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## ■ PEDEUTOLOGY

## ■ TECHNOLOGY OF EDUCATION

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# Editor's Preface

The first number of *The New Educational Review* in 2009 is the seventeenth issue of our journal since the start of its foundation in 2003. In this issue there are mainly papers from: Poland, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Turkey, and Iran, because our journal is open for presentation of scientific papers from all over the world. I am very happy to inform our Readers that since January 2008 *The New Educational Review* has been in the international data base EBSCO as well as in January of 2007 it was selected by the Editorial Development of Thomson Scientific in Philadelphia for coverage in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI).

In the present issue the editorial board have proposed the following subject sessions: Social Pedagogy, Pedeutology, Technology of Education, Special Pedagogy, Chosen Aspects of Psychology, Sociology of Family, and Chronicle.

The subject session "Social Pedagogy" starts with an article by Anna Nowak and Ewa Bielska which presents investigating selected aspects of pathology in educational institutions. Ewa Ogrodzka-Mazur shows the results of research that concern: (1) the values appreciated by learners from final classes of upper-secondary schools as significant determiners of their feeling of identity, (2) the relation between global culture and forming the youth's patriotic attitudes and their identification with their homeland, (3) the relation between consumer society and the youth's readiness to undertake civil activity and to sacrifice personal interests for others. In the article by Teresa Wilk there are presented the ways in which people created theatre to cater for their needs over the centuries, how they have made use of it and how it may be of help to them today in their daily lives. Alicja Żywczok focuses on the meaning of the introspectional research attitude and the discourse in the scientific life of universities, as well as, expose a connection between such a personal feature as courage to present one's scientific opinions and the authority of people of science. The results of the part of the

biographical research presented in the article may be a valuable proposal for bringing up children and the youth in the apotheosis of science and in criticism towards its heritage. Alina Szczurek-Boruta assumes, that community in the culture of individualism strengthens the individual and the individual's development.  In the first part of the study the author presents theoretical assumptions of her consideration, in the second part – results of the conducted research actions concerning the meaning of confidence and solidarity in the life of young people, in the third part she formulates conclusions. From the philosophical point of view and opinion of Hungarian people Sándor Karikó concentrates on the concepts of Europeanism, conformity and youth. Jelena Petrucijová analyses the changes of human identity (individual and group) in the context of cultural diversity. In her opinion ethnocentrism and cultural relativism are contrary approaches towards otherness, which is a constitutive element of our identity. Emin Atasoy presents the construction and use of a free word association test for revealing the scientific conceptual structures of 8th grade students, concerning geographical and environmental stimulus words. With the help of a test four groups of students from four schools – two in Turkey and two in Bulgaria were comparatively studied. Hana Lukášová focuses on the problem of life quality of children in the education and teaching process at school. In the article of Mitja Krajnčan and Boštjan Bajželj the main characteristics of professional relationship and methods of work that enable to develop and attain the adequate professional relationship are presented. Sengul Cangur and his co-workers describe the results of a study, which was performed among faculty members working at Eskisehir Anadolu University using their personal evaluations, in order to identify the factors affecting the job satisfaction levels of faculty members. Katarina Ľuptáková points to some problems in contemporary society which are the result of social changes after 1989. She denotes these problems as a crisis of values, which impacts on people's subjective happiness as well as the total stability of society. Marek Walancik brings up the problem of trauma connected with the battle situation on the example of soldiers who are stationed on the mission in Iraq.

   In the subject session "Pedeutology" Hanife Akar shows an in-depth understanding of the impact of Foreign Language Teacher Training Colleges (FLTTC) on teacher candidates' learning and development, as described by the participants, and the challenges that FLTTC faced during its early development process. On the basis of their long term experience from cooperation with a group of primary school teachers Alena Hošpesová and Marie Tichá discuss the concept of pedagogical competences needed in mathematics education, the possibilities of their cultivation and development and qualified joint reflection as a competence and as a way

to competence cultivation. In their article Jitka Šimičková-Čižková and Bohumil Vašina provide a comparison of criteria for the quality of life as subjectively identified by members of three professional groups: (female) teachers, police officers and office workers. The results show the level of satisfaction with the teaching profession and with the quality of the respondents' private lives. Beata Pituła and Hanna Gawonicz analyse the multidimensional teacher-pupil relation based on principles of selected contemporary pedagogical trends. The basis constitutes the background for the reflection over dialogue as a tool and a method of counteracting the social marginalization of youth.

In the subject session "Technology of Education" Ewa Bochno elaborates on the relations between a student and a lecturer in the general cultural context. She focuses on one of the forms of activating students, namely through a student scientific conference. In her research study Lenka Ďuricová deals with self-assessment by university students and shows the significant influence of self-concept on achievement motivation, motivation for creativity and partially also on academic achievements of adolescent. Yuksel Goktas with co-workers investigates K-12 teachers' ICT competence, the difference in teachers' ICT competence based on their demographic characteristics, and factors that have impact on their ICT competences. Ismail H. Demircioglu analyses and compares the questions asked in history exams at different secondary schools in two cities of Turkey, in terms of the stages of cognitive domain of Bloom Taxonomy. Zdena Lustigová with her co-workers describes how a scientifically exact and problem-solving-oriented remote and virtual science experimental environment might help to build a new strategy for science education which forms a unified body of information and knowledge in both a collaborative and constructivist way. Pavol Odaloš and Miriam Kubinska describe the conventional and unconventional perspectives of teachers on the Slovak language course books. In order to study the processes related to learning Štefan Kováčik introduces the '*coefficient of learning with understanding*', the '*coefficient of improving fine motor skills of hand*', and the '*coefficient of revealing*' concepts when reading pictures. The presented coefficients give a very brief evaluation of the difficulty of curriculum in the case of a standard class.

The subject session "Special Pedagogy" contains a contribution by Małgorzata Gil who describes the social perception of children with intellectual disabilities and the institutions established for the care of them in Poland. She argues that placing children into full-time institutions results in discrimination against them.

In the subject session "Chosen Aspects of Psychology" Katarzyna Markiewicz characterizes the dynamics of changes in executive function in autistic children during their middle and late childhood. The executive function relates to the ability

of self-regulation including attention, motor reactions, resistance to distractions and delay of gratification. In her article Teresa Borowska proves a thesis that there is a close connection between emotional resources of young people and the cognitive style presented by them. The researches were carried out in Poland and in Norway, and the participants were students of junior schools, secondary schools and universities.

The subject session "Sociology of Family" contains one article by Katarzyna Juszczyk, who describes the relations between a stepfather and a stepson in the sociological case study.

We hope that this edition, like previous ones, will encourage new readers not only from the Middle European countries to participate in an open international discussion. On behalf of the Editors' Board I would like to invite representatives of different pedagogical sub-disciplines and related sciences to publish their texts in *The New Educational Review*.

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Social
Pedagogy

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# The Principle of Meritocracy and the Function of Emancipation in the Context of Pathology within the Sphere of Education (Selected Issues)

The paper aims at investigating selected aspects of pathology in educational institutions (classified by Jan Szczepański into the group of educational and cultural institutions [J. Szczepański, 1965, p.114]; and by Shmuel Eisenstadt, into the group of educational and care institutions [quoted after G.Skąpska, M.Ziółkowski, 1998, p. 318]).

Pathology is a notion which cannot be interpreted unequivocally. According to a dictionary definition, it denotes any deviation from the norm. Taking into consideration the criterion of meaning, the term is applied to a set of phenomena harmful to an individual as well as a group, which have a specific origin, social scope and a negative impact [L. Pytka, 1999, p. 175].

In social and humanistic sciences certain typical functions are attributed to educational institutions. They include accomplishing tasks referring to secondary socialization, adaptation, education, imparting knowledge and competence, selection, allocation, holding social control, compensation, reconstruction emancipation [cf. B.Bernstein, 1990, p.33; Z.Kwieciński, 1995, p. 21; T.Parsons, 1969, pp. 172–182; B. Szacka, 2003, pp. 420–421].

School fails to fulfill these functions, as Z. Kwieciński aptly remarks. It reconstructs culture in an incomplete and selective way. Due to dysfunctionality it has created within many local and family environments, which do not aid it in performing its functions, school limits most of its graduates' access to culture. The process of people's adaptation to the established structures and their justification is also incomplete and harmful. The participants of the educational process do not accept the artificial world which is being acted out, pretended at school. They rebel against the division

of social roles and statuses which have been assigned and offered to them. On the other hand, it does not mean at all that at school they acquire the competence to become emancipated, to cross boundaries, to change the world around them, to transform it into a new, better one [Z. Kwieciński, 1995, pp. 21, 22].

The reasons for and symptoms of the crisis in school education are diverse and multifaceted (it would be impossible to investigate all of them in this paper). They lie outside educational institutions, and should be discovered in institutions and people. There are two main causes of the crisis in an organized system of education, which lie outside its institutions. One of them is a crisis of the process of legitimization of the social and political order, as well as the legitimization of power. The second reason lies in the identity crisis the system is faced with, which is characterized by a broad tendency towards readdressing questions as to who and where we are, where we are heading, what we are driven to, what happened in the early days of the current order, what led to its successive crises. Legitimization and identity crisis in the system results in undermining the authority and credibility of sense-makers, their ideological apologists and those who convey sense [education workers are among them] [Z. Kwieciński, 1995, p. 22].

As a result of the examination of the subject literature concerning sociology of education, published over the last decade, a thesis can be advanced that there are two trends as regards interpretation of dysfunctions and pathologies in education. One of them originated in the 60s of the 20th century with the investigation of sociologists, who were predominantly exponents of the theory of reproduction and the theory of social resistance. The second category of analyses refers to specific forms (or risks) of pathological changes in the sphere of education – at its various levels – studied in the context of the information society and the ostentatious consumer society.

The former of the approaches mentioned above focuses on the issues related to social inequalities and creating barriers that limit the opportunity for social advancement among the individuals who show the features characteristic of a depreciated, unfavourable status. The category of social inequalities is one of the key and at the same time universal characteristics of a social structure, since it exists in each social context. Inequalities originate from the differences in access to the specific kind of goods, both material and non-material. Henryk Domański underlines the supreme importance of differences in the level of income, power, presige, lifestyle, and participation in culture. A factor defined as *the degree of need satisfaction* has also been pointed to in literature. [H. Domański, 2004, pp. 23–24]

A specific interpretation of inequalities can be found in the late modern [or postmodern]discourse analysis, in which the category is investigated not only

through the prism of differences in access to social goods, but mainly through the prism of differences concerning identity, ego, affiliation, cultural background. Difference-determining identity is in this case approached from the perspective that takes into consideration the social context, and is studied through the prism of belonging or not belonging to a particular group. In contrast to the modern interpretation, according to which differences are rooted in *objective* variables, a postmodern approach emphasizes the importance of *subjective* variables, which are constructed in a dynamic and discursive way, through social participation. Thus, the category of *inequalities* has been juxtaposed with that of *differences*, the latter being in certain cases socially induced, whereas in others determined by an individual's choice. Hence, when referring to the sphere of education, an individual makes a comparison between *identity* and *education*, examining the correspondence between the two categories [R. Moore, 2007, pp. 8–9]. Taking into account the biography of an individual, neither of the above-mentioned groups of factors (objective or subjective) functions separately. An individual can employ various adaptation strategies, aimed at rejecting the features which have been imposed on a person, and regarded by society as a determinant of the individual's identity. The individual can adopt the strategies designed to accept objective factors [*variables*], determining the person's identity, and refuse to identify with the environment in which these features are depreciated. The individual can pursue identifying with the features which constitute objective variables, and decide on the strategies of resistance, both active and passive, against an institution that depreciates those characteristics. The individual can also maintain the identity determined by the objective features, and refuse to be a member of the institution responsible for depreciation [cf. adaptation strategies developed among students belonging to ethnic minorities: D.G. Solórzano, O. Villalpando, 1998, pp. 212–221].

At the same time, the problem of identity refers to the issues related to society during the transformation period. It can be pointed out, quoting Zbigniew Kwieciński, that from the perspective of the social system dynamics and imbalance, school performs a diaphragmatic function. Due to a historicist attitude it adopted, and many years of activity aimed at detaching children and youth from the current issues of social life, school, as it were, blurs the generation memory. It functions as a diaphragm in the process of experience transmission between generations.

Performing such a function in the period of identity crisis and the crisis of legitimization of the social system, school creates favourable conditions for the crisis to arise, mainly in the sphere of identity development among young people, and in the sphere of sense. It also leads to anomy, vacuum and incoherence between values and norms, and consequently, to escapist attitudes among youth. As a result, school

is regarded as one of the factors which reinforce crisis, since it is characterized by an inability to recognize the meaning and purpose of activity; it loses norms, and considers the social world to be something unknown. School is an instrument of alienation that young people face in their environment [K. Szafraniec, 1986; Z.Kwieciński, 2007, p. 20]

Following the functional order of the industrial society, a postindustrial community is subordinated to the principle of meritocracy, according to which achieving different statuses is determined by technical competence, something that economists refer to as human capital, which is gained during the process of formal education [mostly higher], completed preferably at a prestige institution of higher education. Hence, education is considered crucial in determining the individual's status, and a university becomes a determinant of the social (class) position of the individual [D. Bell, 1999, pp. 409–410].

The original assumption, made in the modern social discourse in accordance with meritocratic principles, was that educational opportunities should stem from intelligence (measured by IQ). In the 70s of the 20th century this assumption was questioned [an interpretation of the meritocratic principle was also subject to criticism]. The critics of this conception (among whom there were Christopher Jencks and Jerome Karabel) pointed out that meritocracy is grounded on selection, whose main criterion is the level of intelligence, which in return constitutes an inborn characteristic. Thus, opportunities for achievement take the form of a peculiar genetic lottery, in which the so-called fair criteria for acquiring a social status are established. It has been assumed that implementation of meritocratic principles is not possible, since parents who have a high social and economic status prove to be an important social capital for their children; whereas children with a low social rank are deprived of this capital. There is also a third aspect which has been emphasized. It refers to the ability to take a given chance, and to the importance of coincidence in the process of achieving particular occupational statuses. When it comes to the issue of the opportunities of gaining high social positions by members of the groups which have been attributed some discreditable features [e.g. racial minorities], the critics of meritocratic principles maintain that in this case equality of initial opportunities [e.g. concerning developing a particular kind of competence] does not guarantee equal opportunities which determine the ultimate outcome (e.g. possibility to hold presigious positions in the occupational structure) [quoted after: D. Bell, 1999, pp. 427–428].

Simultaneously, it is essential that education is referred to as a crucial factor determining the chances of social mobility (as it has been put forward in the classic approach of P.M. Blau and O.D. Duncan) [H. Domański, 2004, pp.

160–161]. The obvious assumption is that social equality [interpreted as equality of opportunity] is conditioned by equality of educational opportunities [Moore, 2007, p. 7]. Opportunities for equal access are in this case considered to provide able individuals with an opportunity to enter education on increasingly higher levels, according to the principle of *competitive mobility*, formulated by Randall Collins [E.Górnikowska-Zwolak, E.Jarosz, 1993, pp. 48–49]. Otherwise, the idea of equality would prove antagonistic towards the idea of academic perfectionism [cf. R.Moore, 2007, p. 6].

Limiting the opportunities for egalitarian access to education is a marginalizing factor. The phenomenon of marginalization is interpreted here as, quoting after Maria Jarosz, *living on the margin of the social law and privileges*, and as a characteristic related to community stratification, and deriving from a social position, biographic experience, aspirations, and civil decisions, which in this case concerns the sphere of educational policy [M. Jarosz, 2008, p. 8]. The notion refers to the limited participation in the fundamental institutions of the given social order; it defines the state which is opposite to social integration. A marginalized individual holds an underprivileged (disadvantaged) social position in a given structure. In extreme situations, marginalization leads to the *welfare dependence* syndrome, and consequently to gaining the *underclass* status (A. Radziewicz-Winnicki, I. Radziewicz-Winnicki, 2005, pp. 12–13).

The issues concerning equality of opportunity, governed by the meritocratic principles, are examined in educational sociology both within the Polish and global context. Determining educational opportunities of an individual through the prism of objective variables, which are predominantly social background (class position), sex or racial affiliation, proves to be disadvantageous to the above-mentioned modern principle, which remains applicable in the postmodern context [R. Moore, 2007, p. 7].

It is likely that the selection mechanism, which constitutes an inherent part of the education system, and results from structural limitations, leads to the exclusion of certain groups of children and youth. The surveys and reports concerning education disclose unequal access to schooling (education). According to externalist views, the reason for inequalities in the education system lies in the fact that certain types of families are not able to prepare their children for taking full advantage of learning at school. The approach emphasizes the fact that the factors generating inequality in education include genetic diversification among groups, in terms of intelligence quotient or cognitive abilities; material deprivation; cultural deprivation, for example a very low level of education within a family and lack of social and/or language skills which are essential for an effective learning process; social

differences concerning aspirations and motivation for studying; disproportions with regard to cultural capital.

The internalist approach focuses on school, and particularly [quoting after R.Moore, 2006, p.330] on the characteristics of the education system which might be responsible for creating and reproducing class and other kinds of divisions; reinforcing social prejudices through the official education programmes; indirect transfer of patterns, by means of a hidden educational programme; disregarding cultural dissimilarities, particularly those concerning sexuality and ethnic affiliation.

According to the view phrased by internalists, education is the main breeding ground for diversification [R. Moore, 2006, p. 330].

The perpetuated and increased inequalities in education refer both to the function of school related to operating in various environments and providing knowledge and school skills for children from various backgrounds (which is defined as a school habitus), but also to aspirations concerning the future social position [aspirations, life plans] [Z. Kwieciński, 2007, p. 18]

Research proves that there is a link between the student's learning results and his or her environment background; and that the level of acquired education correlates positively with social background, or as P.Bourdieu puts it, with the cultural capital [cf. I. Białecki, 2003]. It has been confirmed by the analysis of the dropout phenomenon, which indicates that the students who leave school prematurely come from families with low cultural capital [cf. B.Fatyga et alli, 2001].

There is a lot of competition among schools, which pursue prestige. They apply the policy of segregation – new forms are being created, which are not adopted to suit the needs of selected students. Schools compete for students who come from well-off families. The practice of segregation conducted in post-primary schools involves school enrollment procedures and dividing students into forms [M. Rek, W.Woźniak, 2005, p. 143].

The composition of the student body is determined by the social, economic and demographic structure of the school. An important fact is that there is a division into better and worse schools, which is accompanied by some negative consequences [it contributes to the creation of poverty and crime areas] [J. Błachut, A. Gaberle, K. Krajewski, 2001, p. 350].

Education is grounded on social diversification. It is an effective instrument for perpetuating it, and reinforcing the established structures and functions characteristic of the global society and the local community [Z. Kwieciński, 2007, p. 12]. Contrary to its initial declarations, school performs a function which is referred to as cultural and social reproduction. If we take into consideration the level and

kind of cognitive competence, and the social and moral orientation which young people attain having completed the general education, it can be stated that they bear greater resemblance to their parents rather than to their peers socialized in different family conditions [Z.Kwieciński, 2007, p. 16].

There are certain flaws in the education system. The most representative of them can be traced in the area of vocational education. Training students are provided turns to be outdated and unsuited to the requirements and demands of the labour market. Vocational education does not provide most of its students with good prospects of attaining a high social position, let alone social advancement. It does not encourage alternative education participation, but it contributes to hesitant and passive attitudes among students. In other words, it provides a breeding ground for the phenomenon of counter-socialization [J. Błachut, A. Gaberle, K. Krajewski, 2001, p. 349].

Talcott Parsons, a representative of functional structuralism, distinguishes the principal functions of education, such as socialization, selection and allocation. The process of selection involves singling out able individuals and encouraging them to continue education. The individuals who demonstrate a lower level of ability are made to enter the labour market directly after completing the relatively early stages of education [cf. T. Parsons, 1969, pp. 171–202]. However, this view, originating from the 1960s, has been questioned by the representatives of critical sociology and a radical approach in sociological thinking. In the period between the end of the 1950s and the 1980s, Basil Bernstein developed his theory of language codes and their consequences for the social functioning of the individual. In his theory he emphasizes that the activity conducted by educational institutions does not conduce to social status equalization. It is since the beginning of their educational career, as Bernstein claims, that the representatives of low social classes [he points to the working class ] have had a limited opportunity for achievement, due to the fact that they use a limited language code, which is depreciated in an official school discourse [B. Bernstein, 1990]. Pierre Bourdieu makes a similar assumption in his theory of reproduction, formulated in the 70s of the 20th century. He maintains that school does not foster crossing the boundaries of social stratification, since it provides achievement opportunities for the individuals who, in the course of socialization process, have internalized the habitus characteristic of the middle class (considered to be dominant) [P. Bourdieu, J.-C. Passeron, 2006]. Taking this theory into account, it should be indicated that habitus [regarded as a *genealogical capital*] is a broad notion which combines application of particular language codes with behavioural patterns, lifestyles, tastes, preferences and specific interpretations of reality [P. Bourdieu, J.-C. Passeron, 2006, p.109]. In the view of this interpreta-

tion, the group representative who has developed the habitus which is divergent from the one established within the dominant class, is put at risk of attaining a depreciated social status, which equals limited opportunities for social advancement. In this situation, the refusal to undertake the compensation activity in the school context, or decreasing it to a minimum level which is not suited to satisfy the existing needs, is considered pathological. At the same time, Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron maintain that the task of education is not compensating for gaps but reproducing the dominant class habitus.

A teacher is an agent of the transfer of the dominant class habitus, due to the fact that he/she occupies a social role [which, according to Noam Chomsky, concerns the role of an intellectual], defined as the one which involves representing the interests of the dominant group. An inherent part of this role is a special kind of authority, which does not undergo questioning in the teacher-student relation [P. Bourdieu, J.-C. Passeron, 2006; N. Chomsky, 2004, p. 17]. Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron claim that educational activity is conducted until the moment when the individual, who it was directed at, gains a *long-lasting education*. This stage is regarded as the internalization of the habitus, which will be made to work permanently, even after completing the pedagogical work [P.Bourdieu, J.-C. Passeron, 2006, p. 108]. Thus, in the course of the conducted activity, a teacher, regarded as a representative of a group of intellectuals, implements the principles of the indoctrinating system, concerning imparting knowledge in the scope and form consistent with the interests of a dominant class [N. Chomsky, 2004, p. 17]

Habitus determines cultural arbitrariness, whereas education, as emphasized by Noam Chomsky, subordinated to the modern canons, is carried out in such a way that it fosters indoctrination, imposes an arbitrary form of obedience, does not promote creative thinking, constitutes an element of the control and constraint system. Hence education does not encourage development of the kind of competence favoured by a postindustrial society [N. Chomsky, 2004, p. 16].

Schools in non-totalitarian countries do not remain unaffected by the phenomenon of counter-socialization. The examples which prove this fact include propagating the ideology of growing wealthy, promoting xenophobic views, fostering inequality, and others [J. Błachut, A. Gaberle, K. Krajewski, 2001, p. 350].

In order to accomplish its tasks, school employs staff, the members of which conduct pedagogical activity. K.J. Tillmann notices that teachers, performing the function of officials, are obliged to remain especially loyal to the State [K.J. Tillmann, 1996, p.114]. The personnel factors, which contribute to school crisis and pathology, include negative selection for entering the teaching profession, low qualifications of teachers, the personality features teachers have which are disad-

vantageous for the education and teaching process. Z.Kwieciński distinguishes two kinds of world outlook, and two kinds of morality among teachers: private and professional [Z. Kwieciński, 1995, p.22].

School is geared towards imparting and reproducing knowledge, developing particular skills. The educational process is aimed at preparing students to participate in the post-industrial society [the process involves imposing the patterns represented by particular teachers]. Serious flaws can be discovered in the school syllabuses, which are overloaded and put too much emphasis on details. Demands exceed students' capacities. Mastering the teaching content involves assessing the knowledge which students have acquired.

In order to assess students, a teacher tries to detect a gap in their knowledge. Whereas students carefully hide the lack of knowledge to avoid getting a fail grade [K. Kmiecik-Baran, 1999, p.36].

Z.Kwieciński maintains that the process of education is accompanied by symbolic violence [Z. Kwieciński, 1992]. The notion denotes the phenomenon which legitimizes, reinforces and perpetuates real violence through certain symbolic means, thus broadening it to include a specific form which can be referred to as symbolic enslavement in the sphere of values [P. Bourdieu, J.-C. Passeron, 2006, p. 23]. Bourdieu demonstrates interest in two aspects of symbolic violence. One of them is instilling specific values in successive generations, which means developing their habitus. The other aspect is the school advancement mechanism and opportunities [ibid. p. 23].

Since this paper is subject to text length limitation, the above analyses are presented in a condensed way. It has been emphasized in the article that the attempts aimed at implementing into educational reality the modern principle of meritocracy (the phenomenon which is subject to extensive criticism, centred on the ostensible *fairness* of the activities based on the meritocratic principle) and the function related to emancipation, are accompanied by difficulties and ambivalence. It is possible to identify certain areas of dysfunction (and in extreme cases – pathology) related to the criteria for disciplining students and assessing their achievements as well as habitus. There is a risk of extreme reproduction of arbitrarily established and favoured patterns, represented by the dominant culture. It is accompanied by the phenomenon of marginalization of ethnic and cultural identity of a student, which proves to constitute an important issue in the context of conducting the process of education within the global multicultural society.

Translated by Iwona Mrozińska

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The New Educational Review

# From National to Global Identity.
# Globalization Versus Patriotic and Civil Attitudes
# of Contemporary Youth

## Abstract

Complex issues of the identity of contemporary youth, their axiological preferences and their self-defining in relation to other people and their own country have been undertaken in this article. Theoretical assumptions associated with globalization and shaping the youth's patriotic and civil attitudes constitute the basis for research which aims at specifying: (1) the values appreciated by learners from final classes of upper-secondary schools as significant determiners of their feeling of identity, (2) the relation between global culture and forming the youth's patriotic attitudes and their identification with their homeland, (3) the relation between the consumer society and the youth's readiness to undertake civil activity and to sacrifice personal interests for others.

**Key words:** *national identity, global identity, globalization, youth, patriotic attitude, civil attitude.*

## Introduction

*"We may be approaching such a new and different world that the experiences of history so far will turn insufficient to understand it and to be able to move in it. […] This is the world which has potentialities to give a lot but also to demand a lot, the world in which easy shortcuts often lead to nowhere. We will constantly meet a new Other who will slowly start to emerge from the chaos and confusion of modern times. This Other might come into existence through the confrontation of two opposing*

*currents constituting the culture of the modern world – the current which globalizes our reality and the current which preserves our distinctness, our differences and our uniqueness. And that the Other will be their offspring and heir. We should search for dialogue with him and understanding.* […] *Only well-wishing towards other beings is the foundation which can move the nerve of humanity in them.* […] *The world needs re-thinking".*

This apt remark of Ryszard Kapuściński has become a motto of the undertaken discussion concerning the complex issues of the identity of contemporary youth, their axiological preferences and their self-defining in relation to other people and their own country. The state transformation, initiated in 1989 in Poland, brought about numerous fundamental changes in the socio-cultural area and in individuals' systems of values. It also changed behaviour patterns. The promise of radical changes in economy intensified optimism of many people – people expected "glamorous" future resulting from re-structuring of the state economy and introducing free market mechanisms. Reality verified the expectations – fast financial success of some people was accompanied by stagnation or even degradation of others, the problem of unemployment appeared, as well as the politicians' lack of interest in ordinary people's problems (Brzeziński, Witkowski, 1994; Kurczewska, 1999; Marody, 2004; Radziewicz-Winnicki, 2004; Ziółkowski, 2000).

After the relatively violent period of proceeding from real socialism to real democracy, contemporary youth are continuing social transformations, taking part in them and partially shaping them. The way young people perceive the state and society and the changes occurring in them, which criteria they follow while evaluating, how they would like to build their own and social life, what is worth imitating and what is definitely rejected – they all are mainly influenced by different currents and trends of thought which clash in the environments where the young exist, learn, or work.

With the complexity of globalization processes which constitute "the inevitable destiny of the world", some significant questions appear, especially from the point of view of the young generations' education: What do the youth's axiological preferences look like several years after the political and socio-cultural breakthrough? Are the young more conscious of and sensitive to values or are they sceptical – with no orientation and no perspectives for the future in our country? Is the young person's application of already formed identity a result of mass culture or of rather lesser confidence in older generations, which may be associated with the lack of moral and political authority? Will there be, in the young people's opinion, room for national states in the world which is becoming "a global village"? Will the existence in the consumer society phase out the youth's need for undertaking civil

activity? Will Internet communication technologies threaten direct interpersonal relations?

Showing the relation between globalization processes and patriotic and civil attitudes of contemporary youth – in the context of the search for the answers to the above-mentioned questions – can substantially contribute to a better orientation in the awareness of the young in Poland and to a better understanding of their needs, aims and life ambitions. This, in turn, seems to enrich educational experience collected so far in this field.

## National identity in the time of global culture shaping

As a result of the current globalization processes, a state of cultural discontinuity (often referred to as "the weakening of culture") appears and is often manifested in the relative nature of individuals' social identities and the accepted values and norms. This state is to substitute the new social order which is understood as "the multitude of overlapping and intersecting socio-spatial nets of relations of power" (Kempny, 2000, pp. 12–13; Bernardi, 1998, pp. 275–283; Kłoskowska, 2002) and which allows for the differentiation of cultures at the same time. What is also formulated is the concept of man as a multidimensional, not homogeneous, creature who exists "simultaneously on the foundations of two general laws: of antinomy (heteronomy and autonomy) and of homonomy. The law of heteronomy involves the social dimension of man, the law of autonomy – the biological and subject-oriented dimension, and the law of homonomy – the metaphysical dimension" (Staś-Romanowska, 1999, p. 122).

The possibility of leading the individual into social and cultural life is mainly associated with the effectiveness of socialization processes. On the one hand, they are interpreted as the transfer of social structure qualities into individual properties (society is a source of knowledge which should be reflected in the individual). On the other hand, what is emphasized is that man is not a passive recipient in the socialization process and cannot be described merely as a derivative of society. Human individuality and uniqueness are the reason for "creative notions", which in turn bring about social transformations (Czerniawska, 2000, p. 55). These processes involve the shaping of national identity, which is associated with the natural feeling of belonging to a particular social group (including national and cultural one) and which enables self-identification – the basis for the differentiation between I – We and Others –They. In accordance with the standpoint of many researchers of identity issues, it needs to be highlighted that although identity is a dynamic

whole, "certain types of identification which constitute individual identity are intrinsically connected with permanence, invariability. Undoubtedly, one of such identifications is the national one – it can be hardly subjected to negotiations and is evaluated in ethical and moral categories. The consequences of changes within this identification are painful for the individual and they demand undertaking special effort of negotiating the identity in order to preserve its continuity and the feeling of «being faithful to oneself»" (Michna, 2004, p. 27).

As Zbigniew Bokszański remarks, the structure of the changeability of national identity concepts is predominantly marked by the ways the basic constituents of this identity are perceived. These are: (1) the ways in which the notion of identity is interpreted, and (2) the ways in which the nation is understood. Regardless of different approaches to national identity determined by theoretical solutions in these two platforms, its two basic aspects can be indicated – <u>continuation</u>, associated with maintaining the continuity and permanence, the canon reproduced in the consciousness of subsequent generations, and <u>separateness</u> – which enables to differentiate between the individual or group subject and other individuals or groups (Bokszański, 2005, p. 109).

Numerous concepts of national identity presented by the studies in sociology, history, social psychology and political sciences allow for distinguishing four models:

 – objectivist model – according to which national identity is expressed in the qualities of national collectivity that can be described by an outside observer in an objective way (these are, for instance, historical territory or homeland, common culture, common and legally specified rights and duties of all members);
 – model of identities which are being discovered – based on the bonds of cultural commonwealth and cultural unity (language, tradition, religion, values, social relations, education, particular lifestyle), which at the same time form a special cultural "style" of a particular national collectivity;
 – model of national identity which is being constructed – assuming that national identity does not derive from national culture which was formed in the course of historical process, but is the characteristic of collectiveness constructed at different historic moments for different goals and its qualities depend on functions which it should fulfil;
 – model of public opinion – taking into account "individualizing" interpretation of the notion of national identity, which means referring to empirical studies, knowledge, attitudes and opinions of individual members of national collectiveness concerning this collectiveness (Bokszański, 2005, pp. 114–135).

What attracts due attention in the distinguished approaches which analyze national identity is the fact that it seems to be a relatively stable structure. The relationship with the national group is built on the values accepted by the individual and on features which form the self-concept of the individual. Thus, the feeling of this relationship with the national group seems to be fairly strong. Currently – in the opposition to the stable feeling of national identity – such phenomena appear as isolation and immigration. They determine two developmental tendencies of the world – globalization and disintegration of nations (falling apart of states). The second tendency, in the opinion of sociologists, is a response to the first, which is characterized by the structures of information, production, exchange, consumption and entertainment. What becomes significant is the so-called identity policy (Kempny, 2004, pp. 179–200), manifested in separateness, differentiation between us and aliens, friends and enemies, which often leads to nationalism. As the researchers exploring these issues emphasize, the international situation is determined by many different, often contradictory, factors. The breakdown of both the cold war system and the world partition into competing blocks brought about an abundance of attitudes and aspects of modern life. Faced with such a variety, researchers point at the difficulty in introducing international order, characterized by predictable conditions and events and the broadly understood feeling of safety. "All concordantly emphasize that international community faces new challenges which require new abilities and contents in solving global, regional and local problems" (Artymiak, 2003, p. 69).

## "New disorder of the world" and global identity shaping

Marian Kempny states that two major currents of reflection prevail in thinking about the modern world and globalization effects. The first – economism – refers to the world capitalism and economic transformations, the second – culturalism – focuses on cultural changes. Economism is a natural and inevitable process resulting from modernization, in other words from strengthening the foundation of the capitalist system (Kempny, 2001, pp. 79–101). Globalization processes understood in this way should bring about the birth of global community, the so-called homogenization of national states. Their borders would become less distinct and in turn this should contribute to the creation of supranational structures of organization. The opposite current seems to be the domain of the supporters of hybridization. "For them, copying some patterns present in the Western culture means not a symptom of subordinating local particularism to universal processes,

but rather of the domination of a particular form of social life over others" (Gilarek, 2003, p. 62). Thus, in this approach the unification of societies will take place in the context of culture. For the representatives of this trend, cultural factors, autonomous in relation to economy and politics, are the factors which determine the dynamics of the new world order.

Integration and fragmentation are assumed to be opposing concepts. However, there are approaches which combine the elements of both economism and cultural-ism, presenting integration and fragmentation as two complementary processes. Globalization consists neither in the integration of societies into something like a superpower state nor in the re-birth of particularisms as a local response to global processes. The dynamics of the contemporary world results from the influence of both processes on each other, which occurs in a selective way with regard to areas of life (they concern particular societies) and to regions (where they appear) (Gilarek, 2003). What can be an example of such an approach is Roland Robertson's concept of glocalization, continued also by Zygmunt Bauman, the heart of which concerns restructuring of the social world according to both new principles of re-stratification and the worldwide hierarchy which is constantly reborn.

## "What is happening to all of us" or globalization according to Zygmunt Bauman

Globalization processes determine the shrinking of time and space, which means they touch all the dimensions of human condition and trigger off various transfor-mations. Still Z. Bauman indicates the lack of assumed homogeneity. "Globalization divides and unites to the same degree, and the reasons for the divided world are the same as the factors which stimulate its unifying" (Bauman, 2000, p. 6).

Facing the occurring transformations makes mobility and the freedom of mov-ing around the most demanded value. Thus, globalization concerns a semantically broad space which includes the features, processes, actions, effects, threats and phenomena belonging to the core of the surrounding reality. These phenomena influence non-global areas. As Z. Bauman indicates the increasing polarization of society seems to be a globalization marker. Currently, the difference between people consists in what abilities they have to move about, thus, to decide about the world vicissitudes.

In Z. Bauman's opinion, shrinking of time and space, the disappearance of public space, ex-territorial nature of elites, and staying in one place bring about disability and the feeling of incomplete humanity. This is associated with the inability to

constitute norms and to form communities which are internally consolidated by common evaluation criteria. This occurs because people have no place, their own agora, where they could meet and share observations as a different agora and forum, following the example of elites, separated from local ties.

Thus, a question arises: For whom does globalization take place? Its effects concern all people but the profits seem to be gained only by the richest, who owing to globalization will become even richer, in contrast to the rest of society, whose difficult situation will deteriorate even more. Social stratification will deepen in this way. As the prominent sociologist claims "what is good or bad, beautiful or ugly, appropriate or inappropriate, useful or useless, is decided only on the top, where only the most penetrating sight can reach. The judgments from the top are unquestionable as no sensible doubts can be directed to judges who left no address, even no electronic mail, to which these doubts could be passed" (Bauman, 2000, p. 34).

Stratification of societies influences the arrangement of urban space. Public areas of limited availability, electronically controlled doors, residential areas for rich elites guarded by security are all built in order to isolate from unwelcome co-citizens of the town. Defence walls are not built around towns any longer, they cross-cut it in all directions. The problem starts to appear also in our country, in spite of noticeable differences in the pace of development between Poland and Western societies. This means that certain re-valuing is taking place and the world lacks common aims to head for. "In its deepest sense, the notion of globalization conveys the indefinite, capricious and autonomic nature of the world and its issues, the lack of the centre, as well as the lack of the operator's keyboard, the board of directors and their office. Globalization is another name for »the new disorder of the world«" (Bauman, 2000, p.71). The term "universality" as if fell out of this notion as it comprises order, aim and hope.

Globalization, or what is happening to all of us leads to reflection upon forming new identity the name of which derives from the name of the process – global identity. Whereas the issues of national identity (despite their inner complexity) often appear in expert literature in a convergent way, the standpoints concerning global identity forming seem to be polarized at two extremes of the continuum. The views of the authors discussing reality and predicting possible changes are different as they result from different assumptions. However, undertaking the problems of the new identity shaping or of creating a global society indicates that in spite of various views the researchers are united in the common belief that globalization processes seem to be not without influence on modern societies.

In this context, another question can be raised: Will the values and traditions constituting identities of particular nations become vague in the process of con-

structing a universal set of rules? In one of her works Magdalena Grygierek puts forward an interesting thesis that a strong feeling of identity (brought about by deep rooting in home tradition) gives birth to openness which leads to universalism. The author points out that universalism and homeliness are not antagonists; on the contrary, they use common experience and uncover the abundance of human attitudes. "Authentic and living cultures offer opportunities for a better understanding of universal truths. Aiming at universalism in new reality is not a caprice but necessity. It gives a chance for conflict-free and fruitful encounter with others. While progressing towards universalism, it is important not to abandon one's own traditions. Rooting in a local, ethnic culture enables the application of universal values and, at the same time, protects individuals against blurring their identity" (Grygierek, 2001, p. 232).

"The new disorder of the world", which concerns all of us, also affects a very important sphere of education. Numerous transformations taking place now and their complexity necessitate changes in the field of education. It is school and teachers that are to play a prominent role of 'ordering' the changing reality. This role can be understood as the necessity to read basic values anew because "the constantly progressing worldwide globalization is associated with broadly understood educational processes which are indispensable for authentic and human-based globalization. Thus, it is education which has the task to protect identities of individuals, societies and nations from unwanted and illusive unification and its effects through referring to such values as: truth, responsibility, freedom, tolerance, and human dignity" (Ostrowska, Tchorzewski, 2002, p. 27).

The theoretical assumptions applied in this article, which refer to globalization and shaping patriotic and civil attitudes of contemporary youth, became the basis for research activities aiming at specifying:

- the values appreciated by learners from the final forms of upper-secondary schools as significant markers of their feeling of identity,
- the relation between global culture and both shaping young people's patriotic attitudes and their identification with their own country,
- the relation between the consumer society and the youth's readiness to undertake civil activity and to devote personal interest to others.

252 learners (112 girls and 140 boys) from the final forms of upper-secondary school took part in the studies carried out in Cieszyn Silesia in 2007. 110 of them attended general secondary schools, 68 technical schools, and 74 a vocational school. The research comprised parents as well – 125 mothers and 18 fathers. Altogether the studies were conducted on 395 people. The choice of particular types of schools, the number and structure of the respondents do not constitute

a representative sample; however, they allow for capturing certain tendencies in the discussed issues.

The empirical data was collected by the methods of talk and interview, question-naire, and verbal techniques of completing unfinished sentences which were to examine valuation judgments expressed by the youth.

## Values appreciated by the youth from Cieszyn Silesia

Axiological preferences were established through an analysis of Scheler's Value Scale (SVS)[1], which enables to assess the significance of particular values and their categories (groups) and to compare them with Scheler's model hierarchy. Each of the 50 values in SVS is evaluated independently from others on a 101 point evaluation scale. Referring rough results to sten norms allowed both to outline the profiles of values accepted by learners and to specify how much they appreciate particular values in comparison to the norm group.

Characterizations of the values appreciated by the youth from various types of upper-secondary schools were based on the analysis of descriptive statistics and were intended to be compared and to elicit the similarities and differences in axiological preferences of the respondents. The data in Figure 1 and 2 present the process of shaping axiological predispositions of young Poles, which is characteristic of periods of social breakthrough. The lack of evident domination in the system of values and distinct flatness of their whole structure may suggest that the young are not

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[1] Scheler's Value Scale (SVS) consists of 50 values which constitute 6 basic scales comprising the following values: /H/ Hedonistic (prosperous life, erotic love, possessing, pleasure, joy of life, comfort, rest, exciting life); /V/ Vital (resistance to fatigue, physical strength, fitness, body nimbleness, ability to endure cold, ability to endure hunger). /E/ Esthetic (elegance, taste, harmony, order of things, right proportions of shapes, regularity of outlines, good organiza-tion); /T/ Truth (intelligence, logic, wisdom, objectivity, open mind, understanding, broad mind limits, knowledge); /M/ Moral (kind-heartedness, honour, love to others, peace, helping others, truthfulness, reliability, frankness, honesty, kindness, friendliness); /H/ Holy (God, country, independence, homeland, state, patriotism, faith, redemption, eternal life). Apart from basic scales, 4 factor sub-scales were distinguished in statistical analyses. The sub-scale of Vital values forms two factor sub-scales: /FPS/ Fitness and Physical Strength (physical strength, fitness, body nimbleness) and /End./ Endurance (resistance to fatigue, ability to endure cold, ability to endure hunger). The sub-scale of Holy values also forms two factor sub-scales: /LS/ Lay Sancti-ties (country, nation, independence, homeland, state, patriotism) and /RS/ Religious Sanctities (God, faith, redemption, eternal life). Quoted in: P. Brzozowski: *Skala Wartości Schelerowskich – SWS. Podręcznik.* Warszawa 1995, Wyd. Pracownia Testów Psychologicznych, pp. 14–15.

convinced yet what is important in their lives – the evaluations of values consecutive in ranking are spaced with small distances, so they can change places.

Pupils reaching adolescence approve of theses which affirm pleasure values. This surely results from socio-cultural transformations occurring in our country and the processes associated with them: European integration, globalization, easy access to various goods, free market economy, and also the change in the style in which parents bring up their children. In modern political and economic environment, permissive family up-bringing is developing further and more intensely than in the teenage years of the examined pupils' parents. Learners who finish the upper-secondary stage of education know that it is worth indulging in joys of life and they do not mean to abandon this chance. Pointing at the relation between the contemporary cultural crisis and the crisis of orientation and the ability to evaluate, Wolfgang Brezinka states that in an air of over-abundance of excitement, fast cultural changes, and the disappearance of what is durable and supportive, people feel free to choose from a real multitude of material goods, interpersonal contact, lifestyles, various information and beliefs; but on the other hand, they have little support in right habits and reliable ethic traditions which explain reality.

Broadening the scope of liberties is not only a kind of gain but also burden for the individual (due to too strict demands) and threat for the community (Brezinka, 2005, pp. 21–24). Thus, a fully justified question arises whether the new political and socio-cultural reality generates young people's consumption-oriented attitudes and transforms their identity in this way.

Moral values rank as the second in the group of values in the basic sub-scales. Nevertheless, the minimal difference between the arithmetic mean of the evaluation results of the hedonistic values and moral ones may indicate that both groups of values are equally important to the young. They wish they could enjoy a life full of excitement, they appreciate comfort, rest, pleasure, erotic love, and wealth. However, the young intend to guide their own development taking into account the set of basic moral rules, such as: kind-heartedness, honour, love to others, peace, helping others, truthfulness, reliability, frankness, honesty, kindness or friendliness.

All the respondents appreciate the values of truth fairly high (the third in rank). A higher position of this group of values, in comparison to the results of the 1995–2003 studies (Szymański, 2000; Świda-Ziemba, 2000, 2005), can be interpreted as the youth's getting aware of the role of knowledge and education in the conditions of the free market economy. The young realize that the quality of their qualifications determines their life chances – their future profession, job, position, living standards, and the fulfillment of their own aims and life goals.

## Figure 1.  Profiles of values appreciated by youth

(rough data – basic scales and factor sub-scales)
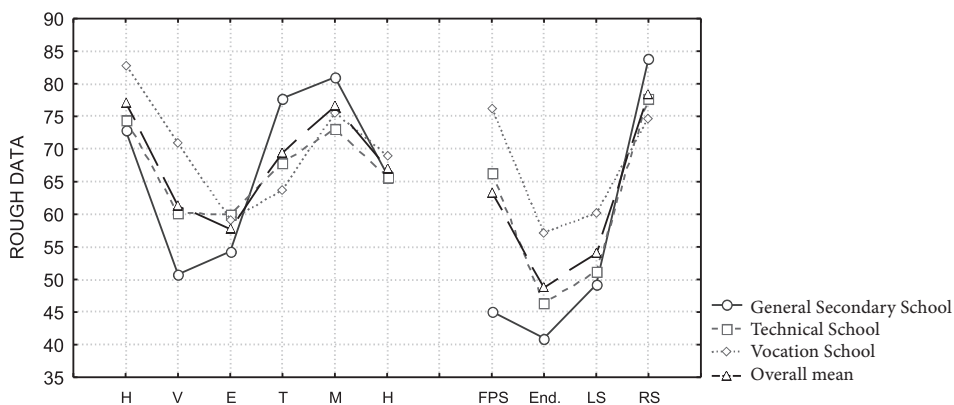


## Figure 2.  Profiles of values appreciated by youth and parents

(rough data – basic scales and factor sub-scales)
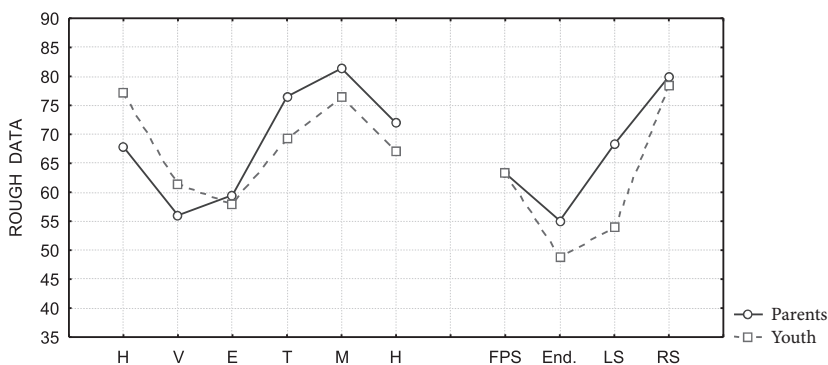


BASIC SCALES FACTOR SUB-SCALES

H – sub-scale of hedonistic values FPS – sub-scale of fitness and physical strength
V – sub-scale of vital values End. – sub-scale of endurance
E – sub-scale of esthetic values LS – sub-scale of lay sanctities
T – sub-scale of truth values RS – sub-scale of religious sanctities
M – sub-scale of moral values
H – sub-scale of holy values

The low evaluation of the holy values (the fourth in rank) resulted from a significant difference in the evaluation of both factor sub-scales into which the holy values are divided. That is why it seems indispensable to consider the research results in both factor-scales separately.

- The religious sanctities gained in the youth's declarations the highest evaluation mean out of all the examined groups of values (78.5). For nearly half of the respondents (47.5%), the highest value (with maximum score) among the 50 values included in Scheler's Value Scale is God. The rest of the respondents, who describe their attitude to religion as "not practising believer" or "not declared in religious issues", highly appreciated other values in this sub-scale – eternal life and redemption.

Although in the questionnaire studies the youth's attitude to faith, religion and God was unambiguously expressed in the highest evaluations, young people's opinions on the role of religion and Church in their life were rather moderate, or even partially contradictory. Some respondents confirm the phenomenon of weakening religiousness in Poland, others highlight a refreshing stir in searching for and discovering new symbols of faith. 15.6% of the examined youth think that the return to God, re-discovering Him, does not necessarily mean the return to the Catholic, Evangelical or other Churches (Kozłowski, Langer, Zagajewski, 1989; Otczyk, 1991)[2]. The institutional renaissance of religion is manifested not only by the comeback to traditional forms of piety , but also by the pluralism of religious life, a symptom of which is the birth of new religious movements (sects and cults). Among the respondents, 8% declared attempting contact with other religious groups and taking part in their meetings. In the opinion of the young in Cieszyn Silesia (91%), religion is a private matter of every person. Thus, it does not mark the whole of the attitude to the world, as occurs in traditional societies, but becomes a section of the individual's experience. In this way, religion and religiousness more often become the values chosen individually (personally) and they lose in rank as values "inherited" only through "being" a member of a particular family or socio-cultural community (Babiński, 1999, pp. 197–211; Mariański, 1997, p. 135).

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[2] In the Polish part of Cieszyn Silesia there are 11 officially registered churches and denominations: Roman-Catholic Church, Evangelical-Lutheran Church, Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Christians of Saturday Church, Methodist Church, Polish-Catholic Church, Free Christians' Congregation, Polish Christian Baptist Church, Polish Association of Jehovah's Witnesses Church (or Strażnica – Bible and Treaty Society), Whitsunday Church and Evangelical Congregation "Zion".

- Lay sanctities, as a factor sub-scale of the holy values, were evaluated rela-
  tively low by the respondents (53.4 points), which resulted in a lowered rank
  of the basic sub-scale in relation to others in the main group. Values such as:
  country, nation, independence, homeland, state, patriotism, seem to have
  small significance for the young generation. However, it can be assumed
  that the absence of the patriotic attitude in the examined pupils' declarations
  may be associated with no threat to our country's sovereignty. The youth's
  attitude to being a Polish was specified in more detail in the results of the
  questionnaire research, in which the respondents were asked the following
  questions:
  - Is there a place (country, town, village) where you would like to live and
    work? If yes, give the name of such a place/places.
  - Do you think you know the problems of Poland, its inhabitants, culture,
    history, in the following degree: a) very high, b) high, c) medium, d) low,
    e) none (I am not interested in the country's problems)
  - Do you wish that Europe became a continent without borders between
    countries and with free circulation of people and the creations of their
    thoughts?

60% of the pupils taking part in the studies declared to live in Poland and to
shape their future in our country's conditions. The remaining respondents do
not only plan to go abroad but they are also preparing for leaving the country
(they look through education and work offers abroad, learn foreign languages in
a systematic way, etc.). In the young people's opinion, the most attractive countries
for migration are: Germany, the USA, Holland, Australia and New Zealand, Italy,
Austria and Spain. Asked for the reasons for their future going abroad, the pupils
mention three main ones: no employment perspectives, low salaries, and no pos-
sibility to acquire high qualifications.

Merely 2.8% of the respondents know the problems of their country, its inhabit-
ants, culture and history of the homeland in a very high degree, 28.7% in a high
and 43.7% in a medium degree. For the remaining group (24.8%) these issues have
no significance in their life.

United Europe and free international contacts are described unambiguously
by the young as "no borders". 67.5% of young Poles think about the common (or
"new") great "homeland", 20% have no opinion yet, and 12.5% of the pupils are
dissatisfied with the accession of Poland to the European Union.

The lowest ranks in the studies were given to the vital and esthetic values. This
seems to be a foreseeable consequence of the tendency (observed over the recent
years) to push physical and art education into secondary position in the process

of education – a gradual decrease in the number of lessons of these subject and the lack of organizations and interest clubs in these fields in the out-of-school system. The young, especially upper-secondary school learners, do not value fitness and physical strength much, neither do they feel the need for the order of things, elegance or harmony.

The presented characterization of the values appreciated by the upper-secondary school learners from final grades (as regards the significance of particular categories of values) allows for an attempt to specify most important qualities of learners' axiological preferences:

– in the area of the lower values (hedonistic, vital, esthetic) axiological orientations of the respondents mostly aim at fulfilling pleasure (hedonistic), material, individual and private (autotelic) values, which enable comfortable life oriented only towards one's own self; however, social and cultural values, which are important markers and determiners of behaviour patterns have much smaller significance – thus an evident orientation appears towards fulfilling selected private values to find both the sense of one's life and one's identity. Esthetic values rank particularly low in the ordering structure – the respondents did not feel the need to fulfill and implement them;

– the truth and moral values occupy an appropriate place in the structure (concordantly with the objectivistic approach to the values represented by Max Scheler's phenomenological concept), which confirms their universal nature;

– clear re-valuing occurred in the religious values – the religiousness of the examined youth (concordantly with James W. Fowler's concept of faith model) is at the synthetic-conventional stage, which emphasizes an interpersonal character of faith, and at the individual-reflective stage, associated with the emerging self-consciousness of a young person concerning the relativity of the inherited religious standpoint and with rejection of the so far recognized authorities (Socha, 2000, pp. 165–189; Bagrowicz, 2000, pp. 86–100). Such a situation brings about both an increasingly critical approach to almost all the areas of life in which a growing-up individual functions and developing an ability to reflect upon one's own identity and ideology;

– a kind of crisis affects the values of the lay sanctities (e.g. country, nation, independence, homeland, state, patriotism). In the respondents' social consciousness, these values stopped being significant elements and basic mechanisms which consolidate both particular social groups and Polish society. Thus, an evident tendency appears towards the search for a new semantic formula (on the language and symbol layers) of this value group

in the context of the occurring social and cultural transformations of our country, Europe and the whole world.

## Global culture and forming the young people's patriotic attitudes and the identification with their own country

Globalization processes take place worldwide and they change the way "we" and "others" are thought of. The processes concern all of us and their effects are still unpredictable. Globalization has three distinctive features: general consuming, temporariness and instantaneousness. In the instant type of culture "the media constantly flood us with information from which a young person often cannot protect, and in addition, certain values lose their significance as a result of fast changes and disappearing reference systems in the form of stable notions, tradition, categories, theories and other similar ones" (Nikitorowicz, 2005, p. 80).

How do globalization processes affect patriotism? Patriotism, which (as Jan Nowak-Jeziorański claims) "is a feeling of love that can be in fact compared to family love, to bonds with the nearest; however, of course, it is far broader and comprises not only the group of the closest contemporaries, but also the whole huge community who inhabit the same land. Moreover, its significance is much bigger than that of any other human feeling as it reaches the past and the future. This community includes not only people who live now, but also all the previous and future generations. This is a dimension which goes beyond one person's life" (Nowak-Jeziorański, 2006, p.25).

Thus, is there a relation between globalization processes and shaping patriotic attitudes of the examined youth in the Cieszyn area of Silesia?

The analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire research results allow for stating that almost three quarters of the respondents feel to be patriots and are ready to defend their country if it is in danger. 28% of the answers indicate the learners' lack of patriotism, as they explain they *do not feel any spiritual relation with their country, there are no chances for normal life in Poland, there is far too much corruption.* A significant majority of such responses appeared in the answers of the pupils from technical schools. The relatively fewest negative attitudes to homeland emerged from the answers of the grammar school pupils. 39% of them described their attitude to the homeland as clearly positive and it was this group of young people who were most interested in the matters concerning their country. At the same time, mainly they were also against the disappearance of borders, which confirmed their ties with Poland. The greatest supporters of the idea of

disappearing borders were the young from vocational schools and they also felt the smallest possibility of their influence on the functioning of the state.

The examined people, regardless of the type of the upper-secondary school they attended, also presented a feeling of very scarce possibility to influence social matters – this reaches the level of 18%.

The technical school pupils' negative attitudes to their own country were confirmed by their responses in the incomplete sentences test. For this group, Poland appears to be a dishonest country offering no prospects for future normal life. Such a frustration was present in all responses but was the most transparent among the learners from technical schools. In the questionnaire responses, there were some positively-loaded expressions (e.g.: my country is beautiful, it is my asylum); however, they constituted a hardly perceivable percentage. What seems most important is that the pupils indicated the necessity of changes in our state and the uncertain future associated with the shortage of jobs and low salaries.

In 2001–2004, the CBOS also carried out studies concerning the feeling of national pride and self-identification of Poles. The research showed that, for over half of the Poles, the basic reference group is the local community. Every fifth respondent identifies with the whole country, and every seventh with the region. Only 3% of the Poles felt ties with Europe.

The question "Are you proud of being Polish?" was answered positively by 73% in 1994, by 63% in 2003, and only 54% in 2004. The prevailing part of the respondents who declared national pride were elderly people over 55 old with primary education and the inhabitants of villages and small towns with the population under 20 thousand. The lack of national pride is most often declared by young people with secondary and higher education who live in medium-size and big towns. As the comparative analysis of the research results shows the degree of feeling pride due to being Polish has changed, especially in the last years. What was indicated as the reason for lacking national pride was again a bad inner situation of the country where corruption rules and society cannot get organized (Zagórski, Strzeszewski, 2005). Similar phenomena are pointed at by the examined youth. Learners, regardless of the type of school they attend, view their country as their homeland, which requires deep reforms. Positive answers appear much less frequently than pejorative ones and they mainly appear in the responses of the female learners from general secondary schools. The remaining respondents indicate unambiguously that the country does not function properly and needs repairing. They often use strong expressions, such as: "filth", "parody of a state", "backwardness". They also think the situation results from the state's faulty policy, which confirms the standpoint of W. Stróżewski, who emphasizes that "the care for Poland, for the common wealth

associated with it, was successfully eradicated in favour of party interest, various clans, and abominable private gain. Rebuilding citizen feeling, the honour of Poland, human dignity – all that is still ahead" (Stróżewski, 2006, p. 39).

In the young respondents' opinion, globalization offers unlimited freedom of migration and also enables the choice of nationality, or its exchange for the so-called world citizenship. As Józef M. Bocheński highlights "declaring citizenship of particular nation is conditioned by circumstances which are independent of the individual's will, such as the place and time of birth; however, it is also a matter of personal decision. This decision may take place in relation to nation in the basic sense – when one abandons nationality, the bonds with the land and language. The decision, though, is necessary when the broad sense of nation is taken into consideration – when it concerns culture and ideology in which one believes. Thus, it seems that authentic and mature love for one's homeland is finally a matter of choice. Such a moment comes when one must say that one wants who one is as a member of this particular, not another, nation. This is sometimes a difficult choice which demands constant re-consideration: having made a choice once and for all, I must choose in every moment" (quoted in: Stróżewski, 2006, p. 40).

For the majority of the pupils the future both in Poland and in Europe or further in the world seems uncertain, although they are all in favour of disappearing borders and "the world's evolution towards a global village". The youth's feeling might be reflected in the following example quotes:

- *My opinion on Poland, Europe and the World is very pessimistic. Commercialized society brings about the devaluation of basic values.*
- *I think that both in the world and in particular countries a break is taking place. Societies are dividing into better and worse. International relations are becoming more and more tense, which will finally lead to a next war. I think it is a threat to everybody.*
- *I do not feel Polish. My aim is going abroad to get higher education and a good command of a language. Maybe I will decide to return to my country one day, but only for love, not for the homeland. As the first thing, the communist generation must disappear so that the young could introduce changes in the government.*
- *I think I have no influence on the shape of Poland and I wish I had. The future of Poland is uncertain, our government makes us feel ashamed – a big zoo. There is no single honest man there because others will not let him. This makes me want to study political sciences and to introduce order. I love my birthplace and my home, and I hope I will never have to leave it.*
- *I feel I am a Polish citizen. I often feel disgusted by the politicians' attitudes. I wish we, the Poles, were honestly ruled.*

## Consumer society and the youth's readiness
## to undertake citizen activities disinterestedly and to devote
## personal interest for the benefit of others

A citizen society is a particular form of society. It is characterized by group self-consciousness (cognitive and normative), which is shared to a considerable degree and which plays a significant role. What distinguishes citizen societies is the fact that their elements are connected owing to common or group self-consciousness of common participation in society. As Edward Shils indicates "citizenship is a particular view of life and a disposition of citizen society which derives from individuals' participation in its group self-consciousness. Citizenship results in ties with the whole society, which are manifested in decisions and actions leading to protection and multiplication of the whole society's welfare. It is the attitude in which individuals' personality consciously allows for their participation in group personality, which in turn limits and shapes individuals' activities. Citizenship means accepting the obligation to act (at least in a certain range) for the common good while making decisions concerning contradictory interests or ideals" (Shils, 1994, pp. 10–11).

Thus, the obligation to act for the common good is one of the markers of a citizen society. A consumer society, however, is characterized by the triad: fast food, fast sex, fast car (Melosik, 2001). Exorbitant consumption becomes the basic aim of social life and the consumer is forced to constant exchange of goods.

Talks and interviews with the examined youth, as well as the analysis of their questionnaire answers enabled to outline the level of engagement in social affairs. Only 36% of the learners feel and declare the need for social engagement. The level of their interest in the country's affairs can be described as medium (general secondary schools) or low (technical and vocational schools). This seems to be an alarming fact as the acceptance of the obligation to act is a constitutive feature of a citizen society and its lack may bring about serious consequences for democracy. In a way, the young people's attitudes to social engagement showed their ignorance of the principles of functioning in democracy. The possibility to influence the state's functioning is also low (19%), and voluntary membership of various organizations reaches 29%. Nonetheless, the learners appeared much more positive in comparison to their parents, who hardly encourage their children to undertake such activities and who do not declare engagement in social activities themselves. Young people do not undertake work for school or the local community, either; but they spend their free time meeting friends, frequenting pubs, watching TV, practising sports, and surfing the Internet. The results of the research are similar to those obtained

in 2004 by the CBOS, in which the question "In your opinion, do people like you have influence on the country's affairs?" was answered "no" by 83% and "yes" by only 15%. Thus, it can be concluded that not only the young but also Polish adult society have a very low feeling of a possible influence on social affairs.

The CBOS studies conducted in 1998–2004 also indicated the majority of Polish citizens do not engage in social group activity. Only every fourth adult Pole declares membership of a certain association, club or party. The level of engagement of the Poles seems relatively stable and depends on their education and material status. The higher education and better material status, the bigger interest in social activity. Unemployment, low education and a difficult material situation bring about no interest in such activity. However, there are some enclaves of social engagement in our relatively passive society. One of them consists of pupils and university students who, more frequently than others, act for: youth organizations (14%), sport associations (13%), charitable organizations for children (8%) and others in need (6%); as well as for school and educational (7%), tourist (6%), artistic (6%), religious and church (5%) associations (Zagórski, Strzeszewski, 2005, p. 260). The types of self-realization activity, a particular "way of life" of contemporary youth, seem to be hopeful and, when supported by educational actions, offer a chance for the re-birth of youth's citizen activity and their devoting personal interests for the sake of others in a new, dynamically changing reality.

## Final remarks

The youth living at the turn of the centuries and the turn of the millennia constitute a specific group, differing from the previous young generations. This difference has its sources in the socio-cultural, economic and political situation of our country, Europe and the world, which becomes a certain point of reference.

In the environment of accelerated changes due to globalization and transformation processes, the traditional order of values becomes unstable – the values which refer to particular human, social and economic situations start to be more accepted than others.

Young people's current world of values is mostly based on new culture, which exerts influence on their lifestyle. Modern youth are not tied together by the common view on life, axiology or communication code (as it took place in post-war or post-communist years, for instance). The young are a generation of growing differentiation of attitudes and valuing assessments, they seem especifically lost, reflective, and focusing on their own existence. These conclusions find confirma-

tion in the flattened structure of values appreciated by the learners, which emerged from the results of the author's studies.

What appears to be characteristic of the changes occurring in the youth's system of values is the increasing significance of self-realization values and the decreasing significance of social values. The discussed differentiation of attitudes does not comprise all areas of life. Young people present relatively homogeneous attitudes towards three groups of values – religious sanctities, moral, and truth values. Youth highly evaluate all the values related to faith, religion, morality, knowledge, family, friendship, as well as the values related to work and education. In their opinion, these values allow for certain economic standards, which guarantees fulfilling many life goals. The youth's axiological preferences are also oriented towards fulfilling hedonistic, material, and individual-private values.

In spite of the declared patriotism and the readiness to defend the homeland in danger, the respondents also present a very critical attitude to their own country and the feeling of their little influence on the state's functioning. This situation frequently results in the young people's lack of civil engagement.

The problems undertaken in this work are numerous, but also current. Aware of certain limitations which influenced the contents of the article, I do hope that it can, to a small extent at least, contribute to the discussion on the condition of the young adolescent generation in the environment of "the new disorder of the world". Thus, it may be worth, as R. Kapuściński emphasized "re-thinking the world anew", including the world of education, with the whole complexity of globalization processes which are part of "the inevitable destiny of the world".

<div align="right">Translated by Agata Cienciała</div>

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# Social Role of Theatre –
## From Antiquity to Modern Times

## Abstract

In every historical period man makes attempts to gain control over the world of nature in order to create the best possible conditions for their day-to-day existence. Yet, it happens that an individual's endeavours do not bring the intended and expected results. As a consequence, people experience a series of difficulties they do not always find easy to deal with. In such a situation a human being looks for solutions which will allow them to find their place yet again in different fields of life, help them carry out their plans and fulfil their needs.

This text presents the ways in which people created theatre to cater for their needs over the centuries, how they have made use of it and how it may be of help to them today in their daily lives.

**Key words:** *theatre, social role of theatre, needs fulfilment, theatre education.*

There is an established conviction in modern society that the times we live in are unique and special. We formulate such opinions with reference to the past, implying – sometimes unintentionally – that the past was less unique. Meanwhile, our judgement does not take into account the fact that every historical period was as unique and exceptional for the societies of the time as modernity is for us.

Such glorification of reality may be explained by means of the scale and dynamics of the ongoing transformations, progress of civilization or findings of science and technology which facilitate everyday life. Progress, which is originally supposed to lead to an improvement of the living conditions, has always been accompanied, even in the remote past, by negative phenomena, which people have tried to eliminate or whose effects they have tried to minimize. In order to do that they have

looked for different solutions and turned to different institutions offering aid and support so as to effectively counteract evil.

Over the centuries offers of support for a person in a difficult situation have undergone changes, gradually expanding the array of forms and methods of aid. Among the many institutions which were deliberately founded to carry out such activities we can find one which was originally supposed to serve an entirely different purpose. It was only later, with the passing of time that people found out how many different roles pertaining to the human aid context it plays. This institution is theatre, an institution which not only tries to respond to man's cultural needs, but also serves prophylactic and compensation functions.

Theatre is a space in which art "happens". Arthur Schopenhauer used to say that art brings relief in suffering. Contemplating art and experiencing beauty calms our physical drives. We get to know the reality around us through contemplation, through aesthetic approach, through art. Therefore, aesthetics and art, which are important components of philosophy, have become "the surest means of escape from the misery of life and instruments of the most profound cognition" (Tatarkiewicz, 1987, p. 222).

Theatre is life and as a form of human activity it has accompanied man since time immemorial. Its magic and greatness consists in a complete visualization of reality and maintenance of theatre's secret at the same time. It was true for primitive peoples "expressing themselves" mainly by means of pantomime and it is true for our times with their plethora of artistic forms present in modern theatre. If theatre is not as old as humanity then it means that it must have been a vital need of human beings.

Everyday life with its good and evil has always provided inspiration for performances. Over the centuries the only things which have changed were the forms of presentation, the forms of expressing emotions, the actor's equipment with costumes and stage props.

Dance used to be the primeval form of theatrical expression. In primitive communities it used to express specific life needs: religion, security, abundant crops or initiation rites. Thus, dance had the meaning of request, sacrifice, or it simply expressed emotions.

Generally, people seek the beginnings of European theatre in ancient Greece and rightly so, although it is impossible to pass over the legacy of Egypt or the ancient East, whose later contribution to the enrichment and development of dramatic art was considerable.

The first performances of the Greek theatre referred to the sphere of religion. Dionysus cult rites were presented, which took on a form of joint folk play. Dra-

matic art historians are almost unanimous in their agreement that such frolics, which lasted for several days, marked the beginning of the development of tragedy and comedy and Dionysus became known as the god of theatre (Berthold, 1980, p. 106).

Ancient Greece was an example of a community of gods and people and regardless of significant political and social divisions it was successfully maintained and created not only by theatre performances, but also by the games. The primary aim of those events was the attainment of a sense of togetherness and community, which was a peculiar value in itself and which provided people with a feeling of security and belonging.

In the Middle Ages secular theatre emerged from the universally functioning religious theatre of the time. Its dominant forms were farces and morality plays. Describing reality and expressing one's opinions on stage became so popular that it did not only boil down to presenting everyday life in the form of theatre performances, but also to inviting the local community to take part in the shows. The plays staged reflected the epoch and showed numerous vices of society, such as drunkenness, salaciousness or problems with the upbringing of youth.

In the period of the Renaissance a strictly dramatic theatre emerged, which staged the plays of recognized playwrights. Theatre gained greater and greater universal acclaim, especially that of the elites. Hence, it became an intrinsic element of almost all big European cities.

Parallel to it, "folk" theatre developed, which staged pastoral plays performed by itinerant artists. The venues of performances were usually accidental, the decisive factor being the presence of potential spectators in a given place. Thus, in order to get the chance to present one's skills to the widest possible audience, the plays were staged outdoors. Such a form made it possible to satisfy – at least to some extent – the social, emotional, educational and entertainment needs of the lowest social class. It also served as a confirmation or a signal that theatre as a rule should not be an elitist form of art, but instead it should be made available to all social groups. Unfortunately, such views have to be popularized once again in modern times and there are still people who do not share them.

*School* theatre, which came into being at that time, played an important role in the creation of *social* theatre. Its basic value was the fact that it presented student life, drawing the audience's attention both to its positive aspects, as well as to all the improprieties or dangers threatening the schoolboys. Its main advantage was the assumption or even the message conveyed that such a form of theatre should educate the young generation.

Martin Luther emphasized the educational role of theatre, when he wrote in his *Table Talk*:

"Out of consideration for boys one should not forbid staging comedies at school, but on the contrary, one should allow it in order for the boys to practise their Latin and due to the fact that comedies in a splendid and masterful way depict characters who are of great value to one's education and who remind one about their class and profession and teach what befits a servant, a gentleman, a young man and an old man and what their conduct should look like (Berthold, 1980, p. 301).

The 16th century is a period of significant historical events, which changed the social and political order in Europe. Theatre played an important part in those transformations. Thanks to the authors and artists, theatre stage turned into an instrument of cognition, a place to come to for advice and instructions on how to lead one's life and what to do with it. Authors of theatrical art were more and more aware of the role theatre could and should play in society. The foundation of national theatres in many European countries dates back to that period of time as well. The national stage was supposed to present the customs and traditions prevailing in a given country. Its development reached its height at the time of Romanticism. Referring to the example of Romantic Poland, it should be noted that dramas which sprang up then were to raise people's hopes for independence, unify the partitioned Polish society – living under the rule of three different invaders – in its efforts to preserve its culture and finally shape patriotic attitudes and present the heroism of Poles in their fight for independence. Thus, theatre served didactic functions.

In the 19th century we could observe further development of human fascination with theatre – realism emerged on stage. The trend was oriented to getting to know a human being, their environment and the motives behind their actions. Alexander Dumas claimed that realistic theatre "sets itself the task of unmasking social evil, deliberates on the relationship between the individual and society and wishes to be a theatre useful to people, both in a literal and metaphorical meaning of the word" ( Berthold, 1980, p. 447).

The above-mentioned usefulness of theatre has not always been understood in the same way. Nevertheless, in any historical epoch people were aware of the fact that it constituted a very potent driving force.

Towards the end of the 19th century another trend emerged in theatre – naturalism. The protagonists of theatre plays begotten at that time were people (groups of people) who experienced a series of difficulties and who deeply felt the hopelessness of human existence. Poverty, marginalization and degeneration of values appeared on stage. Plays which took up subjects typical of the literature created after 1914

left a particularly distinctive impression on the history of theatre. In the authors' works and later on in their stage productions one could observe perhaps all the social problems of a given country. The staged plays drew attention to the existing injustice and gave rise to thoughts about one's own life.

Other trends which emerged in art in the following years – some of them quite innovative – all affected theatre in one way or the other. Even if they appeared on stage for a short time only, their influence on the playwrights' output as well as on the style of the stage productions never went unnoticed and manifested itself in the choice of new subjects and new means of expression.

In the interwar period the need to expand the offer addressed to the audience was perceived. The idea was not to propose a ready-made stage product to the audience, thus turning it into a passive recipient, but instead to make the audience an active participant co-producing – to an extent – a given performance. In fact, those were not the first attempts at activating the audience in the history of theatre, since such forms were popular already back in ancient times. The level of social involvement in such undertakings was different, but the sheer fact of taking up dialogue (co-operation) pointed to the need for developing the area in which it would be possible to establish contact between the actors and the audience.

Theatre has been subject to incessant evolution, hence the frequently posed questions about the condition of theatre and the kind of repertoire which is capable of reaching the recipients and fulfilling certain tasks such as activating and motivating society to undertake actions with a view to introducing positive changes in personal and community life.

In principle, the tasks of the institution of theatre have remained unchanged for ages, whether we speak about ancient theatre, Brecht's theatre or modern theatre. What is happening on stage is supposed to be of use to people.

Modern theatre, regardless of the time and place, and regardless of whether it chooses to raise the problems of everyday life or rather cherish historical achievements, will always be a place in which our life is constructed and reconstructed. It can be expressed in the following words:

"As long as the audience remembers that it contributes to the creation of theatre and that it is not only a passive consumer of art, as long as it insists on its right to spontaneous participation in a theatre performance by means of approval or protest, theatre will not cease to be a stimulating element of human existence" (Berthold, 1980, p. 550).

Every historical period created certain possibilities for human existence. The life of every person is conditioned by many different factors which facilitate or hinder efficient existence. Apart from those factors, often entirely beyond our influence,

there is a whole array of behaviour patterns, attitudes, skills and intentions which make it possible for us to make full use of what our reality offers to us.

The ongoing modern transformations and their social consequences encourage young authors to make current social reality the subject of their works. They readily do it, counting on the considerable interest of the general public or their local community that such subjects are likely to arouse.

The authors entangle their protagonists in the problems of poverty, homelessness, unemployment. They are depicted as inadequate individuals struggling with a sense of failure, deprived of prospects. Such people feel unwanted and disapproved of. And since in everyday life such situations very often lead to other adverse phenomena, such as alcoholism, drug addiction, moral corruption or crime, theatre play characters also function in degenerated spaces. Watching modern plays one cannot help but get the impression that the performances reflect the reality one is so familiar with.

When theatre makers so readily "transfer" reality onto stage, the question arises about the reason for it. An unequivocal answer is perhaps impossible, but it makes sense to think about it.

In the light of such a high incidence of difficult situations people undertake actions which are supposed to eliminate the difficulties and facilitate human life. In our country it is done through social aid centres and nongovernmental organizations offering support. However, even a very superficial evaluation of the effectiveness of such actions makes us reach the conclusion that the compensation efforts are nowhere near satisfactory. From the perspective of pedagogical practice the most desirable initiatives are those which can improve living conditions to a certain extent.

It is a common conviction that only these institutions can be of help which are deliberately established to serve such a purpose, like the above-mentioned social aid centres. Meanwhile, the scale and diversity of difficult life situations creates a need to search for different solutions, sometimes in places, where it does not seem legitimate. Why should not we then make use of the possibilities that theatre offers? Why should not this social institution be more actively involved in aid? All the more so, because already in the past theatre revealed its inclination to be a social institution which would serve society in the different fields of its activity.

Depicting the difficult reality, modern theatre art wishes to provoke the audience's reflection, which will not only result in greater awareness of a given problem of an individual, but also contribute to greater activity and readiness to act in order to improve individual and collective living conditions.

Art is not only an artistic event (experience), it is also – now more than ever – a social practice. Thus, it is more and more often analysed within the context of sociological convention and perceived as one of the elements of the social system, which fulfils certain functions as part of it. (cf. Krajewski, 1995).

If this is the way art is perceived now, then such content pertains to theatre as well, which forms part of it.

Modern theatre is perhaps one of the most important instruments of communication that human beings have at their disposal. It is a peculiar *laboratory*, where we can carry out experiments. Every performance triggers off reflections on our own life, but also educates us so that we can make good choices between good and evil in real life, so that we can avoid mistakes and erroneous solutions which we get to know (experience as members of the audience) while watching the play. It is an extremely precious method of solving one's own problems. Observing the dangerous consequences of some of the situations acted out on stage we can "try out" different solutions, we can try to avoid them, we can try to get accustomed to them and finally learn to cope with them (Hausbrandt, 1983, p. 50).

It is worth noticing that modern theatrical formula, due to its content and the desire to acquire and activate its audience, departs from the presentation of a given work on stage with the use of a stage set which imitates reality and moves towards authentic scenery which was the prototype of the scenario. Such challenges are first and foremost taken up by young directors, who are interested in reaching the widest possible audience, especially people to whom theatre has been unavailable so far. The above-mentioned group of young artists comprises people interested in the co-operation with local communities. It is a sign of our times that recognized authors stage their theatre projects not only in the biggest national centres, but also in smaller towns, where theatrical formula used to be conservative and petrified and whose theatres used to go unnoticed by the artistic milieu and the critics interested mainly in what was going on in Warsaw, Kraków or Wrocław.

The time of changes involved theatre also thanks to the young authors who were able to perceive the problems significant for the local communities, who saw their potential and decided to activate the locals, to change their way of thinking as well as the image of their towns and cities. There are more and more of such examples of joint work – involvement of the local communities in the creation of theatre – in our country. Among other things, there are the theatre groups from Legnica, Wałbrzych and Nowa Huta. The above-mentioned towns are characterized by a similar social situation, a relatively high unemployment rate, a high level of poverty, a sense of lack of prospects, rising crime rates and moral corruption. Theatre makers working in those towns started their activity from encouraging the

residents to visit their theatres, places which were beyond the sphere of interests of most of them. They used different methods – ticket for the neighbour, symbolic 1 zloty ticket, staging performances outside the theatre building with free admission, different advertising campaigns. The next step in establishing dialogue was the idea of producing a play which would be of interest to the inhabitants of a given town, which would tell their story and which would also be prepared by them. Thus, members of the local community were asked to tell some stories from their lives and the life of the town and to bring some objects which they associate with those experiences. The authors' appeal met with a positive reaction of the residents and in a short time scriptwriters had enough material to create scripts for the new performances on the basis of the stories told. The participation of the town dwellers was not limited to their role of chroniclers, as theatre directors engaged some of them instead of professional actors to play some parts in the performances. That is how *Ballada o Zakaczawiu* and *Made In Poland* were born in Legnica, *Kopalnia* came into being in Wałbrzych and *Mieszkam tu* and *Cukier w normie* were staged in Nowa Huta.

Many residents of those towns have adopted the attitude of waiting for someone to come and change something in their lives, to stimulate the town to action, to bring hope for improvement of their living conditions. Such hope has already been raised, even if only to a small extent, thanks to theatre. The theatre authors provoke their audience and expect its reaction, some kind of feedback, not only in the form of thank yous for the experience offered, but also in the form of practical solutions to the difficult situations of the inhabitants.

The examples quoted are examples of cultural education of society and of the possibility of integration and identification with the place we live in. There is a chance to turn the everyday life of town dwellers into art that they themselves co-produce. It is about creating the sense of being needed and responsible for one's own life. Theatre may be a wonderful factor activating the members of local communities to make efforts in order to change their lives. The above examples of stage productions show us that theatre makers decided to place confidence in local residents, to give them the chance and hope for change that they can make happen on their own. The message of modern theatre is the following: members of the audience are not supposed to be passive recipients of a ready-made product, they are supposed to think and act and be creative.

The actions carried out by the above-mentioned theatre groups might be related to Joseph Beuys's concept of *social sculpture*. According to the concept, apart from materials traditionally used by sculptors, one can also shape human reality, both the external and internal one, leading it out of chaos through forming order out

of it. "To form the social system like a sculpture – this is my task and such is the task of art as well. When a human being gets to know themselves as an individual who can decide about their future, they are also capable of shaping the content of the world" (Beuys, 1990; cf. Kaczmarek, 1995, p. 67).

From a pedagogical perspective, we could say that theatre plays the compensation, prophylactic and educational roles in the communities of different regions. Far from negating the work of institutions whose prime function is to offer aid and support to people in difficult situations, it might be worth making use of the help offered by theatre as well and thus contributing to the revitalization of the areas hostile to man. If theatre wants to and can satisfy human needs, we should allow it to do so. (Witalewska, 1983, p. 25).

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# Introspection and Discourse in Communication and Upbringing of People of Science – Based on Biographical-Hermeneutic Research

## Abstract

In this article I point out the meaning of the introspective research attitude and the discourse in the scientific life of universities, as well as expose a connection between such a personal feature as courage to present one's scientific opinions and the authority of people of science. A systematic but not restrictive discourse constitutes, in the university tradition, a way to intensify the scientific atmosphere, and a passion for discourse – an important distinguishing mark of a scientific personality. Apart from an interpersonal dialogue, the scientists' readiness to carry out long methodological research considerations is supported by their internal talk. This kind of intellectual – spiritual effort together with auto-determination create a specific space for scientists' individual development. The results of the part of the biographical research presented here may be a valuable proposal for bringing up children and the youth in the apotheosis of science and in criticism towards its heritage. Through the parental and scholar reflection over the criteria of students' scientific development – future users and creators of culture – it will be easier to discover a human being's potential not only at universities, but at every level of native education as well.

**Key words:** *learning, a scientific discovery, scientific development, knowledge of science, introspection, discourse.*

## Introduction

Assuming that scientific development is a specific form of learning which leads to a scientific discovery, researching into the essence and regularity of scientific development (forms and methods of upbringing used in families of future scientists, educational and intellectual atmosphere in their homes and schools, preferred values, types of scientific determination) is a crucial task of educational sciences. Getting to know the educational mechanisms of scientific development also constitutes the importance of pedagogy among other sciences and disciplines, such as: sociology of science, psychology of science, philosophy of science, ethics of economics and politics of science. Biographies of scientists, especially their written forms, create an ideal situation to the act of understanding – the basic procedure of all humanities. Hermeneutical understanding is isomorphic with the truth and getting to know "self", and apart from that it is a very important cognitive-emotional process, peculiar methodology, a style of research work, a way of interpersonal communication.

Using the biographical method, I analysed over fifty intellectual profiles of well-known and renowned up till now people of science, scientists from all over the world, representatives of various fields of science. Examining personal documents, such as: letters, diaries, registers, memories, records and notes, and first of all autobiographies and biographies constitute huge research material – a treasury of knowledge of an upbringing process, education and scientific development as well as their most important stimulators. A biography, in my opinion, is a system of facts embracing external vicissitudes, those positively perceived by the surrounding of a given person, whereas an autobiography is first of all a description of internal subjective-objective lot of a human being.

The basic task of pedagogical biographical research is to reconstruct the history of one's life focused especially on the history of one being shaped and following processes of constituting meanings in the past life of their families, schools and other pedagogical institutions. This reconstruction points at differentiated forms of a human being's dealing with everyday life. Biographical research takes a prominent position in the wide spectrum of conceptions and methods of quality research, since they create theories. It also determines a specific way of acquiring and sorting out documents of an individual's vicissitudes, whether being told or related (Kruger, 2003; pp. 77–78).

Using this methodology I am going to answer the question – the main research problem: What are the main activators of a scientific discovery of university research workers during their whole lives?

The connection of personal features such as an ability to carry out a discourse with the authority of people of science proves that another very important feature comes out from the attitude to life which can be characterized by the courage to utter what one believes in and the courage to take up pioneering scientific research – pedagogical and scientific authority of "distinguished" scientists. The authority placed on such solid axiological bases acquires features of longevity.

It is worth stressing what a discourse is and how to understand introspection. A discourse in other words is a talk, a discussion, a speech. In McLaren's critical pedagogy – it is a social relation, in which a language or another system of signs becomes o form of exchange between participants of the relation, whereas introspection means deeper consideration, pondering, deliberation connected with analysis and predicting. It is also an intellectual effort coming from auto-determination directed at self-development. Introspection understood as self-development is thus complementary towards a discourse meaning learning from other people and through relation with them.

## A discourse attitude – a way to intensify the scientific atmosphere

Taking up the most crucial discourses of the epoch is a characteristic feature of many distinguished creators of scientific knowledge, just mentioning a long discourse between Immanuel Kant and Christian Garwe concerning connections between theory and practice, Karl Popper's polemic with Schrodinger about characteristic features of life, and Ludwig Boltzman's fight with Ernst Mach on the corpuscular and molecular theory (kinetic theory of gases) in physics. The discourses were carried out in a very lively way not only through a direct exchange of arguments between the intellectuals at conferences, congresses or other scientific meeting, but also through correspondence. The unique significance of the discourses of the scientists in the development of science is stressed by Karl Popper:

I owe Schrodinger a lot: despite all our disputes which sometimes seemed to be the final end of our relation, he always came back to renew our discussions, which were more interesting, or at least more exciting than any other discussion I had with other physicians. We were discussing issues I was working on. The very fact that Schrodinger asked a question "What is life?" in his wonderful book, gave me the courage necessary to ask that question myself, though I tried to avoid questions of "What is …?". I have denied and I still do deny Schrodinger's thesis that preying on negative entropy cannot be a characteristic feature of life (Popper, 1997: p. 192).

An American psychotherapist – Carl Rogers in 1940 was preparing himself to make a speech at the University of Minnesota: the lecture entitled The Latest Conceptions in Psychotherapy was considered to be a birthday of the client-focused therapy. Here is how Kirschenbaum describes that amazing show of Roger's personal and professional courage:

The meeting was presided by Dean Williamson who was a supporter of a directive approach including, among others, the use of psychological tests and giving concrete advice to patients. Rogers delivered his lecture in front of Williamson's students and colleagues. He dedicated its considerable part to criticism of the traditional approaches to the therapy, and was exceptionally harsh towards the practice of giving advice to patients. In order to visualize his thesis he presented a record of an interview made by a therapist giving advice, but without mentioning that the therapist was the chairman of the meeting himself. In other words, Rogers went to the main bastion of directive therapy and carried out a frontal attack on the local theory and psychological practice. Rogers was not prepared for the uproar caused by his lecture. At the same time, it is hard to believe that he did not realize that what he was doing was actually a revolution. The reception given to the lecture – beginning with enthusiastic praises and finishing with aggressive criticism – made Rogers sure that he had said something new, not just made a synthesis of other authors' works. He started writing a new book, which was published in 1942 with the title of "Advisory and Psychotherapy: The Latest Conception in practice". Reactions to the next book were, in many aspects, similar to those aroused by the lecture in Minnesota. For some readers, it was extremely interesting – a lot of students called it "a bible". However, it did not impress a bigger number of psychologists: it was not even reviewed by any serious scientific publishing house. (…) He became a man full of intellectual and emotional energy, of huge innovative passion and an immense fondness for students. His fifth book "About becoming a person" placed him in the centre of attention. When in 1963 he announced his decision to leave the university, he did not need that conventional academic environment any more, which he perceived as restricting and alienating. The outstanding success of "About becoming a person" encouraged him to step onto a more risky path and quit an institution of established reputation. In the newly-founded West Behavioral Institute, he could develop his professional career freely, not being restricted by academic rules, which amazed some of his friends and even members of his family. In 1979 he published "Freedom of learning: a look at what education can be", which was sold in over three hundred thousand copies (Thorne, 2006; pp. 31–33).

Rogers became a great figure of the contemporary psychology mainly thanks to widening the area of his own freedom in the scientific field and thanks to equally

strong sensitivity to other people. Independence and courage to defend one's scientific beliefs are a test of a scientist's authenticity. Autonomy here means an independent attitude towards the extent of good and evil, truth and falsehood, dignity and indignity of acting. An independent person of science accepts personal responsibility for the continuation of chosen humanistic values and for the development of the ethos of science.

A daring presentation of research problems in interactions with other representatives of science gives a communication range and social obligation to scientists' peculiar lot. "Inflexibility" in presenting some intellectual opinion and defending one's own argument despite the pressure from outside, protecting one's enthusiasm for the subject of research from the negative influence of some people, are features indispensable to build charismatic personality, but without any signs of megalomania or autocracy. Courage to fight harm done to people, or standing up against undeserved privileges of people artificially created to be authorities, is part of responsible research workers' virtues of character. A specific sphere of feeling responsibility, e.g. of Stanisław Ossowski, was the righteousness of thinking in a double sense: logical and ethical.

Castoriadis's scientific biography convinces not only his predecessors, but first of all, his contemporary distinguished scientists about an exceptional need to follow intellectual discussions:

Castoriadis's scientific life cannot be called an easy one, not to say a nice one. He did not locate his interests in a safe distance from intellectual battles of his epoch. He never posed as an arrogant observer of reality placed "in high ranks". The thinker's output is characterized by striking continuity, integrity, consequence and aim clarity, and faithfulness to the project of his life. His autonomy as a scientist relied on constant freeing himself from both the power of heteronomical institutions, and autocratic leaders of science (Bauman, Tester, 2003; pp. 52–53).

Finding pleasure in a discourse can also be seen in the personality of Stefan Szuman, who used to invite his students and colleagues to discussions during which he gave them his advice and shared his experiences, lent them his books or scientific materials. He also took an active part, till the end of his life, in discussions held at meetings and congresses of the Polish Psychological Association. Here is how Mrs. Grażyna Makiełło-Jarża remembers Professor Stefan Szuman's lively discursive attitude:

When I began my studies in 1959, Professor Szuman was finishing the last cycle of his lectures. To tell the truth, I listened to his lectures only once. (…) Soon my contacts with Professor became more frequent. Professor and his wife lived on the top floor of a building at 13 Manifestu Lipcowego Street, which also

housed the Faculty of Psychology on the lower floors. The stairs were steep and on their way up they had to take a rest at a landing sitting down on a bench. First we exchanged bows. Later Professor began to start conversations. We ended up with something I like calling "a seminar on the stairs". It was me or my friends who started a conversation. And then we sat down on the stairs opposite Professor. And the seminar was at its full swing. I think that I learned to listen to Professor then and his way of speaking was specific. He was talking to a listener and to himself at the same time. It looked as if while discussing a problem, he was thinking about all "pros and cons". As if he was weaving his way, to sum it up in a simple and convincing way in the end.(…) A couple of my university mates stayed in the department directed by him (Makiełło-Jarża, 1989; pp. 19, 106–107).

Władysław Tatarkiewicz, who was a renowned historian of philosophy, showed his pedagogical talent in, among other things, his didactic work with his students. Originally, Professor's seminars were held in unconventional conditions and aroused common interest. They sometimes took place outside the university: on Castle Mountain, at the cemetery in Rossa, which the youth found exceptionally attractive and which was mentioned by Professor Stanisław Ossowski in his dedication placed in his book given later to Władysław Tatarkiewicz. The social life was flourishing among students' and lecturers' circles. Every week's evening meeting held in one of the lecture rooms gathered not only the academic society, but the inhabitants of the city of Vilnius as well. There used to be some scientific parties at Professor's place (Tatarkiewiczowie, 1998; p. 83).

Knowing the most distinguished figures from the world of science was once a requisite duty for science students who did not want to neglect their own intellectual development. It meant getting to know them personally, a direct contact, though being familiar with their works was also an indispensable element of "the etiquette" of the scientific society. The scientists who I studied (mostly the past ones) declare in their biographies that although in their homes it was not common for the adults to have conversations with children, the young generation had a chance to listen to adults' conversations and freely satisfy their need for a discussion through their school education and contact with their peers.

Authoritativeness of a science authority, one's authenticity, is also expressed in respecting a basic rule of the scientific life, i.e. "unity in variety" and an attitude of good-natured understanding towards young research workers and students. The respect towards a complex process of a human being's development is always a sign of respecting the fundamental humanity of every human being. Stefan Świeżawski, Kazimierz Twardowski's and Kazimierz Adjukiewicz's student, a co-creator of the

Lublin school of philosophy, paid special attention, throughout the whole time of his didactic-scientific activity, to his seminar.

The seminar run similarly to the one run by Kazimierz Twardowski created historical-philosophical abilities of its participants especially through common reading texts and discussion on their interpretation. Świeżawski's seminar, according to its participants, was something more than "a smithy" of scholars specializing in the history of philosophy. It created a specific attitude; it taught the ethos of scientific work, truthful attitude, respect for other people's opinions, an open and tolerant attitude. It made the seminar participants look for he truth, objectivity and will to carry out their scientific-didactic work in the climate of freedom and independence. Świeżawski set high requirements to seminar work, thanks to which their summaries could be placed in a printed form in the volume: "Summaries of doctor, master and seminar theses written at Lublin Catholic University under the supervision of Professor S. Świeżawski and Professor M. Krąpiec" (1956). That volume presents the scientific output achieved at philosophy seminars in the years of 1942–1955 (Czerkawski, Gut, 2006; pp. 10,19).

This kind of education, thought over and arranged in such a way that it arouses not only the cult of knowledge, but respect and love for creators of culture as well, may become an origin of bringing up a scientific individual. Participation in such a unity of intellectual attitudes must have left in the young people's minds the will to pass on those experiences to a wider group of people in the form of creative philosophical discourses or other research work.

## Efficiency of the internal speech – the origin of a scientific discovery

Asking oneself very difficult questions, and leaving them in one's own mind for a longer period of time, is also a characteristic feature of the logic of scientific discoveries. Karl Popper reminds of a forgotten thesis of nativism stating that everybody carries an encoded question in their genes for which one seeks an answer through one's life (Goćkowski, Pigoń, 1991; p. 247) as a matter of fact, a scientist who asks an imprecise question to nature, has no way back. The question will bother him/her even when he/she tries to do everything to get rid of it in the mind. There is possibly no other group of people in the world so dedicated to a given issue of science, and so equally competent in this field, and alone in their search.

The verbal process of this life problem is based on, in my opinion, intuitive-volitive and emotional factors. They are followed by an intellectual vision of the

situation. An answer to truths encoded in the genotype concerning existence, admittedly diminishes the area of non-knowledge, however, it does not decrease the area of the secret of a human being's existence.

It also seems that the wider the space of human scientific knowledge is, the more strongly we experience the phenomenon of secrecy. The more we embrace with our cognition, the more the secret sphere of life grows. Discovering the sense of a human being's life is luckily not fully dependent on the progress of science or technology and it is an important factor which motivates scientists to overcome prejudices, stereotypes and wrong opinions of the world.

Some scientists feel that internal dialogue as an addictive pleasure, simple compulsion to have such internal talks and keep their results recorded. The value of science is then realized, in a sense, through awakening of readiness to bear such an intrapersonal effort by people of science.

## Introspection as readiness
## for methodological research considerations

No matter how active a scientist can be, how much one would like to work e.g. in a laboratory, one should find proportional amount of time for meditation. It seems obvious but many research workers pushed by an impulse of hyperactivity do not find time for proper planning of their experiments and analysis of what they have done so far. Overestimating the value of work itself, an enterprising person, who is "deep" in their thoughts, may not feel that they work. It is a big mistake to think that the time devoted to meditation is lost to the culture, because, as some scientists admit (inter alia, Maria Ossowska, Kazimierz Twardowski, Florian Znaniecki) the best ideas appear at the moments of rest, in dreams, while doing the housework, and what is more a good idea may save a lot of hours of strenuous work. There is nothing worse than losing the thread while pondering over something, being very close to formulating a problem or a notion. It is worth taking care of the ability to concentrate your attention and register in a written form, in various life situations, passing thoughts, hypotheses, and research questions which turn up in our mind.

When I want to concentrate, says Hans Selye, I lock myself up in my study and put up a notice "Do not disturb" and switch my phone off. It took a lot of time before that proved to be effective. (…) Let others, who hesitate whether to use such drastic methods of protection or not, use my experience: the laboratory works very well despite my temporary absences. My assistants learn how to make decisions on their own. Even somebody knocking on the door or calling does not feel offended

because they know they should make an appointment first and my secretary simply says that I am out. (…) I am sure that a lot of my professional colleagues will agree with me that finding some time for thinking is the first-rate factor and that there is not such an effort a human being would not make to achieve a satisfactory solution to a scientific problem (Selye, 1967; pp. 155–158).

Bertrand Russell in his "Portraits from Memory", being his autobiography to a high degree, expresses the following opinion on his scientific work:

I respect in myself and others the power of scientific thinking and inquiry, thanks to which we managed to find out everything we know about the world we inhabit. The very thought, if it is authentic, has its own internal morality and forces you to some kind of asceticism. It can also reward: it can bring, at some stage reaching ecstasy, happiness of understanding of what has not been understood so far and putting everything, which has seemed to be a pack of unrelated thoughts so far, in one homogeneous vision. But deep and authentic searching for the truth requires also humility which reminds a bit of obedience to God's will. The desire for knowledge contains an element of humility towards facts; in the sphere of belief it means humility towards the universe. But it does not mean humility towards humanity: a freethinker will not acknowledge the majesty of authority as true knowledge. A freethinker needs independence of both other people and their own prejudices, difficult self-discipline towards traditions and reforms. Impudence of the mind is a sin if one forgets about secrets of life and places one's opinion in opposition to those of the wisest people of many centuries. Learning to think freely we learned to free our thoughts from fear and fanaticism, and the lesson once remembered, bring peace unavailable for somebody who is enslaved. The universe seen through a freethinker's eye has its own ideality and can bring its characteristic happiness (Russell, 1995; pp. 91,65–66).

Natural mechanisms of internal growth – auto-determination combined with introspection may do more good to scientific development of a young scientist than a restrictive or dogmatic discourse, or systematic executing perceptible results a scientist's individual development.

## Individual consent to possess dreams – a herald of a scientific talent

A slightly stereotypical conviction became popular in the academic society, i.e. mainly literature and art grow out of dreams, whereas a basic premise for scientific research is "pure" intellect. However, the opinions of the scientists studied by me

clearly point out the revolutionary importance of a different way of thinking: a scientist should be able to afford this kind of authenticity which allows a human being to have dreams and believe they will come true one day. Intellectual agility and life resourcefulness are characteristic of average human beings. Uncommonness of a scientific personality is identified only as a result of a combination of exceptional intellectual and character features in a given person. The initial impulse to carry out scientific analyses and persistence come out of primate dreams; intellect seems to be only "a base" for development of an intellectual and imaginative sphere.

 Hans Selye began his big scientific undertaking at the moment when he found himself at the crossroads between something that was safe but common and something risky but still fascinating. He was to make a choice between continuing his work on commonly accepted rules of stress research which his Institute financed and equipped and moving to a new, totally non-researched field of calcifilaxy. The decision was very difficult: it assumed a total transformation of the big Institute (118 people and a couple of hundred thousand dollars), and it was to be made on the ground of a few accidental observations whose charm lay in the fact that they did not match anything known at that time. In Selye's case, sticking to his own dreams decided about starting a serious scientific undertaking, which might have ended as a disaster (Selye, 1967; p. 45).

Stefan Kisielewski's words: "You can act until you have dreams" (Banach, 1996; p. 250) show that a man giving himself in freely to dreams, builds up his own motivational powers which push him towards fulfilling at least a slight part of his dreams. Sticking to dreams only poses a threat that a scientist will remain a teacher and stop his scientific development.

Inconspicuous dreams may in the future become a beginning of a new intellectual movement, great ideas and scientific theories, that is why we should not condemn them as useless, wasting people's time and energy.

## A job of an academic teacher – discreet mental and spiritual obstetrics

A university is an institution which, as a rule, should be a leader in bringing up a human being's potential; dynamic development of all intellectual, emotional and spiritual functions through a university is one of the distinguishing features of the academic community. Through mastering differentiated forms of introspection and discourse both scientists and students are able to discover their own potential and determine more accurately the teleological horizon of their own lives.

The potential is a primary law which rules a human being both from outside and inside. Mieczysław Krąpiec describes the potential (ability) as a disposition for an act proportional to itself, pointing out at the same time that being one of the first and basic elements of reality it is indefinable in its exact sense. Potentials included in a human being's nature enable its multi-directional development subordinated to self-determination. Pointing at intellectual and physical potential is the easiest thing to do, but proper academic formation does not stop at developing these functions only. Volitive, spiritual and in every case creative potentials lie in human nature, but the way in which they are updated is up to a given person. Possibilities are "granted" upon us and we do not have any influence on their existence, they do not determine our development because only the subject of these potentials – a human being – can make a decision about which of them and how they will be developed. There might be a situation in which a lack of ability in a field will not allow to achieve high efficiency in a certain part of it. It refers mainly to intellectual and physical efficiency, and to a lesser degree moral efficiency which is weakly dependent on physiological conditions. The potential possesses another aspect – it fills up a human being's insufficiencies through another man's dissimilarity. This aspect plays a very important part in the process of upbringing; it points at the importance of social cooperation through realizing common good (Gałkowski, 1998; pp. 56–57).

Bringing up a human being's potential at a university refers not only to an academic teacher, but students as well. No matter how inborn intellectual and physical dispositions of a group of students are formed, their volitional, emotional and spiritual spheres leave a lot of educational possibilities; an academic teacher, acting wisely within the range of shaping them, may show his/her discreet, almost Socratic pedagogical obstetrics. An ability to awake transgressive tendencies in young people belongs to the most important educational-didactic tasks of a university. Complementarity and independence are two important rules of developing a man's potential and at the same time they are fundamental rules of upbringing. The process of upbringing of a student at a university cannot abstract from them.

## Conclusions

Introspection and discourse are very important "springs" of scientific development. Independence and courage to defend one's own beliefs through various forms of verbal communication characterize the authorities of science of all epochs. Letting oneself possess dreams and reluctance to non-reflective activism create

an adequate system of life targets, and they are favourable to proper motivational processes and self-determination. The significance of dreams is worth taking into consideration in the process of bringing a young person up as preparation for methodical research consideration.

Very important early distinguishing features of a scientific talent are not only the need to have an interpersonal discourse carried out in set axiological and cultural frames, but also never-ending readiness for an internal dialogue (intrapersonal) and introspection. The quality of introspection and discourse comes out of scientists' individual attitudes towards fundamental universal values, such as: authenticity, courage, justice and modesty. Non-antagonistic scientific discourse with respect for rules of complementarity and independence as a sign of personal and pedagogical conduct is favourable to achieving spectacular scientific achievements.

Keeping balanced proportions between an introspective research attitude and a passion for discourse determines the dynamics of scientific development of university research workers (it is worth avoiding both an argumentative manner present in the so-called an academic discussion and shortages of arguments or creating discussion panels without students' following specific self-determination development).

A university as an institution founded to discover a human being's potential through mastering various forms of introspection and discourse of tutors and students, cannot only optimize the scientific atmosphere, but create mature axiological scientific personalities.

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# Community in the Culture of Individualism – Social Dilemma of Our Times

## Abstract

The keynote of the undertaken considerations is an assumption that community in the culture of individualism strengthens the individual and the individual's development. Concentration on oneself and on one's own objectives does not exclude consciousness of other people's needs. In the first part of the study I shall present theoretical assumptions of my considerations, in the second part – results of the conducted research actions the concerning meaning of confidence and solidarity in the life of young people, in the third part I will formulate conclusions, pointing out, among others, that confidence is a necessary resource letting oneself manage with the presence of others.

**Key words:** *community, individuality, confidence, solidarity, intercultural education*

## Introduction

The contemporary world is characterized by individuality and "neotribality", which is meant as obsessive looking for community (cf. Bauman, 1995:138). The human being was forced to individualism, as Ulrich Beck observed (2002), by social and historical development. Individuality does not mean simply increased freedom, but it brings also a previously unknown risk of dependence and threat. Its domination undermines the meaning of morality and the duty of acting for the good of the whole. Individual existence is difficult to carry and therefore a need for community is growing.

The assumptions of Alfred Adler's individual psychology, the assumptions of Emile Durkheim's sociologism and Piotr Sztompka's theory of happening of the culture of confidence form theoretical frames of the present considerations. The above-mentioned theories can be a good point of departure for portraying the connection between community-ness and individuality. They pay attention to the dualism of the nature of the human being, dialectically deciding about the internal harmony of life.

The key notions in Alfred Adler's[1] conception are the "sense of social bond" and "aspiration to domination", the basic reason for the psychical disorders of the individual is breaking off bonds with the external world. The renewal or restoration of bonds between the individual and the community is the main purpose of his individual psychology. The sense of social bond for A. Adler manifests itself as the reply to threats resulting from the physical world and leads man to the consolidation of his physical powers. Living within a community has a meaning only when the community gives the individual what they cannot achieve beyond the community: protection against the world tending to destroy the individual. Thanks to community the individual increases the scope of their freedom and real and subjectively felt safety. However the community imposes a sequence of tasks on the individual, e.g. the necessity of reciprocating the satisfied needs and obliges them to comply to the rules applying to the members of the community

Paradoxically, A. Adler also writes about, although seen from different perspectives, a priority of both individual and community's interests. The interest of the individual is their happy life, however this interest can be realized only by the

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[1] More on this subject: Adler, A. (1986): *Sens życia* [*What Life Could Mean to You*]. Transl. M. Kreczkowska. Warszawa: PWN; Adler, A. (1946): *Psychologia indywidualna w wychowaniu* [*The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology*]. Kraków: Nakładem Księgarni Stefana Kamińskiego; Adler, A.(1998): "Psychologia indywidualna w wychowaniu" ["The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology"]. In: *Źródła do dziejów wychowania i myśli pedagogicznej. Myśl pedagogiczna w XX stuleciu* [*Sources for history of the upbringing and the pedagogic thought. Pedagogic thought in the 20th century*]. Selected and worked out by S. Wołoszyn. Vol. III, first book. Kielce: Strzelec, pp. 600–608; Markinówna, E. (1998): "Psychologia indywidualna Adlera" ["Adler's Individual Psychology"]. In: *Źródła do dziejów wychowania i myśli pedagogicznej. Myśl pedagogiczna w 20th stuleciu.* [*Sources for history of the upbringing and the pedagogic thought. Pedagogic thought in the 20th century*] Selected and worked out by S. Wołoszyn. Vol. III, first book. Cited edn., pp. 608–609; Słomski, W. (2000): "Społeczne źródła tożsamości w psychologii indywidualnej Adlera". ["Social sources of identity in Adler's individual psychology"] *Albo albo. Problemy psychologii i kultury – tożsamość* [*Either – or. Problems of psychology and culture – identity*], *No 2*, pp. 37–49.

realization of the interests of the community. The measure of individual happiness is adaptation to living as a member of the community.

The most important subject of E. Durkheim's (1999) work is basic opposition individual – society, generally the contrast between individual and social factors. The universal dimension of that opposition is connected with the conception of dualism of the human nature adopted by that scholar, with the conception of spliced man, constituting the pivot of his entire thought. The opposition of what is social and what is individual, present in each human individual, states the universal dimension of the human world. The concept of the dual human being, *"homo duplex",* indicates two poles of man's psychical life: the sensory impressions (instincts, instructions associated with the physical needs of the organism) and the notional thinking (morality, religion, everything that we share with other people). E. Durkheim investigates social solidarity and he subjects it to close observation as a social fact, he shows transformations of the social solidarity of bonds. He points at the moral dimension of social bonds among people.

P. Sztompka describes confidence as the foundation necessary for functioning of society, the factor of democratic politics and economic development, but first of all the factor of safety in everyday life. Social happening of confidence in P. Sztompka's (1997, 1999) presentation means the creation of the culture of confidence (or culture of mistrust). It is probably an example of a more general process, in which cultures, social structures, standard systems, institutions, organizations and all other wholes from the macrosociety level are developing and crystallizing. The process of building the culture of confidence has a continuous character; it develops permanently from the past through the present time to the future.

## Individualism, confidence and solidarity in the life of young people

I assume that the community in the culture of individualism strengthens the individual and their personal development. Concentration on oneself and on one's own objectives does not exclude consciousness of other people's needs. The assumption that individualist values are connected causally with egoism, rivalry, isolation from others and alienation towards oneself is unauthorized. It cannot be considered to be correct in the light of the theoretical and empirical achievements of psychology (Alfred Adler, Maria Jarymowicz (1992, 1994, 1999), Allan Waterman (1981:762–773) and Piotr Sztompka's theory of sociology). Individualism does not state an obstacle for functioning in the community. In contradiction

to liberal positions, community does not restrict the individual, but strengthens them supporting the needs of all the members of a community, at the same time it arouses a sense of duty towards other people.

Human existence is characterized not only by its direction toward its own Me, but also by its social character, its relation to other people. The purpose of the conducted research actions was to determine the meaning assigned by young people to their own individuality, to confidence and solidarity. The research comprised 1000 people, aged 19 to 23, students of pedagogy, at the Department of Ethnology and Theories of Education in Cieszyn, of the University of Silesia in Katowice. All those people live in the Polish – Bohemian borderland. The examinations were performed in June 2008. 945 questionnaires, which comprised 94.5% of the assumed sample, were qualified for further elaboration. In the examined group women constituted 87%, and men 13% of the whole population. 47% of the examined people live in the country and 63% in towns. Questionnaires and an interview were used to gather information.

The southern part of the Polish – Bohemian borderland is a very interesting place for theoretical analysis and empirical investigations. The contact and co-existing in this area populations heterogeneous linguistically, ethnically and nationally, mixture of cultural influences, coming from different ethnic or national circles and simultaneous detritions of heterogeneous population assemblies, contributed to shaping the peculiar culture of the borderland – both cultures of confidence, and mistrust towards the others, formed social bonds which have survived to this day.

Within the described research action an attempt was made to find an answer to the question: What meaning is assigned by contemporary young people to their own Me, to confidence and solidarity?

It was assumed that an interest of community in interpersonal relations implies assigning some meaning to confidence. Confidence has a connection with post-materialistic values. An interest in confidence is one of the aspects of the cultural turn in the sociological theory. It reflects the increasing interest of the range of ”soft” cultural variables, imponderables of social life.

The result of the research indicate that for 94.6% of the examined people their own Me is an important value, 82.3% of the respondents respect confidence and for 26.0% of the young people solidarity is an important value.

The examined young people recognize confidence as a value without which a life together with other people is impossible, they emphasize that confidence is one of the most important values of their life. In P. Sztompka (2007:69–70) comprehension confidence is composed of two elements: convictions and their

practical expression. Such a way of understanding of confidence *(anticipating con-fidence)*(cf. Sztompka, 2007:100) is very important for young people, who assume that usually other people's actions will be also beneficial for them, when they establish relationships with them. Young people point also at *mutual confidence* (cf. Sztompka, 2007:99) – such a relation between partners, in which each of them is an exponent and an addressee of confidence and so each of them manifests the credibility towards the other partner. In the students' declarations also the notion of also fiduciary trusting appears – entrusting somebody with some object, a person or other value with the hope for the care, concern, and return in case of our request. Statements point at the fact that young people do not perceive trusting as a dimension of political culture, "of civil culture", confidence does not constitute an important aspect of a civil society for them.

The way of understanding of the notion of solidarity by young people refers to the two different types of solidarity distinguished by E. Durkheim: mechanical and organic. Mechanical solidarity, characteristic of primitive societies, is based on similarity, on the community of feelings and beliefs, based on sanctions and common collective consciousness. Organic solidarity is based on interdepend-ence, connected with social differentiation, increasing role of the individual and with general individualisation of collective life. The ways of understanding of solidarity by young people exhibit transformation of the mechanical solidarity into organic one, together with increasing social differentiation, together with the process of individuals becoming independent and releasing from the influences of other people. Perhaps therefore the solidarity obtains rather low valuation (as compared to confidence) from the examined young people. The order of mechanical solidarity and moral integration is replaced by a new order based on mutual dependence.

## Conclusions

Social life is filled by an increasing number of threats and hazards; the world offers still grater pool of possibilities. The results of the performed investigations indicate that confidence is an indispensable component of young people's actions; it becomes a strategy of behaviour indispensable in touch with untransparency of the social environment. It performs important functions not only for partners of an interaction, but also for wider communities, groups, associations and organizations. It stimulates sociability, enriches the network of interpersonal bonds, increases the field of interaction and lets establish close contacts with other people. It increases

what was called by E. Durkheim (1999) "moral density"[2], which is described
by contemporary authors as social capital (Putnam, 1995), "spontaneous social
behaviours" (Fukuyama, 1997) or civil commitment (Almond and Verba, 1980).
Confidence favours tolerance, approval of strangers and allowing the existence
of cultural and political differences, which thanks to it are not treated as threats.
In this way it damps manifestations of intergroup hostility or xenophobia and
civilization disputes.

The individual will approach their goal when it connects their individualism
with taking some obligations for the common good. It is not here about getting
rid of I and granting the dominating role to society, it is not about converting
communities into centres of separate Me. It is about connecting I and we in the
understanding of Martin Buber (1998: 631–660) in the complementary and con-
structive relation, which is possible when the importance of mutual obligation is
taken into consideration.

Young people in a natural way feel the need for separateness, accepting and
remaining faithful to ideas, they long for morality. Many possibilities of influencing
the individual and the community are in education. It is both help in forming
and exerting influence, and the help in self-determination and self-development
of a given person. The education on the practical layer is both the carrier of ideas
of the upbringing, and the means of the organization of learning, of forming self-
awareness and promotion of development.

It is difficult to state any generalizations concerning the generation of contem-
porary young people because as shown by the results of the latest investigations, it
is an internally diversified group. It is worth stressing that the examined students
form a specific group, they are future teachers, included in the process of academic
training within the scope of intercultural education, developing their own identity,
but also preparing themselves for dialogue relations with other people. Perhaps,
as future teachers, they possess greater sensitivity for the needs of other people in
such a way realizing their vocation.

The opinion rejecting the community-ness of social life in the culture of
individualism is not possible and legitimate in social and educational practice.
Special cultural capital of society is hidden in the potential of strong moral bonds.
Determination and creation of favourable conditions allowing full mobilization
and full use of the human potential is the challenge of the contemporary pedagogy.
It is connected with the increasing role of confidence as a means for domesticating

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[2] Moral density – high density, intimacy of relations filled with strong emotions with a high
level of interdependence and long time of duration. Cf.: Durkheim, 1999.

risk and counteracting uncertainty. This connection was already noticed by Niklas Luhmann (1979), who stated that confidence is a means allowing to manage in the complexity of the future produced by technology, also Anthony Giddens (2002:6) recognizes confidence as an indispensable demand of life.

Basic confidence, as called by Erik Erikson (1997), creates the initial splice, which originates the complex emotional-cognitive attitude towards other people, the world of things and one's own identity. Basic confidence formed thanks to taking care of the first carers in a critical way connects individual identity with appraisals of other people. It is connected in the principal way with the interpersonal organization of time and space. Acquisition of feeling of separate identity and ability to determine the identity of other people and objects depend on the formation of this basic confidence. Confidence alone includes the natural element of creativity, i.e. an ability to act and think in a new way in relation to the previously established patterns.

The young people from the Polish – Bohemian borderland become people from a cultural trans-borderline crossing, thanks to education, journeys and language skills, borders of regions, states or continents. They emanate with multiculturalism and Europeanism only partially assigned to their small homeland. Thanks to mass migrations, tourism, and travelling they get in touch with strange people; they are surrounded by others from every side. "The strange represents what is unknown [.] culturally determined space, which separates what remains external from the "known" world shaped by tradition, which community is identifying with" (Beck, Giddens, Lash, 1994:81). The confidence stays an indispensable method allowing coping with the presence of other people.

The individual lives through feeling of the social bond as a need for intercommunication with others, for exceeding one's own isolation, in the aspiration to communicate and improve the system of communication. "A good community is a different-ity", as Tadeusz Sławek (2006: 33) writes, community-ness cannot define itself by excluding those who are received as a "strange body". On the contrary, this "strange body" helps the community to understand the values on which its existence is founded. The strange is waking communities up from the dream of complacency".

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# Europeanism, Conformity, Youth
### – A Philosophical Outlook –

## Abstract

The concept of Europeanism implies, first of all, the historical appearance of the individual, the cohesion force, culture, moral value system that has an impact on the movement of world history and whose essence is that the individual is freed from all previous historical boundaries, the bonds of birth, order, education, profession, religion and nationality. The autonomous personality appears with many abilities, talents, moral carriage and duties and responsibilities and dares to take responsibility for oneself, becoming therefore what one has created one. When we, Hungarians, learn Europeanism, we must not fall into "worship of the West", renouncing our personal dignity, characteristics and culture. Neither the West, nor Europe has an intellectual-moral right to expect bowing and conformity from us, since conformist accommodation, although it may have certain advantages, has a rather high price – the loss of freedom. Because of that, I do not accept the new, in essence manipulative, slogan: "Be EU-conform!" Obviously, we can and must comply with the processes of Europeanism, however, we secure that this compliance incorporates respect of the individual and personal dignity. Youth, undoubtedly, carries the desire and ability of self-creation "in its blood". The self-creating and freedom-searching activity of youth harmonizes with the myth of the individual.

**Key words:** *youth, philosophy of education, European values, Europeanism, education, European dimension, conformity, nonconformity, uniformity, community*

## The category of youth

Youth could be analysed from numerous and equally important perspectives. In this respect it would be worthwhile to take into account *Hegel's* point of view. Nearly two hundred years ago the German philosopher with great astuteness discovered that a genuine understanding of Youth, at a rather high level of abstraction, could only be reached if it is interpreted as a *process*. It means that youth has to be placed on the triple generation line of 'child-youth-adult'. Following that, a clear separation of each generation becomes a basic aim. Hegel, accordingly, claimed that the *child* still lives at peace with the world, its life is filled with games, under the guidance of adults and its model is always a concrete person (e.g. parent, teacher). However, when the child becomes *a youth* and with gender awakening, the role of games is taken over by learning, that is the act of conscious and controlled study, his model no longer appears in the subjective form of some concrete person, but instead it is tied to a substantial general concept, to an abstract thing, or worldview, deprived of all character (like freedom, love, friendship). The model, however, resists cold reality and this antagonism the youth experiences is an 'upside-down world'. The young experience a strange contradiction – they are 'adrift' among abstractions, abstract decisions, they can only understand and evaluate the flow of the world in black and white, while they rush, heated by great energy, noble feelings and generosity, towards the swift and radical changing of the world. The *adults*, however, experience and learn that it is not enough to fiddle merely with general things, principles, values, world saving plans, but that we must, first of all, deal with the existential details such as families, or elderly parents. Adults recognise and accept that one is responsible for oneself and others. One realises that instead of a deep and complete transformation of the world, we can only advance step by step, doing even that only, if we are ready for and capable of achieving a certain conformation, that is, joining the world (Hegel, 1968, pp. 84–85).

Hegel's youth concept reminds of an ancient Greek philosophical concept (let us not forget that in classical Greek philosophy practically every important question had emerged that was later examined for centuries). According to *Socrates* the youth were full of ecstasy, luxury, bad manners and rudeness to their parents, had no respect for old people and were idle even when they were supposed to be working. Such views could easily belong to a father or grandfather, rigid in his views, habits and social skills. The youth is the same today.

It is not difficult to discover that Hegel's and Socrates's concepts are interconnected, both reminding us that the young everywhere and always wanted to differ from their fathers and grandfathers. Characteristic generational features are the

denial of regular and accepted values, of the traditional lifestyle patterns, the search for something new, the rejection of authority regardless of the concrete historical place and time. This is why a nearly two and a half thousand-year-old saying can seem like an utterance of today. We could say that the generation gap was is and will always be, whether we want and recognise it, or not. From this we gain the following moral – frictions between youth and the other generations appear in every era, but if we view it as part of an organic process, then the problems emerging from the differences between the generations seem natural and clear. There is no reason to dramatise or to underestimate problems deriving from the generation gap.

Obviously, historical changes do take place in the situation and social role of youth and they, at the same time, distinguish the young of each era.

We know relatively little about the history of *primitive peoples*. It seems certain that it was not a short period and not a lively society, characterised by primitive technology and production (more precisely: work), simple division of labour, constant and clear system of relations, low life-span and, of course, a lack of youth. Youth as an easily distinguishable group or generation was unknown. A child used to become an adult suddenly and instantaneously via the successful accomplishment of the so called initiation ceremony. The period of youth simply fell out of the line of generations.

Youth, as a relatively separate and independent category only came into existence in the antiquity. Then youth became a 'topic', it was discussed and the problems related to it were tackled. Society started to observe the problems of youth. The ruling theme of the age was – let us deal with the young but only in order to make sure that they get ready for their role as an adult easily. A young person was but an adult, 'reduced in size'. Therefore, youth had to be dealt with only from the point of view of education. Youth appeared, but still only as a passive object, whose only task was to reproduce, to simply repeat the life, views and values of fathers and grandfathers.

*Modernity* brought a colossal change in the story of youth. Most importantly the gap between the biological and social maturity could be observed. This process was first documented by *Kant*. Amidst the civilizational development, Kant called 'sophisticated conditions', the social maturity of a young person got behind the biological maturity by an average of ten years. Social maturity demanded high educational requirements from youth, who had to master more and more difficult professions. The young also had to be in possession of numerous tools of income in order to be able to make a living. *Modernity* has created unparalleled dynamics in economy. A young person can usually adjust to dynamic development faster, more

easily, with less psychological or intellectual trauma than their fathers or grand-fathers. The young should no longer be trained to copy the older generation, but to continuously update technology, science and the economy, for the judging and re-creating the established norms, lifestyles and value-systems. The more socially decisive experiences accumulate, defined through generalisations or knowledge or deduction, the larger the social role of youth becomes, as *György Lukács* observes. In modern age, experiences do not only emerge in an empirical way. In modernity, the monopolistic position of the older generation was threatened, and, in turn, the social role of youth strengthened. Being a young person became a separate substance, a large social group instead of a generation (Lukács, 1976, p.141). The ethical category of youth has changed into an expression of a social (sociological and political) level and importance. There developed a new social power, with characteristic features, separate interests, values and goals. Youth has become good and a value in and for itself! The March Youth of 1848[1], the "Young Italy", the "Young Germany" or the student movement of 1968 are in the line of youth movements asserting themselves. These occasions warn us that we should no longer observe youth as some kind of passive generation yet to be educated, or a weightless generation. On the contrary, it has become a serious constituent of society, with which we should deal in a special way, not only from a moral (as it used to be), but from an economic, ideological and cultural point of view.

The *fourth stage* is unrolling, so to say, before our very eyes. The fact that youth is awakening to its own conscience and that it has gained more social importance in modernity is just as joyful as the "rebelling youth" of the previous decades. Unfortunately, many signs indicate that in postmodernity, the young are losing their identity, separate culture and their self-organising ability and awareness. Society is depriving them of their "youth", as if stealing from them; Hungarian poet *Judit Katona* says, we "owe the grocer on the corner/ and they owe us our youth." (Katona, 1997, p. 39). The life of the young of today is a "lean" one, with the usually abandoned struggle, practically a mundane day-to-day life. They do not have faith in themselves, in their strength and possibility to shape history. They cannot come up with anything, they are simply "stewing in their own sauce". There are a large number of young people living among us, yet they do not come together as one, a united power, an elevated and hopeful social group, but possibly only a virtual generation. It seems that history merely happens to today's youth, and that the

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[1]  The expression refers to the young students, poets and novelists who initiated a popular uprising in Hungary's capital which later grew into the revolution of 1848–49. (translator's note).

traditions of the great generation of 1968 has disappeared forever. Also society and politics are incapable of making contact with today's young, as if it (society) has already given up on its own youth.

Some may disagree with my approach. But whatever course the debate concerning the historical relation of society and youth takes, we may perhaps already agree in one point.

## The concept and question of conformity

Numerous facts indicate that today we have stepped into the era of the general spreading of conformity. This is not a Hungarian phenomenon but a world tendency. According to *Cornelius Castoriadis*, we are living in the most conformist stage of modern history (Castoriadis, 1994, p.48), to which *Milan Kundera* would reply that we experience the overture to the death of the individual and, at the same time, of an era of a never before experienced uniformity (Kundera, 1992, pp. 177 and 202). But what is conformity?

Numerous experiences and empirical philosophical experiments prove that people are willing to conform to the others even if their beliefs are different. They are simply worried about their popularity and position. Many believe that if they deviate from social norms or simply from the majority opinion, judgement, they find themselves in an impossible, or, at least, unpredictable situation, and easily become the object of contempt, humiliation and possible complete alienation.

Such fears are not unfounded, just as comfort may also motivate the need for conforming *at all cost*. Still, it is not advisable to absolutise the need and inclination to conform and pose them as some sort of fateful and unavoidable situations. It would be a mistake to view conformism as mere accommodation or regularity of social behaviour. Behind the emergence of conformity as a negative phenomenon we must see deep, social reasons. I would merely recall some philosophical statements, describing processes of social strength. Nearly three hundred years ago, American liberal thinker *William Penn*, gave the perhaps deepest, original, meaning of the word. According to him, *conformism is a civic virtue whose price is the loss of liberty* (Penn, In: Bass – Berg, 1971, Foreword, page not numbered). This negative sense of the concept of conformism only strengthens later descriptions. *Nietzsche*, for instance, states that the modern man suffers from a weakened personality and, therefore, is a shadowman who wears a disguise, a mask (Nietzsche,1989, pp. 54–55). The thought is carried on by *Heidegger* – in the modern existential crisis, everybody is the Other, nobody is oneself. The Anybody, the nobody become the

subject of the question regarding the "who" of everyday existence (Heidegger, 1989, pp.259–261). Finally, *Ernst Fischer* is at the end of the line, giving the most philosophical definition of the concept. Conformity is the *"I sinking into the Anybody."* (Fischer, 1964, p.97).

The question is how can conformity, according to the above interpretation, be related to youth – existence and youth – question. I propose three criticisms of related misconceptions. According to one myth, conformity and youth are "siblings", because it is youth that is the social group, the generation that is most conformist. Those adhering to this thought regularly cite an ancient Greek philosopher. It was *Epicurus* who, more than two thousand years ago, proposed that it was not the happy young man to be praised, but the old one. Those who are in their prime are often shoved into any direction by fate, yet the elderly man has settled, reached his destination and will stay there. (Epikurosz, In: Nestle, 1923, 144/80, 144/17 ). We may also reinterpret after Epicurus a famous saying of *Pascal's* that youth is a bending reed. As a 20th century example it was German sociologist *Schelsky* who saw the structural regularity of growing conformity in the behaviour of youth. It seems then that youth, because of its inexperience and susceptibility, may become conformist more easily than other groups (Schelsky, 1958, p. 381).

The other myth views the question in exactly the opposite way – to reject conformity, that is, to claim that nonconformity is the nature or the "blood" of youth. *Cooley*, a 20th century sociologist, enthusiastically declares that it is youth that becomes the peak (top) of nonconformism (Cooley, 1967, p. 304). The inherent revolt against every form of the mechanical accommodation of the Other is present in the young. The young man naturally questions every given, generally accepted system of norms and values, deeply rooted relations and lifestyle-patterns. He is pursued by his fascination of the new ways, forms, methods and values. The believers of this concept come up with a seemingly irrefutable practical argument too, the student movements of 1968, aimed at destroying traditions, order, formalisms and conformity. And what else could this indicate than nonconformity? The behaviour of youth, therefore, is largely guided by nonconformity rather than conformity.

We can raise objections to both thoughts. First, it is not a proven statement that there exists *inherently* conformist and/or *inherently* nonconformist youth. We cannot even say if the young are inclined to be conformist or, on the contrary, nonconformist. To me, the approach which deals with the problem in a differentiating way seems the most convincing. Both conformist and nonconformist traits can be found in the accommodating behaviour of the young. And if we compare it to other generations, we may find that both traits are present more often among them than in the other generations. This is why, although youth does not possess

the necessary experience and its behaviour is easily influenced (manipulated), at the same time, it is able and prepared to say "no" to many things, while desperately searching for new ways, value systems and lifestyles.

Second, the conformist-nonconformist ambiguity – *does not comply with a negative positive alternative*. In the common interpretation, usually the concept is that conformism is negative, while nonconformism is a positive form of accommodating. However, scientific research and practical experience deny this schematic interpretation. In reality, both types express a negative meaning and spring "from the same root" – conformity is accommodating to others without principles, while nonconformity is not accommodating to others again without any principles. It is only an illusion that a nonconformist is sovereign personality since his mode of accommodating is not defined by him, but by the majority. (It is marked by the standpoint and behaviour of the majority that he does not accommodate). Obviously, conformism-nonconformism is a false alternative, both are extreme forms of being, neither surpasses the other. Let us recall that the 1968 West-Berlin student uprising, the nonconformism of the students, gradually calmed down by the mid 70s and transformed into the other extreme – conformism. What else could we presume when reading the slogan of the 1970s, "Oh God! Make me spineless to enable me to get a state office!"

Third, the conformist-nonconformist ambiguity can, of course, *be defeated*, but not with the extreme forms of the two. These two forms do not exhaust the richness and variety of human coexistence. Convinced accommodating, creative relating, mere copying, passivity, and so on, do also exist. We cannot then say that conformity and/or nonconformity fatefully burdens the individual and that the human being, including the young, faces it helplessly and at its mercy. Exercising one's human autonomy in given social and individual conditions may overcome both harmful features creating a completely new and different form of adjustment to society.

## On the concept of Europeanism

Europeanism has numerous meanings, not only implying a geographical unity or a historical formation. It expresses a characteristic *economic content*, formed by such categories as the market economy, centralisation of capital, financial transactions, integration and the European Union. It also includes *political elements*, such as the multi-party system, parliamentary democracy, civil organisations and institutions, superior to the nations – the Council of Europe, the body created

to protect minority rights, military block, etc. Finally, we differentiate *general cultural* connections whose perhaps most important criterion is the undertaking of shaping the identity of a defined "common fate". The first level is examined by economics, the second by politology and the third by philosophy and ethics. The third level searches for the answers to such questions like: how should a Europe-conscience be born, under what conditions can nations (and within them the separate regions) comply with the general tendencies, global motion, how should universal values and national-regional characteristics, and cultures relate to each other and with what cultural sensibility, moral values and way of thought should we construct Europeanism.

We need all the three directions and modes of approach. Although we are still far from attaining a deeper familiarity with Europe's economic and political processes and regularities, certain steps and results have been achieved in economics and politology. It is an unfortunate fact, however, that philosophical and ethical research has not even stated the more important questions. We can, of course, postpone the resolution of other aspects. However, we must know that neither philosophy, nor ethics can remain passive in the deeper clarification of the question of Europeanism. The more delayed the analyses of this nature are, the bigger the sacrifice and risk of finding our place and value in a bigger community.

I find one of the thoughts of *Milan Kundera*, a writer of philosophical sensibility, a very good starting point in the philosophic-ethical search for an accurate definition and character of Europeanism. He does not only see a defined market-financial mechanism or any spectacular parliamental clashes in Europeanism, but a characteristic cohesional force, stemming from the intellectual-moral values (Kundera, 1992, pp.177 and 202). According to him, *Europeanism* is a formation, in which the *individual* itself steps on the stage of history and *receives respect of social scale and effect; the individual is above all*. Naturally, we are not forced to accept Kundera's opinion, but it seems certain that postmodernity itself is difficult to imagine without liberation of the individual. The individual does indeed become liberated of all their previous historical bonds – of birth, order, education, profession, religion and the bonds of belonging to a nation. The autonomous character appears, with many abilities, talents, moral holding and responsibilities, who chooses and assumes himself: *who becomes what he has made of himself*.

To me, it seems obvious that the appearance of the individual as a sovereign substance is an important and irreplaceable part of the essence of Europeanism, even if it contradicts Kundera's beliefs. The historical debut of Europeanism and the individual as a new category can be naturally connected with the other two suggested concepts, that is – conformity and youth.

Nowadays we hear a lot about the necessity of joining the European Union and in general about European values and European identity. A new concept is being born – Europe-conformity, a new slogan is spreading – "Be a Euro-conformist!"

I have tried to show above that conformity, in its original meaning, is a negative concept. Insofar as it comes with the necessary loss, or, at least, the weakening of the freedom of the individual. From this point of view, it is difficult to bring together the phenomena of conformity and the "above all-ness of the individual," which is an important element of Europeanism. Therefore, I do not think we should use the compound Europe-conformity, especially not as a value-system pattern to follow. Obviously, I am not saying that we should show no inclination towards the European Union and, generally, globalisation. However, it would not be preferable, or even unworthy, if the general trend of joining and the accommodation to the Union would take place with a conformist inclination and/or an inferiority complex. Regarding this, the warning of Hungarian and European writer *Sandor Marai* is still valid. The writer emphasises that we must not live in some sort of "West-enchantment". The West has no intellectual-moral right to expect head bowing and imparting to us a feeling of inferiority – the people living in the central and eastern regions of Europe. On the contrary, we should accommodate the Union in such a way that we maintain our personal dignity and respect (Márai, 1996, pp. 85–86). I agree with Sandor Marai's warning and let me add the following thought – this approach and behaviour can under no circumstances be described solely within the paradigm of conformity and/or nonconformity.

Youth carries the innate desire and ability of self-creation, be it suppressed or abandoned, the sensibility towards the new and the desire for freedom can always be found in youth. Perhaps, it is unnecessary to prove that this self-creating and freedom-searching activity of youth is in natural harmony with the myth of the European individual, a part of Europeanism. Therefore, the common analysis of the concepts of Europeanism and youth is not an artificial and alien notion. *Europeanism and youth – these are two, organically connected "entities", mutually enriching each other*.

There is no "paved" road leading to these two "components" and really finding each other. We must meet many criteria so that the values, deriving from the inner nature and logic of Europeanism and youth could really manifest and strengthen each other. And finally, let me mention at least one feature that we usually do not like to speak of. I am thinking of morality and value, and particularly the importance of *responsibility*. (It is not difficult to accept that in the research into responsibility philosophy and ethics are the most qualified.)

Europeanism as a characteristic historical formation, as I have mentioned, is nourished by moral values, too (e.g. respect towards the individual, truthfulness, taking responsibility for one's actions, etc.). But how are responsibility and youth connected? I presume responsibility occurs as an important factor from the point of view of both *society* and *youth*. Approaching from the *social* angle, let us consider one of the teachings by *Jacques Derrida*. According to Derrida, no righteousness can be presumed if we cannot and do not want to watch the future, if we do not feel like taking responsibility towards those who are not yet born, that is, the youth of the future. *Thinking in the future means that we are pro-youth* (Derrida, 1993, pp. 8–9). Being pro-youth does not, however, mean some kind of nursing or ruling over the young. Nobody and nothing can take possession of youth, neither government, nor party, nor parent, nor school, nor media. Youth is nobody's, therefore, everybody's, the whole society's. To put it in another way – *let youth be itself*.

Obviously, the problem of responsibility emerges from the point of the *young* as well. The young must be ready and capable of taking responsibility for forming their own environment and influencing the rest of society. The rather popular thought is unacceptable that being young is no more than an easy, "jolly", one-time diversion which, therefore, only occurs once in a lifetime and thus has to be maximally taken advantage of. More serious thinking, greater sacrifices, we could say *the quicker understanding of adult roles and responsibilities is called for*.

The question then is the following – does youth have the responsibility towards modern society *today* and what is its effect? And vice versa, does society owe its youth a sense of responsibility in *recent* struggles and efforts of building a new nation?

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# Human Identity and Educational Challenges

## Abstract

The changes of human identity (individual and group) are analyzed in the context of cultural diversity. Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism are contrary approaches towards otherness (pros and cons). Otherness is a constitutive element of our identity. (In)tolerance is considered as a social pattern of behaviour and as an effect of socialization. The development of inclusive, socially empathic identity is a challenge for education.

**Key words:** *human identity, inclusive identity, attitude towards otherness, ethnocentrism, cultural relativism, tolerance, social empathy.*

We live in the time of significant and intensive changes, consensual as well as antagonistic and controversial. In any case, these changes are permanent and judging by their intensity and impact also more profound and swifter than in the past.

The formation of a society influenced by cultural diversity is accompanied by two sometimes contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, there are processes of globalization affecting timeless, universal values shaping general human relationships, while on the other hand, there are processes protecting what is local and national, regional values, uniqueness of regional groups (including ethnic groups) and revitalizing their culture. When combined together, both tendencies lead to the formation of a so-called intercultural individual who lives in an open society and shares the values of tolerance, solidarity, etc. The objective of education is to gain empathy, multicultural and intercultural competences, self-understanding, and awareness of the values of one's own culture as well as understanding of and openness towards the "other". When the two tendencies clash, it results in the formation of negative stereotypes and prejudices that nourish homogenization

and isolation of groups and result in people fearing the loss of traditional values, their identity and uniqueness as well as feeling threatened by the unknown and the other, etc. This is a case of exclusive identification and identity.

If our time is the time of new »reevaluated« values, new cultural phenomena, pluralism of values and openness, it is also the time of new cultures and new identities. However, clashes of cultures and their influence on each other must not always threaten one's cultural identity, just like blending of cultures is not always a guarantee that a new identity will be formed. However, similar processes and symptoms bring a new perspective to the issue of identity formation and preservation at the individual as well as the local cultural levels.

## Human identity

The problem of human identity is above all a problem of human existence. As soon as an individual gains self-consciousness, he/she postulates the question of self-identity. During this voyage of inquiry and *de facto* self-formation, people find and shape certain fixed points which they identify with and which serve as an anchor and source of certainty. Our identity is neither present *a priori* nor natural; it is a process and a concrete result of interaction between an individual and his/her environment (in particular the social environment as represented by other people). It is a social phenomenon that changes and is refined during the full course of human life. It is also a relatively constant unity, or integrity. For this reason, the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur speaks about the paradox of identity: we use the same name to identify a person from birth to death because we assume the existence of an invariable individual foundation – however, actual human experience negates the existence of any such foundation as people are different at any given moment. The following thoughts focus primarily on ethnocultural identity.

Culture is the foundation and indispensable precondition of human existence. Culture is a vision of reality which exists between an individual and the world (of course, this is just one of many concepts of culture). This vision guides, regulates, stimulates and coordinates human activity and behaviour. As representatives of a certain culture, we share – at a latent level – common codes of consciousness, a system of signs, symbols, values, patterns of behaviour, etc. Culture helps us adapt to a specific social and natural environment as well as change and innovate this environment. The degree of individual identification with a certain culture is always different and derives from individual psychosocial characteristics, historical "nature" of culture itself and the degree of its openness.

At the time of rapid cultural development when the traditional institutional structure of culture (i.e. external reality) is transformed, there arises a discrepancy between the cognitive model of an individual (a consistent system of knowledge, faith, moral attitudes and ideals) and the facts of objective reality. This discrepancy, known as cognitive dissonance (L. Festinger), is related to stress burden placed on individuals, disintegration of the original system of "cognitive maps" and in extreme cases may lead to disintegration of personality. In this case, cultural contacts develop into a source of conflict both at the individual level and the level of subculture or even culture. People living in today's world of cultural diversity must be prepared for a constant clash of different worlds. This preparedness presupposes that the mechanisms developed at the individual level would reduce the degree of dissonance and would renew the harmony between new information and the original cognitive model so that one's perception of reality and actual attitudes again would produce a consistent whole. "A sense of self is sustained largely through the stability of the social positions of individuals in the community. Even where tradition lapses, and life-style choice prevails, the self isn't exempt" (Giddens, 1999, p. 27).

The problem of identity encapsulates the core tension between the individual and the societal. Human identity is determined both in terms of belonging to a group(s) and in terms of not belonging among "others". Individual identity and group identity – while existing in a relationship of permanent mutual tension – show significant differences. Our self-consciousness is based on our awareness of ourselves as members of a social or cultural group (ethnic, national, linguistic, gender, etc.) To define "myself" means to be aware of "we are…" and to be accepted by "we". Since a person may see her/himself as a member of more than one group, her/his identity may vary depending on the group s/he identifies with at any particular time. Each of these identities is accompanied by its commensurate beliefs, expectations and behaviours and defined by reference to the norms of a particular group (Lestinen et al., 2004, p. 6).

Group **identification** (1) is one of the three key elements of the social identity theory (Tajfel, Turner 1979), with the other two being **categorization** (2) and **comparison (3).**

Through categorization (2), our sociocultural environment acquires meaningfulness. We create and use categories by employing rational, ethnic, religious, professional, and other socially constructed labels that help us structure our concept of our environment. The actual subject-matter and ways of categorization, a specific construct (placed in a cultural space and historical time), are based on the historical experience of each culture and anchored in its traditions. An individual may

be a member of a certain culture insofar as he/she shares a cultural tradition (i.e. common history) with other members of that particular culture. Cultural identity stems from being aware and proud of shared past and present.

Social capital of each culture contains the basis for adaptation to a new cultural environment. Individuals retain bonds to the culture which they grew up in for their entire life regardless of the specific situation which they might be in. These bonds even help individuals cope with intercultural situations.

According to the idea of social comparison and competitions (3), we compare our group with others in order to evaluate it (and ourselves). We require "they are" to define "we are". People look for common but especially for specific identifying attributes, which means that an individual needs otherness to become aware of what is "mine" and "ours". Generally, group/culture members tend to make comparisons in ways that reflect positively on themselves. They do this by using dimensions that are favourable to their group as a basis of comparison. This type of positive self-evaluation improves the level of group self-awareness, its solidarity and integrity. At the same time it is the basis for positive as much as negative stereotypes (resulting in prejudices). In preceding historical eras the collective cultural/social identities were mainly constructed based on the tendency toward an ethnocentric social exclusion of "otherness".

In other words, just like individuals, all groups need a permanent conceptual structure. Sharing of values and building on traditions of previous generations is, at the societal level, an important mechanism of social integration and identification. In the opinion of Murdock, ethnocentrism is the emotional and intellectual foundation of ethnic dualism according to which everything that exists and has positive significance for society is connected with one's own group, while everything problematic is attributed to the activities of other, foreign groups. For groups, intolerance towards "otherness", not yet assimilated equates to the defense of one's own existence, that is to say an expression of endogenous interests, which, however, is linked to exogenous values. Everything foreign is perceived as a threat. **Historically collective social/cultural identities usually tended to be construed in the intension of social exclusion of otherness, which is something closely associated with an ethnocentric worldview (including West-centric, Euro-centric, etc.).** Identity has often defined as something negative: to have a certain identity means not to have others.

Traditionalism in culture was linked to the unchangeable stratification of society which enabled almost no social mobility. Under such conditions, a person's identity at the sociocultural level was practically predetermined by his/her background. Historical development led to broadening of the social space of both individuals

(1) and local cultural units (2). As regards (1), if we perceive contemporary cultures as heterogeneous, we must recognize that people identify with values and norms of behaviour of different referential groups. As regards (2), if we recognize the phenomenon of blending of cultures, we perceive each specific cultural-historical unit not only as the result of internal inventions, but also as the result of acculturation processes and migration flows resulted in internalization and domestication of foreign cultural attributes. Contacts of cultures lead to the creation of new cultural phenomena. Recognition of pluralism and otherness assumes recognition of similar, common attributes. Without common attributes we cannot define otherness. Without them there would be no basis for possible mutual learning and understanding. In the opinion of Bakhtin, no culture exists by itself but only in relation to other cultures, positioned on a border and constantly crossing it.

Multi – ethnicity and cultural diversity articulate anew the question of how human identity is shaped. Post-modern pluralism opens a space for liberty and innovation that we have never seen before while also threatening integrity and entirety. "A relation to something different, which is of constitutive nature for any identity, is losing firm ground," because the world today is characterised by the "predominance of the occasional, predominance of images, predominance of the individual" (Augé, 1994, p. 63). Identity is becoming rather multi-stage, case-to-case, situational. The contemporary concept of identity is based on inclusivity (as opposed to exclusive identity of the preceding eras). According to Gilroy, we live in a world where identities are a problem. They are a problem both at the level of theory and as a controversial fact of today's world (Gilroy, 1987, p. 301). Human life in culture becomes a life on the edge of cultural clashes, the boundary between cultural worlds (in-between-worlds or between worlds in the works of V. Belohradsky) with their multiplicity/pluralism of value orientations and lifestyles. The determining factor is more and more, the ability of each individual to preserve his/her personal integrity, which is the basis of cultural identity as an open, shifting phenomenon determining our humanity. In multicultural situations, people sometimes find themselves on the dividing line between various intersecting sensory curves and inevitably try to detect the "meanings of life" of different cultures, which builds up the basic tension of our being – being on the boundary, in the captivity of various signifying, value orientation points that man cannot coalesce with and as a result remains alone (Fromm's fragmented mass of lonely individuals).

The postmodern phase of the development of individuals, groups and social relations has emphasized the multidimensionality of human existence. There are two possible identities: dispersed identity and fragmented identity. More frequently,

we encounter manifestations of fluid identity, which threaten the preservation and cultivation of cultural capital.

There are other conceptions of identity such as sliced identity, partial identity and multiple identity that also assume a potential contradiction of identities (Barker, 2000, p. 387). The identities change according to shifts of individual social statuses and roles, contact with various social groups and behaviour in varying social and cultural environments. The increased importance and value of subjective identification factors, such as emotional subjectivity, is a common trend in contemporary identity discourse. "I am who I feel myself to be".

Identity with a focus on inclusiveness versus exclusiveness is seen as a conception of the multicultural world. In this way we see an effort towards cultivating inclusive identity as an integral part of the socialization role of education. Thus, through contact with another culture, cultural identity will be modified, consciously or unconsciously.

The conception of inclusive identity is grounded in cultural relativism, which social and cultural anthropologists have began promoting as a critical reaction to West-centrism, Euro-centrism, etc. (in effect any form of ethnocentrism). Cultural relativism calls for each culture to be viewed as a unique phenomenon. We must strive to look at each new culture in a way that is free of stereotypes of our own culture, which is akin to an "indigenous person's view". Of course, cultural relativism has its pitfalls not only in the form of possible cultural agnosticism (each culture is so unique and enclosed that we cannot come to know it), but also in value (including moral) relativism. Some scholars therefore stress the need for overcoming it. Nevertheless, the challenge to free ourselves from stereotypes and prejudices as a "horizon of pre-understanding and pre-comprehension" of other cultures remains the axis of our relationship towards otherness.

The analysis of the multidimensional functioning of individuals is connected with the **growing responsibility for one's own development** without a gurantee of unflawed behaviour and sometimes even the opportunity to correct mistakes. The problem of being lost in a world of shifting values and the crises of traditional culture (the danger of discontinuity connected with the fact that life is increasingly often composed of a multitude of heterogeneous episodes) are on the rise. At the social level, the challenge lies in the problem of dialogue based on recognizing human rights and the value of pluralism, the problem of tolerating otherness and differences (of race, language, religion, ethnicity, values, symbols, skin colour, gender, etc.). At the individual level, multiculturalism is connected with respectful recognition of one's own difference, return to one's own foundations, substantiation of one's own actions and responsibility for them.

## (In)tolerance as a pattern of social behaviour

The English writer and scholar A. Koestler pointed out a significant biological feature of mankind. Unlike most other species, a human being does not have a genetically encoded program preventing him/her from killing fellow humans. Otherwise, there would be no place in human history for ritual human sacrifice, public executions and torture, wars and genocide, actions that have accompanied humanity from barbarism to our times. Such a statement should in no case be understood as recognition of the need for and inevitability of violence. Man has alternative genetic programs that limit his aggressiveness. The place and extent of realization of each genetic program largely depends on the influence of social environment and systems of cultural traditions which an individual's personality develops in. When considering the phenomenon of aggressiveness, E. O. Wilson, unlike Freud, Lorenz or Fromm, does not link it to instincts constantly looking for a way to let go. In the opinion of Wilson, we can fully understand the development of aggressiveness in human societies only if we take into account the determinants of aggressiveness at three levels: the basic level of biological predisposition, the level of demands of the existing environment, which is determined by cultural processes, and finally the level of random details, which contribute to the given cultural tendency (Wilson, 1993, pp. 98–118).

Today, tolerance – the opposite of aggression and violence – is a widely debated issue. In the author's opinion, tolerance is considered above all as a socio-cultural phenomenon grounded in the psychosomatic uniqueness of (1) the species of *homo sapiens sapiens* and in the specific features of every (2) specific human individual; however, what is decisive is the approach that it is a prevalent pattern of behaviour inherent in (3) a certain culture transmitted within an endoculturing process and shared by its members, applied in their actions, etc., and finally (4) concrete actions of a concrete individual that takes place under specific conditions and that may be evaluated as either tolerant or intolerant.

A prerequisite for tolerance is an individual's autonomy and independence, personal responsibility for his/her actions, fundamental values and unacceptability of forcing any ideas upon others regardless of believing in their truth and value. Moreover, tolerance requires awareness of the relativity of our personal convictions and the impossibility of justifying them absolutely, because the existential truth exists only in plurality now. In this context, problems arise at the individual level related to the preservation of one's identity and the danger of disintegration of personality, which is especially threatening during the formation of one's personality (e.g. L. Festinger's concept of cognitive dissonance and A. Wallace's mazeway.) At

the supra-individual level, unanimity (both confessional and ideological) is at odds with pluralism and tolerance. There is no doubt that authoritarianism (totalitarianism) and paternalism are incompatible with the idea of tolerance. But are these requirements realistic when dealing with the relationship between the majority and a minority group? Let us use the education system as an example: if the majority of society (the state) does not intervene, it equates to a hidden reproduction of social inequality because upward social mobility by members of those ethnic minorities that do not consider education as a starting capital for the future is impeded. The goal of the education system in democratic societies is to overcome initial inequalities and to equalize the chances of people from different social classes and ethnic minorities. But the realization of similar principles requires intervention by the majority of society (the state) so the relationship between the majority of society and, for example, an ethnic minority will no longer be a relationship between partners (equals), but a paternalistic-welfare relationship.

The current concept of tolerance involves both: the recognition of pluralism and the recognition of dialogue as the basic communication tool for achieving tolerance. Dialogue requires equivalence and equality of partners. Human consciousness is dialogic in its essence. The elementary act of self-reflection – "I", i.e. the relationship with self, is realized through the self relating to another person and to myself as another. Dialogue involves mutual cognition and empathy, mutual experiencing, searching for means to achieve a shared goal through compromises and giving up something that is one's own (videlicet, hermeneutical tradition in philosophy). The moment of "reciprocity" should be emphasized. It is not possible to require only one subject to respect and tolerate the norms of the other subject.

One prerequisite of tolerance is pluralistic democracy and the means of achieving tolerance is dialogue put in a broader context of open communication taking place in the space of public discourse. Dialogue requires respecting the individuality of the other, traversing egocentrism, striving to find a goal or having the means for dealing with problems. Discussion makes the opinions of different people clash with each other, elucidates them, explains them and broadens the group of those who share them. Only open communication structures can withstand dictate. In his book Rorty writes: "The view I am offering says that there is such a thing as moral progress, this progress is indeed in the direction of greater human solidarity" (Rorty, 1989, p. 183). However, Rorty does not see this solidarity as the core of self, as a priori essence of a human being. Rather, he considers it to be the ability to view traditional differences (in tribe, religion, customs, etc.) as progressively less significant than similarities stemming from pain and humiliation or, in other words, the ability to make people who differ from us in many ways a part of "us".

Tolerance is the right way towards eliminating discrimination in practice. It may seem a relatively easy way, but the problem is that both sides must accept it. Tolerance is a multidimensional phenomenon with the ethic dimension being the point of integration where all other dimensions converge. Democracy is a necessary, yet somewhat external aspect of tolerance. A tolerant attitude towards the "other" is the result of tolerance education. No standard of behaviour, including tolerance as the required standard of individual behavior and social coexistence, is given to people a priori but it is the result of internalization of sociocultural regulations which occurs in the course of socialization, including education and schooling.

Society uses culture and education (as part of culture) to form its members. Durkheim said that education is the "image and reflection of society". Society creates an image of man as he should be and in this image the peculiarities of the societal structure are reflected (Durkheim 1956). In the course of socialization and enculturation, cultural patterns, cognitive maps, codes of behaviour, specifics and peculiarities are reproduced. In other words, we are what we are taught to be. However, the theories of cultural and educational **reproduction** corresponded to the reality of pre-modern times. Within culture, there has been a growing tendency of moving from reproduction of tradition towards cultural transformation and innovation. Identity has become more problematic, but it is still mostly rooted in exclusivity and distinction between "us" and "them" (which prevails at the level of tolerance). Hosking and Schopflin share the opinion that democratic, civilized societies are still based on myths as much as authoritarian ethnic societies (Hosking, Schopflin 1997: V).

A basic goal of education is to contribute to the construction of an individual's identity. Negotiating the terms of recognition of one's social and cultural identity constitutes an integral part of the educational process. This negotiation is crucial to the empowerment of 'self' to act independently while interacting with others.

The task of education is to be student-oriented, help the students to develop individual qualities and form their social "Self" (being oneself – the motto of Rogers's humanist psychology, being able to go beyond oneself, "stepping out of oneself"), search for their own place in the world in relation to oneself and to others. The prerequisite of success is an individual approach. "Social and cultural capital" of each individual should be accepted, because each of us has a history of living experience, which guides him/her to raising his/her own questions and looking for her/his own place in the world.

The goal of the whole socialization process should be to cultivate **inclusive identity** based on a calling for active solidarity, mutual understanding of cultural diversity (perceived as a foundation of originality and richness) and shared humanity.

It has been argued that education as a creative process should be an in-depth interaction between the teacher and student towards supporting their mutual moral development. Thereby the moral culture of a person is seen as an essential part of her/his general culture which is reflected in interpersonal relationships including multicultural relations (Feber and Petrucijova, 1998). Interpersonal social empathy, as a basis for pro-social behaviour, is one of the ways of making interpersonal relationships better, for decreasing social tensions, aggression and violence (Roche et al 1991, Lencz 1994). The tool used to practise such behaviour is *dialogue* resulting from tolerance and mutual respect.

In a society of cultural diversity the realisation of these tasks is possible only due to complex educational activities in the spheres of (1) intra-cultural, (2) multicultural and (3) inter-cultural education (Petrucijova, 2002, pp. 368–369).

The main task of intra-cultural education is to develop and to encourage the original ethno-cultural, national identity of students. If we want to reach successful integration of different social groups we should accept their cultural rights for cultivation, and presentation of their identity. It is an essential part of our human rights. Intra-cultural education should implicitly involve the training for dealing with situations of cultural contact. The task of multicultural education is to show a variety of world cultures, of value systems and of models of reality accepting the fact that our model of reality is only one of them. Intercultural education should guide to the idea of a common world. Mutual respect and tolerance of "otherness" is a means for its sharing. The concept of inclusive identity corresponds to multicultural and intercultural levels of education.

But without support of the whole society tending towards tolerance and inclusiveness the efforts of educational institutions will not be successful. We all should live more openly and reflect on "otherness" more than earlier generations.

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# Eighth Grade Students' Associations of Geographical and Environmental Concepts
## (A Comparative Study between Turkey and Bulgaria)

## Abstract

The paper presents the construction and use of a free word association test for revealing the scientific conceptual structures of 8th grade students, concerning geographical and environmental stimulus words. The test contains eight stimulus words, which retrieve a cluster of associations most of which are based on geographical and environmental education and are studied as associated. Four groups of students from four schools – two in Turkey and two in Bulgaria are comparatively assessed and the results analyzed. Variables, concerning the social status of students and their interest in geography and environment are compared and differences between them are outlined.

**Key words:** *environmental concepts, geographical concepts, word association test.*

## Introduction

The secrets of learning and cognitive development of people have been attracting scientists' attention and effort since ancient times. They are a subject of inquiry of many branches of science: psychology, neuropsychology, neurophysiology, biology, ethnology and many others. Cognitive scientists study the multiple forms of category learning and have come to the conclusion that it depends on different brain systems. Goswami (2001) shows the importance of relational and surface similarity in analogical reasoning. The structure of the conceptual understanding and the richness of students' representations are essential in perceiving analogy. Ratzan

(2000) studies the metaphorical approach to the Web, noting the significance of the way information is described as it affects its perception and use. Users perceive not only the Internet and the Web, but their total environment in different ways. Lakoff and Johnson (2003), Rosh and Mervis (1981) and Bollen and Heylighen (1997) stress the point of categorization, conceptual clustering, supervised classification and <u>concept learning</u>.

The human conceptual system is characterized by two main concepts – category and schema (Sharifian (2001). The visual representations of these concepts are concept maps (Novak and Gowin, 1984), mind maps (Buzan and Buzan, 1993), intellectual maps (Kostova 1998, 2008). Psychologists, like geneticists map the genes, map the connections among words learned as a result of everyday experience (Nelson, 1998). Maps aid learning in all subjects. In science teaching students are asked to study scientific terms and then recall or recognize them when given words as test cues. Conceptual (intellectual) maps based on text or association analysis are very useful tools in science education. In this activity several mental processes are involved: comparison, analysis, comprehension, model construction, elaboration, retrieval, etc. Conceptual mapping organizes learning at the level of conceptualization in the sense of the theory of constructivism, the foundations of which were laid by J. Piaget.

Most neo-Piagetian theorists of cognitive development incorporate the concept of relational mapping (Case, 1985, 1992; Halford, 1993; Pascual-Leone, 1987). Case (1987, 1993), integrated important aspects of the Piagetian stage theory and cognitive information-processing theory and drew out implications for the design of instruction. However, Halford is the only neo-Piagetian who has formally proposed that analogy plays a central role in the development of logical reasoning, and who has linked analogical processes to performance in traditional Piagetian tasks. In his structure-mapping theory of cognitive development Halford proposed that most logical reasoning was analogical.

Associative learning and associative psychology have the longest history and most contradictory evaluations among the basic concepts concerned with learning.

Association (associo, L. connect) in the sense of psychology means "connection or link between different neuro-psychological processes in our consciousness; a link between stimulation, reaction and their results as well as a link between different notions in such a way that one notion brings to mind the other" (Milev, 1958; Ogegov, 1981); "mental connection between an object and ideas related to it" (Fowler, 1964). The term association is introduced in psychology by J. Locke, who laid the foundations of associative psychology (1961), but the phenomenon was known to Plato and Aristotle (Davidov, 1983). The idea of association of sensory

perceptions was developed in the works of a number of psychologists such as Hume (1911), Hartley (1749), Bain, (1894), Mill, (1901, 1959) and many others. A. Bain (1894) enriched the associative psychology with the interest in motion and linked it to experimental neurophysiology as early as in 1855. In Thomas Hobbes's psychology "much importance is assigned to what he called, variously, the succession, sequence, series, consequence, coherence, train of imaginations or thoughts in mental discourse" (Associations of ideas, 2008). According to Mill (1859), "radical empiric knowledge, including mathematics and logics, can be derived through generalizations of sensory experience". It was assumed that not only "intellectual pleasures and pains, but all phenomena of memory, imagination, volition, reasoning and every other mental affection and operation, were but different modes or cases of the association of ideas" (Associations of ideas, 2008). H. Spencer developed the conception of evolutionary associationism united with the conception of cerebral localization on the basis of evolutionary biology and Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. He had accepted the view that associations having positive consequences were probably learned and passed to succeeding generations (Spencer, 1887). The theory of evolution had a huge effect on the development of psychology. I. P. Pavlov gave scientific explanation to the concept association through his research on conditioned reflexes and temporary nerve links (Pavlov, 1927).

On the basis of research in psychology and neurophysiology new conceptions have been developed: association (Deese,1665; Suret, 2005), associationism, evolutionary associationism, associative psychology, associative thinking (Mole, 2002), associative memory (Hinton, 1989; Willshaw, 1989), associative learning (Field, 2005; Levine, 2000; Wills, 2005), word associations (Davidov, 1983), etc.

Associationnism is a psychological theory which states that mind learns by combining simple irreducible elements through association. Associationists derive all psychological phenomena, including abstract thinking and will, from the general principles of associations based on the influence of the material world on the nervous system (Davidov, 1983). Many psychologists, such as Bradley (1922), B. G. Ananiev, L. S Vigotsky, A. I. Leontiev, A. A. Smirnova (Davidov, 1983), criticize this theory as a metaphysical approach to learning. In the quest for scientific knowledge cognitive scientists look for new theories and experimental data in order to explain psychological phenomena and especially cognition.

Individuals somehow register that the occurrence of events is related in a certain way. There are two ways in which humans can learn that two events or objects are associated. The first way takes place when learning is unintentional, unconscious or stimulus-driven. In this case associative learning is "the result of associative proc-

esses that capture regularities in the environment by forming associations between representations". The second way is characterized by "intentional, conscious, effortful learning, driven by language and formal reasoning when learners are engaged in rule-based processing" (Wills, 2005). Humans can learn by generating and evaluating hypothetical rules about associations in a conscious and controlled manner. In associative learning separate ideas and beliefs are linked in order to increase learning effectiveness. Deliberate associative devices are employed in all modern teaching.

Associability denotes a parameter controlling learning that is sensitive to previous learning (Suret, 2005). Preferences learning (learning to like or dislike) is also associative learning (Field, 2005). Associative memory is connected with some features of the brain – parallelism (as in simultaneous actions of many muscles for coordinated movement) or seriality (only one pattern can exist at a time and the instructions are executed sequentially) (Hinton, 1989). Visual memory is also explained in terms of a connectionist model (Fildman, 1989). In associative memory pairs of patterns are stored in such a way that presentation of one member of a pair will elicit the other from the store (Willshaw, 1989).

Associative thinking is described as the process of following threads between ideas by connecting words, phrases, ideas, memories, experiences, concepts and is used all the time in comedy, innovation, problem solving, copywriting and brainstorming (Mole, 2002).

Word association is a common word game involving an exchange of words that are associated together and also a powerful research technique, introduced by Francis Galton (1880) (quoted by Sheehy, 2003) and subsequently developed by Carl Yung in 1904–07 (Collected Works, 1954), for studying human conceptual systems (word association, 2008). F. Galton looked for a link between a person's I.Q. (intelligence quotient) and word associations and did not find convincing data. Carl Jung theorized that people connect ideas, feelings, experiences and information by way of associations and that ideas and experiences are linked, or grouped, in the unconscious in such a manner as to exert influence over the individual's behaviour. He named these groupings Complexes (Boeree, 1997).

Word association also known as associative experiment (Davidov, 1983) is a test consisting of a list of words administered to the respondent, who has to respond to each word by means of the first word coming to his or her mind. This research technique has a long history and has been in use for more than a century (Sharifian, 2001). It can be of several types according to its structure, mode of application, aims etc. (Sharifian, 2001): controlled (the informant's response is constrained in terms of category, word class or concept for response selection), free (the response

is not restricted to any specific category or class of words), discrete (each participant is asked to produce only a single association to each word, Dollinger, Levin, Robinson, 1991), continued (the same stimulus word is presented several times at certain intervals for giving associative responses), continuous (the stimulus word or words are presented only once to the respondents who are asked to give as many associations as they can in a pre-specified period of time), successive (presenting the whole list of stimuli several times).

A word association technique is widely used in solving a number of practical problems. It is applicable in public opinion research (WAPOR), which advances the use of science in the field of inquiry to collect necessary information about public likes and dislikes and use it in advertizing and attracting the customers (Mole, 2002). It provides possibilities to compare the first and the last word of associations, repetition of words and pathways of associations, treatment of people with some psychological problems, visualization of concept associations, using concept density maps (Van Eck, Frasincar and Den Berg, 2006), proper message by market researchers, level of anxiety of students in different classroom activities, unconscious associations (Boeree, 1997, Green, 2008), conceptual knowledge organization (Colgan, 1998), effect of multimodal stimuli on associative learning (Jordan, 2008), thesaurus construction (Spiteri, 2002), etc.

A word association technique applies different types of questionnaires: a table with two columns (first column – list of stimulus words, second column – associated words), sentence completion (a list of sentences to be finished with more than one example for each sentence (Word association, 1999), list of stimulus words with spaces to fill in the associated words at a given time under a given situation.

Category learning can be accomplished by means of multiple cognitive forms that depend on different brain systems: analogical reasoning (Goswami, 2001), concept clustering, concept hierarchies, connectionism. Taxonomies of concept hierarchies are crucial for knowledge-based systems, including ecological and environmental sciences (Cimiano, Hotto, Staab). Connectionism is a paradigm in cognitive science, which is used in the fields of artificial intelligence and cognitive psychology, neuroscience (Knowlton, 1999), philosophy of mind. It models mental and behavioural phenomena as networks, each composed of a large number of simple units. The material basis of these networks is given by the achievements of neurophysiology in studying nerve synapses. This link of connectionism to neuroscience is called biological realism and is criticized as reductionism. Nevertheless, the brain has built in capacities for connecting the studied information with that already processed, organized and stored (Blakeslee, 1990). As early as the embryonic period the long axons of neurons "travel" through the brain looking for

corresponding receiving stations in order to make communication connections. This process continues after birth and experience shapes the brain throughout life. Synaptic connections and modifications are involved in the learning process (Levine, 2000). Their understanding helps to use the association technique successfully for the improvement of learning.

The analysis of the mentioned studies supports the assumption that development and use of a word association test is a scientific technique for obtaining valuable and reliable results, whose interpretations can help to make some insights into understanding and assessing students' geographical and environmental conceptual systems.

This study's aim is to investigate the geographical and environmental conceptual systems of students in the 8th grade in Bulgaria with different scientific interests and students in the same grade in Turkey with different social status and assess the number and directions of connections using the free word association test.

## Material and method

The method used in the investigation of the students' conceptual geographical and environmental systems was a *continuous free word association test.* This is a reliable technique used as a procedure for measuring the number, direction and strengths of connections (Cramer, 1968; Nelson, 1998). The word association test in our investigation was applied as a second task after priming, using 40 scientific terms (Kostova and Atasoy, 2008). The first task was as follows: 8th grade students of four schools from Bulgaria and Turkey (B1, B2, T1, T2) were presented a table of 40 scientific concepts and were asked to mark the concepts they knew, then to choose five of them they knew best and explain them. The second task was a continuous free word association test using eight stimulus words. Only one word – environmental problem – was included in the two tables.

The investigation sample of students' associations of environmental concepts includes two groups (B1 and B2) of students from two Bulgarian schools in Sofia and two groups (T1 and T2) of students from two Turkish schools in Bursa. The two Bulgarian groups were different: students in group B1 had no specialized interest in biology whilst those in group B2 had a special interest in biology and had passed an entrance biology exam, choosing this area for future professional orientation. Group T1 is representative of students with low social status, whilst T2 represents students of higher social status in Turkey. There were 92 participants from Bulgaria, of which 40 in B1 and 52 in B2. There were 82 participants from Turkey, 36 in

T1, and 46 in T2. The investigation took place during the 2005/2006 school year. It should be pointed out that the groups from both Bulgaria and Turkey are not representatives for the countries as a whole and for this reason the results of this investigation cannot be used to make general conclusions about the geographical and environmental concept associations of all students. Our aim is not to compare the two countries but to compare samples T1 and T2 with respect to the social status of the students and B1 and B2 with regard to the students' interest in biology. And although the two groups from Turkey and Bulgaria are not identical they include students of the same age who study subjects with comparable contents. Therefore, some data can be obtained about positive aspects and shortcomings of geographical and environmental education in the two countries and about the influence of culture on environmental concept associations.

Data was collected using a questionnaire, administered to each student and constructed as a table with two columns. The first column represented the stimulus words; the second column was with blanks for students to fill in their associations with each word (Table 1)

**Table 1.  A model of word association test**

| Stimulus words | Associations |
|---|---|
| 1.  Nature | |
| 2.  Environmental (E) problem | |
| 3.  Biosphere | |
| 4.  Biodiversity | |
| 5.  Nutrition | |
| 6.  Ecosystem | |
| 7.  Cycle of matter | |
| 8.  Global warming | |

The participants were asked to write on the blank shown next to each presented word all free associations with it in the order they came to mind in three minutes' time. The stimulus words were 8 scientific terms written in Bulgarian for Bulgarian students and in Turkish for Turkish students. After completing the lists, they were collected for analysis.

## Results

Each student's paper was analyzed and the total number as well the as average (the mean) of associations were counted (Table 2, Fig. 1). The four groups vary. The students having special interest in biology (B1) gave the greatest number of associations. Students with a high social status (T1) also demonstrated a high number of associations. The number of geographical and environmental associations of B1 and T1 is much lower (Table 1, Fig 2).

Table 2.  Groups and stimulus words

| Groups Stimulus words | B1–40 students | | B2–52 students | | T1–36 students | | T2–46 students | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | total | average | total | average | total | average | total | average |
| 1.  Nature | 147 | 3.67 | 292 | 5.61 | 112 | 3.11 | 177 | 4.42 |
| 2.  E. problems | 71 | 1.77 | 171 | 3.28 | 81 | 2.25 | 146 | 3.65 |
| 3.  Biosphere | 54 | 1.35 | 185 | 3.55 | 1 | 0.02 | 24 | 0.67 |
| 4.  Biodiversity | 77 | 1.92 | 167 | 3.21 | 9 | 0.25 | 59 | 1.48 |
| 5.  Nutrition | 104 | 2.60 | 171 | 3.30 | 93 | 2.58 | 117 | 2.93 |
| 6.  Ecosystem | 44 | 1.1 | 107 | 2.05 | 72 | 2.00 | 53 | 1.32 |
| 7.  Cycle of matter | 70 | 1.75 | 112 | 2.15 | 28 | 0.77 | 50 | 1.25 |
| 8.  Global warming | 63 | 1.57 | 121 | 2.32 | 39 | 1.08 | 118 | 2.95 |
| Total/average | 630 | 15.8 | 1324 | 25.5 | 435 | 12.1 | 744 | 16.2 |

The greatest number of associations in the four groups was retrieved from the word nature. This may be because nature was the first word in the table or probably because some words in the primer test were connected with it.

The stimulus word nature is most commonly associated with representations from living matter (Table 2, Fig 1): representatives of flora – plants, trees, flowers, grass, bushes, leaves, fruit, greenery or fauna – animals, butterflies, fish, rabbits, deer, birds, etc. Some of the representations are synonyms (flora, plants; fauna, animals), others are the result of different classification systems (grass, bushes, trees) or denote characteristics of flowering plants (flowers, fruit) or animal (bird songs). Still others are parts of plants (leaves) or have their effect on man (greenery). Non-living matter as a generalization is represented by 2 associations from 147 (B1), 12 association from 292 (B2), 9 associations from 112 (T1) and 5 associations from 177 (T2). Parts of non-living matter are retrieved as follows: 15 (B1), 44 (B2), 14 (T1) and 7 (T2). The students connect nature with the Earth, Moon, ores, minerals, air, water, the Sun, stars, the Earth's spheres (atmosphere,

**Figure 1. Average value of students' environmental associations.**
**X: 1–8 stimulus words; Y: average of the number of associations**
**for each stimulus word of each group B1, B2, T1, T2.**
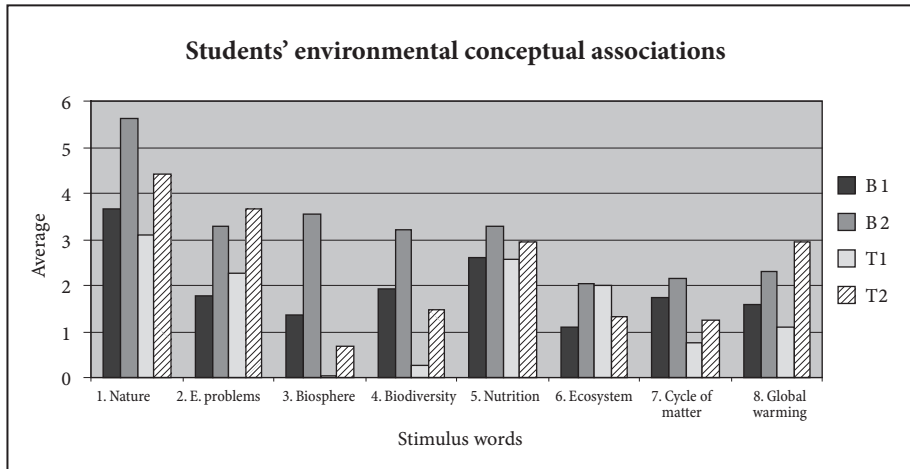


**Figure 2. Average number of students' environmental**
**associations for each group**
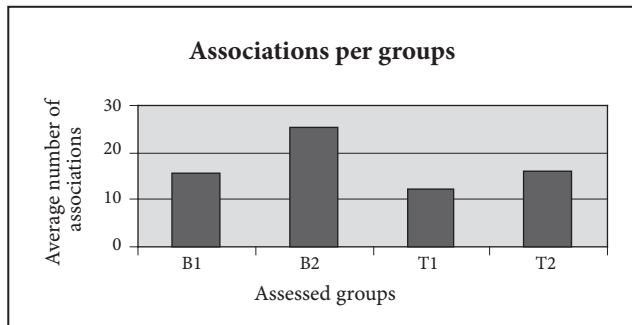


lithosphere, hydrosphere), the sky, oxygen, soil, the Universe, rocks, etc. Many associations are geographical terms: mountains, seas, oceans, lakes, rivers, meadows, parks, forests, etc. and show the geographical culture of the students. Few associations are generalizations: surrounding environment, natural environment, living nature, organisms, non-living nature. Nature is also connected with people, walks, cleanness, calmness, beauty, freshness, recreation, environmental problems and pollution as one of them. Plants and animals as words associated with nature

predominate in groups B1 and B2. The same holds true for groups T1 and T2. In T1 besides these two words many students point out the generalization living creatures. The students in T2 retrieve natural (living) environment, living creatures and people besides plants and animals. Words, such as natural environment, hydrosphere, lithosphere, atmosphere, plants, animals, natural resources, national park, exist in the priming test.

In group B2 the associations reflect biological classification (prokaryotes, eukaryotes; microorganisms, viruses, fungi, fish, unicellular organisms) and are much more concrete with examples (deer, rabbit, squirrel, fish, hazelnut, St. John's Wort). They are also broader in scientific scope (ecology, jungle, biosphere, substances, physical bodies) and connected with natural phenomena (rain, bird songs, evolution of species, natural disasters, food chains). Some reflect personal perceptions (calmness, cleanness, beauty), sensitivity to the quality of the environment (pollution) or the need for taking care of it (protection). This is probably due to environmental education and the students' interests in natural sciences.

In group T2 some associations show explanations (not made by man, not changed by man, not ruled by man, environmental equilibrium), significance (environment for living things, natural resources, recreation sites), personal perceptions (my home, the place I live in, what I can see, my sister's name, freedom for animals, rural places, environmental problems). Past experience and science education have shaped the students' associations. The social status plays its role as well. The students having access to a better education have constructed broader and deeper conceptual systems.

The stimulus word environmental problem has also evoked many associations but not as many as the word nature. In the four groups the students connect this word with pollution of the different components of nature (air, water, soil), pollutants (industrial or domestic waste, cancer causing substances, noise, repelling odor), ozone layer and natural resources depletion, deforestation, biodiversity degradation, natural disasters (fires, floods, erosion), global warming, greenhouse effect, effects on nature (aggression towards nature, disturbance of environmental equilibrium, landslides, vegetation destruction, earthquakes) and on man (diseases, lack of food, lack of fresh water, starvation). Besides different types of global environmental problems, the students connect the stimulus word with the causes (human irresponsibility, poaching, smoking, wars, industrial accidents, overhunting, human lack of care and sensitivity, unplanned building, industrialization, factories, acid rains, transport, ignorant politicians, bad policies). Very few associations are concerned with measures for environmental protection and environmental problems solution (Red data book, scientific research, NGOs). In B2 and

T2 the associations are broader in scope, more generalized and socially oriented, greater in numbers, more personally connected and included in larger conceptual structures. They reflect cause and effect relationships and some are connected with consequences for the future of mankind. The effect of education and scientific orientation is convincing. The students reflect on environmental culture in their communities and retrieve the words domestic waste, solid waste, rubbish, refuse, scraps. In T1 and T2 pollution is represented by a greater number of associations (waste, industrial waste, chemical waste, pollution of the environment, pollution of air, water, soil, noise pollution, automobile waste, etc.). The word environmental problem was represented in the priming test and the words greenhouse effect, erosion, acid rains, problems of the ozone layer, cancer causing substances, salinity and industrial technologies. The priming words had their positive effect on the associative thinking of the students. Three students in group B1 did not show any associations with the word environmental problem. In groups T1 and T2 some students did not respond, either. We cannot tell whether this is because they were embarrassed with the stimulus word or whether they had too many associations and that confused them in choosing which one to begin with.

The stimulus word biosphere evoked a small number of connections. The two groups in Bulgaria differ from the two groups in Turkey. In B1 and B2 this word is connected mainly with living organisms, many plants and animals, but two students from B1 and 13 students from B2 gave correct definitions of the concept. Biosphere caused the retrieval from memory of the words many people, life, nature, everything around, air, sun, atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, etc. In B1 seven students did not give any answers and in B2 – only one student. In B2 single associations are given, such as living nature, ecosystems, biological equilibrium, biological kingdoms, etc. In T1 only one student connected biosphere with atmosphere and the others did not answer. In T2 group biosphere was connected with the Earths' spheres, the planet Earth, environment for living things, all living things biodiversity, biogeochemical cycles, environment for living things and human beings, but 28 students did not answer (Table 4). The students from Bulgaria gave more associations with respect to this word, which can be due to the early introduction of the term in the textbooks. Nevertheless, the term biosphere probably is not well represented and explained in the textbooks of both countries, which was the cause for the poor results. There was not a direct word for priming biosphere, but some indirect words were included in the priming test, such as environmental equilibrium, ecological pyramid of energy, sustainable development.

The stimulus word biodiversity is better understood than the word biosphere. The greatest number of connections are with plants (12 in B1, 26 in B2, 3 in T1, 10

in T2), animals (14 in B1, 27 in B2, 2 in T1, 9 in T2), diversity (12 in B1 and B2), biological species (4 in B1, 25 in B2, 3 in T1, 15 in T2), plant species, animal species (6 in T2), plant diversity (8 in T2), animal diversity (6 in T2), living organisms (4 in B1, 9 in B2, 3 in T2). Single associations are with fungal species, human beings (all groups), nutritive products, biological peculiarities, fruit vegetables, water and land organisms (T2). The students in B1 associate biodiversity with types, kinds, termites, bones, muscles, nutrition and behaviour. The students from B2 associate biodiversity with insects, prokaryotes, eukaryotes, bacteria, kingdoms, unicellular, invertebrates, vertebrates, mammals, herbivorous, carnivorous, omnivorous, sub-species, monkeys and biology. Two students in B1 and one in T2, seven students in B2 give definitions of biodiversity. One student from T2 connects biodiversity with photosynthesis. Only four students in B2 connect the word with endangered species. Some words connected with biodiversity are included in the priming test – populations, biotope, biome and endemic species.

The data shows understanding of biodiversity mainly at the level of organisms, but not at the genetic or ecosystem level of diversity. This fact is due to the biological contents of the science textbooks in both countries. It is difficult and not necessary to include molecular and supraorganismic levels of biodiversity in the 8th grade textbooks but they should be included in the next grades. Nevertheless, the term is poorly represented in the textbooks and probably the students were not engaged in taking care of endangered species in their vicinity, which could be the cause of poor experience and poor associations (Table 4).

The stimulus word nutrition is very rich in associations, especially in groups T1 and T2. Some students give definitions of nutrition as a biological process, mention the stages – ingestion, digestion and ejection and the digestive system (7 in B1, 12 in B2), others connect it with human nutrition, eating, drinking (12 in B1, 8 in B2). Some think of meals – breakfast, lunch, dinner, dessert (8 in B1, 9 in B2, 6 in T1, 8 in T2), others of nutritive products – fish, meat, eggs, honey, yoghurt, milk, cheese, bread, fruit (13 in B1, 21 in B2, 24 in T1, 13 in T2) or nutritive substances – proteins, carbohydrates, minerals (calcium), vitamins, water (7 in B1, 14 in B2, 7 in T2). Many students connect nutrition with biological necessity – satisfying hunger, very important necessity, for maintaining life (4 in B1, 10 in B2, 15 in T1 and 23 in T2). Nutrition is regarded as a source of energy for growth and development (5 in B1, 6 in B2, 6 in T1, 14 in T2), plays an important ecological role – producers, consumers, reducers, food webs (B2, T2), and is of different types – independent (photosynthesis), autotrophic, heterotrophic (T2), saprophytic (B2). It has social aspects – undernourishment, hunger (B1), restaurants (B2), table for serving meals (T2) or social status – rich, poor (T1), It reflects culture, personal and social habits

– McDonalds (B2), useful, harmful (B1), vegetarian, dietician (B1, B2), healthy, unhealthy, poisoning, fattening, regular, satiate (B2, T1, T2), diseases, anorexia, nutrition problems (B2, T2), gastroenterology, nutritive supplements, separate (B2), aesthetics – beautiful, tasty (B2), harmed by smoking and alcohol drinking (T2). Some associations reflect structural adaptations of animals – snake jaws or attitude to animals (B2). The results show that biological terms are interdisciplinary and are conceptualized on the basis of personal experience within the culture of society. Science education plays a crucial role in the development of cognitive conceptual systems, which are very dynamic and situational. The words included in the priming test are chemical fertilizers, food web, natural resources, carbohydrates, proteins, parasite, undernourishment and hunger, healthy way of life. All the students in the four groups gave associations with this stimulus word (Table 4)

The stimulus word ecosystem does not retrieve many associations and the retrieved ones are not precise. It is connected with a system of organisms (3 in B1, 5 in B2, 8 in T1, 7 in T2), with a biological system (T2) or groups of plants and animals interacting with their environment (16 in B1, 20 in B2)**,** with nature and biological species (12 in B2, 9 in B2), diversity (B1), ecological equilibrium, harmony (all groups). Some students think of concrete ecosystems (biomes) – forest, sea, lake, jungle, taiga, steppe, savanna (B2, T1), of cycle of matter, nutritive interactions (B2, T2), environmental problems, human interference, need for protection and care (all groups), a living place (T1). Words in the priming test: plants, animals, population, biotope, biome, national park probably help and direct retrieval. Many students did not give any associations, showing lack of experience due to lack of practical work at school (Table 4).

The stimulus word cycle of matter retrieved connections with concrete cycles of oxygen, nitrogen, carbon, water (all groups), exchange of substances (B1, B2), parts of cycles – evaporation, freezing, state of substances (gaseous, fluid, solid), burning, life, rains, fossils, decay, plants and animals (all groups). Some associations are with a circle and chemistry, scientific definitions, movement, repetition, eternity, periodicity, biology (B1, B2), physical and chemical change of substances, recycling (T2). Priming words: cycle of oxygen, cycle of water, carbon dioxide, salinity stimulate remembering. The results are not very satisfactory. The cycle of matter is at the basis of understanding of the concept ecosystem, but both concepts are poorly connected with sound conceptual structures.

The term global warming is associated with temperature (B1–22, B2–31, T1–4, T2–18), glaciers melting, water level raising (B1–6, B2–14, T1–6, T2–8), ozone layer depletion, greenhouse effect, sun, carbon dioxide, extinction of species, pollution, global problem (all groups), causes – anthropogenic (T2), ignorance,

irresponsibility (B2), consequences – natural disasters, deserts, floods, war, hunger (B2), poverty, droughts (T1, T2), deluge (T2), glaciation (T2), apocalypse (B2), fear, horror, panic (T2, B1), cosmetic industry (T2). The associations show awareness of nature, causes and consequences of global warming. There are no associations with measures against global warming and that can be explained with inadequacy of science syllabi and science textbooks. They frighten students with facts but do not give enough alternatives and issues. Priming words are: environmental problem, environmental equilibrium, greenhouse effect, problems of the ozone layer, industrial technologies.

The analysis of the associations that came first in the given situation shows what was on top of the students' minds at the time of the investigation (Table 3). Most of the students in the four groups thought first of living things, especially plants, when reading the stimulus word nature. The words that did not come first were non-living things, seas, oceans, lakes, flowers, air, water, rivers, meadows, sun, park, bushes, leaves, fruit, people, grass, flora, fauna. Environmental problem evoked the word pollution as the first one in all the groups. The students did not remember as first the words industrial waste, diseases, floods, soil pollution and natural disasters. The term biosphere retrieved first living organisms, definition, many animals (B1, B2) and atmosphere, the Planet (T2), but the words many people, water, prokaryotes, eukaryotes, unicellular organisms came after that. Biodiversity was first associated with diversity in general, biological species, plant and animal diversity, but living organisms, fungi, people, flowers, foods came second, third, etc. Nutrition evoked first human nutrition, meals, foods, biological definition, nutritive substances, but words as dependant nutrition, development, drinks, producers, consumers, reducers, photosynthesis did not come first. Words connected with everyday life and experience were easier to retrieve from memory than scientific terms. Ecosystem activated first the interaction of species with nature, groups of plants, a system of living things, but forests with animals, humans, system of non-living things, living place, nature and animals did not come first. Cycle of matter retrieved cycles of carbon, oxygen, water, nitrogen first, but physical condition of water, photosynthesis, evaporation did not come first. Global warming was first associated with temperature of the Planet, glaciers melting, greenhouse effect, but the words warming, droughts, deserts, human irresponsibility, apocalypse came to mind after them. The stimulus words evoked scientifically based conceptual structures which were learned in associations.

The data confirms the notion that science education and especially biology education have profound contribution to the development of cognitive conceptual structures, no matter how dynamic and unstable they are.

## Table 3.  First associations with the stimulus words

| Characteristics of the first associations for each stimulus word | | Groups | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B1 | B2 | T1 | T2 |
| 1. Nature | Living nature | 33 | 36 | 25 | 32 |
| | Nonliving nature | 0 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| | Surrounding environment | 7 | 9 | 7 | 10 |
| | Others (walk, beauty, home) | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| | **Total** | **40** | **52** | **35** | **45** |
| 2. Environmental problems | Pollution | 24 | 33 | 21 | 33 |
| | Greenhouse effect | 3 | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| | Deforestation | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | Fires, erosion | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | Natural disasters | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| | Species extinction | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | Break of environmental equilibrium | 0 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| | Environmental ignorance | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| | Measures: Red Data Book | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | **Total** | **37** | **52** | **30** | **45** |
| 3. Biosphere | Many animals | 7 | 14 | | 3 |
| | Living organisms | 13 | 20 | | 3 |
| | Nature (B1,B2), Earth spheres (T1,T2) | 8 | 2 | 1 | 7 |
| | Our planet | | | | 3 |
| | Environment | 2 | 2 | | 2 |
| | Definition | 3 | 13 | | |
| | **Total** | **33** | **51** | **1** | **18** |
| 4. Biodiversity | Plants and animals | 6 | 10 | 3 | 15 |
| | Diversity | 11 | 9 | 3 | 6 |
| | Biological species | 3 | 21 | 3 | 9 |
| | Definition | 2 | 7 | | |
| | Environment and species | 10 | 2 | | 1 |
| | **Total** | **32** | **49** | **9** | **31** |
| 5. Nutrition | Human nutrition (meals) | 18 | 15 | 7 | 6 |
| | Biological necessity | 4 | 4 | 15 | 23 |
| | Energy | 4 | 6 | 6 | 14 |
| | Nutritive substances and products | 7 | 9 | 8 | 2 |
| | Definition | 5 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| | Independent, other single associations | 2 | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| | **Total** | **40** | **52** | **36** | **46** |

| Characteristics of the first associations for each stimulus word | | Groups | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **B1** | **B2** | **T1** | **T2** |
| **6. Ecosystem** | System | 3 | 4 | | |
| | System of living things | | | 8 | 7 |
| | Plants, animals, people and environment | 9 | 25 | 4 | 1 |
| | Interaction | 3 | 9 | 2 | 1 |
| | Nature and species | 11 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| | Processes: environmental equilibrium and cycles | 3 | 3 | 3 | 13 |
| | Others: nature, environment, harmony, kingdom | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| | **Total** | **31** | **47** | **23** | **29** |
| **7. Cycle of matter** | Concrete cycles | 12 | 14 | 10 | 6 |
| | Processes | 14 | 13 | 8 | 5 |
| | Definition | 3 | 9 | | 8 |
| | Chemistry | 3 | 3 | | 3 |
| | Life, fossils, others | | 10 | 3 | 12 |
| | **Total** | **32** | **49** | **21** | **34** |
| **8. Global warming** | Temperature, climate | 18 | 24 | 4 | 18 |
| | Glaciers melting | 2 | 5 | 6 | 8 |
| | Ozone layer | 7 | 4 | 3 | 11 |
| | Sun | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| | Extinction | 1 | 4 | | |
| | Greenhouse effect | 2 | 8 | 3 | 1 |
| | Pollution | 1 | 3 | 2 | |
| | Consequences , others | 2 | 1 | 6 | 6 |
| | **Total** | **37** | **51** | **27** | **46** |

The students differ individually as far as the number and contents of retrieved associations are concerned (Table 4). The students in group B2 retrieved a greater number of associative words to each stimulus word than the students in B1. For example, with respect to the word nature the greatest number of individual associations was 13 in B2 and 9 in B1, 8 in T1 and 10 in T2. We presume that it was due to their pre-developed interest in biology, which ensures more serious studies and broader acquired knowledge. The same holds true for group T2. Having financial possibilities, the students in this group were able to attend a better school and receive a better education. Certainly their achievements are not only due to wealth but also to a scientific interest as money cannot replace studies.

Individual differences are certainly due to a scientific outlook and scientific conceptual structures established in the students' minds as a result of education and personal experience. It is also due to the plasticity of the students' thinking and memory retrieval. Some students are quicker at remembering than others.

*Emin Atasoy*

## Table 4.  Number of students per number of associations
## (SW – stimulus word; EG – experimental group)

| SW | EG | Number of associations | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 1 | B1 | | 5 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 11 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| | B2 | | 2 | 2 | 11 | 4 | 12 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| | T1 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | | | | | |
| | T2 | 1 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | | | |
| 2 | B1 | 3 | 18 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| | B2 | | 7 | 9 | 17 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 1 | | | | | |
| | T1 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| | T2 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 14 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 2 | | | | | | |
| 3 | B1 | 7 | 20 | 7 | 4 | 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| | B2 | 1 | 5 | 8 | 16 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | | |
| | T1 | 35 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | T2 | 28 | 12 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | B1 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 4 | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| | B2 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 15 | 13 | 9 | 1 | | 1 | | | | | |
| | T1 | 27 | 9 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | T2 | 15 | 15 | 7 | 6 | 3 | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | B1 | | 7 | 14 | 12 | 2 | 5 | | | | | | | | |
| | B2 | | 6 | 9 | 21 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 1 | | | | | |
| | T1 | | 10 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 4 | | | | | | | | |
| | T2 | | 14 | 12 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | |
| 6 | B1 | 9 | 19 | 11 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | B2 | 5 | 15 | 17 | 9 | 4 | 1 | | | | | 1 | | | |
| | T1 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 2 | | | | | | | | |
| | T2 | 17 | 14 | 8 | 5 | 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | B1 | 8 | 16 | 4 | 8 | 1 | | 3 | | | | | | | |
| | B2 | 3 | 11 | 22 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| | T1 | 15 | 15 | 5 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | T2 | 12 | 22 | 10 | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | B1 | 3 | 17 | 14 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | B2 | 1 | 12 | 17 | 13 | 9 | | | | | | | | | |
| | T1 | 9 | 16 | 10 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | T2 | | 14 | 11 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 2 | | | | | | |

The word association test shows that scientific interest and social status are both essential in obtaining a better education and developing broader cognitive conceptual structures. Acquired knowledge builds a broad scientific basis for further associations and conceptualization of new knowledge.

## Conclusions

Associative thinking is the first step on the road of creative thinking as it is closest to the material basis, that is, to the object of cognition. Therefore, the process of association making is at the heart of all types of learning, but the interpretation of the concept and the attitude to it depend very much on the theoretical basis upon which it is discussed. Associationists, behaviourists and constructivists differ in their appreciation of the concept of association. Associative processes take place at different levels of learning. They are those processes that lead to the development or maintenance of cognitive connections (associations) between events, behaviours, feelings, thoughts, visual images, etc.

The word presented to the target people acts as a stimulus activating the memory and extracting the words associated with it which are on top of their minds. A dynamic associative structure is created in memory that involves representations of the words themselves as well as connections to other words. This structure of scientific terms plays a critical role in any task involving familiar words. People cannot create or retrieve representations involving familiar words, without relying on pre-existing associative structures created as a result of past experience. Thus, the word association test can be used in order to reveal scientific conceptual structures.

The word association test reveals some insights into the cognition of 8th grade students, studying environmental concepts. Used as a test for assessing students' conceptual structures, the test confirms the importance of prior associative knowledge in processing everyday experience. The use of a priming test before the free word association test warms up and directs the retrieval of words, connected with the stimulus words.

Science conceptual structures depend both on the science education and culture of the community in which students grow and develop, including the climate and culture within the schools themselves. They are not the result of studying only one subject but integrate studies in all subjects with their everyday experience. The main role is played by science education incorporating environmental aspects.

There are similarities and differences between the schools within each country and between the countries, due to the similarities and differences in the syllabi

and curricula, the methods of teaching, social status, interests in science of the learners. The students with special interests in biology and geography (in Bulgaria) and the students with high social status (in Turkey), attending elite schools gave associations greater in number and broader in scope than the students, attending ordinary schools. Additionally, geography and biology subjects are part of social studies and science education in Turkey. But, geography and biology is a seperate subject in Bulgaria.

The students from the four groups show connections with proper scientific words to the eight stimulus words: nature, environmental problem, biosphere, biodiversity, nutrition, ecosystem, cycle of matter, global warming. The students in all the groups give the greatest number of associations with the word nature, second in rank comes the word nutrition for B1 and T1, biosphere for B2 and environmental problem for T2.

There are individual differences in the speed and number of retrieval. The students from B2 and T2 thought faster and gave a greater number of associations than the students from B1 and T1. More students from B1 and T1 did not give connections to some of the stimulus words than students in B2 and T2.

The study points out some shortcomings of school subjects, curricula and modes of teaching. Measures for nature and biodiversity protection are barely discussed and poorly understood. Besides, the students are not involved in activities for environmental protection and improvement. Different strategies of teaching facilitating the building of associations, such as a content analysis and mind map clustering, intellectual concept map construction, visualization of conceptual structures, etc., are hardly used in school practice.

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# Student's
# Preconception of Children's Life Quality

## Abstract

The study was conducted within the Research project no. 406/06/0035 – *"Life Quality of Children and Adolescents"* managed by Prof. PhDr. Jiří Mareš, CSc. from the Faculty of Medicine of Charles University in Hradec Králové. The article (2006) provides theoretical assumptions for the solution and proposed methodology for research from the teacher students' point of view.

**Key words:** *life quality, preconception, contextual knowledge, teacher student, the questionnaire; a tool to identify; the teacher preconception of the children's life quality.*

## Introduction

In our paper we will try to analyze some results (sub results) of the study commissioned by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic. The study was conducted within the Research project no. 406/06/0035 – "Life Quality of Children and Adolescents" managed by Prof. J. Mareš from the Faculty of Medicine of Charles University in Hradec Králové. The title of the initial theoretical study was *the Preconception of Children's Life Quality and Teacher Knowledge* and this year we will continue. Our article (2006) provides theoretical assumptions for the solution and proposed methodology (cf. the Annex).

Identifying the sense of scientific research into the "preconception of children's life quality" in education is a way to better understand the holistic approach to a child in the role of a pupil. The holistic approach makes it possible to upgrade

the image of a pupil as a "head (brain) attending school lessons" which is still very frequent in the transmissive model of knowledge passed at current schools.

This year we will try to provide answers to a couple of research issues. In this paper we will focus on one of the key issues. We will be interested in the following: which beliefs do students of the Primary School Teaching express in their approach to the **impact of their preconception of the life quality of children on education and teaching process at school.**

## Subject matter of the research

A changed view of a child and childhood in teacher training and practice has emerged and has been tackled from various standpoints in the Czech Republic (studies by Z. Helus, 1996, 2001) and abroad (G. Kapica, 2007). The question is how to make the teacher adopt a new concept of the child in the role of a pupil, avoid manipulating with the child, still respecting the *specific character of children's life phase* when the child is developing during primary education.

A new context in the view of the child in the role of a pupil makes it possible to adopt the meaning of the term "life quality" that was thoroughly mapped by J. Mareš, for the purpose of the team research (2005, 2006). We proceeded from the life quality definition provided by the World Health Organization, adopted by the Head Coordinator of the research: *"The term means individual perception of the child's position in life, within the context of culture and value system the individual is living in; it shows the individual's approach to his/her own objectives, expected values and interests…and in a complex way covers his/her somatic health, mental condition, the level of independency, social relations, his/her beliefs, religion – all those in relation with the key characteristics of the environment… The life quality shows subjective evaluation occurring within a certain cultural, social and environmental context…the life quality is not identical with the terms…"health condition"…"life satisfaction"…"mental condition" or "welfare". It is rather a multi-dimensional term."* (2006, p. 25, after WHO, 1993).

It can be assumed that the teacher's subjective understanding of the term "life quality of children" is a significant quality in the teacher's professionalism and should become the subject matter of his/her reflection by means of a structured tool which, in our case, rests in a questionnaire.

For our research task we identified the term "life quality of children" as contextual knowledge of a student of the primary school teaching; it will enable the student to enter the process of primary education transformation, so much needed at present. The view of the "life quality of children" as a starting point for the

teacher's understanding of the child in the role of a pupil and an assumption of the teacher's concept of the teaching process at school can upgrade the change context from highlighting of mental (namely cognitive) processes to looking for links with children's health, social skills and spiritual development (cf. the Levels of Children's Development, Lukášová-Kantorková, 2003, p. 55).

We were interested in whether the term life quality of children is subjectively significant for students of primary school teaching.

We conducted a test analysis of the students' pre-concept of the term "life quality of children" in the education and teaching process at school. What do the students think about their subjective approach to the life quality of children and its reflection in their professional activities in education and teaching? Does their own opinion on the approach to the term "life quality of children" have any impact on their practical procedures selected during the education and teaching process at school?

## Empiric research – the sample, procedure and methodology

In 2006 we conducted preliminary research of the pre-conceptions of 38 primary teaching students by means of a questionnaire that was based on the questionnaire for the primary school pupils research conducted by J. Mareš. His questionnaire was adapted and its modified version applied during the preliminary research into students was published in the form of initial information in the Research Miscellany 2006 (Lukášová in Mareš 2006, pp. 79–80). This paper will also provide the results of the research conducted with the 1st and 2nd grade students of regular and combined study of the Primary School Teaching (Teacher Training College of Ostrava University).

We will be dealing with one questionnaire item only: *"Currently there are two different opinions on whether teachers' understanding of the life quality of children has an impact on the education and teaching process at school. What is your opinion? Please select your own approach and complete the following sentences: 1) One group of people states that the teacher's preconception of the life quality of children has an impact on their acting during the education and teaching process because…. 2) The second group states that the teacher's preconception of the life quality of children has no impact on their acting during the education and teaching process because…".* The exact wording of the students' statements were copied in the report and assorted according to the individual age groups. Then the qualitative analysis of the content of the students' statements followed; they were assorted according to their common attributes (cf. the research results below).

The research sample (**111** students altogether) was split according to age because the age of a future teacher can be a significant factor in arguments presented by primary teaching. For the above reason we selected **four age groups** of students: 1) students under 20; 2) 21–30-year old ones; 3) 31–40-year old ones; 4) 41–50-year old ones. "Older students" are those attending the combined study, thus completing their education after some years of teaching as unqualified teachers.

| Group number: | Age category: | Students number: | The sample split into age groups – in % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. ( no. 43) | Less than 20 | **43** | 39.1 |
| 2. ( no. 44–73) | 21–30 | **31** | 27.2 |
| 3. (no. 74–101) | 31–40 | **28** | 25.5 |
| 4. (no.102–110) | 41–50 | **9** | 8.2 |
| Total: | | **111** | **100%** |

## Research results and their interpretation

In this part of the research evaluation we will pay attention to the student's responses in group 4. We were interested in their response to the question: "Does our preconception of the life quality have an impact on the education and teaching process at school?" We identified five kinds of answers: 1) Yes – it does; 2) No – it does not 3) Yes and No 4) I don't know 5) the answer was missing. The answers were assorted by the student age, always into four groups according to the following categories: 1) under 20; 2) 21–30; 3) 31–40; 4) 41–50. The results are shown in the two following tables:

From the previous tables it follows that **65 % of the students** (72 of 111) in all the age categories are of the opinion that their own preconception of the life quality of children **has an impact** on their approach to their view of a pupil and teaching process.

The opposite opinion, which means **no, there is no impact**, covered by statement two, was not selected at all.

**31% of the students** (35 of 111) in all the age categories tried to find out arguments for both "**Yes** and **No**" answers, as provided below.

In the following text we will select some students' representative statements from the qualitative analysis.

**Table1:  Occurrence of answers split into type**

| Answer – type: | Absolute number: | Relative number: |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 72 | 65 |
| No | 0 | 0 |
| Yes and No | 35 | 31 |
| I don't know | 1 | 1 |
| The answer is missing | 3 | 3 |
| Total: | 111 | 100% |

**Table 2:  Occurrence of answers split into answer types and age groups of respondents**

| 1. Yes | Absolute number: | Relative number: |
|---|---|---|
| 1.1 under 20 | 26 | 23% |
| 1.2 21–30 | 21 | 19% |
| 1.3 31–40 | 22 | 20% |
| 1.4 41–50 and over | 3 | 3% |
| 2.No | | |
| 2.1 | 0 | 0 |
| 2.2 | 0 | 0 |
| 2.3 | 0 | 0 |
| 2.4 | 0 | 0 |
| 3. Yes and No | | |
| 3.1 | 14 | 13% |
| 3.2 | 10 | 9% |
| 3.3 | 6 | 5% |
| 3.4 | 5 | 4% |
| 4. I don't know | | |
| 4.1 | 1 | 1% |
| 4.2 | 0 | 0 |
| 4.3 | 0 | 0 |
| 4.4 | 0 | 0 |
| 5. No answer | | |
| 5.1 | 2 (no. 26, 33) | 2% |
| 5.2 | 1 (no. 72) | 1% |
| 5.3 | 0 | |
| 5.4 | 0 | |
| Total: | 111 | 100% |

Selected opinions of group 1 – *Yes, the teacher's preconception of the life quality of children* has an impact *on our acting during the education and teaching process because:*

- As teachers we should make children understand the above term; it will then be easier for us to lead children *to meet this objective.* The teacher should lead children in some way to establish the proper life regime, to build sound relations with their age-mates, to realise that learning is not only a "necessary evil"; they should know that *at present the education as such is a step towards good quality of life.* (no. 27)
- If we know *the life qualify of children*, we will manage to adapt ourselves and *will be able* to find a specific approach to every child, it will be possible for us to develop an appropriate motivation system, *we will be able* to find out appropriate prevention measures in case of negative phenomena occurrence. (no. 34)
- I think that it is *partly* reflected in the education and teaching process; if the teacher is able to understand the life and life style of a given pupil, the teacher then tries to help him/her. The teacher can help by understanding the pupil's environment – not everything can be done in the way the teacher would like to see…

The third approach represents an opinion that the teacher's preconception of the life quality of children has an impact on their acting during the education and teaching process, but to some extent only.

Selected opinions of group 3 where students filled in the answer **Yes and No**:

- Teachers are educated people and know quite a lot about the preconception of the life quality of children. /… they do not care about teachers' opinions and live their own life…
- The teacher views pupils from a different angle than their parents do… /… teachers can be influenced by certain factors…
- Children spend quite a lot of time with their teacher, which should have some impact. In case the teacher is excellent and is respected for his/her natural authority and motivation – it can be a good example for children. The life quality can thus be transferred into some other values. /… The teacher has no influence. Unfortunately, he/she most probably cannot change the poor life quality of some children's families. The teacher can try to change it when working with a group of children but after the teacher leaves, everything stays the same. (č. 31)
- At school the child has space for *communication* which is applicable in her/his life, as well; the teacher provides opportunities for the children's development

and cognition… / teachers have no influence at school in the area of ethics and moral. (no. 40)

• By this preconception we pass over our values to children and form them according to our own opinions/it is not possible for teachers to form or influence a human being. The teacher has not enough power and competences to be able to observe the child as a personality; the teacher only passes over the knowledge. (no. 51).

As for the content of the responses of the students of primary teaching, assorted by age groups, no significant differences have been identified. The older the students were, the more readily they selected the "Yes and No" answer and tried to formulate their arguments.

## Conclusions

From the results of part of the research it is clear that **65% of the students of primary teaching are convinced** that the teacher's preconception of the "life quality of children" has an impact on the process of education and teaching. Such an opinion is represented in all age categories, to the same extent.

**31%** of the students of primary teaching tried to formulate arguments to support the answer "Yes and No", which means that the preconception of the life quality **can but does not need to influence the teacher's acting** in the process of education and teaching.

The life quality of children is a new term in the theory of pedagogy; it is a multidimensional term covering biological, psychological, social and spiritual qualities we can take into consideration when thinking about upbringing and education. From the arguments of the respondents-students of primary teaching we can see that they always cover only one of the above aspects. In the following research phase we will analyze the **content** of the term "life quality of children" in the students' own preconceptions (in the same sample) and the preconceptions of pupils (about 12 years old). We will try to identify which qualities are the most frequent in the students' statements.

The questionnaire collecting data on the preconception of the teacher's subjective view of the "pupils' understanding of the life quality" can become a valuable tool for the reflection and self-reflection of the future teacher quality, for the identification of wide dimensions of education and humanity of man that can be implemented at school.

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## Annex: The questionnaire – a tool to identify the teacher's preconception of the life quality of children from the point of view of students of primary school teaching.

**The understanding of the term "life quality o children" – students of primary teaching**

**Jiří Mareš & H. Lukášová**

*Age: 18, 19, 20, 21, others:*
*Gender (to be circled):*
a *student (male) – a student (female) a teacher (male) – a teacher (female)*

**The years of teaching experience so-far:**

At present, research projects covering the life quality of children and adolescents have been launched all over the world. We are interested in your own understanding of this term. There are no good or bad answers. The point is to identify your individual opinions.

1. *In some magazine you will see the title* "Children's quality of life"*; if you think a little,* what *will flash through your own mind?*
2. *What will be your explanation of the title* "Children's quality of life" *to pupils of the 5th grade?*
3. *We have prepared a table which is to be completed. Imagine* three children you know, *aged 6–12, and describe them in the table as three examples. We do not want any names; just try to identify* special characteristics of their life. *Describe why you think they have bad, average or excellent quality of life.*

| *Type of a child* | *Brief description of special characteristics of the child's life* |
|---|---|
| *The child may have* bad life; *the child's life quality is not very good in my opinion; it is worse than the life quality of most children I know because…* | |
| *The child may have* normal life; *his/her life quality is average, in my opinion …..* | |

| Type of a child | Brief description of special characteristics of the child's life |
|---|---|
| *The child has* excellent life, *in my opinion his/her life quality is better than that of most of the children I know because…* | |

4. *There is common occurrence of two different opinions on whether our* pre-conception of children's life quality has or does not have any impact on the education and teaching process at school. *What do you think? Please select your own approach and complete the following sentences.*

    4.1 *One group of people would state that the preconception of children's life quality* has an impact *on our acting during the education and teaching process because…*

    4.2 *The second group would state that the preconception of children's life quality* has no impact *on our acting during the education and teaching process because…*

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# Analysis
# of Relationship Elements in Pedagogy

## Abstract

In the field of helping professions, especially in pedagogical professions, a relationship is an essential component of professional work. In this article the main characteristics of professional relationship and methods of work that enable to develop and attain the adequate professional relationship are presented. The professional relationship is also dealt with in the context of theories of various authors, who emphasize the balance of closeness and distance in the relationship as well as the concepts which help to form it.

Essential elements in the process of forming the adequate relationship are pointed out. Furthermore, the significance of pedagogical Eros and ethos in education is given along with the critical view on setting boundaries and expectations at work within the pedagogical field.

**Key words:** *relationship, pedagogy, closeness, distance, pedagogical Eros, educational style, tolerance of ambiguity, distanced roles, empathy*

> If you want to change people, you have to love them.
>
> *Pestalozzi*

> "Education is a process of life and not the preparation for future life", and the school is "…the form of everyday life in which all factors are aimed at effective orientation of a child, so that he or she can share common sources of mankind and uses his/her own powers for realization of social objectives…"
>
> *(Dewey, J., 1900, My pedagogical credo)*

## 1. Introduction

A relationship is not something to be taken for granted. It demands a variety of categories, which lead to a relationship between a pedagogue and youth/children, and those are the basics for further educational work.

The question of relationship is the core matter of professional self-evidence, because everything which is done pedagogically must be transferable through this relationship (Giesecke, 1999, p.5).

The comparisons of researches, which analytically discuss the semantics of relationships, point out important guidelines of a pedagogical relationship.

Pedagogical eros, as a condition of genuine pedagogical relationship, is a precursor of further categories, gathered through different analyses and practical experience and recognized as important in forming relationships between a pedagogue and children/youth or some other clientele (with their own specifics).

The effects of a pedagogical relationship can be found in proper steering between closeness and distance and in every time differentiations of the question of what sort of relationship is suitable in the pedagogical sense, in order for the goals to be carried out.

The term educational relationship is generally described as our representation of the relationship between adults and children. In pedagogy this phenomenon is discussed through different perspectives and can also be found in lots of different descriptions. Kron talks about a confusion of terms and forms the higher rank term of pedagogical relationship (Kron, 1994, p. 221), according to a "face to face" relationship between an educator and an educated ( cited from Klafki and Kluge). The term a pedagogical relationship is understood by him as an educational relationship, generation relationship, dialogical relationship, educational society.

In the article, we also stress the importance of growing autonomy and professional responsibility of pedagogues and other professional workers in the fields of education and social work. We also state the importance of implementing different forms and methods of work and the enhanced active role of youth and other target groups. In the article, furthermore, we present important factors that influence appropriate relationships and among them, pedagogical authority, ambiguity tolerance, empathy and distance of roles are stressed.

## 2. Analysis of pedagogical relationship contents

### 2.1. Pedagogical work in reaching appropriate relationship

A pedagogical relationship is a every special relationship which is formed between a pedagogue and his/her client. The aim of education and the whole methodological repertoire of approaches must entirely be achieved by the personal intervention of the pedagogue.

Unfortunately, we do not have a really persuasive theory that can be practically used by all practitioners who feel insecure while working with children many times.

It is a mutual process of giving and getting, where the children are not the only ones who are getting something, but also the pedagogue himself. Good contact motivates the pedagogue to work and provides him/her with ease at work.

Apparently the work of a pedagogue is not anything special. A pedagogue does the things which are done by the majority of people in their everyday life, for example: cooking, talking, keeping company to other people, etc. However, within this work, a pedagogue is creating simple, tiny threads of life, which results in creating the working field of a pedagogue.

Everyday errands with human interactions create an important opportunity for appropriate professional observation as well.

The goal of a pedagogical relationship is the upbringing and education of youth of whole pedagogical personality, because the personal spirit only develops through another personal spirit. The pedagogical effect does not come out from the system of valid values, but from primary selfness, a real human with true will adjusts to another real human. It is about primacy of educational orientation against ideas about objectivity and actuality (Giesecke, 1999).

The manner or type of a relationship between an educator and a person being educated is the core of an educational process. The clarification of structures and the meaning of a relationship is more important with missing pathos (Giescke) or, in other words, with extensive limitations on rational dimensions.

Not only clients, also experts must be aware that the everyday nearness is not meant for itself. This is something natural and intuitive, but it must, at the same time, be formed at the conscious level. It is something that always serves a certain cause. A quality relationship between a client and a professional is a condition for successful help. The relationship is of quality when the client and the professional feel each other; for the client, this represents a sign that he or she can trust the professional.

### 2.2. Characteristics of interaction in relationship between client and professional

The interaction between a client and a professional is based on two orientations. If the professional wishes to control, lead the interaction, he or she must position himself or herself, in his/her attitude towards the client, within six areas, and also develop forms which point to a mix of behavioural patterns for each example, within the following alternatives:

1. **Centralization on tasks and persons**. Both views must be balanced and a basis for a work pact between a client and a professional must be built.

2. **Symmetry and asymmetry of a relationship.** Both partners can take either a subordinate or dominant position, and show behavioural patterns, which are in contrast to other periods (within their relationship). The relationship between a social worker and a client is hardly ever symmetric and even then only for a short period; it is usually complementary. This means that reversal of roles, different, changeable functional and co-dependent behavioural patterns are possible.

3. **Flexibility and consistency**. A professional must find a good measure of flexibility, if he or she wishes to maintain a quality relationship.

4. **Acceptance and transfer of responsibility.** This is connected with the autonomy of an individual; in order for the client to become autonomous, the professional must motivate the client, trust him or her and enable them to grow as persons.

5. **Restraint and engagement**. Sometimes it makes more sense not to pressure the client, at first and to show some restraint. This leaves the client with space for self-indicative, which can be set as a goal.

6. **Nearness and distance**. This is surely one of the most difficult components in a relationship. It is hard to find the right measure of nearness and distance. If a relationship is characterized by distance the professional cannot get in touch with the client, and therefore cannot fully understand the client. On the other hand, nearness can be a problem, as it often leads to the client becoming dependent on the professional. This is one of the reasons for the »burn-out syndrome«, with which the professional is emotionally exhausted as a consequence of not being able to get away from this dependent behaviour.

We must be aware of different roles and behavioural patterns with which we experiment, we are more or less directive, distanced, confrontational… By experimenting with the roles we will come to one most productive case for an individual.

The relationship also holds great educational power – it borders the distance, which estranges the pedagogue and the protégé and homeliness appears and through this feeling, the professional steers his or her client on the path of their work. After their client is inwardly occupied, the client automatically wants to work and wishes to fulfill the tasks; in the opposite case the client would perceive it as restraint, as something toilful. (This can cause a great deal of trouble, and therefore a substantive number of clients stay at the level of being disciplined and performing their obligations.)

A pedagogical relationship is the most natural and the most perfect way to discipline. Discipline inflicted with fear, threats, which hides internal protest and a tendency towards defiance is not a way towards reaching the set goals.

### 2.3.  Basic presuppositions for a pedagogical relationship

In connection with the particularities of a pedagogical relationship, we wish to call on the fact that this is a matter of abilities and qualities which must be lived in practice by the pedagogue and cannot be comprised/facilitated as short-time practices. Kleinert (2007) states the following characteristics, as important presuppositions for a pedagogical relationship: genuinity, empathy, compassion and acceptance.

GENUINITY (harmony, congruency). The educator must not put on an act. His or her clients must be regarded as they are behaving at a given moment or in a given situation. Nevertheless, his or her own problems must not burden them while at work. The clients are quick to see through a facade, and when it falls down, we become more vulnerable. We can and must show our feelings, we must react to some things in a spontaneous manner and admit our mistakes; all those abilities are what we are actually teaching our clients in the institution. Despite the changing current sensitivity, the educators must constantly ask themselves if their attitude towards their clients is generally positive.

EMPATHY. The educators must actually be psychically totally and completely with their clients. They must be able to obtain their world of sensing things.

Empathy means a sensibility to the growing-up person as well as to clients in general. This does not mean that we become one with the client, as then we would not be able to help our client as competent adults. So, a partial distance is also constantly needed, towards empathy, otherwise it is difficult to enable appropriate scenarios of solving problems. This is merely an experiment to actually understand the kids, our clients.

COMPASSION. Despite all the distance, the educator or pedagogue must make the child feel a sense of understanding, compassion, a feeling of true caring for the child. A right measure of compassion and distance is needed.

ACCEPTANCE (respect). The educator or pedagogue must face the client in an objective manner, without prejudice, and also accept their positive and negative aspects. The child, client must be assessed as an individual, not as someone molded by the educator or pedagogue. That is how the client knows that there is someone who understands him or her, who knows what they are like and what they feel; he or she feels loved, approved by someone and accepted by someone. The professional worker must set himself/herself a goal to build a warm, genuine relationship with the child or minor, and with this also accepting the child for what they are. All children, even the most disruptive and the most difficult ones, have many good points in their behaviour, which we can recognize. The educator or pedagogue must constantly be aware that each child is unique and also that each one has developed their own strategies, which are based on specific experience. It is often hard for adults to understand the sense of a child's behavioural pattern. Especially with children it is very important not only to assess them negatively, but also recognize motives, which enable the understanding of trouble, learning of new skills, abilities and strategies.

### 2.4.  Other abilities forming a good pedagogical relationship

Continuing abilities of an educator, necessary for building a good pedagogical relationship are the following:

ACTIVE LISTENING. This is a method which enables the child the experience of being taken seriously. We focuse on the child trying to read between the lines, consider their mimics and gesticulations. Simply put, we repeat what we have heard, to check if the child understood correctly, we mirror the contents or feelings. With this we enable the child to get more intense access to his or her thoughts or feelings. Those that master the skill of active listening, automatically practise understanding, turn to the child and show empathy.

TENDENCY TOWARDS ABILITIES. There is a contrast of tendency to a problem. In social and pedagogical professions we are over subjected to psychological optics, so our attention is drawn to people's deficits. When institutions speak of children, they usually speak of problematic children. Through their abilities we adopt the logic which claims that there is no one in this world who does not know a single thing. This is how we can, on the one hand, see the child's deficits, weaknesses, mistakes and problems; on the other hand, we can see their handicraft skills, beautiful facial expressions, sense of humour, strength, energy… Through glasses which see childrens' abilities, the child experiences a different type of respect towards him/ herself. A tendency towards abilities gives him/her the taste of soup, a tendency to problems is searching for a hair in the soup.

THE ABILITY OF REINTERPRETATION. This is an ability which helps us see things in a different light. If a problem is lit from the other side (in a different light), it often disappears completely.

The education or pedagogical relationship is also achieved by raising the living standards, and acquiring additional professionals. To guarantee work quality a good spirit is needed, as this is what marks the work of an institution.

### 2.5.  Socrates oath for pedagogues

The characteristics of a pedagogical relationship can also be explained by a minimal consensus by Socrates oath for pedagogues. It can also be used as an educator's ideal:

>*»As an educator (teacher, pedagogue) I solemnly swear,*
>*To mind the peculiarity, uniqueness of each child,*
>*To honour their feelings and experience,*
>*To support their strengths, virtues and*
>*help them accept and conquer their weaknesses,*
>*challenge and develop their dispositions,*
>*encourage to fulfillment of obligations and try to persuade them of the urgency of*
>    *such actions,*
>*help them develop through learning and solve their own problems,*
>*I will not misuse my experience advantage (e.g. with agitation, indoctrination),*
>*I will constantly improve my knowledge and abilities.«*

<div align="right">(Giesecke 1999:272)</div>

### 2.6.  Pedagogic relationship as a basis for conducing pedagogic methods

A pedagogic relationship serves as a basis for conducing pedagogic methods. Nohl (Giesecke 1999) says that education is a passionate relationship of a mature person with a becoming person, and exists for that person alone, to get to their own life and its form.

Procedures, functions and effects of a pedagogical relationship can be labelled as:
- A reciprocal relationship, mutuality, a relationship of interacting ,
- Targeting towards individual development,
- Non – forced,
- Group relationship,
- Differentiation of a pedagogical relationship,
- Intensity level and duration (›capability of growth‹).

The relationship can also be influenced by:

- Group climate,
- The influence of external factors (day of the week, after writing a demanding exam, after a conflict),
- The fact that someone is being wronged,
- Current mood,
- Psychic vitality, exhaustion.

When the children, clients are in a state of psychological insecurity, they can be won over and offered some security in an expert manner (e.g. departing for home or not: conflict at home; possible routes – we can go home with them, and create an unforgettable weekend…) (Schilling 1995).

A pedagogical relationship can be labelled as a permanent experiment of keeping a balance between target groups, situations and specific living worlds and sensible and rational services.

## 3. Pedagogical ethos and eros

Ethos of an educational institution is in the consensus of value on each moral principle, which is perceived as obvious in educational work. Principles as such are usually not written down explicitly, but they do set some kind of cultural – ideal subsystem of behaviour and relationships, which are most recognizable in borderline situations, mostly with disciplinary violations. Giesecke (1999) says that the school ethos is also recognizable through communication and management leaning towards consensus.

The pedagogical eros is connected with the human picture, which is shown to young people as partners in an educational process. It is given by educational contents which construct a pedagogical relationship. The pedagogical ethos is therefore recognizable in a pedagogic relationship, behavioural culture and connecting of the protégés, educators and management – and not a stance of efficiency and market-oriented competition according to the system of winning or losing (Gronemeyer 1996).

The appraisal of acceptance is understood as a tendency which is registered with young people and based on pedagogical understanding, which prevents young people from leaving these institutions as disbanded troupes. The pedagogical eros is always in relationship to itself and to its own stands and values, but it also applies to errors and shortages. Acceptance of values as an elementary human tendency contains love without additional liabilities and conditions. This is at the same

time, a tendency towards itself and unselfishness. It does not depend on situations, operating, ways of behaviour, but of a life's tendency, which is drilled and practised all the time (von Hentig 1993).

That is why working on the pedagogical eros is an important ingredient of pedagogues' professionalization. The quality of an institution is in a complementary relationship between the ethos of the school and the eros of professionals.

Eros is, because of its platonic nature, put into an asexual sphere of love, which is viewed as a pedagogical eros between the educator (teacher, pedagogue) and the person being raised.

Pedagogical eros is a diverted maternal instinct. The difference between them is that the maternal instinct is most genuine in the relationship with a mother's own children, while the pedagogical eros pertains to all humans. (Gogala 2005:121).

Gogala emphasizes that the pedagogical eros does not ruin the teacher's authority, but it can actually deepen it: »Personal educator's love does not make the teacher an indulgent good fellow, but gives them a deeper and more understandable view of the children's life, a view that is only accessible to a person in a direct and warm personal relationship with other people. That is why the pedagogical eros does not harm the teacher in a school, or make him or her the authority, but opens their student's souls […]« (Gogala, in: Kroflič 2000).

Gogala realized that an erotic relationship establishes a positive contact, a transfer relationship, which only enables the establishment of a personal authority (Kroflič, ibis). He was aware of the danger of becoming overly sentimental and of spoiling children, which must be exceeded with "the uniting of a pedagogical eros with righteousness, consciousness and consistency" (Kroflič, ibid).

Three levels of a pedagogical eros are known:
1.  personal pedagogical eros (student),
2.  Factual pedagogical eros (values),
3.  pedagogical eros for molding (upbringing, education).

Personal pedagogical eros (pertaining to the student) is a true loving relationship of an educator for someone that the educator is responsible for molding. The essence of the eros is that the person being raised is important for the educator, but he or she has an emotional tendency towards the student. This could also be interpreted as a maternal instinct.

Factual pedagogical eros (pertaining to values) presents the attitude towards culture and is of psycho-methodical character: psychological meaning that one always manages to make others enthusiastic about something, if you yourself believe in it; methodical being the one enabling the transfer of such enthusiasm – a medium between the educator and the person being educated.

Pedagogical eros for molding (pertaining to upbringing and education) contains the inner-most part of a pedagogical spirit and powers the other two components of the pedagogical eros.

The pedagogical eros has the highest psychological reaction, as the children, the clients grow fond of it.

A pedagogue must respect the person (meaning their client), their humanity – elementary human values, which we all have, no matter what the developmental phase, parent status, and abundance of the categories that differentiate us.

The child's abilities should be respected, as this is the only way for the child to start respecting him/herself as well! Furthermore, we must also respect their yet undiscovered abilities, and find them.

The uniqueness of their individuality, and their obstinacy must also be respected. Their beliefs should not be despised or degraded; even if it is false, it will balance itself out through the upbringing. Imagine a vine, a bean – all climbing plants have knots, have sideways, but they are still growing onwards!

The student's own will and personal independence must also be respected, as such a relationship diverts from autocracy and dominance, in the bud; a respectable manner is needed, which does not lower the necessary pedagogic authority, as the pedagogue is responsible for vital, social ( in the context of being able to handle the environment and oneself and mental maturity. This is nothing aggressive, violent, but a sign of a competent, culturally richer older person giving guidance. This is a matter of personal and professional authority, which is comradely, and appreciates and respects an individual.

The contact is formed by the pedagogical eros and a respectful attitude towards the client, protégé, tenant… This also enables the pedagogue to get to know their student better, which is a basis of their work. The more authentic, the more personal is the attitude of a pedagogue towards the presented material, topic, the more easily he or she will succeed in gaining contact and that their work will bring the desired results. If they themselves are enthusiastic about it, this enthusiasm will transfer itself to others as well.

An element of good practice is the demand for abandonment. Abandonment is experiencing an emotional reaction to the human's life situation. Genuine amiability changes an emotion of tension into abandonment and directness. Abandonment is a good binder (summarized after: Gogala 2005).

## 4. Proximity and distance

Proximity and distance are inevitable tasks in a social and pedagogical field of expertise. Also inevitably we encounter a challenge, how to, on the one hand, fulfill our formal business role with competence and on the other hand, how to allow limited personal, emotionally managable relationships (Dörr/Müller 2007).

From the view point of pedagogy oriented into the world (Thiersch 2007), tasks can create a suitable balance between proximity and distance at those three intertwined levels:

- the balance between personal proximity and distance (between professional and lived in worlds, meaning the life position of their clients),
- the balance between proximity and distance of one's own logic of interests and self-evaluated cognition of needs for professional work,
- balance between proximity and distance of one's own logic and interests of organizational, infrastructure and economic conditions of professional interventions.

Upbringing is always a relationship between people (Sommer-Himmel 2005:12) and constant pursuit of balance between proximity and distance in the relationship between a pedagogue and protégé (client):

- is the current happenings between the educator and the person being educated;
- the current relationship includes the protégé and the educator;
- a relationship and »inner« processes of both persons are in a joint constellation of inter human relationship in the upbringing;
- within these problems, interaction and communication are used as the focal concepts.

Proximity and distance (König, in Sommer-Himmel 2005:13):

|  | Productive effects | Difficult part |
|---|---|---|
| Proximity | Protection, security<br>Safety<br>Support and base<br>"warmth" and understanding | Dependence<br>Control<br>Power |
| Distance | Ability to distinguish<br>Ability to develop themselves<br>Experience of independence, Self-efficiency and inner control | Lack of attachment<br>Superficiality of a relationship<br>isolation |

Proximity and nearness are, in concrete practice, connected with questions of boundaries, which we set between clients and pedagogues. This is an elementary problem, stating that pedagogical activities cannot be performed without clarity and finalization on mutual expectations and possibilities. This type of discussion on limits and setting of limits is usually a reduction of a problem with expectations of order, structures and subordination.

Pedagogical activity (Thiersch 2007:43) should be understood as a balance between proximity and distance, which is insured with reflexivity, methodological transparency and contractual liability. Alongside theoretical foundations, one must also be aware that exercise is obligatory; meaning casuist work.

Müller (2007:155)defines the control of things and people near, as trust maybe even as just (or foremost) an experiment, to hang on and slowly try to decompose the fear, hatred, manipulations and seduction, which is not organizationally or pedagogically incorrect. This process is especially difficult in juvenile facilities and pedagogical institutions.

## 5.  Some important categories, which co-form a professional pedagogical relationship

Why is a qualification in establishing relationships needed? What is it that pedagogues need to know and be ware of? Theoretical knowledge is needed, as pedagogues can no longer gain directives and strategies on the basis of their own life experiences. Life experiences of pedagogues are as a rule different from experience of children. Even the experience of these children, when they grow up will be different from the experience of their pedagogues. Pedagogues do not have, on the basis of their life experience alone, knowledge broad enough or notions evident enough, of previous and future life environment of children. For the upbringing to actually succeed or even be possible, this considerable deficiency must be abolished. Explanatory patterns and strategies cannot be assumed in a standardized form, but can only be developed through communication with children. »It is a matter of interpreting provisional feelings and assistance of the addressees, within the frames of their acceptability, and to develop ›correct‹, as well as emotionally tolerable reasoning for practical strategies of control that are developed on the basis of the before mentioned strategies.« (Dewe/Otto 1987:802) This is not possible only on common sense and natural instincts. That is why self-criticized reflexivity is needed alongside a fair amount of social imagination (Müller 1983) and theoretical knowledge,

for example on connections between the socio-economic status, life experience and identity.

In order for communication to succeed, despite the exceedingly different life experience and often despite the lack of definite notions on the life of children so far, experience that encourages identity, the distance of roles, empathy and tolerance of ambiguity must also be present (Wolf 1995). This makes the professionalism part harder, as these characteristics cannot be acquired through education.

**Distance of roles** is an »ability to rise above the requirements of tasks in order to choose, deny and interpret « (Krappmann, in: Wolf 1995:42). The pedagogue, whose freedom of work is not tightly restricted with regulations and small competence of decision making, must be able to use this freedom of decision making flexibly, according to certain situations and individually according to the child's needs. That is why they must know how to interpret their own role – multi-layered as it is – without abandoning the before mentioned responsibilities, and without strictly keeping the regulations of behaviour of the orderly educator.

This is even more difficult with younger children, who often misinterpret the role of their educators as a role of their new parents. The neighbours, children's friends or teachers can perceive this community as a family. Pedagogues define their position as a role of professional educators, but at the same time they strive for as normal life-like relationships as possible, and notice that the term ›family‹ is already at hand to describe such a module, but that ›housing community‹ does not apply. This creates a strong whirlwind, which forces professional pedagogues to gradually discard their role. That is why they need the ability to flexibly interpret their role without allowing them to be sucked into this whirlwind.

The next ability is **empathy**. With this conception we must understand ability of anticipation of perceiving others, as well as ability to empathize with the emotional world of others. The more different the life experience of pedagogues from this of children is, the higher the need for empathy is, in order to communicate successfully as well as to be able to interact with children.

Interaction with a child, whose behaviour is perceived by the pedagogue as ›troubled‹, is usually not possible; anticipation in such a case does not succeed. This anticipation does not include only the predictions of behaviour – for example in the sense »this or that is about to happen«, but also the explanation and understanding of the sense from the child's perspective (Wolf 1995).

With the distance of roles and empathy we do not avoid different expectations and perspectives. The ability to carry different expectations and motivations side by side, is called **the tolerance of discordance.** In educational situations, where an adult cannot repressively put into the effect their own interpretation of

reality, this adult must be able to handle the discrepancies, different perspectives and different feelings (Wolf 1995). If he or she does not succeed in doing so, the discrepancies will be repressed or they will be forced to decline from educational aspirations. Institutional education constantly proves the oppression of the child's interpretations, resulting in false modification and underground actions (Goffman 1988).

Frequent exposure to this ambiguity and ambivalence might be one of the biggest burdens of the pedagogical work with people who have lived through extraordinary life experience. This also happens because understanding and normality of one's own views are questioned. Those constantly – as the pedagogues in an institution – exposed to this problem need professional strategies to be able to handle this ambiguity and not try to remove it.

Ambiguity is, for example, eliminated when we give up our own perspective and see the world in the same light as it is seen by the child; the process of upbringing is then not possible. A different term of eliminating ambiguity is general dismissal and denial of the child's own perspective. In such a case the interaction fails as well as prevents the upbringing, only a slight adjustment and leaning is possible.

For pedagogues the professional knowledge gained through their studies and controlled with professional exams, which manage to approach the profession, is not sufficient, but they must also have the above-stated abilities to encourage identity. A person acquires these abilities through primary socialization, their effect on interactional behaviour is so wholesome and complex that they take the constant and all-purpose personal characteristics. These abilities are favourable for any type of interaction and accordingly for all fields of social work. Children and youth must gain experience as active persons, as objects of their own, they must conquer their own reality. Pedagogues must prepare and allow life and study conditions needed for this. In every-day cohabitation the pedagogues must direct the (targeted) education. The success of everyday life is also proved by the fact that the child is naturally enabled to participate and grow. The participation also entitles an understanding of living their own reality and their own life, not the life of an institution or group (Wolf 1995).

In comparison to professional activities, which are spaciously and time wise separated from every-day activities ( for example in counseling), the integration at the everyday level is especially hard and especially endangered. Thiersch (1997) warns of ambiguous elements of everyday orientation. This cannot (and should not) be the strive for re-birth of orientation into the processing, but it shows that all problems have not been solved by orienting into every day of a child. Thiersch strives for a reasonable part of all factors, with which it is difficult to define what

part does each occupy in such an orientation. This orientation should be based on life and imbued with professionalism in average everyday life. Otherwise the problem can also be that the use of professional knowledge can get lost in everyday life, as it is possible to make do without professional standards.

Professional handling of relationships with a client has another point-of-view. If a pedagogue wishes to deepen their view into the child's perspective and take their life experience seriously he/she must not be blocked by a strong negative attitude towards the children and their values. Such a negative attitude is not grounded as deep as to make it impossible to change it. But it is mostly connected with life experience of the pedagogue to such an extent that it cannot be removed so that the pedagogue decides not to let him or her feel these negative feelings. With this, a certain role is played by the emotional as well as comprehension view points. These relationships are hard to acquire when extensively burdening experience of pedagogues are triggered off through children. It is easier to access the problems, which are in its core, connected with information or experience shortage.

With this a pedagogue does not become an omnipotent specialist for all life situations. In such a manner possibly needed handling may also not be replaced. But he or she is still, to a great extent, responsible for life conditions and education of children. One must use professional methods of gathering information and continually incorporate this new knowledge into their pedagogical handling.

Professionalization in this work field does not exist, regarding professionalization to certain types of trouble, but for acquiring and using knowledge needed for each case, in preparing appropriate life and civilization conditions, through a capability of interaction with people who have gone through a burdening experience, and with this also for the upbringing of children for which they are competent. Lombach (1991) states that professionalization also means an advantage of pedagogical education before charitable charisma of help and security. Müller (1993) defines the concept of professionalization with the central concepts of autonomy, identification and competence.

Pedagogues define their competence in Müller's (1993) research, as a cap ability of judgment towards one self in developing competence, for example: on placements, appraisal of indications, discharge, appraisal of progress, creation of an individual education plan, cooperation with institutions and individuals important to the child or young person.

For pedagogues autonomy means independence, their own responsibility for completing their tasks, bigger manoeuvre space for their decisions considering organizational and administration questions.

Professionalization is understood as a cause and intention of every theoretical orientation, which influences institutions which, as a consequence, develop and go on in usage.

Kokhonen (Skalar 1995) states the measurements of professional work in educational and juvenile institutions:

- care for the protégés, for their progressive development;
- knowledge of methods, techniques, strategies, command of education and educational process methodology;
- ability to teach from experience, evaluation and metacommunication;
- knowledge of leadership, co-operation and working within a group.

Focus is on the competence of pedagogue who accepts full responsibility for an individual in a facility in which the pedagogue is a permanent relationship person. The pedagogue offers full security and prevents the minors' manipulation strategies considering the transfers from one institution to another, as well as the institution's philosophy, being that young people today are too difficult and that only the difficult ones are subjected to our guidance.

## 6. Conclusion

Pedagogical discourse of a relationship shows the complexity of demands for a professional worker. Success rate of a relationship is visible in the realization of educational, pedagogical goals which are set with the child, young person or client. Despite that, it can happen that some goals remain unrealized. That is why the awareness that goals will remain unrealized without a proper relationship is much more important. Correct usage of knowledge on authority, educational styles, proximity and distance suitability and dispersion of roles, the tolerance of discord, etc. contributes to entirety of knowledge one must have to upgrade a relationship and to have firm and quality relationships with our clients.

The pedagogue completely lives in his or her work, which also helps their personal realization. They are so fond of it that they cannot live without this type of work. The pedagogical eros, the theoretical knowledge, reflected experience and methodological offers are a guarantee for quality pedagogical work.

It seems that pedagogical work is expected to substitute and supplement all the existing social, especially educational and social gaps, but according to Thiersch and Müller the profession is not wide – range enough to touch each and every one.

The contribution brings important cues of relationship knowledge, with which practice should be equipped, at the same time it opens many opportunities which are shown by this research field.

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# How Motivation, Communication-Cooperation and Reward System Affect Faculty Members' Job Satisfaction in a Developing Country

## Abstract

This study, which was performed among the faculty members working at Eskisehir Anadolu University using their personal evaluations, was designed to identify the factors affecting the job satisfaction levels of faculty members and to develop a proposed model. Within this framework, a questionnaire including 59 items scored on a 5-point Likert type scale was applied to 143 faculty members. Consequently, when the best-fit model was investigated, the study revealed that while motivation and communication-cooperation are significant factors for job satisfaction, the use of reward systems is not an effective factor. Our proposed model could be directly applied to similar factors or could be developed using different factors.

**Key words:** *job satisfaction, motivation, communication-cooperation, reward system, faculty member*

## Introduction

Higher education institutions are the only organizations focused on the dual core functions of knowledge creation and knowledge transmission through the process of research and teaching (Houston, 2006). However, faculty (both university and

college) job satisfaction is similar to job satisfaction in industries or organizations, with the exception of the autonomy that individuals in academia experience in their work (Tack & Patitu, 1992).

While there have been many studies examining general job satisfaction (such as in factories and industrial organizations), there are only a few specifically focusing on faculty members' job satisfaction. Since the 1960s, researchers have carried out new studies investigating job satisfaction in faculties; this has been due to a decrease in faculty members' job satisfaction because of fiscal constraints, inadequate resources and scholarships, and an unfair salary system. Therefore, in the last two decades, the "faculty members' job satisfaction" phenomenon has gained a lot of popularity, so the number of studies addressing this phenomenon has rapidly increased. In these studies, the factors affecting faculty members' job satisfaction have been identified as motivation (Braskamp et al., 1984; Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995; Castillo & Cano 2004; Bakhshi et al., 2005), the reward system (including such elements as salary, scholarship, extra salary) (Milosheff, 1990; Johnsrud & Heck, 1998; Leslie, 2002; Kusku, 2003; Houston, 2006), and communication-cooperation (Boyer et al., 1994, Johnsrud & Heck, 1998, Green, 2000; Kusku, 2003; Castillo & Cano, 2004; Drysdale, 2005).

In most studies regarding the job satisfaction of faculty members, the relationship between job satisfaction and demographic characteristics is usually the underlying focus. Based on these studies, which reveal many factors related to faculty job satisfaction, researchers have tried to suggest that the scope of the studies could be extended and job satisfaction could be related to other factors. However, those factors affecting job satisfaction are dealt with in isolation. Gliem et al. (2001) stated that it would not be enough to explain job satisfaction by each factor individually. They also claimed that the relationship between universities' management policies and job satisfaction must be carefully examined, suggesting that it would be better to investigate the job satisfaction phenomenon in each faculty's own climate. When the literature on job satisfaction is reviewed, it is obvious that some modelling approaches, which are in favour of this suggestion, have been employed (i.e., Hagedorn, 1996; Johnsrud & Heck, 1998; Johnsrud et al., 2002; Rosser, 2004; Cangur, 2004).

In the light of this suggestion, this study aims at developing a model for determining in what manner and how much motivation, communication-cooperation, and reward systems affect job satisfaction.

## Method

### Sample and instruments

The sample consists of 143 faculty members who worked at different units of Eskisehir Anadolu University in 2003–2004. The number of faculty members in this study was determined by the ratio of the total faculty members in each unit. Each faculty member's demographic information is gathered using face-to-face interviews. To gather the data, a questionnaire based on the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire-MSQ (Weiss et al., 1967) and Job Descriptive Index-JDI (Smith et al., 1969) was developed and applied to the faculty members. The content of the questionnaire included 59 items: 28 items measuring the job satisfaction level, 17 items measuring the motivation level, 10 items measuring the communication-cooperation level, and 4 items measuring the efficiency of the reward system used at the university. A 5-point Likert type scale was administered.

### Data analysis

The data was analysed using LISREL 8.54 (SSI, Inc., Lincolnwood, IL, USA). Frequency values and/or descriptive statistics were calculated in order to find out the demographic characteristics of the faculty members and the factors in their job satisfaction level. The Cronbach alpha values of each factor were calculated. To find out the extent of these factors' effect, the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) method was applied. The constructed structural model is shown in Figure 1. The Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) technique was used for the estimation of parameters. A covariance matrix was used for the input matrix. At the beginning of the analysis, in order to attain a proper model, all items in the investigation were taken into consideration; then, the items that best represented the latent

**Figure 1:  The proposed structural model**
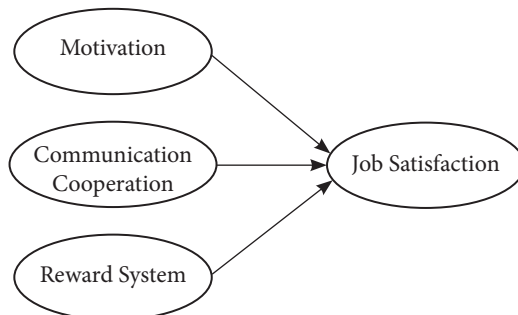
variables were selected and models were tested. The best-fit model was obtained at the fifth stage. In the study, the best-fit model was evaluated by using χ²/df, RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation), CFI (Comparative Fit Index), NFI (Normed Fit Index), NNFI (Non-Normed Fit Index) and GFI (Goodness of Fit Index) measures.

### Structural equation modelling method and goodness of fit measurements

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is a multivariate method composed of a factor analysis and a multiple regression analysis; it is used to estimate dependency relationships. Technically, structural equation modelling estimates unknown coefficients in linear structural equation sets. In the equation system, directly observed variables and latent variables, which are related to observed variables but not observed, usually exist. SEM assumes that there is a causal structure to the latent variables set and that observed variables are the explanatories of the latent variables (Mueller, 1996; Byrne, 1998; Joreskog & Sorbom, 2001). Applied to data on attitudes, perceptions, stated behavioural intentions, and actual behaviour, SEM can be used to specify and test alternative causal hypotheses. It has been found that, as might be expected, causality is often mutual. The assumption that behaviour is influenced by attitudes, perceptions, and behavioural intentions without feedback does not hold up when tested using SEM (Yilmaz, 2004). In order to determine the acceptability of the model in the structural equation modelling, multiple comparison measures (absolute, parsimonious, incremental) are used (Byrne, 1998; Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). The measurements are χ²/df, RMSEA, CFI, NFI, NNFI, and GFI. The information including the acceptability levels of measurements was given for deciding model fit. Kettinger & Lee (1995) stated that if the sample size is smaller than 200 and if χ²/df value is smaller than 3, then one has a model fit. If a RMSEA takes a value smaller than 0.05, this indicates that the model has a good fit value. GFI is an indicator of relative variance and covariance quantity. In order to be an indicator of a good fit, the marginal acceptability level should be 0.90 for the GFI measure. Since the marginal acceptability level is greater than 0.90, it is determined as the best fit model. If NFI and NNFI values are between 0 and 1, this indicates a good fit. However, the NNFI value does not necessarily have to be between 0 and 1. When NFI and NNFI values are equal to 1 or close to 1, it indicates the best fit (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003).

Because it analyses the relationships between latent variables and controls measurement errors, giving values close to population parameters, the structural equation modelling draws researchers' attention. However, because of the risk of

false usage and elasticity, it is a fairly complex method. For this reason, researchers should be more cautious in determining factors and defining causal relations.

## Results

47.2% of the participant faculty members were female and 52.8% were male. 35.2% of the participants were over the age of 35 (female: 16, male: 34). After administering a reliability analysis, we developed a model using 16 items for the job satisfaction factor, 9 items for the motivation factor, 8 items for the communication-cooperation factor, and 8 items for the reward system factor. The job satisfaction level for faculty members was $3.66\pm0.29$ (Cronbach $\alpha=0.89$), the motivation level was $3.22\pm0.20$ (Cronbach $\alpha=0.83$), the communication-cooperation level was $3.49\pm0.19$ (Cronbach $\alpha=0.86$), and the reward system level was $3.26\pm0.53$ (Cronbach $\alpha=0.67$). An appropriate model was reached at the fifth stage of the model development process. It was decided that the theoretical model fit at the significance level of 0.05 and according to goodness of measures rules ($\chi2=18.61$, $df=21$, $p=0.61035$, $RMSEA=0$, $\chi2/df=0.89$, $GFI=0.97$, $NFI=0.98$, $NNFI=1.00$). Path diagram and analysis results for the theoretical model that is the best fit for model development assumptions are shown in Table I and Figure 2.

All latent variables were dealt with one by one, and their effects on job satisfaction were interpreted as follows. The coefficients of item B1 (Path Coefficient (PC)=0.85, t=10.93, p<0.05) and B2 (PC=0.74, t=9.31, p<0.05), which determined faculty members' motivation level, were statistically significant. The direct effect of the latent variable of motivation on job satisfaction was found to be significant (PC=0.71, t=5.53, p<0.05). Also, its indirect effect on items A4, A10, and A14, which expressed job satisfaction, was found to be statistically significant (0.55, 0.49, and 0.42 respectively, p<0.05).

The coefficients of the items C6 (PC=0.85, t=11.08, p<0.05) and C7 (PC=0.84, t=10.95, p<0.05), which were about the cooperation-communication factor, were also significant. The direct effect of this cooperation-communication factor on job satisfaction was also found to be significant (PC=0.41, t=3.30, p<0.05). Likewise, motivation had a significant indirect effect on job satisfaction according to items A4, A10, and A14 (0.55, 0.49, and 0.42 respectively, p<0.05).

Items D3 (PC=0.75, t=8.12, p<0.05) and D4 (PC=0.76, t=8.34, p<0.05), which represented the reward system factor, had positive coefficients and were statistically significant. However, the reward system factor did not have a significant path coefficient (PC=–0.16, t=–1.21, p>0.05).

The determination coefficient of the proposed model was found to be 0.83. In every one unit increase in cooperation-communication and motivation, job satisfaction increases by 0.41 and 0.71 respectively. In every one unit increase in reward system, job satisfaction decreases by 0.16. Therefore, it can be concluded that while the same directional relationship is seen between job satisfaction and communication-cooperation and motivation factors, there is an adverse directional relationship between job satisfaction and reward system factors. An 83% variation in job satisfaction is explained by communication-cooperation, motivation, and the reward system.

## Table 1:  LISREL estimations for the proposed model

|  | Estimation of Parameter | t-value |
|---|---|---|
| *A – Job Satisfaction ($\eta_A$)* | | |
| A4. Our administrators make efforts to solve our problems. | 0.77 | |
| A10. I believe that there is a strong devotion between the administrators and the faculty members at work. | 0.69* | 7.65 |
| A14. Administrators show enough interest in our personal problems. | 0.59* | 6.58 |
| *B – Motivation ($\xi_B$)* | 0.71* | 5.53 |
| B1. In my institution, administrators try to meet faculty members' individual needs. | 0.85* | 10.93 |
| B2. Administrators believe that some factors such as work accomplishment, to be known and promotion motivates faculty members. | 0.74* | 9.31 |
| *C – Communication-Cooperation ($\xi_C$)* | 0.41* | 3.30 |
| C6. Administrators provide all information needed for faculty members for a job to be well-done  at the institution | 0.85* | 11.08 |
| C7. Administrators and faculty members always exchange opinions. . | 0.84* | 10.95 |
| *D – Reward System ($\xi_D$)* | -0.16 | -1.21 |
| D3. While assessing the personnel achievement, occupational ideals, occupational behaviours, colleague performance and skills are taken into consideration. | 0.73* | 8.12 |
| D4. There is always constructive competition among the faculty members about the occupational subjects. | 0.76* | 8.34 |
| **The Best-Fit Structural Equation Model**   $\eta_A = 0.71\xi_B + 0.41\xi_C - 0.16\xi_D$   R2 = 0.83  Errorvar. = 0.17 | | |

*p<0.05

**Figure 2: Path diagram for the proposed structural
equation model (standardised solution)**



Chi - Square = 18.61,      df=21,      P-value = 0.61035,      RMSEA = 0.000
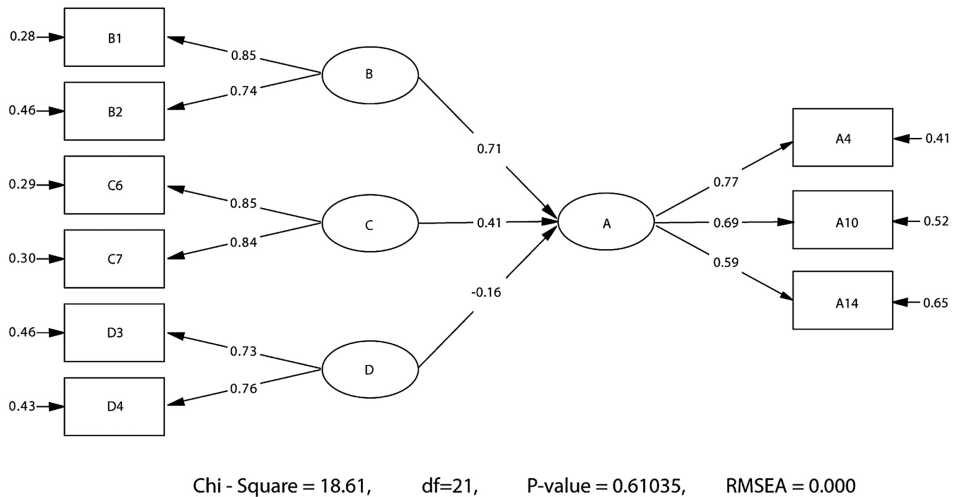
## Discussion and Conclusion

When this study was carried out, the number of universities in Turkey was 77 (68.8% state universities, 31.2% private universities). This number increased to 115 in 2007, and it consisted of 85 state universities and 30 private ones. According to the Turkish Parliament General Assembly Meeting in May 2008, it was determined that the number of state universities should increase to 94, and the number of private universities to 34. The aim of this rapid change in the number of universities in a developing country was to expand the number of people with university degrees in each geographic region.

The study was administered at Eskisehir Anadolu University, one of the most respected universities in Turkey, which was founded in 1958. The university includes 12 faculties (3 of which are distance-learning faculties), 10 vocational colleges, and 1 conservatory, with a total 1780 academic personnel.

In this study, it was found that when the motivation and communication-cooperation levels of faculty members increase, their job satisfaction level also increases. However the reward system does not have an effect on their job satisfaction level.

The most effective factor in determining the job satisfaction level was discovered to be the "motivation factor". Faculty members with a high level of motivation stated that their administrators meet their needs and perform motivative actions (such as recognition and promotion). As there is a positive relationship between motivation and job satisfaction, if faculty members develop a high sense of motivation, their job satisfaction level also increases. When the relevant literature is consulted, it is clear that the motivator variables for faculty members with regard to job satisfaction (achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and promotion) have been examined alone in several studies (Braskamp et al., 1984; Castillo & Cano, 2004; Bakhshi et al., 2005). The findings of this particular study also show similarities to the relevant literature. Braskamp et al. (1984) stated that low motivation of faculty members was detrimental to academic achievements. It can be claimed that at the university where this study was conducted, the administrators have a motivational attitude.

Faculty members need to have feedback from their administrators, as this usually facilitates their sense of achievement (Kelly, 1989). The communication-cooperation factor, which represents the quality of communication between faculty members and their colleagues and administrators, has an important effect on job satisfaction. If there is high communication-cooperation at an institute, there will be a strong consensus that administrators lead their academic staff in a motivative way. This communication-cooperation factor has a positive effect on job satisfaction. Therefore, when faculty members' communication-cooperation level positively increases, their job satisfaction level also increases. These findings are parallel to those of Boyer et al. (1994), Johnsrud & Heck (1998), Green (2000), and Drysdale (2005). Kusku (2003) found that academic employees are not content with their colleagues with respect to their cooperation in academic studies. Johnsrud & Heck (1998) emphasised that when the distance between administrators and faculty members increases, faculty members' confidence in their institution decreases. Green (2000) highlighted that the job dissatisfaction of faculty members may weaken the link between administrators and faculty members and may jeopardise the achievement of university goals. According to Castillo and Cano (2004), faculty members and university administrators should converse to enhance interpersonal relations in order to attempt to remove the barriers between inter – and intra-departmental relationships. In the study, the administrators seem to value the relationships between their faculty members and try to act in support of a compatible atmosphere in the workplace.

Finally, this study (which sheds light on further research) revealed that the motivation and communication-cooperation factors—but not the reward system

factor—are important in determining the level of job satisfaction. The explained portion of the model reached was found to be 83%. As for the remaining 17%, the unexplained portion was thought to have resulted from the other factors that can be examined in further studies. In further research looking for information on the job satisfaction levels of faculty members at particular universities, our model could be used directly or some amendments could be made to the model developed.

After modelling, it is of great importance for administrators to become aware of their faculty members' levels of job satisfaction, and that they see which factors affect these levels in terms of administrative procedures that are applied or will be applied. They should asses the level of satisfaction based on various job satisfaction components among their faculty and collaborate more closely with the faculty in the design and management of faculty development programs. Furthermore, faculty administrators can identify departments with low job satisfaction and establish strategies and programs to improve satisfaction in these departments.

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# Several Suggestions for the Pedagogical Discourse on Value Orientation in Education

## Abstract

The author of the paper points to some problems in contemporary society which are the result of social changes after 1989. She denotes these problems as a crisis of values, which impacts on people's subjective happiness as well as the total stability of society. She highlights the growing materialism, individualism and the phenomenon of cultural diversity and in this context points to the need for pedagogical discourse on value orientation in education. In the conclusion of the paper the author delimits a system of central values and educational spheres on which the contemporary school should be focused in the interest of value homogenization.

**Key words:** *post-modern society, materialism, individualism, value diversity, anomie, universal values*

## Introduction

Society of the contemporary man could be labelled with many attributes. In terms of sociology, it is post-modern society with all its characteristics, including a high degree of industrialization, urbanization, developed mass communication and the like, representing the opposite of traditional forms of society. From the point of view of political science, it concerns democratic society which is based on the values of autonomy and personal freedom of its members, representing the opposite aspect of totalitarian society. Both delimitations are characteristic of the development accompanied by changes in values, attitudes and overall mentality. The literature and the press also denote contemporary society as *pluralistic,*

*open, democratic, free, post-modern, emancipated, multicultural,* etc. The attributes mentioned evoke a rather positive contribution for the life of the contemporary man, his emancipation and the guarantee of happiness. However, everyday reality of people's lives and of the whole society gradually point to the negative aspects of these contemporary attributes. *Plurality and openness* breed diversification of values connected with uncertainty and instability of officially proclaimed principles and norms (Žilínek, M., 1993, p. 17), they lead to nihilism (cf. Bernet, R., M., 1995, p. 2) or anomie (cf. Ondrejkovič, P., 2002); *democracy and freedom* bring about also misunderstanding of freedom, unpreparedness for it and risks of not being able to cope with it (cf. Kosová, B., 2003, p. 106); *modernity* breeds impersonality (cf. Koťa, J., 2001, p. 15) and values such as material wealth, suppression of personal activity; *emancipation*, apart from its positives, brought about also sharpened individualism and related denial of super-individual values (cf. Walterová, E., 2004, p. 181); and *multiculturalism* is accompanied by growing manifestations of racism, nationalism and intolerance (cf. Kraus, B., 2003, p. 258). On the basis of these facts, we could negate the above-mentioned attributes and in relation to our society introduce names such as *narcissist, ambitious, self-centred, utilitarian, materialistic, intolerant, individualistic* or *consumer;* and in terms of consequences resulting from this character of society, we could also call it *uncertain* and *unstable* society. This enumeration of the negatives should neither lead to the theories about the onset of nihilism, which was forecasted by F. Nietzsche, nor to the ideas of apocalypse of the mankind, which can be found in some concepts of post-modernism. Our aim is to point to those phenomena which are present in our society and are in contrast to the traditional universal values which we try to delimit at the end of the paper.

## Domination of consumerism

An important ethologist K. Lorenz (1990) included among the contemporary man's eight deadly sins also haste of the era, which brought him to new values such as profit, success and endeavour to achieve a higher status. Each of us can see how the importance of money and material values is growing every day. Materialism, which became a significant feature of the post-modern western culture, reduces the feelings of happiness and internal well-being. Already E. Fromm (2001) highlighted the growing risks of a consumer society. He considered the compulsive need to have as the main reason for man's break-up with himself. In the work *To Have or To Be* he calls for returning to the traditional values of being and denotes the orientation for having as value fetishism. The research also confirms (Hnilica, K.,

2005, p. 395) that people are the less satisfied with their lives the more they believe that their happiness depends on their possessions. According to M. L. Richins and S. Dawnson (1987, 1990, 1992) materialism is risky particularly because of the fact that owning goods becomes the only source of people's *happiness,* which they finally lose. This opinion is also supported by K. Hnilica (2005) who asks the question what is a sufficient property for man and how many things will make man really happy. According to the author this amount cannot be determined. Materialistic people never have enough possessions to be happy. Actually, they respond to each improvement of the situation by increasing material aspirations, which thus become a source of constant deprivation.

Naturally, the personal feelings of failure, subjective dissatisfaction or injustice are reflected in social behaviour. Materialism impacts on our overall attitude toward the world. It concerns our way of thinking which is based predominantly on the so-called instrumental reason, which can be perceived as a certain kind of rationality, which we apply while calculating the most economic use of means. The decisions subject to instrumental reason drive man to individualism and egoism, which influence our interpersonal relationships. The instrumental approach, which according to Ch. Taylor (1992) is one of the reasons for the deformed understanding of authenticity in the modern age, controls our lives also in those areas in which we should think differently rather than on the basis of utility or analyses of 'costs and profits'.

Deterioration in interpersonal relationships, withdrawal from the world – all these are phenomena which can also cause disintegration of society. In his studies P. Ondrejkovič[1] (2002) expresses fears of anomie in contemporary society, the source of which are general goals of social success based on the central value of material wealth. Man's inability to achieve goals of this character pushes an individual into the position of a social outsider and arouses anomic feelings of depression, disillusion, frustration, disappointment, embitterment and anger, which lead to more permanent mental states of hopelessness, helplessness and states without any positive prospects. It is a psychological aspect of materialism which was highlighted by R. Agnew (1995) who stressed that exactly these feelings are often the source of various forms of violence, social and individual pathology.

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[1] P. Ondrejkovič (2002) based his reflections on anomie on the ideas of the sociologist E. Durkheim, whose work expressed fears of disintegration of society due to the growing autonomy of individuals and reduction of the so-called mechanical solidarity based on collective conscience and binding norms (for more see Keller, J., 1992, Plichtová, J., 2004, Strouhal, M., 2004a, Strouhal, M. 2004b)

## Sharpened individualism

Tendencies in the rising need for an individual's autonomy were already mentioned by sociologists in the 30s. H. Spencer saw the content of progress in the given phenomenon, F. Tűnnies called it a dangerous victory of egoism of the modern age and E. Durkheim perceived it as a cause of disintegration of society (for more see Keller, J., 1992). Contemporary authors did not show indifference to this controversial phenomenon either. Among them belong B. Pupala, 2004, W. Brezinka, 1992, R. Bernet, 1995, P. Ondrejkovič 2002, S. Dorotíková, 1998, B. Kraus, 2003, P. Khun, 1992, E. Walterová, 2004, M. Žilínek, 1997 and others. It is problematic to identify the causes of a given situation. R. Bernet found them in the former political regime, which according to the author cultivated spiritual passivity in people and gave birth to the 'peculiar kind of collective autism' (thanks to it people withdrew into their privacy and do not show personal activities of caring about others). At the same time, it can be a new phenomenon which came with the new age characteristic of values such as economic prosperity, social prestige, power, professional, social or economic success at any price. Cooperation was replaced by fierce competition and the former ideology was replaced by new *ideology of individualism* (Bernet, R., 1995, p. 5).

Whether it concerns historical heritage or a modern feature, also in the case of unhealthy individualism we could reflect on the level of man's personal dissatisfaction and on the level this phenomenon impacts on social events. In our reflections on individualism as a source of life satisfaction and fulfilment we will draw from the works by G. T. Reker and P. T. P. Wong (Reker, G., T., 2000), who claim that the composition of our meaning of life can have different depth depending on the degree of self-transcendence. The authors in their research showed that the first two degrees, i.e. preoccupation with the self and individualism can be considered as more superficial sources of personal happiness. On the other hand, people with deeply rooted dominant sources of meaningfulness in their life such as service to others, participation in public social and political affairs and self-transcendence – referring to values going beyond an individual towards the meaning of the whole world and the ultimate meaning, have a more significant feeling of fulfilment in their life. The level of satisfaction with their life was much higher than with those who have more superficially-rooted sources of the meaning of their life.

A noticeable turn to egoistic thinking or individualism also means the risk of disturbing relations to the social environment. Excessive orientation to personal goals and happiness leads to man's inability to confront his view with the views of others. Man, under the auspices of freedom, rejects the 'prescribed' morale with the

justification that he wants to be himself. Here we get beyond the limits of individual happiness and can think about social consequences. This phenomenon, according to H. Klages, can be observed in wide layers of population. The author comments that it is a 'permanent shift of mentality from the focus on the norm to the focus on the self, from the norm-centred to the self-centred understanding of the self and the world' (according to Brezinka, W., 1992, p. 254). At the forefront there is a desire for life without commitments, lack of interest in public affairs, lifestyle of individual satisfaction (Skalková, J., 2000, p. 19). Naturally, these life aspirations are directed at the effort to protect one's subjective value world, to isolate oneself from the potential disapproval of the surrounding. It leads to the loss of such values as participation and altruism[2], as well as to the risk of 'losing fundamental empathy, interest in others, solidarity, and looking for ways of bringing people together as mutual enrichment' (Kraus, B., 2003, p. 259).

When judging the consequences of individualism for social events, we could use the reasoning that freedom of the individual is one of the principles of democracy and thus cannot be the subject of criticism and condemnation. Even though democracy places emphasis on human personality and guarantees conditions for free development in terms of developing one's unique individuality, the emphasis on personality, on the individual does not presume individualistic society connected with egocentrism and selfishness, society presented vulgarly by materialistic and consumer attitudes toward life and by usurping. Democracy builds on the features of individualism shaped by the period of renaissance, which placed emphasis on the respect for the individual, man, recognized the possibilities of free development of one's individual abilities and talent. Besides exercising individual and civil liberties, it equally stressed an individual's *personal responsibility for actions* towards general interests of society (Khun, P., 1992, p. 222).

## Value diversity

Living conditions in a democratic society require space for the differentiation of people in terms of opinions, ideas and values (Khun, P., 1992, p. 222). Openness of society, among other things, means respecting different attitudes toward life, accepting various value orientations. With the fall of the iron curtain also our country opened to new views of the world and attitudes toward life. 'There is no unified canon of values in society and various lifestyles and life expectations

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[2]  For further research see IVVM In Havlík, J. et al, 2002, pp. 37–39

have been formed' (Walterová, E., 2004, p. 171). 'Pluralization of lifestyles and activities, types of thinking, social conceptions' became an accompanying feature of our society (according to Kraus, B., 2003, p. 254). Some authors speak about the so-called value chaos, with strange movement of values up and down, with various understanding and execution of rights and obligations (Banach, C., 2000), others mention the onset of anti-universalism (Ondrejkovič, P., 2002), others new conditions for radical heterogeneity where it is not possible to talk about alternatives, but we have to dispute those differences which provoke a sharp contradiction (cf. Malík, B., 1998). Diversity undoubtedly represents a contribution in many aspects, but it can also cause chaos as a result of which *subjective uncertainty grows* in social behaviour, which P. Ondrejkovič (2002) considers as a distinct anomic phenomenon also in our country. Roots of this uncertainty can be searched for in the *difficulty of man to orientate himself in the tangle of values*, which are becoming increasingly diversified in society, and also in the *effort of an individual to differentiate more and more from the others and in looking for the identity of one's SELF* in the complex world of meanings. Difficult orientation in the value systems of society also leads to the problems of *searching for one's own identity.* In the rich offer of lifestyles an individual attempts to preserve his/her uniqueness, originality, he/she strives to distinguish him/herself from the others at any price. According to B. Pupala (2004) contemporary man wants to be himself first of all and tries to live for the present, which means that he loses sense for big issues and topics and turns his back on permanent values and traditions.

In the situation described above the issue of value homogenization seems to be fundamental. Schools should play a decisive role in this process (Pupala, B., 2004). The starting point of educational action should lie in the precise determination of central values at which our schools should be directed. If we want to respect the cultural identity of every pupil, these values have to be valid for all cultures and cannot be in contrast to any nation, ethnic group or other cultural group. These limits should determine values which are covered by human rights, are based on fundamental values of being, and stem from the natural essence of man. According to Hudeček (1986, p. 49) such values have a permanent character and they are relatively stable in every society and for each individual. They express the needs and desires of every man, each period and society. They are characterized by great stability and do not change even in revolutionary periods. Though some values were intentionally deformed in certain periods, when these periods passed, the deformed values were re-activated in real form (Prunner, P., 2002). Exactly these values form the framework of human rights and freedom presented in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and from our point of view they should

represent the starting point of value homogenization. It concerns the following values:

- Values based on the needs which are necessary conditions of human existence. According to J. Galtung and Wirak (In Veerman, 1992) if they are not satisfied, it leads to the disintegration and destruction of personality: *life, health, security, love, freedom.*
- Values as elementary moral categories, which according to Žilínek (1997) stem from human naturalness and are necessary for the regulation of human behaviour generally in the sphere of intragroup or individual mutual relationships: *respect, self-sacrifice, pride, compassion, sincerity, loyalty, friendship, confidence, solidarity, tolerance, mutual help and others.*
- Values as moral categories of fundamental substantial importance, which 'form the underlying content of moral consciousness and self-awareness of personality, its spiritual and moral philosophy of life' (Žilínek, 1997, pp. 44–53). We talk about values, which according to Čačka (1998) form the highest layer of spiritual happening of personality – the layer of existential and beyond-the-self-reaching aspects of personality. For example *well-being, good, fairness, obligation, responsibility, honour and dignity, meaning of life and happiness, conscience, tolerance, peace and others.*

Individual values can be reflected in these educational spheres:

**Education to respect of life, its protection and searching for its meaning** (central values: *life, love, respect, health, meaning of life, happiness*). From the view of this educational area, the school should act in the direction of an individual's education, who will be satisfied with their own life, will perceive their own life as meaningful and valuable, will appreciate it as the greatest value, protect it and improve it qualitatively. In the pedagogical practice this involves a dialogue with pupils containing questions about the value of life, its quality and meaningfulness.

**Education to positive self-perception** (central values: *love, respect, pride, honour, dignity*). 'Respect to oneself, to one's own person is the basic prerequisite for a positive relationship with other people, acceptance and recognition of the others' (Koubeková, 2006, p. 9). Therefore, it is necessary to focus educational activities on the development of positive self-perception by each pupil, which means to teach them to know their own SELF, to describe it, to take evaluative attitudes toward it, to guide pupils to the real perception of their own person while strengthening confidence in themselves.

**Education to pro-sociability** (central values: *love, respect, peace, compassion, sincerity, friendship, self-sacrifice, mutual help, solidarity*). Schools should educate man who is willing to intervene, to help another man. Ideally, we can talk about

pro-sociability motivated by internal values, which is based on the solid moral conviction of selfless help and does not calculate on social expectations.

**Education to tolerance or inter-cultural education** (central values: *love, respect, pride, honour, dignity, conscience, tolerance, peace, fairness, obligation*). The task of the school lies in teaching the pupil to perceive difference and diversity as the fundamental principle of existence. It should guide the pupil to be open to a dialogue, to form his/her own opinion, not to perceive otherness as a threat, but as a possible source of enrichment.

**Education to freedom and responsibility** (central values: *freedom, obligation, responsibility, meaning of life, happiness, conscience, fairness, self-sacrifice*). Issues concerning the nature of freedom seem to be of importance these days. To focus the educational activity in this direction means to guide the pupil to the knowledge that the subjective aspect of the human SELF plays an equally important (if not more important) role in the process of exercising freedom as the outside social determination. Understanding the risks of building subjective barriers to individual freedom is the basis for experiencing life satisfaction. Another dimension of this educational issue lies in guiding the pupil to the understanding of limits of individual freedom with an emphasis on cultivating the sense of responsibility and obligation. The task of the school is to educate man who can judge his needs and goals not only from the subjective, but also inter-subjective and social view (Plichtová et al, 2004).

Some of the presented educational issues are stable and relatively developed in pedagogical theory, however, other require deeper elaboration and particularly penetration into pedagogical practice. The basic condition for their realization still lies in extending space for forming attitudes and values in our schools.

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The New Educational Review

# Mission Syndrome in Soldiers Coming Back from Their Military Service in Iraq

## Abstract

This article brings up the problem of trauma connected with the battle situation on the example of soldiers who are stationed on the mission in Iraq. According to the unofficial data, every second soldier coming back from the mission suffers from the so-called post traumatic stress disorder – PTSD. Its symptoms include recurrent intrusive memories of traumatic events. Practice shows that despite the fact that well-trained soldiers go to Iraq, in some cases the conditions in which they perform the military service exceed their abilities of adaptation. Examples shown in the article imply a suggestion that the future "mission soldiers" should receive long-running training, which would enable them to adapt – to the greatest possible extent – to new conditions of life connected with the change of climatic zones and also to acquire the ability to manage in repetitive stressful situations involving the threat to their health and life.

**Key words:** *stress, soldier, mission, trauma, Iraq, mission syndrome, mental disorders, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.*

## Participation of Polish soldiers in Iraq missions

"A couple of years ago we made a strategic decision to join NATO, which has become our safety pillar and thus now we have to follow consistently where the Treaty's needs call." (S. Cznur 2006).

While making the decision to send Polish soldiers to Iraq, nobody realised that some of them would come back suffering from the traumatic stress syndrome. More

and more Polish soldiers who return from Iraq have serious problems. They also affect their families and include mental illnesses, alcohol and drug abuse, violence at home (PAP 2006). General Mirosław Bieniek, the commander of the second shift, reported nervous breakdown of a few soldiers who witnessed the death of 30 Iraqi men during the intervention in Karbala. According to experts, after such an experience as the one in Iraq, nobody stays unaffected. A soldier who comes back from Iraq will constantly talk about his emotions and things he came through during the mission, whereas his family have their own problems connected with the absence of a close person, fear and stress.

## The image of a Polish officer serving on missions

According to the sociologists from prof. Jan Maciejewski's team, a Polish soldier serving on a mission is about 30 years old, is married and quite well-off. He decides to go on the mission for financial reasons, yet he also treats this mission as a chance of professional development (B. Politowski, 2004 pp. 4–5). The researchers from the Institute of Sociology at Wrocław University working under the management of prof. Wojciech Sitko had to investigate what motivation, experiences or even emotions the Polish Army officers – participants in foreign mission – had. The research covered 700 officers from various units and military institutions in many garrisons. About 70% of the mission participants complained about difficulties connected with living in a totally different climatic zone. A relatively low percentage of them were afraid of losing their health and life. This proves their high morale, good training and preparation for military profession. Nevertheless, they return home. Every seventeenth officer (5.9 per cent) had to leave the mission earlier, every second of them declared that it was connected with family problems (B. Politowski 2007, pp. 4–5). Was the earlier return of the others caused by PTSD?

## Soldiers' reaction to traumatic situations: post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), combat exhaustion, combat stress reaction (CSR)

Human reactions to extreme traumatic situations can cause deep and permanent changes in both psychical and physical functioning. The analysis of this phenomenon allows one to put forward a thesis that stress has a huge influence on human behaviour, not only at the moment it occurs, but also many years later (F. Potracki 2004). The introduction to the classification of mental disorders of a new disease

unit – the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (disorders suffered from after experiencing traumatic stress) was in the United States in the 80s a crucial and surely new insight into the consequences of extreme traumatic experiences. One reason for the introduction of PTSD diagnosis to the American classification were the difficulties connected with the adaptation of Vietnam veterans to their civil lives and their re-assimilation with society (J. Heitzman 2002, p. 24). PTSD – the traumatic stress syndrome includes mental disorders occurring after a rape, assault, front fight, transport disaster, staying in concentration camps, terrorism and other extreme situations. According to the American Psychiatric Society PTSD, is connected with a life threat and accompanying helplessness. It also applies to constant trauma reconstructions, which lead to insomnia or nightmares connected with this trauma, remembering and pondering over it, persistent avoidance of memories and situations which are associated with the traumatic event and a decrease in general livelihood, which involves feelings and thoughts connected with the trauma. A frequently occurring symptom of PTSD is strong tension which is brought back by every memory of the event, object or sound which may be associated with it. It may lead to one reliving another trauma and having the impression that this event is taking place again (P. Krukow, A. Lipczyński 2006). Since WWII a term combat exhaustion has been used in psychology. It is caused by such elements as long physical effort, battleground scenery, long physical tension, lack of rest, incapability of physical or psychical recovery, fear of death, injury or disability (F. Potracki, 2004). Combat exhaustion symptoms were observed by soldiers regardless of whether the troops achieved a success or experienced a disaster. No matter whether soldiers fought 30 years ago or now, no matter what technology the army had or has or will have, a soldier is still exposed to the same dangers in war operations. He is still threatened with death, he can still be a witness of his mates – other soldiers' death. Taking into account the fact that a soldier was residing in such conditions for a long time, there was talk about psychical losses after WWII. Nowadays it is called combat stress reactions (CSR). It constitutes "the total of disadvantageous psychical results of long-lasting participation in fight, occurring in three spheres: somatic, mental and behavioural leading to a significant lowering or even a loss of ability to act and causing exclusion of soldiers from the war" (F. Potracki 2004).

## Characteristic behaviours of soldiers coming back from missions

Every human has their own stress resistance, individual psychical tolerance, their own defensive mechanism, everyone has their own limited threshold of psychical

capabilities. If a body makes out and estimates personal danger as too high, the resistance will be disordered, our defensive mechanisms will be disorganized and later help will be necessary. The images of destruction, the injured, the remains of killed people, the ubiquitous feeling of danger – all these are common images for some of the soldiers taking part in peace missions. Dealing with death leaves a mark on their psyche. Depressing memories, nightmares, the feeling of fear and anxiety, even after returning home, may accompany them for years or even for all their lives. They can also occur after one, ten or even twenty years.

Polish soldiers injured during the mission are treated in the Army Medical Institute in Warsaw. They have various injuries such as gunshot wounds, burns and also mental disorders caused by war stress. The most common diagnosis is PTSD (R. Krzyszkowska 2007). Disorders connected with war stress are in some cases so big, that despite the treatment applied during the mission, they prevent soldiers from further fulfilment of their duty and, in the end, they have to be evacuated home. It happens regardless of whether soldiers have been prepared for every kind of mission or not, whether they have practised procedures which are effective during the real service or not, it is, however, only a simulation of situations and events that may be expected. Assistant professor Stanisław Ililnicki points out that the differences are noticeable immediately after their arrival. For example, in Iraq high temperatures and sandstorms are annoying (R. Krzyszkowska 2007). Healthy soldiers with high morale went to Iraq, yet for some of them the conditions of their service exceeded their capabilities of adaptation. In every country they go to, they have to get accustomed to being under fire, getting up in the middle of the night and hiding in shelters. Everybody is afraid, especially those who take part in patrols and convoys where most often they experience attacks from the opponents. Facing danger or death, everybody is afraid, no matter how experienced they are. It is a natural reaction. There is one more aspect of "returning from missions". A soldier who comes back injured is regarded as a hero and can feel proud because the injuries he experienced are the evidence of his devotion and courage. A soldier who comes back with mental problems is considered to be weak since a soldier cannot break down. Thus, many of them prefer to suffer alone rather than look for specialist help. Some of them look for consolation in alcohol others reach for drugs.

Only during the Iraq mission 225 soldiers returned home on their own demand (P. Glińska 2007, pp 4–5). Even though a few months have passed since their return, many of them are awoken at night by nightmares. It is hard for them to recover, to take part in everyday life. One of the patrol soldiers mentions "we were attacked near Karbala. I was shot in my thigh (…) I was stressed. My heart went to

my throat. I was afraid of death, injury (…). Nowadays my emotions are seesawing. One night I had so much aggression inside me that I wanted to destroy my room" (A. Rawski, 2006, pp. 20–22). A honker driver talks about his experience: "We fell into a mine, one person was dead. I was injured and I was severely bleeding. This hellish explosion appeared in front of me like a movie frozen image. In the evening I feel strangely nervous, I perspire excessively. I think about my colleague who I will not see again. I am tired of feeling the guilt that I didn't save him" (A. Rawski 2006, pp. 20–22). We had read such descriptions but in accounts of American soldiers coming back from Vietnam or Korea. This time, however, these are the words of Polish soldiers serving in Iraq, who have been diagnosed with battlefield stress.

It is hard to exactly define the number of emotionally affected soldiers since, whereas mental disorders of severe ASD occur immediately and last from two to four weeks, the symptoms of the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may be an effect of ASD not subsiding and they can appear even a few months or years after experiencing such events. Army doctors do not control this phenomenon either, as soldiers are ashamed of their mental disorders, they try to avoid being treated by an army doctor and go to private clinics. Nevertheless, it is the fact, as colonel Karasek informs, that the number of soldiers emotionally injured after a mission in Iraq is growing, the evidence of which are the reports of psychologists from military units as well as the number of people calling the military helpline. In order to help the soldiers returning from Iraq, the department of defence organized, free of charge, two-week long "anti-stress" therapy sessions at military rehabilitation centres. No one, however, foresaw such a response from possible therapy participants – soldiers perceived this kind of help as a way of eliminating them from the army. They were afraid that psychologists, during the therapy, would prove that their mental health condition would exclude them from fulfilling their professional duties (A. Rawski, 2006, pp. 20–22). This fact can testify that soldiers going on missions and also officers preparing them for "all circumstances" did not foresee the threat of the PTSD phenomenon, even though it had been observed a long time ago in the United States among soldiers of the Vietnam War, who after arriving home, could not cope in their everyday life. This phenomenon called the Vietnam syndrome was a serious social problem. It has also been reflected in many movies which we could see on the screen, such as e.g. "Taxi Driver" or "Born on the Fourth of July". In the Polish army a similar phenomenon occurred and was defined as "the Balkans syndrome". It was a result of traumatic situations experienced by Polish soldiers who were fulfilling their mission in Bosnia in the 1990s. It can be, however, supposed that these previous experiences were not used by people who were dealing with mental condition of the soldiers setting off in next contingents.

## Conclusions

Since January 2006, 122 soldiers and about 180 members of their families have been treated in the mental health clinics in Toruń, Grudziądz, Wałcz and Bydgoszcz. The Military Hospital in Bydgoszcz provided support for 42 soldiers and a few families. Apparently, there are situations in which commanders send their subordinates who are affected by the traumatic stress syndrome or abusing alcohol or drugs to army commissions. (PAP 2006). In military contingents more and more young inexperienced people who have to face many demanding challenges can be seen. They have to fulfil their duties in totally different conditions in terms of geography, climate and culture, where everything is unfamiliar to them. They have to meet demands and perform tasks they are given as well as protect themselves and their colleagues. Besides, they also have to overcome common human fear or even learn how to live with it. They suffer from excessive stress and often ease it with alcohol and if they manage to finish their service, after arriving home, they do not know what to do with themselves. Every second soldier, according to unofficial data, who returns home from a peace mission suffers from the so-called post-traumatic stress or PTSD. He cannot sleep, feels constant fear, has low self-esteem and difficulties with adaptation. He can neither function at home nor at work. Due to this fact, he sometimes commits suicide.

It should be taken into account that the war stigma is unavoidable, since the war itself is a constant coincidence of traumatic situations. A human can, however, be prepared to take part in the war or deal with extreme situations he can encounter. According to colonel Truszczynski, such preparation will be effective if training has the so-called stress implanting character, namely when stress elements which may be encountered in Iraq are created. Soldiers should undergo the preparation process in the climatic conditions similar to those they will have to exist in soon and they will get to know the reactions of their own body to high temperatures or low air humidity (A. Rawski 2006, pp. 20–22). Nevertheless, anxiety and fear on such missions as the one in Iraq, are a common thing and there is no training, experience or theory that could prepare a person to combat these feelings. They can only be minimised in such a way that they do not paralyse the actions and can help soldiers make reasonable decisions.

"If somebody says that he is not afraid, it means that he either cheats or reduces the fear that is inside him, he does not want to be aware of it. If a fireman during an action or a soldier in a war says that he is not afraid, it may be very dangerous as it may be a sign that he cannot look inside him or does not understand what is going on. And that is the type who is likely to break down first." (P. Bernabiuk 2007, p 5).

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Pedeutology

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# Foreign Language Teacher Education: The Polish Case[1]

## Abstract

Foreign Language Teacher Training Colleges (FLTTC) were established in Poland as an answer to the need for drastic changes in education in 1992. By the year 2001, FLTTC had managed to graduate the number of teachers the market demanded, yet the quality of these programs was questioned. This paper presents an in-depth understanding of the impact of FLTTC on teacher candidates' learning and development, as described by the participants, and the challenges that FLTTC faced during its early development process. A two-way mixed method was used to better understand the purpose, process, successes, and challenges faced by this alternative teacher education program. The data reveal that the teacher candidates mainly applied to FLTTCs to learn a foreign language, and they used their degrees as a springboard to obtain better-paid jobs. Although the teacher candidates had a positive perception of their teaching skills, building true college-school partnerships was necessary for the development and learning of teacher candidates.

**Key words:** *teacher education, foreign language, college, policy*

## Introduction

Foreign language learning is regarded as a European priority, and with this idea in mind earlier candidates for the European Union as well as new candidates initiated important changes in their education to develop foreign language educators. Among those countries, Poland established foreign language teacher colleges to meet the demand of the education market. Nevertheless, there is little

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evidence as to their effectiveness. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness and challenges foreign language teacher training colleges (FLTTC) face. It is hoped that an understanding of these challenges may help offer policy implications for the improvement of Foreign Language Teacher Training Colleges in Poland as well as in countries which are seeking for models to educate foreign language teachers through a fast track model in Eastern Europe and Asia. In the following proceeding sections, a brief overview of education and foreign language teacher education in Poland is described as background information to highlight the need of the study.

In the spur of democratization of social and political life, Poland embarked on a major economic and political transformation with the collapse of the Iron Curtain in 1989. The Ministry of Education presented to Parliament a document called "the main direction for improving the National Education System in Poland (Banach, 1998, cited in Salitra, 2003), and in 1999 an education reform was released which aimed at identifying the main educational priorities and a new comprehensive law on education in the country. This reform not only aimed to improve the quality of education by restoring the strict proportionality between transmission of information, formation of skills and development of personalities, but also the interaction of education and upbringing processes (Salitra, 2003; Tomiak, 2000).

Those drastic changes in education brought with it urgent needs in tertiary teacher education institutions, especially foreign language teacher education was ranked as one of the crucial issues (Hamot, 1998). The mandatory language taught at primary level had been Russian until the year 1989. Understanding the importance of introducing a Western language, school authorities prompted by political, social, and parental pressure strived to replace the dominant position of the Russian language with one of the foreign languages, particularly English (Kwaśniewicz, 2000). Nevertheless, the Polish Education system was not ready to supply the demand as there were few teachers with Western language credentials (Pawelec, 2000). Although Pedagogical Universities and Foreign Language Philologies had been training Foreign Language Teachers (Eurydice, 2004/05), the number of graduates was short in meeting this need (Kwaśniewicz, 2000).

To meet the demand of foreign language teachers one solution was to train foreign language teachers in three-year colleges in which the graduates would receive a "licencjat" (that is accepted as an equivalent of a BA degree). Ultimately, Foreign Language Teacher Training Colleges (FLTTC) were founded in 1990 (Eurydice, 2004/05, Kwaśniewicz, 2000). These three-year institutions of higher education became sanctioned by the Ministry of Education in 1992 (Kwaśniewicz, 2000), but are not recognized as higher education institutions in the national legisla-

tion (Eurydice, 2005/06). The number of these colleges had increased steadily in number. While it was planned to have 30 English Teacher Training Colleges, the number expanded to 61 in the year 2000. Some of the FLTTCs which were part of Pedagogical higher education institutions currently changed into Pedagogical Universities.

The reforms in the Polish education system overall reflect the need to support Poland's transition to democracy and a capitalist economy, and they are reflected in the training process of foreign language teachers (Pawelec, 2000). The policies adopted by governments or states regarding teacher education, licensing, hiring, and professional development may make an important difference in the qualifications and capacities that teachers bring to their work (Darling-Hammond, 2000). When the Foreign Language Teacher Training Colleges were founded the target was to provide 19,000 qualified secondary school teachers of English. As planned, by the year 2001 FLTTC had managed to graduate the targeted number of foreign language teachers. Although the expected number of teachers was educated, the question of quality emerged (Pawelec, 2000, Komorowska, 1995 cited in Kwaśniewicz, 2000).).

There are two types of teacher training colleges overall in Poland. The mainstream teacher training colleges are institutions of higher education that primarily educate primary and secondary school teachers that receive a licencjat degree when they graduate. This title allows teacher candidates to pursue their studies in an institution of higher education for what some may call graduate school. Graduates of teacher training colleges are recruited as full-time teachers in primary level up to secondary and higher levels school. In Poland teachers with at least a Master's Degree are permitted to teach at secondary and upper levels and graduates of other teacher training colleges such as History Education can only teach at lower levels of education (Nowak-Fabrikowski & Tardif, 1999). The second type of teacher training colleges are the ones that are established under Pedagogical Universities and are called Foreign Language Teacher Training Colleges. Graduates of FLTTC have more privileges than the ones that graduate from other Teacher Training Colleges, as they train teachers of foreign languages for all levels of school education: ranging from pre-primary to post-secondary schools, and below the higher education level and are referred to in the legislation as initial teacher training institutions (Eurydice, 2006/07). One more advantageous situation according to the Tertiary Education Act is that FLTTC may offer post-graduate courses if they meet the requirement of having one professor and at least 2 M.A. holders on top of 5 Ph.D. holders for each foreign language.

There is no legislation that defines the curricula for teacher training. Neverthe-

less, FLTTC are required to follow the framework syllabi issued by the Minister of National Education and Sport, which determine the duration of studies, compulsory subjects or blocks of compulsory subjects, the number of hours assigned to these subjects, and the minimum number of hours to be allocated for practical placement in school (Eurydice, 2001). These programs were launched between the academic years 1992/93 and 2006/07 (Eurydice, 2006/07). Apart from other FLTTC in Poland, teacher candidates attending FLTTC are subjected to four modules throughout their training: English language arts, philology, teacher training, and optional subjects such as European studies (Kwaśniewicz, 2000). The purpose of language arts teaching is to take students beyond the Cambridge Proficiency Level with a high level of linguistic proficiency. The changes brought about in the preparation of future teachers in higher education were based on the curriculum in which a greater number of hours is devoted to pedagogical, psychological, and methodological coursework than to the teaching practice in schools (Salitra, 2003). The teaching practice module consists of pedagogy taught in the first year, and methods of teaching in the second and third years.

Senior teachers are expected to serve as mentors to new teachers and to teacher candidates during the training, what follows is an account of the challenges (Farrell, 2003). The mentorship system could be supplemented with a more informal system of collegial working relationships. The formal mentorship program can continue but it could be well supplemented by "a buddy system" to help familiarize new teachers with the school routines (Farrell, 2003, p. 107). It is argued that the system of educating teachers and improving their qualifications quite simply was not prepared to take on the instruction, in such a wide range, of all currently employed teachers (Salitra, 2003). Yet, one needs to beware that there is evidence that the teaching and learning process may be established before the teacher candidates attend teacher education institutes (Richardson, 1996).

The Polish example can provide implications for nations that go through similar dramatic changes in political, economic and educational systems. Changes can be dealing with program changes such as in the case of Romania, who went through initial changes in training preschool and primary school teachers through three-year short-term studies (Manolesco, 2006), and graduates were considered to become powerful agents of change. Other changes can be with policy implications for teacher education curricula, such as preparing teachers as researchers (Reis-Jorge, 2005), or evaluating change with Chinese lecturers of English based on teacher education and training in English language development (Lamie, 2006). As Grossman (2008) puts it: if university-based teacher education is to survive, we need to consider the challenges as opportunities for all students and teachers.

This study may provide an incentive for nations that are challenged with the development of foreign or western language teachers. Therefore, as explained above, this study aims to investigate the challenges FLTTCs face with respect to teacher candidates' development and learning.

## Method

This study was conducted through a two-phase mixed study in which a survey and a case study was utilized to collect data. Data were collected through a qualitative method including document analysis, field notes, and interview data in a case study, and through a quantitative method via analyzing open-ended and close-ended items in a survey. The data collected through the qualitative means were prerequisite to design a good survey instrument to decide what was to be measured (Fowler, 2002). This case study helped "explore" the context and evaluate how the program operated from multiple perspectives. To reach clues and seek answers, "how" and "why" questions were posed through in-depth observation and collecting rich descriptions of the context to develop more insightful questions (Yin, 2003) to be answered through interviews, and later through a survey instrument. The qualitative data helped the quantitative aspect of the study by aiding the conceptual development and instrumentation, as well as by facilitating the analysis by validating, interpreting, clarifying, and illustrating quantitative findings (Miles & Huberman,1994). Consequently, the power of a two-phase design was advantageous in that the two approaches were conducted separately, therefore, it enabled the researcher to conduct a qualitative phase for an in-depth understanding of the phenomena studied and a quantitative phase to triangulate or converge the findings (Creswell, 1994). The phases will be explained in the proceeding sections.

### The Case

The first phase of the study was utilizing a case study design in a three-year FLTTC that was popular for the number of qualified teachers they graduated and was recognized as one of the first FLTTCs established right after the reform in 1999. Case studies, as Stark and Torrance (2005) put it, seek to engage with and report the complexity of social activity in order to represent the meanings that individual social agents bring to those settings and manufacture in them. Here, as the authors highlight, social reality is created through social interaction, albeit situated in particular contexts and histories, and seeks to identify and describe before trying to analyze and theorize (Stark & Torrance, 2005). Therefore, the case

study was initiated by observing the methodological and the pedagogical class-rooms to gain an understanding of the learning context first. Beside the in-depth field notes of the observations above, the authors also observed TCs' field practice at the cooperating schools. The latter included the feedback sessions held by the supervisors and mentors. I used prolonged engagement and persistent observation at the site and at the cooperating school with TCs to overcome the distortions that may be due to my impact on the context, my own biases, and enable myself to understand the culture in the FLTTC. Persistent observation was helpful to identify the development and learning process of TCs and those events and relationships to interpret their growth as prospective teachers (Erlandson et al., 1993).

Sampling procedures for the semi-structured interviews were conducted pur-posefully. The power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases in order to understand the needs, interests, and incentives of a small group to deeply probe the questions under study (Patton, 2002). In-depth interviews were conducted with the Teacher Training College Director (Ph.D.), two supervising instructors (Ph.D. candidates), one methodology instructor (Ph.D. candidate), two mentors (M.A. Degrees). Since there were only two supervising instructors for the third year teacher candidates. The focus groups with TCs were also purposefully selected. The criterion was that each group of teacher candidates would be working with one of the two supervisors, and it was expected that each focus group had a sample of teacher candidates visiting different school sites for their teaching practice. The criterion was set so as all TCs with different supervisors and mentors could be represented in the case study. Consequently, two focus groups (n1 = 4, n2 = 5) with nine teacher candidates were formed.

All the educators (supervisors, mentors, methodology teacher), except the Director were teaching in another institution as language teachers to subsidize their income. The faculty (n = 3) who were doctoral candidates during this study were challenged to receive their doctoral degrees and conduct publications for tenure track positions. Beside these, among all TCs, four of them were teaching at a private school, and others offered one to one private lessons (tutoring), and teacher burnout was likely to be observed.

All the interviews with the participants as well as the focus groups with TCs lasted between 30–45 minutes, and were tape-recorded with the permission of the participants. The interviews with the participants in the focus groups started with background questions such as age, experience in teaching, and questions such as "What is the main purpose to have selected this FLTTC for your studies?" to understand their motivation toward the college they were studying in. The main interview included questions to understand the development and learning of TCs

as prospective foreign language teachers. Questions were asked related to their pedagogical as well as teaching practice experiences in the cooperating schools. Although there was the risk that the interviewees were sometimes self-conscious and overly aware of the recording (Erlandson et al., 1993) it was not observed in this case. One reason can be that through prolonged engagement during class and field practice the researcher and the participants built trust and confidentiality.

The concluding part of the interview included questions such as whether they would become a teacher or not and how they evaluated themselves as prospective teachers. Prompting and probing questions were employed to gain a deeper under-standing of the teacher candidates' development and learning. Since the researcher was an external evaluator, the focus group interviews with the teacher candidates were conducive to environments in which genuine conversations emerged among the teacher candidates who were destined to a similar learning and/or teaching environments. All the subjects were given pseudonyms in reporting the findings for confidentiality reasons.

Next, a document analysis and expert (teaching staff) opinion based on the teaching practice and the curriculum were used to validate the interview data and compare the curriculum in the FLTTC with the national requirements. Based on the interview data and document analysis, close-ended and open-ended items were constructed to obtain more detailed information of the issues reported in the development and learning of TCs via a survey questionnaire.

### The survey

The second phase deals with the survey. The issues that emerged during the case study (through interviews and observations) as explained above were analyzed to construct a baseline for the survey questionnaire and reach a larger sample of TCs in several FLTTCs. The sampling process for the survey embarked by selecting six FLTTCs in four big cities through convenient sampling based on the criteria to reach FLTTCs with the largest number of student populations and having gradu-ated teachers over the last year. Among those FLTTCs, three were English, one German, and two were French medium colleges. All the FLTTCs were contacted for permission to conduct the survey in their school with the teacher candidates (TCs), who were in their final month of the sixth semester since this period was close to their graduation and the TCs could be considered as novices already. Nevertheless, one of the FLTTCs had to be excluded from the study because the students were celebrating a special feast, and the number of TCs ($n = 3$) available for the research was too small.

A total of 205 TCs were administered the survey questionnaire by the researcher.

Nevertheless, six of the questionnaires were cancelled due to the internal validity considerations as they included a large amount of missing data. As a result, the sample consisted of 199 teacher candidates (Female = 161, male = 34, 4 did not indicate their gender) in their final semester at various Foreign Language Teacher Training Colleges (n = 5) in Poland. Among those who participated, 138 were English, 36 German, and 25 French language teacher candidates.

### The Survey Instrument

The survey questionnaire consisted of two five-point Likert-type scales and one four-point rating scale, and open-ended items aiming at obtaining richer information. The background questions included items such as gender, teaching experience, hours of supervised teaching sessions, purpose of attending the FLTTC, future career plans, and international student exchange experience. The main questions included the following scales: Teacher candidates' self-assessment [α = .83, $N = 125(16)$] (items rating a four-point scale from not successful at all to very successful) of their teaching skills and their perceptions of the teaching practice [α = .67, $N = 181(16)$] and TCs' perception of the variables that contributed most to their development and learning (items rating a five-Point Likert-type agreement scale) they went through [α = .65, $N = 175(13)$], and TCs' Expectations from supervisors [α = .85, $N = 148(22)$]. The survey instrument was pilot tested with the TCs who participated in the focus group interviews. The TCs were asked to answer the questions, and reflect on items they had difficulty in understanding. Next, two professors, one of whom was one of the main agents in the establishment of FLTTC in Poland reviewed the data collection instruments for its content validity. Also, two instructors, one with a Master's of Art Degree and one as a prospective Ph.D. candidate validated the items based on their experiences and the teaching practice curriculum.

## Data Analysis

As described above this study is a mixed method design that was subjected to descriptive and content analysis. Descriptive statistics of the close-ended items were described in percentages, means, and standard deviations. The open-ended items were subjected to content analysis, and frequencies and good quotes were obtained. The responses to open-ended items provide more in-depth information to interpret the findings through descriptive statistics. All the qualitative data (interviews, field notes, document analysis) were thematically analyzed through

content analysis to understand the curriculum of the FLTTC: the pedagogical courses, the language development courses, the cultural courses (e.g., democratic values, European studies), and the teaching practice overall.

The thematic content analysis was conducted as follows: 1) themes in the open-ended items were examined and thematically coded; 2) these codes were utilized in coding one of the transcribed interview data, and additional codes were included: 3) themes were constructed and organized and data were recoded based on the themes that yielded. Next, themes were defined and interpreted to provide evidence of the theme. The main themes that emerged were: "Emergence of teacher training colleges;" as it included issues of the need for establishing colleges and the admission process. Next, "FLTTC as springboards" as participants refer to using the foreign language as a means to get better paid jobs; "internationalization in FLTTC" as the college tried to adapt its curriculum to the European context with subjects such as European Studies, and its deep involvement in student/staff mobility." The next themes emerged as "TCs' development and learning;" and "building college school partnership." Finally, data were *triangulated* with the thematic content analysis results in the transcribed interview data, and extracts from field notes, and the open-ended items. For instance, the challenge to use FLTTC as springboards was evidenced in the interview data with TCs as well as in the survey data that revealed TCs' main intentions about attending these institutions. The findings obtained through the case and the survey were triangulated to report the entire study from a holistic perspective.

Triangulation of data can be described as one of the best ways to elicit the various and divergent constructions of reality that exist within the context of a study. It enables the researcher to collect information about different events and relationships from different opinions and understandings of a topic (Erlandson et al., 1993). Ultimately, the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data collection means and the triangulation of data sources (teacher candidates, instructors, teachers, director, and mentors) provide evidence for the construct validity of the study (Thomas, 2003; Yin, 2003).

## Results

The results are explained with regard to the five challenges that emerged respectively: emergence of Foreign Language Teacher Training Colleges; FLTTC as springboards; internationalization in FLTTC and mobility; TCs' development and learning; and building college school partnership.

**Theme 1:  Emergence of Foreign Language Teacher Training Colleges**

During the transition period into the European Union, FLTTC were established to meet the dramatic needs of foreign language teachers. Therefore, the number of FLTTC both private and public increased dramatically between the years 1999 and 2001. The director of the FLTTC in which the case study was conducted indicated that the Minister of Education realized with the changing political situation in Poland that there was an urgent need for training a lot of language teachers. These were supposed to be Western language teachers, and highlighted that these were languages other than Russian. Since training language teachers in five years was too long a process, policy-makers debated on the issue of having three year colleges rather than the master programs. As a result, FLTTC were established. The curriculum of these institutions was similar to that of the four-year licentiate degrees, but were squeezed into an intensive three-year program. According to the Director, this change was especially difficult for the Poles who came from a strong traditional education background with a Master degree in becoming a foreign language teacher. There is evidence that this change in implementation inevitably made the stakeholders question the quality of the FLTTC graduates (Pawelec, 2000).

The Director emphasized that Teacher Training Colleges had a lower status quo in society due to the above-mentioned five-year track to become a secondary grade teacher. Nevertheless, he claimed that the graduates of FLTTC received certain privileges over graduates of the former colleges. One privilege was that the Ministry of Education legislated that teachers who graduated from FLTTC were allowed to teach from primary to secondary levels. While any other teacher training college graduates could only teach at the primary level. This finding was also evidenced in the literature (Nowak-Fabrykowski & Tardif, 1999). Consequently, such implementation by the Ministry facilitated the dramatic increase in the demand for establishing new FLTTC as their graduates could be hired early on the market. However, this raised a different consideration: the challenge to meet this demand, and inevitably the challenge for student admission in these colleges.

In Poland, application for higher education was traditionally based on the Matura exam, which is similar to the French Baccalaureate. Policy documents indicate that the Matura examination was expected to gradually replace entrance examinations to universities and will have an external character. According to the School Education Act, the external Matura was introduced in the Spring of 2005 (Eurydice, 2004/05).

The data obtained from the director and TCs revealed that teachers in secondary schools train students intensively toward the *Matura Exam* and are likely to ignore the formative curricular requirements. The participants highlighted that the level

of difficulty of the Matura Exam might vary based on educational opportunities and this might lead to inequality of opportunity for rural and urban students when the Matura Exam scores were considered as a priority in student selection into higher education institutions. The director argued that to guarantee equality of opportunity they would conduct their own entrance exam for the applicants holding a successful Matura score.

On the other hand, the participants in the case study, argued that this method did not guarantee overcoming equity concerns for urban and rural students with unequal educational backgrounds. The participants stated in interviews that they thought that the applicants in big cities were more advantageous than students from the country because the former had better foreign language learning opportunities, and could easily be selected into universities . A female TC complained, "The more increased the demand for foreign language teachers, the harder it gets to receive acceptance into the university or college." Alternatively, the literature gives evidence that private universities or colleges have become more accessible to young people from the country and from working-class families. Figures revealed that, for instance, in a college the number of students coming from the country exceeded 20% (n = 20), and those from working families were about 60% (n = 119) of the student population (Szablowski, 2001).

### Theme 2:  Foreign Language Teacher Training Colleges as Springboards
Although the demand for FLTTCs was important, the findings resulting from the quantitative and qualitative data indicate that FLTTCs were preferred as mainly springboards to attend five-year higher education programs or find jobs with better salaries than the teaching profession. Descriptive statistics reveal that the first aim of teacher candidates (TCs) was to learn a foreign language when they applied to their institution. More than half of the TCs (63%, n = 125) wanted to learn a foreign language, one out of eight (12%, n = 24) wanted to become a teacher, and fewer (11.6%, n = 23) wanted to become a translator, and the remaining (13%, n = 26) wanted to learn a language either to enter a Foreign Language Philology that offers a Master's Degree, or to find a better-paid job. This finding correlates with the interview data in that the TCs confessed that well-paid jobs were incentives not to choose the teaching profession.

At that moment, when the TCs were in their last month of graduation, only 30.2% (n = 61) of the participants were determined to become a language teacher, one-fifth (25.1%, n = 50) were not determined, and almost half of the TCs (44.7%, n = 89) were still uncertain if they wanted to become a foreign language teacher. As for the reasons the TCs reported in the open-ended questions that they would

become teachers if they were not able to find better-paid jobs, or if teachers' wages rose. Others reported that they were already teaching as full time teachers, but were not satisfied to teach without a Master's Degree as a master's degree would increase their salary.

As a result, only 12% of the participants (n = 24) wanted to become foreign language teachers when they first entered the FLTTC, and only 30% (n = 60) were determined to enter the teaching profession when they were about to graduate as foreign language teachers.

The data obtained from the survey are in line with other data obtained through the case study. For instance, the Director in the case study underlined that it was more prestigious to teach with a Master's Degree in the education market. Fortunately, one point was that TCs graduating from language departments stood out among other graduates that graduated from teacher training colleges. Since learning and teaching a foreign language was regarded as a very reputable issue during and after the transition period, so were the teachers who graduated from FLTTC. Nevertheless, the faculty believe that the TCs' teaching skills are sufficient to teach in a qualified way, and should not feel obliged to receive a Master's Degree unless there are other requirements.

### Theme 3:  Internationalization of FLTTC

The Republic of Poland was a strong candidate of the European Union in 2001, and traces of globalization were evident in every section of education. FLTTC seemed to be the most advantageous ones among other higher education institutions in the internationalization of education. Polish education program became eligible to participate in some European education and research programs from 1989 on. TEMPUS was one of the first programs to impact on the development of higher education enormously. Next came INCO_COPERNICUS, which mainly dealt with research (Filipkowski, 2003).

It was with the SOCRATES-ERASMUS, LEONARDO DA VINCI, and with the start of the Bologna Process that student and teaching faculty mobility dramatically increased. Also, the successful attempts of the administrative boards in higher education made it possible for FLTTC to make bilateral agreements for the exchange of teachers and the TCs in other Western countries for a semester or two. The increasing number of exchange students from different countries was an incentive for the FLTTC to establish beginner level Polish language classes, and modify their curriculum based on the demands of globalization. Courses such as "European studies" were included in the curriculum of FLTTC. The Director stated that courses like European Studies were helpful for students to learn to live in a democracy and

a Western World. In other words, FLTTC were more than institutions that offered TCs the essential skills for teaching, but also were institutions that offered TCs learning opportunities as democratic citizens. Nevertheless, the number of outgoing students and teaching staff is lower than the number of the ones coming in the internationalization process (Eurydice, 2004/05; Filipkowski (2003).

The descriptive data showed that about one third (31.7%, n = 63) of the TCs sample had been abroad for at least one semester for educational purposes. While six percent of them joined the Erasmus/Socrates programs, the rest (62%, n = 123) found other means to leave the country for educational purposes, mainly learning a foreign language. Three of the TCs in the focus group stated that two of them had attended the Socrates exchange program for at least one semester, and one female TC said that she had attended the program for two semesters. All the TCs indicated that they had opportunities to join an exchange program. They emphasized that it offered them more than teacher training opportunities. It enabled them to reconsider the instructional process they went through as TCs, and the instruction their prospective students would expect from them as novices.

Four TCs in the focus groups indicated that it was important for them to learn about the politics, geography and history of the countries whose language they teach, yet, they complained that they had difficulty in relating those to their development as foreign language teachers. In addition, the teaching staff mostly preferred traditional methods in their classes, and the TCs found that those did not relate to what they had been taught to do (Holt-Reynolds, 2000; Jadallah, 1996; Kroll & Laboskey, 1996). This result might have been an outcome of the dominating teachers in the Polish traditional school culture (Tomiak, 2000). There are several reasons that may have led to such a conclusion.

First, the teaching staff were devoted to their self-development, and attended Master's and Doctorate programs to obtain a tenure track position as a qualified faculty member as indicated by supervisors and the mentor teacher in the case study. Nevertheless, the small number of tenure track faculty led to burnout among the teaching staff. Especially, the number of the teaching staff with a master's degree is higher compared to the ones with doctorate degrees in FLTTC, and this causes various problems. For instance, the intensity of the classes at the FLTTC as well as moonlighting in other schools as part-time teachers are some of the main problems of the teaching staff as to why they may not complete their doctorate studies in a required period. Inevitably, cases of burnout were easily observed. Consequently, some experienced and well-qualified teaching staff did not receive their Doctorate Degrees in due time and had to leave the institution. For instance, one of the supervisors in this case study was to quit the FLTTC as she could not

fulfill her doctorate requirements in time. This led to vacancies in the experienced teaching staff. Also, the ones with doctorate qualifications were likely to transfer to universities as one of the supervisors and the mentor indicated.

As a result, there was a risk that qualified faculty transferred to better-paid jobs, and this requires the administration to make the teaching profession at FLTTC more attractive and awarding. Another reason could be the excessive academization as Komorowska (1995, cited in Kwaśniewicz, 2000) highlighted. Colleges that have had close links to universities may tend to focus on academics or pure science rather than educating well-prepared teachers with practical teaching skills.

### Theme 4:  Development and Learning of TCs

The data with regard to TCs' development and learning were based on understanding how they constructed a teaching and learning environment, how they evaluated their teaching skills and what variables contributed most to their development and learning as teacher candidates. The TCs' perception of their own teaching skills indicated a positive tendency. The data based on five-point Likert-Type scale (five = completely agree, three = undecided, one = completely disagree) reveal that the classroom environment the TCs constructed was positive ($M = 4.04$, $N = 196$, $SD = .65$); the students participated in activities that the TCs assigned during sessions ($M = 4$, $N = 195$, $SD = .74$), and these activities were rather student-centred ($M = 3.99$, $N = 192$, $SD = .85$); yet, it was likely that more than half of the students were involved in off-task behaviour ($M = 2.76$, $N = 193$, $SD = .89$). In sum, TCs can be claimed to have comparably high or more than average self-efficacy beliefs about their teaching ability, but require more practice or experience in their classroom management skills.

While the TCs reported in the open-ended items that they were powerful in building a positive classroom environment (10.56%, n = 21), preparing interesting activities (10.06%, n = 20) and coping successfully with time management issues, a large number of the TCs reported a difficulty in time management skills (23.62%, n = 47) and lesson planning (22.62%, n = 45). The TCs suggested they needed more feedback (18.10%, n = 36) in order to overcome their weaknesses. Yet, they reported mainly their concerns regarding the skills of the mentors they observed in the training school (15.08%, n = 30). Research provides evidence that both mentors and university supervisors play a key role in the development and learning of teacher candidates. The most important seemed to be the quality of the dialogue that was maintained during practice teaching. The more open and divergent the views were allowed, the more satisfied the student teachers were (Talvitie, Peltokallio, & Mannisto, 2000).

As for what variables were most effective in the TCs' learning process, they reported that the number of successive classes was most effective. More specifically, the TCs reported that their development and learning as prospective teachers were mainly based on "teaching classes successively during teaching practice ($M = 4.38$, $N = 195$, $SD = .82$), teaching a whole session in the cooperating school ($M = 4.06$, $N = 197$, $SD = 1.21$), observing student attitudes toward certain activities ($M = 3.90$, $N = 193$, $SD = .93$), discussing teaching issues in methodology classes ($M = 3.94$, $N = 197$, $SD = .85$).

The TCs were asked about their expectations from the supervisors with regard to their development and learning in teaching skills in the survey. The highest expectations were reported as "give individual feedback on my performance ($M = 4.27$, $N = 171$, $SD = 1.09$), which is parallel to their written statement; ask my opinion about my own teaching performance ($M = 4.16$, $N = 170$, $SD = .98$); provide suggestions to improve their weaknesses ($M = 4.32$, $N = 169$, $SD = .93$); discuss the weaknesses in my teaching skills ($M = 4.17$, $N = 169$, $SD = .91$); discuss the strengths in my skills ($M = 4.26$, $N = 168$, $SD = .86$); give constructive feedback on my classroom management skills ($M = 4.10$, $N = 169$, $SD = .96$).

On the other hand, the TCs reported they completely disagreed or disagreed that their supervisors gave feedback in the presence of their classmates ($M = 2.43$, $N = 172$, $SD = 1.48$) and asked for peer feedback about their teaching performance ($M = 2.87$, $N = 171$, $SD = 1.46$). Thus, even if reflective feedback is expected by the faculty on evaluating TCs' own performance, teacher candidates expect this to be realized in privacy. Such findings may indicate two aspects. One aspect is that the competitive environment in the FLTTC influences the TCs' expectations about the type of feedback given. Therefore, the feedback offered may look critical rather than constructive.

In addition to the above, the interview data indicate that the TCs in the case study benefit most from the reflections after teaching practice in the schools they visited. They reported that classroom observations and reflections of how they taught helped them a lot. Their reflections on the teaching practice also enabled them to see a difference between how they had been taught to teach and how their teacher taught them at the secondary school.

Strategies such as self-evaluation and reflecting on performance made the TCS set a goal for their follow-up teaching practice. Consequently, the success of the student teachers' achievement relied on the sensitive support given by the mentor in the schools and in the institution of higher education by the supervisor (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 1998). If the supervisor did not give support and provided the student teacher with opportunities to explore dilemmas and contradictions, it

was likely that student teachers would withdraw from the search rather than take further risks (Talvitie, Peltokallio, & Mannisto, 2000).

Finally, as for their self-evaluation report, the TCs indicated that they had a rather high rating on their teaching performance in the survey. The scale ranged from four "very successful" to one "very unsuccessful." The data show that the TCs were satisfied with developing a positive classroom environment ($M = 3.27$, $N = 192$, $SD = .65$); building successful interactions with students ($M = 3.08$, $N = 192$, $SD = .67$); teaching new vocabulary successfully ($M = 3.01$, $N = 190$, $SD = .64$); and making lessons enjoyable ($M = 2.91$, $N = 188$, $SD = 1.73$). Consequently, the findings indicate that the TCs have positive self-efficacy beliefs about their teaching skills for that moment.

The data obtained from the TCs via the survey and the focus group interviews were parallel with those of their supervisors in that the number of observations and teaching practices increased, so the quality of the TCs' teaching improved. The improvement was also parallel to the quality of reflections provided after the teaching. Supervisor A claimed that what they did was just to provide them (TCs) with certain tools from the beginning of their careers. Most of the things they had to learn on their own in practice teaching. Whereas, Supervisor B saw the training of TCs as an in-service training since some of the students did have some outside teaching and experience in private schools already. Yet, she asserted that a weakness was that they should have been doing more teaching hours in the trainig schools because the TCs had had "hardly got to teach three lessons in a row."

Consequently, the TCs may feel uncomfortable in front of their peers. To enable the student teachers to be more critical and reflective in their practice, Tatto (1998) suggests developing shared understandings or norms within programs and across the field of teacher education. While McIntyre (1994) states that it is important that student teachers receive feedback regarding some criteria as pupil attention, interest, and comprehension. However, critical reflection can trigger off a deeper understanding of teaching. It should also involve examining teaching experiences as a basis for evaluation and decision-making and as a source for change (Richards, 1999).

Reflective supervision of TCs by faculty members leads to higher order thinking skills and TCs become self-directed learners in the long run. TCs' are highly motivated to improve their language competence. Knowledge about the development and learning of adolescents was emphasized and regarded as the essentials in becoming professionals, learning of younger children was emphasized.

As regards of the curriculum content the TCs explained that English was taught at an early age in Poland, and felt that they would find jobs easily at the primary

level. Consequently, the curriculum content is argued to ignore the learning of young learners and this caused a mismatch with the new educational reform for lower levels of education and the legislation that teachers graduating from FLTTC are mainly educated to teach younger learners rather than adolescents.

Many TCs start FLTTs with little foreign language knowledge and therefore there was much focus on intensive language skills, while there was little time devoted to subjects such as classroom management pedagogy, instructional planning and evaluation, and child development and learning. In addition, although there was a core curriculum for the foreign language classes at secondary schools, each school selected their own course material. With this respect the TCs graduated with lack of knowledge of designing a curriculum and evaluating course-books. The TCs also exposed another concern which was having difficulty in relation to the content of some courses such as geography to their prospective profession.

Although the instructional designs and methodologies introduced were very constructivist or innovative, the instructional delivery used by the faculty staff or by the mentors were rather traditional and the teacher candidates did not feel they were provided with a model that their educators taught. Although the curriculum was established to facilitate the transition process from the old educational system under reform, the content of courses such as geography and history did not reflect the actual needs of prospective foreign language teachers. Moreover, "intercultural knowledge and sensitivity are elementary soft skills for international cooperation" (Vogel, 2003, p. 386), and TCs needed to acquire this knowledge through pedagogical experience, and cooperation with other cultures at university. The recognition of theoretical elements in the field was combined with pedagogical knowledge. Therefore, the methods classes were considered useful for understanding and practising teaching and learning processes according to the participants.

### Theme 5:  Building School Partnerships

Since the three-year intensive program offered at TTCs aims at preparing TCs for the teaching profession as a fast track model, the issue of quality was of high concern. Therefore, TCs' formal training at the higher education institution and their teaching training through observing an experienced teacher and teaching whole sessions themselves were essential in their development. The figures given above show evidence of how the number of teaching hours and reflections provided might have contributed to the development and learning of TCs. Nevertheless, during the case study the stakeholders pointed at the lack of formal school-college partnerships, whose existence might have ensured the retention of quality opportunities during the teaching practice for TCs. Lesson plans for teaching practice

mostly covered one-two hour lessons. Planning for short duration was considered as a threat as these might not have been formulated into longer hours of lesson planning during actual training. The teaching practice was perceived as inauthentic, or like one of the participants claimed "a 45-minute show."

The male mentor felt that there was a need for more collaboration between the supervisor and the mentor. Both mentors asserted that TCs constructed interesting activities, but complained that those did not match the curriculum. The male supervisor wanted to be asked what was to be done in the teaching practice and decide how to evaluate the teacher candidate. There were various issues that arose due to lack of school-college partnership, the supervisors as well as the director of the FLTTC suggested building a true partnership with a school and contributing to the development and learning of teachers as an investment for the development and learning of the teachers. Since intensive field practice was meant to "not only give the teacher some practice, but to help the teacher understand the organizational school culture and interpersonal relations among various parties" (male supervisor).

Both the mentor teachers and the TCs have some concerns of being evaluated, the inexperienced mentors feel uncomfortable to evaluate the teacher candidates in a reflective session. A positive tendency is that the supervising faculty emphasized that this unwillingness was likely to change since there was a new criterion being introduced that offered teachers who were mentoring TCs with extra scores on their professional performance evaluation documents. They argued that the duration of the formal training could be too short to have TCs internalize the well-proven practices, and improve mal-applications. The male supervisor saw these as challenges for further improvement, and claimed TCs "will go to schools very soon and then they'll be inexperienced teachers. And these [experiences with novices] might be interesting to see what sort of problem an inexperienced teacher can have.

The data indicate that the mentors were often selected among the earlier graduates since they were more familiar with the philosophy of the higher education institution they had graduated from and their teaching was more likely to match with the type of teaching and learning environment that the faculty teach TCs during their methodology classes. In the interviews, the female supervising faculty complained that it was difficult to find mentors because they were mostly reluctant as they were either underpaid, or the teaching experience of TCs made mentors fall short in reaching the program goals. In addition, the female supervising faculty explained that some mentors might find themselves offended seeing that TCs may be teaching better than they did. Such data were also supported by the male

supervising faculty. Consequently, the mentors seem to have low efficacy beliefs about their teaching skills and consider themselves as inefficient to be good models. On the other hand, the supervising faculty thought that both the mentors as well as the TCs needed to benefit reciprocally from each other during teaching practice. This expectation was validated by the mentor indicating that when she watched them (TCs) teach, she sometimes learned from them by noticing what was wrong, or what was good. Yet, the mentors had other concerns regarding the feedback sessions.

The director, and both the supervising faculty during field training highlighted a need for *establishing strong cooperation with partner schools.* The director explained that the FLTTC itself was responsible for making an agreement with mentor teachers, and have TCs work with them on the basis of their being full-time teachers. Based on the FLTTCs' budget, it was possible to pay the mentors on an hourly basis. The method teacher suggested there should be one training school where they could meet and talk with the headmaster and the teachers, and train them.

As it can be seen, the process of teaching practice is far more essential than the formal education the TCs received. Therefore, FLTTCs are challenged to establish strong cooperation with partner schools (namely, partners based on a courtesy agreement), providing TCs with good models of mentor teachers, and providing sufficient amount of teaching opportunities for TCs' practice teaching.

## Discussion and Conclusions

The findings of this study reveal that Foreign Language Teacher Training Colleges (FLTTC) have become crucial institutions in supplying the demand for foreign language teachers in society both before and after the transition into democracy, and have proved successful in meeting foreign language teacher shortages in primary and secondary schools through a fast track model. The success can be evaluated from two perspectives. First, since teacher candidates (TCs) could be hired as full-time teachers after a three-year intensive program and contribute to the needs of the market at a younger age than their counterparts graduating from universities, it can be considered as an incentive for nations that need to train foreign language teachers. Second, TCs have positive beliefs about their teaching ability, but lower beliefs about dealing with off task behaviours. Such a finding is in line with the research that claims that TCs need to master the topics related to classroom management (Chan, 2008; Savran-Gencer & Cakiroglu, 2005) as

classroom management is one of the challenging yet least emphasized subject in teacher education (Darling-Hammond, LePage, & Akar, 2005). Despite the positive quality measures with regard to TCs graduating from FLTTC, the findings show that these colleges are confronted with certain challenges to retain this reputation. Especially, in their spur to more elite education (Szablowski, 2001).

First, although teacher training colleges have been developed to meet the needs of the market, these institutions are likely to be used as springboards to other professions or institutions to receive foreign language competence. Second, the low reputation and consequently the low income rate compared to teachers who graduate from universities may discourage the motivation of the FLTTC graduates to pursue a job in the teaching profession. Fortunately, FLTTCs holding a sufficient number of tenured academic staff have started offering graduate education to meet the needs of their graduates in that respect, which is observed as a positive way to receive a higher public opinion. In this way, the TCs complete their master's degree while teaching at the same time in a primary or secondary school, and gain a reputation as a foreign language teacher with a Master's Degree.

Third, the findings indicate that teaching practice was found to be an important asset in the development and learning of teacher candidates. Especially, the more opportunities the teaching candidates had to experience teaching and receive feedback by their supervisors, the more self-confident they became as prospective teachers. Such applications are likely to increase the self-efficacy beliefs of TCs concerning teaching ability, while less practice may decrease those. For instance, in some colleges TCs had not been observed by their faculty. It can be concluded allegedly that the number of faculty fell short in supervising the teacher candidates during their teaching practice or the faculty may be more interested in the academic development of TCs rather than their practical teaching skills (Komorowska 1995, cited in Kwaśniewicz, 2000). Nevertheless, to generalize this finding I suggest that further research needs to be conducted to understand particularly faculty tenure track positions and the development and learning of faculty.

Next, although the intensive teaching practice program was one of the key elements for the successful development of teacher candidates, it can be concluded that it had some drawbacks. In FLTTC the recognition of theoretical elements in the field is combined with pedagogical knowledge. Therefore, the methods classes were considered to be a means to understand and practice teaching and learning processes. Knowledge about the development and learning of mainly adolescents was emphasized. Unfortunately, many teacher candidates started FLTTC with little foreign language knowledge. As a result, there was much focus on intensive language skills, while there was little time devoted to subjects such

as classroom management pedagogy, instructional planning and evaluation, and child development and learning. The existence of these subjects in the program may not guarantee that the needs of teacher candidates in FLTTC will be met with regard to their future teaching profession. Further research is essential to analyze the existing school culture at the lower levels of education, and analyze textbooks so as to understand their structural accordance with innovative approaches to teaching and learning. The findings are in line with the research that indicates that being well-equipped with content-specific knowledge is crucial in relating it with pedagogical knowledge in teacher education, nevertheless it needs to be facilitated through the coaching of academic staff (Akar, 2007).

Another challenge is that there were no true partner schools. Faculty members at the FLTTC made arrangements with mentors based on personal relations. Therefore, there was the risk that the mentors might not renew contracts with the FLTTC. Urgent new policies need to be developed to increase and develop true school-FLTTC partnerships, and make contracts more attractive to hire mentors. In addition, it can be concluded from this study that mentors might have lacked the essential tools to be involved in the mentoring process; therefore, it needs to be professionally recognized. For instance, mentors were likely to use traditional strategies where the teacher is a dominant figure (Salitra, 2003) and such situations may not serve as good teaching practices for TCs who were subjected to or were recommended to implement more innovative (e.g., constructivist) methods in their classrooms. Therefore, new policies may strengthen the school-FLTTC partnership in order to provide opportunities for the professional development of mentors.

One solution could be that the college can keep in touch with their graduates and make bilateral contracts as mentors to build stronger college-school partnerships. Experienced faculty (especially supervisors) in the college can offer seminars or invite teachers (mentors) in partner schools to attend their methods and pedagogical courses and in turn contribute to the development and learning of teacher candidates in partner schools. It is hoped that in this respect their experiences may have a reciprocal long-term impact in schools as well as in FLTTC to introduce a more student-centred way of teaching and learning environments.

In addition, the findings reveal that the faculty and teacher candidates had various opportunities to experience different school cultures abroad via faculty mobility and student exchange programs offered via education-based international programs such as the TEMPUS, Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates and Erasmus (Fulton et al., 2007). Such mobility may establish new synergy in Polish school culture and teachers' professional life. It is a positive incentive that more and more students are attracted by the exchange programs. One implication is that curricular content

such as European studies, and different cultures and countries and topics such as democratic citizenship will be facilitated through student exchange programs, and allegedly examining the school culture in other European countries may have had a positive impact on the school culture in Poland. Further research is recommended to understand the impact of exchange programs both in higher education as well as at lower levels of education on teachers' teaching practices and student learning.

## Policy Implications

Based on the bulk of the data, the following can be concluded for policy concerns: educational policy concerns about teacher development and learning, and economic and social concerns as prospective professionals.

First, Foreign Language Teacher Training Colleges need to attract students with good foreign language competences to give priority to pedagogical development rather than foreign language development to keep a high quality of their graduates. One suggestion to attract teaching as a profession can be offering scholarships to TCs who want to become language teachers. Second, the present framework for teacher education in Poland is rather complex. Foreign Language Teacher Training Colleges need to construct policies to establish a core curriculum for teacher education institutions to compete with teacher education institutions in Poland and abroad. Therefore, it is suggested that FLTTCs all over the country establish a common mission. One implication is that teacher education curriculum needs to comply with other (e.g., international) teacher education curriculum. Recent publications, such as Darling-Hammond & Bradsford (2005) may be an example of what needs to be included in a teacher education curriculum. Such an achievement can be obtained by further developing partnership at the international arena through exchange programs and student/teacher mobility. The implications of the latter may also affect the candidate countries who are going through a similar teacher education development such as Romania, Bulgaria, and Slovakia (Eurydice, 1997, Kwaśniewicz, 2000).

Third, FLTTCs are challenged to establish educational policies to construct school-college partnerships and attract their graduates or successful language teachers as mentors. These policies need to satisfy the needs and interests of both the schools and the teacher training colleges. Mentors at cooperating schools are encouraged to engage in reflective training that will improve the professional development of the mentors themselves. Improvement may yield better teaching

and learning environments based on exposure to innovative instructional strategies as well as better foreign language competences.

Research shows evidence that flexibility and openness on the part of mentor teachers are conditions that provide optimal support to teacher candidates and increase the opportunities for learning to occur for both mentor and teacher candidates. Such evidence is important in establishing collaborative inquiry for the mentor teachers involved in partnership with the teacher education institution (Grisham, Ferguson, & Brink, 2004). Alternatively, mentors should benefit from the opportunities offered at FLTTC such as attending pedagogical courses and methodology classes dealing with teaching and learning approaches. In return, FLTTCs may benefit from mentors' descriptions of their authentic experiences in the field and have them visit students in the early years of their training. Next, FLTTC are challenged to teach in diverse cultural contexts and different grade levels, and focus on topics such as classroom management pedagogy, student assessment and grading, and primary school kids' learning more intensively.

Fifth, to make professional development meaningful in a reform environment, deeper coordination between schools and FLTTCs must occur to ensure its relevance (Scribner, 2003). Policy-makers are challenged to establish new policies for considering scholarships or new incentives to attract more foreign language teachers who are graduates of FLTTC. The implication for this is not to restrict the life-long learning process, but to award teachers and provide them with an impetus to complete their master's degrees and seek ways for further professional development. Such policies may influence the traditional public opinion and find FLTTC graduates as reputable as the ones that graduate from universities or foreign language philologies.

Overall, the findings of this study may contribute to the knowledge and research on training foreign languages teachers in teacher training colleges from several perspectives. Assessment of the current status of FLTTC in Poland is important to the development of countries experiencing the transition period such as Romania and Slovakia, who have adopted a similar solution in foreign language teacher training. The Polish experience can be an incentive to the countries that need dramatic changes in their foreign language teaching policy to meet present as well as future challenges.

During this study, there was a limited number of documents printed in English. As a non-speaker of Polish, I came across many difficulties in understanding the official documents and legislations in education and had many of the documents obtained from the CODN and Ministry of Education (MNE) translated by the faculty with English Philology credentials. Yet, I had to frequently ask the faculty

as well as the officials in the CODN and officials in the Ministry of Education to validate my data based on FLTTC policies. Although it may be considered a limitation in the study, my role as a foreign (external) evaluator reveals important implications for program evaluation, especially through exposing the challenges that FLTTC face from multiple perspectives. The nature of qualitative research is that the researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, and analyzes words and emics and reports the perception of the informants in the natural setting (Creswell, 2007). During my observations and interviews, I witnessed teacher burnout both among the academic faculty seeking tenure track positions and the teachers due to moonlighting in several jobs. For instance, one consideration could be decreasing teaching workload for the instructors (Dabrowa-Szefler & Jablecka-Pryslopska, 2006) at FLTTC to provide opportunities to conduct research and get tenured, or to better pay experienced teachers and have them remain in FLTTC as supervisors or language development teachers. Such unrevealed data provide important implications for policymakers and curriculum developers. I hope that further research will shed light on these challenges through an in-depth examination and develop implications for policy makers with the issues reported above.

Another implication is that FLTTCs have been effective in meeting short-term needs of the nation in meeting the demand for foreign language teachers. Nevertheless, urgent new educational policies need to be legislated to meet the challenges revealed in this study and consider the long-term needs of FLTTC. These are the development of academic and teaching staff and tenure track positions, the development and learning of mentor teachers in training schools, and teacher candidates' future social and economic concerns. In brief, the present study indicates that new educational policies need to be established to address the challenges that Foreign Language Teacher Training Colleges face with regard to developing student-centred approaches to learning over traditional teaching methods at all levels and consider the economic and social concerns of teacher candidates.

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# Following the Path of the Teacher's Development
## Joint reflection

## Abstract

The results of recent educational research support the notion that the key to increasing students´ knowledge is the competence of their teachers. On the basis of our long term experience from cooperation with a group of primary school teachers we discuss the concept of pedagogical competences needed in (mathematics) education, the possibilities of their cultivation and development and qualified joint reflection as a competence and as a way to competence cultivation. As the cooperation in our team influenced the participating teachers in different ways, we will illustrate their development by a selection of episodes from their teaching.

**Key words:** *primary school teachers, teachers´ competences, qualified joint reflection*

## Introduction

Among the phenomena influencing the culture of mathematics education teachers' professional competences are of crucial importance. Over the past few years we have paid our attention to cultivation of in-service teachers' competences.

We have been cooperating with a group of primary school teachers on a long-term basis. The stimulus to our cooperation with these teachers and to formation of the team came from the need for solving the Comenius project "Understanding of mathematics classroom culture in different countries". The objective of the project was to develop a course for EU teachers. Our original idea was that we would illustrate typical features of teaching of mathematics in the participating countries

to which end we would use video recorded episodes from teaching and analysis of curricular materials and textbooks. However, our experience soon showed that this task was not only difficult but probably even unfeasible.

Thus, we were gradually led to the conclusion that the international course would be based on several appropriate video recorded teaching episodes which would be subjected to joint reflections. This would enable us to influence and cultivate the participants' competences. It is easy to find plenty of experience with successful use of video recordings of episodes from real teaching when demonstrating to teachers' innovation in school practice and when outlining the possibilities of its implementation (e.g. Švec, 1996; Santagata et al., 2007; cf. survey in Sowder, 2007). Using video recordings it is possible to create and cultivate skills in assessment of pupils' answers, to diagnose pupils' mistakes and their sources. Gradually, we came to the conclusion that if it was joint reflection that was carried out, its participants learned to exert deeper insight into the content taught and into its grasping by the pupils; what happens in this case is influencing of teachers' beliefs, deep and permanent changes in how they perceive the sense and character of mathematics education.

Although the aim of the project was not to support professional development of the participating teachers, gradually we could observe significant changes in their perception of teaching of mathematics. Consequently, we began to pay attention to these changes and investigate them from the research point of view. We could observe not only development of the teachers' reflections (it is published in details in Tichá, Hošpesová, 2006), but also changes in their teaching.

In the following text, we will first pay attention to how we comprehend the concept pedagogical competences needed in mathematics education and focus on the possibilities of their cultivation and development. Then we will explain in more detail what we understand by joint pedagogical reflection and its significance. In the next part we will show that the cooperation in our team influenced the participating teachers in different ways. We will try to illustrate the change in their beliefs by a selection of episodes from their teaching.

## Theoretical background of our work

### Teachers' professional competences

If we want to answer the question what teachers should master, what they should know, who the teacher-professional is, we have to study professional competences and compare them with other related concepts (pedagogical content knowledge,

knowledge of pedagogy, attention-based knowledge, etc.), their interrelations and importance for the teaching profession.

The Czech psychologist, Z. Helus (2001, p. 37) emphasizes: "A successful effort to change the school is only possible if the teacher becomes its leading agent. It is to do with answering questions regarding his/her competences and responsibility, regarding his/her appropriate condition, regarding updating his/her undergraduate training and providing lifelong education. This implies a change in the demands on the teacher's knowledge and competences."

What do we understand by key competences of a mathematics teacher? In our belief it is a set of professional competences by which we understand complex qualifications, skills and dispositions for successful performance of the profession. In accordance with the work (Helus, 2001) we rate among the basic competences (a) the subject-didactic competence based on expert knowledge of the scientific content and its implementation in relation to a specific class and (b) the competence of qualified joint reflection connected with the ability to project one's own lifelong education. (Hošpesová & Tichá, 2003; Tichá & Hošpesová, 2005, 2006). That is why the focus of our research is on the issues related to the teaching content. Our effort is to ensure that the subject taught is not "invisible".

It is Shulman's ideas concerning "knowledge base for teaching" that are, from our point of view, beneficial and form a good source of inspiration (Shulman, 1986). He emphasizes the content of teaching and therefore simultaneously the teacher's knowledge of this content. According to Shulman, the teacher's knowledge (in our case the knowledge of the teacher of mathematics) is of a specific nature which differs from the knowledge and understanding of the specialist (mathematician). Pedagogical content knowledge is specific for the teaching profession and answers the needs of teaching, the teachers apply their knowledge to help their pupils understand processes and concepts; the scientists use their knowledge in research, to gain new knowledge in their area (Grossman, Wilson & Shulman, 1989; Cochran, King & DeRuiter, 1995).

For mathematics education Harel and Kien (2004, p. 25) indicate three interrelated critical components of a teacher's knowledge base (a) knowledge of mathematics content, (b) knowledge of student epistemology, (c) knowledge of pedagogy. Bromme (1994, p. 84) extends this list into "five fields of knowledge that are needed for teaching: (a) knowledge about mathematics as a discipline, (b) knowledge about school mathematics, (c) philosophy of school mathematics, (d) general pedagogical … knowledge, (e) subject-matter-specific pedagogical knowledge" and emphasizes their interrelatedness: "The fusing of knowledge coming from different origins is the particular feature of the professional knowledge of

teachers as compared to the codified knowledge of the disciplines in which they have been educated." (Bromme, 1994, p. 75). Similarly, Ball speaks of the necessity that teachers should acquire "amalgam" of the subject matter knowledge and knowledge of pedagogy and interconnect it in the context of their work in order to prepare teachers who "not only know content but can make use of it to help all students learn" (Ball, 2000).

Let us remind the reader at this point of "European didactic tradition". One cannot but observe a striking resemblance between "pedagogical content knowledge" and "subject specific didactic" (in German "Fachdidaktik") as a perspective on learning contents. For example, Klafki (1967) points out that the main task of teacher training is the "didactic analysis". By this is meant the mental process focusing on contents, on answers to "what"-question in teaching and education (methodology in contrast focuses on the "how"-question).

The competence of reflection is of special importance and it is taken as the determining feature of the teaching profession (Bruner, 1996; Krainer, 1996; Climent & Carrillo, 2001; Jaworski, 2003).

### Qualified joint reflection

As already mentioned above, Helus puts the competence of qualified pedagogical reflection on the same level of importance as all the other kinds of competences. He defines this competence as the analysis of the teacher's own thinking and of the teacher's dealing with their students in a way suitable for their ability to plan their own lifelong education, and considers it as a determining feature of the teacher's professionalism (Helus, 2001). Slavík and Siňor (1993) understand the term "qualified joint reflection" as "… a description and analysis of key elements, evaluation and revaluation of modes of explanation, of decision making, of choosing appropriate strategies."

At the same time, reflection is the way to cultivation of teachers' competences as it enables development of the teacher's "professional" thinking and presentation of practical didactic theory. Systematic reflection of one's own activities, decision making processes and pedagogical situations creates suitable conditions for transition from intuitive to conscious and reasoned conduct. This means that it constitutes the key element in future teachers' and in-service teachers' professional development (Švec, 2004). The selection of various techniques of systematic qualified reflection facilitates deeper inner dialogue (Scherer et. al., 2004; Švec, 1996). Reflection also constitutes a significant part of action research whose main participants are in-service teachers (Jaworski, 2003; Schön, 1983).

Some authors warn of the necessity to carry out and systematically develop

not only self-reflection but also joint reflection. (Tzur, 2001; Cobb et al., 1997). Scherer and Steinbring (2003) stress that the work of teachers of mathematics is exceedingly demanding and thus calls for "qualified planning and qualified joint reflection of everyday teaching activities".

We came to the conclusion that qualified pedagogical reflection (as we understand it) requires making of video recordings, peer observation of mathematics lessons by the participating teachers, joint lesson planning etc. (Steinbring, 2002) and that it is necessary that teachers should be prepared for these activities.

## Cooperation with the teachers

### Selection and characteristics of the participating teachers

Our team cooperated with five primary school teachers. The reason for building the team was carrying out the project mentioned in the introductory part. We were looking for experienced teachers whose work was well appreciated by both the school and the parents. At the same time, it was essential that these teachers should trust us to such an extent that they would have their teaching video recorded. We were looking for (and we believe we managed to find) teachers who were self-confident as far as pedagogical experience is concerned, liked teaching mathematics and believed that they could "show us something".

The teaching experience and qualifications of almost all the participating teachers was sufficient and adequate. Primary school teachers in the Czech Republic teach all subjects. Their university training corresponds to this fact. The university course is eight to ten semesters long and is held at faculties of education. The course includes pedagogical-psychological preparation as well as the core and didactics of all subjects taught at primary school. Until 1989, unified curricula for mathematics training of primary school teachers existed. They included the basics of arithmetic, algebra, geometry and the didactics of mathematics. Our teachers (Anna, Cecily, Dana[1]) were graduates of this type of undergraduate training. However, at the beginning of our cooperation all three claimed that they were not completely happy with their undergraduate preparation in mathematics. Ema was a graduate of a different undergraduate course and as a primary school teacher she was not a certified teacher.

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[1]  The names of the teachers are pseudonyms.

It is not compulsory in the Czech Republic to take part in in-service training. Teachers enroll on it voluntarily if interested. Most often they take part in separate courses that offer attractive methodological approaches.

### Progress of our cooperation

As we have already mentioned above, our cooperation with the participating teachers underwent certain development as we gradually changed our conception of how to solve the project. Therefore, the video recordings, which were made gradually, came to existence under different conditions.

We started by making video recordings of a few (2–4) subsequent lessons of each of the teachers. The focus of these lessons was left entirely up to the teachers. Our only demand was that the recorded lessons should be their usual lessons that they would not deviate from their usual teaching. Later we selected a few samples for presentation at the international meeting of all project solvers. These samples can now serve as a reliable source material from which we can deduce what beliefs regarding the sense of mathematics education the teachers originally had possessed.

Discussions with colleagues from Germany and Italy led us to adopt the idea that it was not possible to illustrate the culture of teaching on episodes from the teaching practice and to expect that the positively evaluated experience could be "transferred" into other classes and lessons. We moved towards Steinbring's opinion that professionalization of the teacher's work could be supported by reflection of the teaching episodes (Steinbring, 2002). That is why we began to prepare suitable video recordings of teaching more like teaching experiments. Joint preparation of video recording and reflection on a selection of episodes became a component part of our work.

Our cooperation gradually settled down roughly on the following steps:

1. Preparation of the teaching experiments usually began at a joint meeting of the team of teachers and researchers. We discussed the topic of the coming experiment, the potentialities of the use of various methods and techniques, and even mathematical content in greater detail if necessary. The topic of the experiment usually originated in the needs of the teacher in whose lesson the experiment was done.

2. The teaching experiment was usually realized by one of the teachers in her class. If two of the teachers were teaching in the same grade, the experiment was carried out by both of them. After the joint session, the preparation and lesson planning of the teachers was individual.

3.  The experimental teaching was recorded by one researcher on a camcorder. During our cooperation we made 25 video recordings of lessons (or their sections). The intrusion into the course of the lesson was minimal as the pupils were used to being video recorded.
4.  The teacher who had taught the recorded lesson was the first to watch the recording and to select interesting passages which she wanted to discuss with her colleagues. It was usual that she consulted her choice of episodes with the researcher who had made the recording.
5.  The video recording (of the selected episodes) was watched (and sometimes repeatedly) and reflected upon individually by all members of the team. Therefore, all the members of the team were prepared for the subsequent joint reflection.
6.  The selected episodes formed the basis for joint reflection of the whole team. These discussions were usually also recorded by the researchers, which enabled a follow-up analysis of the joint reflection.

During our cooperation, the teachers were teaching in different grades according to their work at school.

What we could observe was that the cooperation in our team contributed to the fact that the teachers' perspective on the meaning and essence of mathematics education was changing. Also our view of the school practice was gradually changing.

## The teachers' beliefs and changes in them

In the joint reflections of the short episode video recordings selected by the teachers themselves we discussed the possible approaches, the sources of various beliefs etc. After some time of our close cooperation, the teachers began to regard their different teaching styles and philosophies of school mathematics, didactic approaches, subject matter knowledge … (Bromme, 1994) as one of the fundamental sources of differences; in this context they considered their different professional orientation and undergraduate training.

The discussion usually centred on two areas: (a) pupils' work, (b) teachers' opinions on how to approach a specific topic. What was certainly surprising was that the whole discussion was penetrated by considerations on the essence and meaning of mathematics education and also by considerations on the sense of joint reflections.

It was also becoming increasingly more apparent that our joint sessions had various effects on the individual teachers. Changes could be observed in all of them but these changes were of a different nature. What we will try to do now is to describe these differences and to document them with the help of transcripts of the teaching episodes. Naturally, in some cases we rely on our feelings and subjective perception of approaches of the individual teachers.

### Development of didactic skills (The Case of Anna)

It was Anna who at the beginning of our cooperation was most explicit about her intention to change her teaching of mathematics. Her lessons whose video recording were taken at the beginning reveal her considerable mastery of methodology and her effort to prepare such problems for her pupils that they would be able to solve. However, she always tried to ensure that her pupils would also understand the process of numerical operations that they were taught.

Let us illustrate this point by the following episode. In a lesson in the 1st grade she taught her pupils, who had previously not encountered the operation of multiplication, to solve several problems leading to repeated adding of the same summand. It is obvious from the transcript of Anna's interaction with the pupils that she was not merely interested in the results of addition. She tried to make sure that everybody would understand how to get to this result.

| | |
|---|---|
| T 1: | I found out that 6 pairs of peas were growing there. 6 pairs of seedlings. Would you know how to count how many there were, now, if there were 6 pairs? Péťa. |
| Péťa: | 12. |
| T 2: | Is it right, children? |
| Children: | (*together*) Yes. |
| T 3: | Who could explain this to me? How did you find that 6 pairs are 12? Luboš. |
| Luboš: | Because 3 times 2 is 6. |
| T 4: | Aha. |
| Luboš: | And again 3 twos are 6, too. 6 plus 6 is 12, too. |
| T 5: | Did anybody count that differently? His calculation was right. Verunka. |
| Verunka: | I counted 6 + 6. |
| T 6: | Like Luboš. And what about you, Mařenka? |
| Mařenka: | I did: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12. |
| T 7: | You counted in pairs. O. K. |

Some time later we made a recording of a lesson which we had prepared together and whose goal was to elicit pupils' intuitive notions of division (for more details see Hošpesová, Tichá, 2003). During the lesson, the pupils were working in pairs. Their task was to place pictures of seedlings on a sheet of paper in such a way that the seedlings "could grow well". Although the pupils were able to produce various solutions that met the conditions from the assignment (e.g. cf. Fig. 1), Anna was not satisfied. After the lesson she said: "Their solutions are interesting but from my point of view the whole lesson led to no conclusion. I don't quite know what the children have learnt".

**Fig. 1. Pupils´solution**
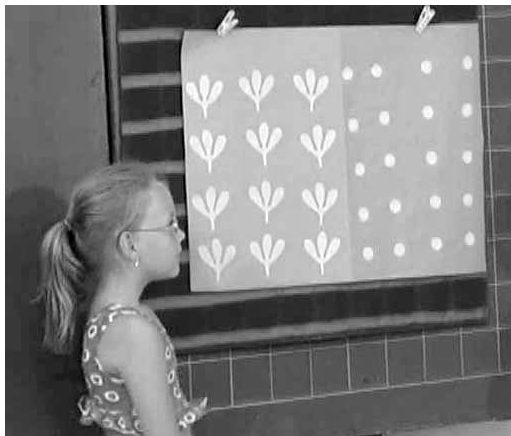


After a few meetings of our team, Anna stopped looking for merely effective methodological approaches. In her lessons, she began to create such situations whose solution promoted understanding and led to building of concepts. For example she asked her 2nd grade pupils to decide which of the following calculations are correct and also to explain why:

$63 - 8 = 60 - 5 =$                           $63 - 8 = 60 + (8 - 3) =$

$63 - 8 = (63 - 3) - 5 =$                  $63 - 8 = 60 - (3 + 8) =$

In pupils' justifications she was not satisfied merely with the calculation of the result. She insisted that the explanation should be comprehensible to all other pupils. The goal of teaching in the 2nd grade is usually practice of addition and subtraction of numbers up to 100. It is by no means usual to ask the pupils to develop their own procedures or to explain unusual procedures. In the discussion on the issue she stressed that she wanted to promote understanding of the counting procedures. (The lesson is analyzed in greater detail in Tichá, Hošpesová, 2006).

### Advancement towards action research (The Case of Cecily)

Already the initial joint discussion of the whole team revealed that Cecily's level of knowledge in the selected subject area (part/whole relations, fractions) is solid and much deeper than the knowledge of the other teachers. Cecily as we came to know her was really interested in the development of her own abilities, namely in

changing her teaching methods and in looking for causes (as she herself told us). Preparation of the experiments, realization of the teaching and joint reflection enabled the researchers to naturally develop and enhance subject-didactic competence of the teachers. We could guide the teachers to deeper understanding of the concept of fractions, to becoming aware of various approaches and representations (especially operational and iconic) and the significance of the role they play in the building of the concept of fractions (Tichá, 2003). Cecily regarded these discussions as a challenge and stimulus for further studies. Gradually, her interest moved from the effort to "show something", "to show how I do it" to search for problems, misunderstandings and their sources and causes, shift towards the "action research". The experiments that she came up with and gradually improved (both as their content and realization are concerned) clearly confirm this claim. Predominantly she focused on strengthening understanding of the role of the whole. Let us now sketch the main idea of a few of her experiments:

### Experiment "Slips of paper"

Each pupil got three congruent paper rectangles (cf. Fig. 2). Everyone also got such three different strips of paper that it will be apparent that the small rectangle is a half of one of them, a third of the second one and a quarter of the third one (cf. Fig. 2).

### Fig. 2. Slips of paper
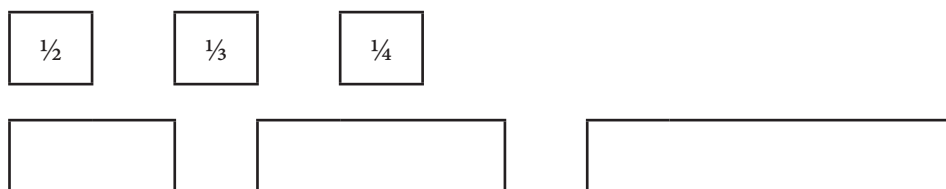


Cecily formulated the task: "You have three congruent paper rectangles. One is a half, the second is one third and the third is a quarter. How come? (She did not mention the big rectangles, strips of paper.)" It seems that the dialogue reveals Cecily's effort to understand her pupils' way of understanding rather than to explain the solution of the problem.

T 1:      Try to think for a while. … Hana?

Hana:    Because every time they are from a different piece of paper and in each case the size of the paper is different.

T 2:      And what do you say, Tom?

Tom 1:   Each of the parts is smaller but the large picture is the same.

T 3:     Which picture?

Tom 2:   The original shape which is divided into the parts.

T 4:     Is the same, is it?

Tom 3:   Hm. We only divided it into smaller or larger parts. *(Other pupils are asking to speak.)*

T 5:     Children, does anybody want to say anything to this? .... Jirka.

Jirka:   The original shape is always larger and for example this one here (*he grasps the appropriate large rectangle*) is the three one-thirds.

T 6:     Jirka realized why you have the long stripes of paper on your desks. Look at them. Is there any connection to the fractions?

Pupils:  Yes. Yes.

T 7:     How is it related?

Marta    The one third seems to fit into the rectangle. *(She grasps the appropriate stripe of paper.)* Into the smallest one the half and the quarter ... Or into this one we can place three times the third.

T 8:     Do you want to add anything?

Robert:  To match them ...

T 9:     Well, match ... or, what do you think?

Adam:    They are wholes to these. They are the wholes to the thirds ...

T 10:    ...quarters, halves ...hm. Now, try to find the appropriate wholes.

The dialogue clearly shows that Cecily is well aware of where the conversation is leading to and lets her pupils explain unclearness and overcome obstacles. If the answer is incorrect, she reveals no sign of dissatisfaction. The initiative lies with the pupils. She herself speaks much less than she used to at the beginning of our cooperation. The core of her production is formed by challenges and calls up. She tries to guide the conversation to a conclusion and encourages her pupils to formulate it on their own.

Cecily carried out this instruction experiment with the whole class. Any realization of this experiment demands a high level of the teachers' subject didactic competence. In her teaching, reflection-in-action (Schőn, 1983; Jaworski, 2003) was evident. Immediately after the lesson, she suggested a repetition of this experiment with a group of six pupils from a different class so that it would be possible to observe how pupils grasp the whole-part relationship and also the idea of the whole. It also demonstrates her shift to the position of teacher-researcher.

### Experiment "PIZZA"

This experiment was inspired by the contribution of Steinberg at SEMT conference in which she posed a similar question to teachers (Steinberg et al., 2003). In the first part of the experiment (mathematics lesson), Cecily gave her 4th grade class (10–11-year-old children) a familiar problem: Divide three pizzas among four children in a fair way. The second part of the experiment began by introducing the pupils to the situation and handing out a worksheet: Cecily said that a teacher in another school had already assigned the problem that she had just given to her pupils and they had solved it in the way given in the worksheet. Cecily's pupils were to decide which pupil solved it correctly and to justify their decision.

**Worksheet:**

|   |   |   | ¼ |
|---|---|---|---|

|   |   |   | ¼ |
|---|---|---|---|

|   |   |   | ¼ |
|---|---|---|---|

Child A: You divide each pizza into 4 equal parts. Each child gets ¼ from each pizza. He gets 3 fourths so it is ¾ pizza.

Child B: You divide each pizza into 4 equal parts. Together there are 12 pieces. Each child gets 3 pieces or 3 from 12. So the answer is ³⁄₁₂.

Then Cecily added some questions: Is it possible that three quarters equal those three twelfths?… Is it correct?… Tell me what you think is correct and what is not correct and why. The first answer, the other one or if both answers are correct. … Who was right? And were any of them correct at all? (Here we quoted only fragments, for more detail cf. Tichá, Macháčková, Hošpesová, 2006, 2007).

After realization of the teaching experiment, processing of the video recording and making its transcript, Cecily asked her collaborators (both the teachers and researchers) to make individual reflections on the experiment (Hošpesová, Macháčková, Tichá, 2006). Cecily gradually moved to the position of the teacher-researcher. As a doctoral student she participated in preparations of further experiments, their evaluation and publication of results on conferences.

### Loss of self-confidence (The Case of Dana)

Dana was the most experienced of all of our teachers. She joined the project because she hoped to find inspiration for her teaching. She claimed that she disliked following textbooks, that she preferred looking for situations that remind her pupils of their everyday life experience. She was also fond of looking for interrelations among various subjects. We can say that she was longing for change but she was not quite sure what kind of change that should be. In initial reflections of teaching episodes from Germany and Italy she most valued: "… the emphasis

on independence of decision making, development of pupils' logical thinking, teachers'unobtrusive guidance, pupils' abilities to discuss, the coherence of lesson plan … free scope and challenge of the tasks …, interesting use of aids, …".

### The project– fraction as an operator

At the beginning, several lessons taught in the 5th grade (10–11-year-old children) whose objective was understanding of the fractions as an operator of grasping part-whole relation and various representations and interpretations of fraction were video recorded. For group work, Dana had chosen problems with multiple solutions. The pupils were not familiar with the solving procedure. For example, one lesson was devoted to work on a project. Groups of pupils were assigned the following types of tasks:

Let us begin in a shop. Here you will have the original price of strawberries, lemon, radish, pears, and here you will record the price reduction.

There are girls, boys, teachers and parents at a party. We don't know how many boys, girls, teachers and parents there are. And how many there will be – you must be able to express using a fraction. You cannot use any number if you want to have a nice result.

The discussion that followed the solution of the problem clearly showed that Dana did not utilize all the potentials hidden in these problems. The attached transcript of the discussion that followed the solution of the first problem clearly indicates that the pupils were not asked to explain how they were looking for the solution of the problems. The pupils were expected to formulate traditional tasks with usual calculations. Her questions aimed at elicitation of such wording of the problem that Dana would normally use in her teaching.

| | |
|---|---|
| T 1: | Could anyone of you state how much one kilogram of fruit which is there would cost? |
| Pupils 1: | Yes. |
| T 2: | OK, test your classmates. |
| Michala 1: | … One kilogram of lemon costs… |
| T 3: | … costs … careful with the tenses … If it costs 15 crowns, then the question how much it costs must be answered |
| Michala 2: | how much does it cost after price reduction … |
| T 4: | so how much di…. |
| Michala 3: | …did it cost. |
| T 5: | The whole question again. |
| Michala 4: | One kilogram of lemon costs 15 crowns. |
| T 6: | It costs. |

Michala 5:    after price reduction by one third

Later, in one of the first joint reflections, Dana asked her colleagues to propose how to react to the unexpected solution of the group that was solving the second problem. The pupils in their solution proposed that there were 21 people at the party, namely: ⅓ of boys, ⅓ of teachers, ⅓ of girls, parents 0. Dana's reaction in the lesson was: "The number of the attending parents cannot be expressed using a fraction. It could be expressed using a decimal number." Later she asked her colleagues if she was to accept the solution as correct or not.

We believe that this is the first demonstration of Dana's uncertainty and ambiguity as far as basic concepts are concerned, in this case expression of a rational number using a decimal number or fraction. Later, this uncertainty became even much more apparent.

### Teaching episode: "Discovering fractions"

This experiment came into existence on a joint meeting of the team where the issue of introducing fractions to primary school pupils in such a way that a fraction is understood as a part of the whole was discussed. (A more detailed description of the lesson plan and the implementation of the experiment were published in Hošpesová, Tichá, 2005).

At the beginning of the lesson, the pupils were given strips of paper, folded into four equal parts (Fig. 3). The dialogue presented below has been abbreviated.

### Fig. 3.  Folded strip of paper
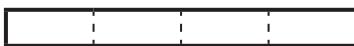


| T 1: | Let's discover fractions. … Now have a look at what you can see in front of you and try to describe it. Write it down. What is it? |
|---|---|
| Vik: | Four parts…. A whole divided into four parts. |
| T 2: | Andy, what can you see in front of you? |
| Andy: | Well, I also thought that we have something like a line segment divided into four parts. |
| T 3: | Well, let's have some more. Pepa. What do you think you can see in front of you? |
| Pepa: | I also thought it is a segment, divided into four. |
| T 4 | Who thinks something else? We have heard two … Eva. |
| Eva 1: | They are in fact four oblongs joint … |
| T 5: | Joint … |

Eva 2:     into…
T 6:     …together. Well. What do you think, Marek?
Marek:     A segment that has four parts.

At first glance this may appear to be a typical example of a good teaching practice. In the very first sentence, the teacher creates a situation suitable for discovering, for building up new concepts and for articulation of new ideas. However, it is doubtful what exactly the pupils were supposed and able to discover. Was the aim of the teacher to organize the children's experience with fractions? Did she want to find out that her pupils can name or record fractions? Although all the pupils' suggestions from the discussion can be regarded as correct, the teacher is not content. During the a posteriori analysis, the teacher said she had hoped that her pupils would figure out that the given strip of paper was a whole divided into four equal parts. This is what Eva might have been trying to say but her thought remained unnoticed in the course of the discussion.

## Recording fractions

The unclearness about what the pupils can actually discover becomes even more transparent in the following part of the preceding lesson. The teacher asked the pupils to record what they could see. She asked them not to use the words and suggested that they should use numbers.

Andy 1:     It could be 4 underlined and 1.
T 1:     I understand. You mean something like four ones.
Andy 2:     Like 4 parts making a square … that …
T 2:     …. one …
Andy 3:     …. oblong
T 3:     I see. Because you don't know fractions … this way of recording …
         now I don't know how to put this … is not possible.

Andy's reply (Andy 1) is not correct but understandable. It is quite likely that he has never encountered a recorded fraction because in everyday life (in the Czech Republic) notification of fractions is seldom used. It must not be forgotten that the form of recording fractions is a mere convention which pupils discover only by chance. This is clear from the following course of the lesson.

The teacher, trying to help the pupils, tore the oblong where it was folded into 4 equal parts (cf. Figure 4). She wrote the following numbers on the blackboard: 1, 4, $\frac{4}{4}$, $\frac{1}{4}$. Then she asked the children to write down which of the notifications is not appropriate in this situation. None of the numbers predominated within the pupils' answers, they wrote down all the given possibilities.

**Fig. 4. Strip of paper divided into 4 parts**

| | | ¾ | |
|---|---|---|---|

T 1:         (*Barbara wrote.*) Barbara, can you see three anywhere out there?

Barbara 1: I divided the 4 identical oblongs, there are the outer …

T 2:         … You have used number 3. I am asking about this number 3.

Barbara 2: I can't see the gaps, but there are 3 gaps.

T 3:         I will arrange it in a different way, not in a line. (She arranges the parts of the oblong in such a way that they do not form a line.). ….There are no longer three gaps… (Some pupils change the notification to ¼.)

T 4:          So you are offering a unified answer. Andy, come and explain it to us.

Andy 1:    There are the four parts.

T 5:         Come and show the 4 parts. (Andy points at them.) I see, 4.

Andy 2:    Together they make up the square … oblong. (He draws an oblong shape in the air with his hands.)

T 6:         But they are not together. Together, that was here. (She points at the notification of number 1 on the blackboard.). How many are there now?

Andy 3:    4

T 7:         How many have we divided it into? I wanted to represent all those four. (Andy shakes his head.)

T 8:         Why do you think your answer is not correct? …. Listen. I can see 4 and I divided it into 4. David. (David recorded ¼.)

David:      We know that the oblong was divided into four parts. These are quarters. And we know there are four. So I recorded 4 quarters.

Mirka:      Four quarters make one whole.

If the presented discourse is to be judged as a representation of the teacher's beliefs we can say that in several places the pupils were encouraged to formulate their thoughts by expressions such as: "… try to describe it", "… What do you think you can see in front of you?"; "who thinks something else?"; "… come and explain it to us"; "why do you think your answer is not correct?". It can be asserted that the teacher managed to foster a creative atmosphere: she praised new ideas, encouraged self-reliance, independence, open communication, ability to accept. However, the whole course of the discourse clearly shows that her intention was to bring the pupils to the only answer that she regarded as correct.

Looking at the stimulation and building of atmosphere in this particular lesson globally, one cannot be blind to the pupils' confusion. Also the teacher expressed her disappointment after the lesson: "I thought they would understand that first we had a whole and then its parts."

The situation could be perceived in more ways. It is a question to what extent the described lesson could have contributed to the construction of the concept of fractions. The processes of concept formation at the primary level are often intuitive, vague and unclear and therefore it is hardly possible to determine the impact of one dialogue on the construction of the concept of fractions. However, if this were a longer-lasting trend, it can be expected that it would influence pupils' perception of mathematics and their attitude towards it.

Regardless of the above-mentioned problems, the teacher's inquiry and attitude must be appreciated. Dana was not afraid of taking risks; she was able to admit an error and also accept the negative experience. The benefit of this episode is that for a while she offered the pupils freedom of thinking, feeling and behaving. Unfortunately, it turned out that certain unclearness in terms, lack of pedagogical content knowledge, could mislead the pupils' perception of what a correct answer in mathematics is, how to reason in mathematics, what to look for.

## Use of reflections in teacher training

As we gradually collected materials from all grades of primary school, we began to use joint reflection as a way to influence opinions of other professionals (primary school teachers, lower secondary school teachers, researchers in the didactics of mathematics) during workshops in the Czech Republic and on international conferences. Joint reflection should be used in particular for: (a) cultivation of the teachers' behaviour and acting, (b) formation of teachers' more perceptive approaches to pupils' ways of thinking and the ability to utilize them in teaching, (c) becoming conscious of moments valuable from the point of view of pupils' cognitive processes.

It became clear that teachers need some guidance on how to reflect on pedagogical situations (Scherer, Söbeke, & Steinbring, 2004). Future teachers should be systematically prepared for reflections on teaching and should be familiar with relevant literature. In-service teachers themselves admit that they would appreciate some instruction and guidelines that they could follow during reflections. However, they would not like them to be too binding and admit they are not really sure they would use these instructions, follow the guidelines and act according to them.

We certainly think that the method of carrying out joint reflections in teaching become should one of the ways of realizing one's own weaknesses in teaching and thus of their elimination. However, there are several myths deeply rooted in the Czech mathematics didactic theory, such as: memory is anachronism, mistake is always welcome, constructivism will save all problems, the present reform will solve all problems (Kuřina, 2006). We definitely do not wish to enrich this list of myths by our work on the role of reflection in the development of teachers' competences.

### Several questions at the end

The effort to carry out qualified pedagogical reflection is of great benefit to all the parties involved – teachers, pupils and researchers. There are still several open questions: How can we examine the benefit of joint reflection in relation to the classroom practice? How can we examine "conceptual changes" in teachers' beliefs and knowledge? How and to what extent can university people support teachers to reflect more deeply? What is their role in collaborative groups? A teacher is under different pressures and has priorities different from those of a researcher; how does a teacher-researcher balance these tensions and priorities? What really is "action research"? Is (the notion of) reflection culturally specific?

### Acknowledgement

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# Quality of Life among Primary School Teachers and Other Professions

## Abstract

The study provides a comparison of criteria for the quality of life as subjectively identified by members of three professional groups: (female) teachers, police officers and office workers. For the research project we applied the SEIQoL method, which is based on the identification of five life objectives and which then assesses how important they are for the respondents to the questionnaires. The analysis of the results will then show the level of satisfaction with the teaching profession and with the quality of the respondents' private lives.

**Key words:** *life objectives, satisfaction, quality of life, SEIQoL method*

## Indroduction

Most considerations of the quality of life (QoL) are linked with an individual's state of health. The first studies on this topic appeared in the 1930s in connection with patients suffering from chronic oncological, psychiatric and internal medical conditions. The medical research-based approach to the quality of life is currently represented by the World Health Organisation's WHOQOL project (1997). The project lists six domains, each with varying numbers of indicators, all of which contribute to the quality of life. The domains are: physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, environment and personal beliefs, spirituality. It is clear from the structure of this definition of the QoL that health is a necessary factor in the quality of life rather than a quality in its own right.

Empirical research aiming of defining and measuring the quality of life in various countries (known as social well-being) began in the USA during the 1970s. Since the 1990s issues of the quality of life have increasingly come to the forefront of interest in economically developed countries. As new social problems have appeared, the focus on the QoL, which was originally seen primarily in medical terms, has shifted to include psychological aspects. New research terminology has been developed, including well-being (both physical and mental), coping with demanding situations, and attainment of personal goals.

Researchers have developed wide-ranging conceptions integrating various approaches connected with the quality of life. Kováč (2001) distinguishes three levels of the QoL: existential, individual-specific and elite (cultural-spiritual). The existential level consists of: somatic state, normal psychological functioning, functional family, meeting of material needs, environment and basic skills necessary for survival. At the second level these criteria are developed to take on an individual and specific dimension, and at the third level, to cover personal development and intensive self-realisation. All of these dimensions lead to a generalising component consisting of the individual's awareness of his/her own personal meaning of life. Kováč sees the search for and enrichment of the meaning of an individual's life as a universal principle of the quality of life. The meaning of life acts as a regulator of human behaviour, and at the same time is a source of an individual's satisfaction with his/her life.

Veenhoven (2000) divides the QoL into two facets: external and internal. External qualities are connected with the suitability of the environment, prerequisites for which are the natural environment, social capital, prosperity and standard of living. The sum of these qualities is the experience of life as something useful. Internal qualities give an individual his/her capacity to live, and are connected with personal health and psychological capital. These internal qualities affect an individual's evaluation of his/her own life, which in turn consists of subjective well-being, satisfaction, happiness and the feeling of the meaningfulness of life.

In the psychological literature the concept of life satisfaction occurs more frequently than the term quality of life. Well-being is generally seen as part of mental health. As with the search for the QoL criteria, the researchers dealing with the content of life satisfaction aim to identify a set of elements which are connected with the experience of a certain level of satisfaction. A frequent feature among these elements is the positive evaluation of an individual's own person. Blatný (2000), Blatný, Osecká, Macek (1998) see a connection between positive evaluation of life and the general ability to cope with difficulties, while also emphasising the separation of such an evaluation from the performance aspect of behaviour. Life

satisfaction is more closely connected with the behaviour focused on seeing the positive aspects of life situations.

Issues of individual personality and the perception of the QoL have come to the forefront of interest particularly in connection with the development of positive psychology. In an overview study of changes in the QoL in the same individual over a period of time, Mareš (2004) points out the necessity to explain the differences in the evaluation of the QoL under the influence of various life events and interventions. He sees the QoL as a subjectively perceived individual state, which changes over time and is a result of the evaluation of at least three types of factors: somatic, psychological and social. A recent addition to this conception is the spiritual or value-based aspect, which leads to the individual's awareness of his/her own personal meaning of life (Řehulka, 2004).

In this study we have attempted to determine the extent of the informational value of the SEIQoL method (Schedule for the Evaluation of Individual Quality of Life) for identifying the QoL and the achievement of life objectives. The method is based on respondents' personal views on what they consider to be important (Křivohlavý, 2002). The authors of the method – which Křivohlavý (2002) sums up as What is important to you in life and what is most important to you – are O'Boyle, McGee and Joyce (1994).

## Description of the data set

Data collection was carried out on an accessible sample of respondents studying at the Faculty of Education, University of Ostrava, in two semi-distance learning degree programmes: Social Pedagogy and Teaching for Primary Schools (Stage 1). The data set consisted of 149 respondents (72 men and 77 women, average age 34.9 ranging from 22 to 49 years of age). The set was divided into three different professional groups: (female) teachers (N48), police officers (N68) and office workers (N33).

Table 1:  Data set

| GROUPS | Profession | N | Age (M) | Sex (M/F) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.** | teachers | 48 | 33.42 | 3/45 |
| **2.** | police officers | 68 | 34.58 | 62/6 |
| **3.** | office workers | 33 | 36.49 | 7/26 |
| Total | | **149** | **34.86** | **72/77** |

## Research method

The SEIQoL method does not set out criteria in advance. It draws on respondents' personal views of what they consider to be important. The basis of the SEIQoL methodology is a structured interview in which the respondent considers the demands of his/her life. The questionnaire asks the respondent to list five life objectives (known as cues) which he/she considers to be the most important, together with his/her level of satisfaction with each cue (on a scale from 0% – 100%). The next step is to determine the relative level of importance of each of the five cues so that the total for the set works out as 100%. The final step is to mark a place on the scale measuring the respondent's overall satisfaction with his/her own life. The SEIQoL is evaluated by multiplying the importance of each cue by its level of satisfaction. The resulting value is equal to the sum of all of these values for all the five cues.

## Method of analysis

We carried out a descriptive and correlative analysis using the SOLO statistical program to calculate values. Fisher's F-test was applied to variance and Student's t-test to means, and the closeness of the relationship between the selected variables under examination was evaluated via Pearson's or Spearman's correlation coefficient depending on the quality of the data involved.

## Results

The descriptive statistics for the variables under examination are shown in Table 2. The correlation coefficients giving the closeness of the relationship between the satisfaction of life objectives (SEIQoL % verb.) and the respondents' declaration of overall life satisfaction (SEIQoL % graf.) according to the professional group shows that the relationship is not random and is significant across the entire sample (Pearson, $r = 0.4156$, Spearman, $\rho = 0.4302$). Similar results were obtained from the samples representing individual professional groups. Using the t-test, the differences between men and women were then compared, followed by a comparison of the respondents under 32 years of age and the respondents aged 32 or older in each of the individual professional groups. No statistically significant differences were found in overall life satisfaction or in satisfaction of individual life objectives (Tables 3,

## Table 2  Satisfaction with the achievement of life objectives by professional group

| Professional group | N | SEIQoL % verb. | SEIQoL % graf. | r – Pearson |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | 48 | 78.78 | 67.59 | 0.4444 |
| 2. | 68 | 75.40 | 71.09 | 0.4097 |
| 3. | 33 | 74.39 | 72.55 | 0.4632 |
| Total | 149 | 76.19 | 70.41 | 0.4156 |

## Table 3  Satisfaction with the achievement of life objectives according to age

| SEIQoL | N | M | s | N | M | s | F | PF | t | Pt |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| % verb. | 54 | 77.0 | 11.15 | 95 | 75.88 | 12.73 | 1.41 | NS | 0.48 | NS |
| % graf. | 54 | | | 95 | | | | | | |

## Table 4  Satisfaction with the achievement of life objectives according to sex

| SEIQoL | M | | | F | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | M | s | N | M | s | F | PF | t | Pt |
| % verb. | 72 | 74.83 | 12.22 | 77 | 77.65 | 14.72 | 1.45 | NS | −1.27 | NS |
| % graf. | 72 | 70.06 | 16.10 | 77 | 70.45 | 19.76 | 1.51 | NS | −0.13 | NS |

## Table 5  Comparison of satisfaction with the achievement of life objectives according to professional group

| Professional group | % satisfaction | N | M | s | N | M | s | F | PF | t | Pt |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. – 2. | verb. | 48 | 78.78 | 15.85 | 68 | 75.40 | 11.59 | 1.87 | 0.02 | 1.26 | NS |
| | graf. | | 67.59 | 19.91 | | 71.03 | 16.16 | 1.52 | NS | −1.04 | NS |
| 1. – 3. | verb. | 48 | 78.78 | 15.85 | 33 | 74.39 | 13.66 | 1.35 | NS | 1.30 | NS |
| | graf. | | 67.59 | 19.91 | | 72.55 | 18.77 | 1.12 | NS | −1.13 | NS |
| 2. – 3. | verb. | 68 | 75.40 | 11.59 | 33 | 74.39 | 13.66 | 1.35 | NS | 0.39 | NS |
| | graf. | | 71.09 | 16.16 | | 72.55 | 18.77 | 1.12 | NS | −0.40 | NS |

4, 5). The highest levels of the QoL satisfaction were expressed by the teachers, but in comparison with the other groups this difference is not statistically significant. Further comparison of the professional groups brings the same results (Table 5). Regardless of their profession, the respondents evaluated their own quality of life as fairly high (71% – 79%). The percentage value given may reflect the respondents' awareness of the extent to which their objectives still remain unachieved. The current situation of the respondents – all of whom are university students in full-time employment – seems to impose a certain limit on their levels of life satisfaction.

The analysis of the respondents' important life objectives (Table 6) shows the significance of eleven values which form the core of the individuals' efforts and make a key contribution to the quality of life. As expected, health is rated as the most important objective, regardless of classification criteria. Other equally important objectives are employment and family. The ordering of the life objectives according to the classification criterion of profession is not entirely identical in each case, but the correlation analysis shows a high degree of similarity. The biggest differences are between the groups of teachers and police officers. Social relationships, children, finances and education have a different importance for the teachers than for the police officers. The qualitative analysis of the value of employment also shows a different approach to this objective: teachers place greater emphasis on a comfortable life, security and good working relationships, while the police officers prioritise personal and career development.

### Table 6  Frequency of values in the concepts of the QoL

| PROFESSIONAL GROUPS | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| order | 1. teachers | freq. | 2. police officers | freq. | 3. office workers | freq. |
| 1. | Health | 39 | Health | 61 | Health | 30 |
| 2. | Employment | 35 | Employment | 56 | Employment | 29 |
| 3. | Family | 33 | Family | 50 | Family | 20 |
| 4. | Social relationships | 26 | Finances | 38 | Partner | 18 |
| 5. | Children | 23 | Interests | 35 | Social relationships | 16 |
| 6. | Interests | 21 | Comfortable life | 22 | Children | 14 |
| 7. | Partner | 18 | Children | 20 | Finances | 13 |
| 8. | Finances | 15 | Partner | 18 | Education | 10 |
| 9. | Education | 12 | Housing | 16 | Interests | 9 |
| 10. | Comfortable life | 10 | Social relationships | 14 | Comfortable life | 8 |
| 11. | Housing | 8 | Education | 11 | Housing | 6 |

Table 7  Correlation between 11 life values given
by all professional groups in the data set

| Professional groups | ρ (Spearman) |
| --- | --- |
| 1. – 2. | 0.3645 |
| 1. – 3. | 0.9000 |
| 2. –3. | 0.3964 |

## Discussion

After determining and evaluating the extent of the informational value of the SEIQoL method for the identification of the quality of life and the achievement of life objectives, it may be stated that the method provides basic information on the subject. A comparison of the data from the set with the content of the QoL, as directed in theoretical studies, shows the presence of all the three basic categories of life objectives: somatic, psychological and social. Additionally, the basis of the quality of life as defined by WHOQOL, i.e. a set of interactions between an individual and his/her environment, also forms the foundation of our respondents' life objectives. All the six aspects of Kováč's existential level (2001) are present in the cues (values) of the respondents. Because the respondents are limited to just five cues, the additional two levels in Kováč's conception (individual-specific and cultural-spiritual) appear only exceptionally.

The information obtained on life objectives and the content of the QoL points to a certain similarity between the objectives of our respondents. The order of the 11 chosen values shows a significant correlation. At the same time, Sperman's correlation coefficient of the order of values in terms of frequency in the group between the teachers and office workers (which include a large majority of women) $\rho = 0.9000$, while between the police officers and the other two groups $\rho$ is slightly above 0.36. The respondents' objectives are evidently affected by their prevailing current life situation; all of them are university students, and successful graduation is a precondition of future employment in their respective professions. However, the significantly higher correlation between professions dominated by women may be due more to male-female differences than to the differences between the police officers (i.e. members of a male-dominated profession) and the other two groups; alternatively, the results may be due to a combination of gender differences and the specific influences of police work. A somewhat different experience of using

the SEIQoL was reported by Blahutková et al. (2004), who used the method to test 129 Czech, Slovak and Polish teachers and whose results pointed to the differences in the conception of health as a factor in the QoL both between men and women and between the three countries involved; health was rated most important in Poland, followed by the Czech Republic, while the Slovak teachers gave priority to the provision of financial security to their families. The authors of this study also highlighted a higher level of dissatisfaction with the respondents' state of health among the Czech teachers when compared with Polish and Slovak teachers. The overall level of life satisfaction in Blahutková's study of teachers (75% – 100%) is also higher than in our study (71% – 79%). Řehulka (2003), who also used the SEIQoL on a group of teachers, found a higher degree of emphasis on family, happiness and the respondents' children as life objectives. In contrast with our data, Řehulka's respondents placed teaching work in only 11th place (out of 17) as a life value. The overall level of the respondents in Řehulka's study is lower (64%) than in ours (78.7%).

## Conclusion

The SEIQoL method used to identify the subjective life objectives and the level of the QoL of the respondents is useful in determining basic life focus and respondents' current degree of satisfaction with their own lives. The sample tested in this study shows no statistically significant differences in the subjectively evaluated degree of the QoL depending on age, sex or profession. The primary school teachers, who have been the focus of our professional interest, cite higher levels of life satisfaction than the police officers and the office workers in the sample, however the differences are statistically insignificant. The average level of the QoL among the teachers in this study approached 80%, which is a lower figure than in Blahutková's study and higher than that given by Řehulka's research. Teaching as a profession was confirmed as one of the respondents' important life objectives.

On the basis of our experience with the research reported here, we believe that the objective data should be complemented by an interpretation of subjective statements which may cause differences in the content of the respondents' individual goals.

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# Dimensions of the Teacher – Pupil Relation. The Role of the Dialogue in Counteracting Social Marginalization of Youth

## Abstract

The text is an attempt at an analysis of the multidimentional teacher-pupil relation, basing on principles of selected contemporary pedagogical trends. This basis constitutes the background for the reflection over dialogue as a tool and a method of counteracting the social marginalization of the youth.

**Key words:** *teacher-pupil relation, dialogue, marginalization of youth.*

The basic definition assumes that teaching is an intentional activity the aim of which is to bring about particular changes in schoolchildren's way of thinking and behaving. According to its assumptions the teacher is the person who organizes or even guides the process of a child's transformation. One of the most fundamental principles of reforms introduced in schools in 1999 was the elimination of the educational system that would be aimed strictly at teaching. The person coordinating the project of this reform – the Minister of National Education – Mirosław Handke – declared in 1998: 'School should, above all, bring up, then provide with knowledge and exercise given skills that are needed while using it. Therefore, the teacher becomes committed to forming the patriotic as well as civil attitude, and the one towards the family and culture' ( from the conference devoted to plans of educational reform held on 17.04.1998 at the Jagiellonian University – quoted from UJ Bulletin www3.uj.edu.pl/acta/9804/7.html).

After 9 years from the moment of initiating changes in the educational system above mentioned, it is clear that nowadays school as the place of 'teaching art' should impose on teachers not only duties of broadening the knowledge of their

pupils, but the necessity of supporting them during the way of developing their identity as well. Therefore, the teacher performs two roles before schoolchildren – the role of the teacher who fulfills specific aims of the subject taught, and the role of the educator who develops attitudes, interests, character, etc of the pupil being under his/here care. Nevertheless, the public discussion on what education in school should comprise, what the most desired features of the teacher are and what should the teacher – pupil relation be like, still does not abate.

The most fundamental assumption of the teacher – pupil relation is that the former one 'has certain pre-understanding in the process of bringing up and educating' (Sawicki, 1996). This pre-understanding that has arisen from existential experiences of an adult implies asymmetry in the teacher – pupil relation. It may be thus concluded that school is not a kind of sphere in which the idea of equality would be carried out, for equality is not necessary and is even inadvisable in the community where the above-mentioned metamorphosis of the child is to be happening.

'Traditional' pedagogy bases its assumptions on the behavioural concept of the individual's development. According to the metaphor suggested within the range of this theory man is a 'machine' that passively responses to stimuli from outside. It is therefore necessary for the right development of child to create not only adequate living conditions for them, but to guarantee care as well, which is sometimes understood as an interference of parental authority, or authority of other kind, in their life. Without such external stimulation the development would not be possible. The aim of upbringing carried out in such a way is adaptation of the child to the reality faced by them and to the world that functions in a particular way according to an already established definition. The desired personal standards, acquired by an individual during their way of transformation, are fairly rigorously defined. It is essential to use also 'traditional' methods of instrumental conditioning to achieve given purposes. The essence of educating understood in this way assumes then a complete subordination of the pupil to the will of their educator who efficiently operates such measures as punishment and reward. R. Kwaśnica calls this kind of pedagogy the rationality of adaptation (Kwaśnica, 2007).

Also genetic psychology postulates that psychological maturity of an individual is a process which always takes place in a concrete social context – at first in the family environment, then in school – among peers and teachers. The correct development of the child is not possible in isolation from the social environment.

The beginning of school education is a special moment in shaping the child's personality. During this time it meets a wider group or "others" who will play the key role in receiving answers to such fundamental questions as: who am I and where do I go.

Creating a vision of the future and, first of all, a vision of my own 'I', is always in connection with the relation towards 'others'. Ch. H. Cooley introduced into social science the notion of 'reflected ego', which is self-knowledge of an individual, shaped through interpretation of the reaction of others towards themselves. One of the most important mirrors in which a growing up human is looking at himself/ herself is the teacher. The attitude of the teacher towards the pupil influences, to a high extent, the child's self-evaluation and process of identity shaping. The next categories of the desired features of the teacher are thus being created. Their aim is to optimize the process of achieving mature personality by the pupil and to guarantee full success at this point. The reflection on the role of the teacher in the process of upbringing results in a specific revolution of basic assumptions of pedagogy. In this field new currents and tendencies are opposing the 'classical' points of the theory of education.

Affirmation of a human being as a person, entity, was initiated in philosophy by modern personalism already in the 30s of the 20th century. Soon such a recognition of the uniqueness of an individual, their autonomy understood as the right to self-determination prevails also in educational theories. In pedagogic discourse there appears, inter alia, a concept of non-directive or non-authoritary pedagogy that, according to Kwaśnica, originates from rationality of emancipation (Kwaśnica 2007). The postulates are being brought into practice first of all by stressing the inter-activeness of the impact of the entities who take part in the process of upbringing (educator, pupil). In conformity with such an approach the authority of the educator is being invalidated by the fact of calling him to perform such a role that is to appoint him a teacher. The role model becomes a self-improving educator who is also able to understand a child entrusted to his care. The questioning of the previous 'traditional' approach towards upbringing results in promoting the teacher's new attitude. Its essence is not to develop the only right personal ideal, but to support the child on their way of realizing the individual concept of themselves. What is fundamental is also the emphasis of the permanence of man's development. The consequence of it is the fact that educating cannot be limited to a particular phase of life, but it is the need which never disappears. Realization of the above-mentioned message results in breaking up with the tradition of 'pedagogy of lords, strategists and the knowing better' (quoted from Śliwerski 2005). The aim is to educate free, autonomous individuals, able to make decisions themselves. In spite of the existence of quite clear differences between pedagogy that bases its assumptions on rationality of adaptation and the one that bases its assumptions on rationality of emancipation, both of them jointly grant the status of intentional activity to education. They are both absorbed

in seeking ways of improvement of its procedures. There is a question beyond it: Does anybody need education at all?

Socio-cultural transformations, the effect of which is the advent of a crisis of all values crisis, stimulated the attempt at answering the question about the validity of pedagogy. In the 1970s not only new thinking about upbringing appeared but a social movement as well – anti-pedagogy. It questions the prevailing thesis about the necessity of interference into the development of children and young people. Its main aim is the contestation of definitions of upbringing that are fixed in science and in practice. Anti-pedagogies regard all pedagogical influence as an attack on an individual's freedom. Each educational activity is evaluated by them in a pejorative manner and called 'small murder', 'psychological tortures' or 'brainwashing' (quoted from Śliwerski 2005). This theoretical reflection of anti-pedagogy refers to slogans of freedom, equality and brotherhood which were found on flags carried by liberation movements at the turn of the 19th century. For anti-pedagogy the liberation of the child from difficulties connected with programmatic socializing influences is becoming a priority, and their subjectivity becomes a starting point in interpersonal relations.

What role should then the one who is becoming a witness of a child's growing up fulfill? Perhaps the answer can be found in the words of the leading founder of anti-pedagogy: H. v. Schoenbecker: "A new world, a world of people deciding about themselves is opened to those who are treating a young man in the way that is free of educational intentions, to those who respect their 'humanum' and to those who show their friendship to them" (Schoenebeck 1990, quoted from Śliwerski 2005). Anti-pedagogy admitting that an individual is a conscious, fully responsible for themselves and independently existing being results in the necessity of ensuring such a person freedom of learning, or even enabling them to arouse their developmental potentials.

At the time of general emphasizing individualism and independence it is hard not to come under the influence of controversial but often right views of anti-pedagogies concerning the nature of an individual. But will eliminating the notion of upbringing from the general use bring about its disappearance also from social experiences? What about social order that requires some kind of consensus, resignation from part of individual freedom in favour of common good? Is there a possibility for 'I' to exist without some resistance which gives a proper shape to a formless material?

If we were to attach such a great value, as anti-pedagogies postulate, to the respect of an individual's freedom, we should also take into account the words of an American psychologist and psychotherapist Carl R. Rogers: 'It does not

seem reasonable to me to impose freedom on somebody who does not want it. If a group is offered a freedom to learn on their own responsibility, then with a logical consequence, if it is possible at all, one should take care of those who do not want it and do not aim for that kind of freedom as they prefer to be instructed and guided (quoted from Śliwerski 2005).

According to the theory suggested by Maslow, self-realization is possible only when the basic necessities such as physiological needs, a need for safety, esteem, recognition etc. are satisfied. Self-realization is secondary to affiliation. How to reconcile these two instincts which seem to be leading in two different directions? To paraphrase Rogers's words: discussing the sense of upbringing one should think what to do with those who are not ready for freedom or independence. The current pedagogical debate does not concern the search for an optimal style of upbringing. Yet the question still remains: what kind of function in nowadays society is education fulfilling or should education fulfill and what kind of purpose does the educator – pupil interaction serve? The dilemma – whether or not to bring up gains special importance in the educator – pupil relation, especially for the pupil, endangered by social exclusion. What are the consequences of authoritarianism, liberalism or a complete lack of interference in the process of creating one's own personality by young people unfavoured by society? These young people seem to be lost the most in the world where the cult of being a free and independent individual prevails. Living in their enclaves they lead a gregarious life, duplicate their fathers' biographies and thus are doomed to seek or even appeal for help and support from others. What should, then, from their perspective education look like?

Exclusion is one of the origins of social inequalities. In sociology this means a situation in which some individuals are deprived of the possibility of full participation in social life (Giddens, 2004). The exclusion may be of different kinds – beginning with economic exclusion that results, among other things, in unemployment and poverty, through depriving particular groups of people of the right to engage in political life, ending with a restriction of the social relations net, the consequence of which is isolation of certain groups. There are also different reasons for marginalization of certain societies. It happens that individuals exclude themselves from different aspects of life, e. g. they decide to give up education, to quit work, not to take the floor in public debates, etc. But one should remember of those who are socially excluded because of actions that are irrespective of them – these are above all victims of stereotyping and prejudice. As Bauman said: 'production of ' waste – people', 'reject – people, or 'people for grinding' ('surplus people', 'useless' – whose presence one could not or did not want to accept) is an unavoidable result of modernization and an inseparable part of modernity, inevitable side effect

of establishing order (in each order part of present people has to be rejected as it is 'out of place', 'does not fit the rest' or is 'an undesirable element') and achieving economic progress (which cannot last without destroying and depriving people of effectiveness of ways of maintaining themselves used up to now and, thus, without taking away livelihood from people using it)' (Bauman, 2005).

People that are in danger of exclusion or have already been excluded from particular social reality are, in public opinion, often identified with pathological groups. This associates pejoratively with deviations such as delinquency, alcoholism, drug addiction, or prostitution. Individuals like those often evoke negative feelings, e. g. contempt, disgust etc. The consequence of such perception of the excluded ones is their discrimination, objectivity that is depriving them of subjectivity and the right of deciding about their life. An inevitable result is that they become the subject of the influences of others, and that they have their freedom restricted in comparison with those who dominate, called 'normals' by Goffman (Goffman 2005). From the social perspective the excluded ones bear the stigma that distinguishes them but within their group is an important integrating element. Finding oneself in a marginalized group is often accompanied by feelings of deprivation, frustration and pessimism. These emotional states often imply an increase in tensions and aggressive behaviours among people that are socially discriminated. Hence these individuals are exposed to collisions with the law, which may result in restriction of freedom, that is, imprisonment.

For 'normals' those with a stigma, who follow their own system of values, are a kind of danger. That is why the dominating groups are establishing institutions to control and supervise the excluded ones, sometimes under the cover of giving help and support.

An important problem in recent years is the phenomenon of young people's marginalization. Children and youth are generally treated as though they did not have their own status. Their life situation is always a result of their parents' lot. Thus, despite attempts at integrating them with society they inherit the stigma of exclusion, which becomes an inseparable attribute of their identity. On that ground one may say that in the future nowadays excluded children will become adults deprived of chances of full participation in social life.

According to Erikson's concept (1950) identity is the feeling of being an independent individual, integrated with society which is an important set of reference. An individual's identity is thus two-dimensional: personal, the one that gives the feeling of exceptionality, uniqueness, and social which is an effect of 'embedding' of a person in a given society, and which is also the feeling of being similar to others. Regularity in the process of creating a new personality is the fact that its individual

dimension is secondary to the social one. Initially a person is defining themselves
with the help of 'we' category. Malrieu (1980) says: 'a child forms part of their
identity through participation in social life. It is their surname, their class at school,
their nationality, their team'. Our existence is not restricted only to social roles. At
the time of glorification of the individual's autonomy it is becoming a necessity to
create individual identity which is a distinction of an individual story of life from
the background understood as a social context, which means being similar to 'oth-
ers'. The condition of forming individual identity is to keep distance from socially
assigned role. Lack of reflection on belonging to a given group implies problems in
the realization of one's own 'I'. The ability of keeping such a distance is not always
only a result of having competence. It may happen that some circumstances render
it impossible to keep distance from social dependence. A person abandons forming
individual identity. Instead of it a compulsion of loyalty to a group appears. Such
a person takes the status of conveyed identity and does not take any effort to look
for another alternative but agrees to accept a standard of life that was given to them
by their parents or another significant person even in late childhood (Rostowski,
2005, p. 14). It is quite common among people socially 'stigmatized'. The reason
for the strong identification of these young people with their parents is the lack of
understanding and loneliness beyond their own group. During the time of growing
up and forming their subjectivity they often become convinced that they have no
right to freedom of choice as nowadays school is a place of differentiating pupils.
'Tone is set by strong and wealthy ones while weak and poor ones cannot approach
them – they are excluded from interpersonal relations or used in shady business and
then rejected (Trempała 2005, p. 51). In school like that the scenario of a hope for
acceptance and normalization of relations between the dominating group and the
marginalized one becomes brutally verified. Young people suffering from depriva-
tions of various kinds learn that their descent is an undeniable stigma. This stigma
is the most important element in the process of forming an individual's identity. As
Goffman said (2205, p. 53): 'Among their people a stigmatized individual may treat
their disability as a basis for organization of their life'. Krystyna Szafraniec describes
two ways of adaptation that are used by young people in threat of marginalization.
The first of them involves passive adaptation and consent to exclusion, the second
one aggressive contestation and desperate protest. Both of these ways inevitably lead
to the life that stands no chance of success. In this manner the range of excluded
people is widened, according to Bauman's 'people for grinding', people who do
not fit the contemporary world where individuality and independence is being
approved. What role should school perform in counteracting this phenomenon?
School that according to the above-mentioned reform should not only teach but

above all bring up and equalize pupils' opportunities? The main question is what way should be pointed out so that it could lead to forming one's own vision of the future, without duplicating other people's life involved in social dependence. To what extent is it allowed to interfere in the young people's world 'who have no opportunities and does not stand chances, which means that they are eliminated from the way of career? (quoted from Słupska 2005, p. 173). Should a teacher who encourages pupils to strain themselves and make their own life, respect the right of each of them to self – determination? Or would it be better to acknowledge that young people descending from dysfunctional families are not able to release themselves from the burden of their parentage and that is why one should mark out their way of life? A lot of teachers, who consciously and responsibly treat the task of bringing up young people face dilemmas like that.

These educators, who are reflecting on their role in forming the identity of teenagers from marginalized societies, may draw their inspiration from the basic assumptions of the philosophy of dialogue. One of the most significant authors of this theory, Martin Buber, claimed that a human 'becomes I in contact with you' (Buber 1992, p. 39). Therefore, the nature of a human fulfills in a relation. But it does not apply to a relation where a person is treated as a subject, an object of studies. Only when I am able to feel somebody's feelings and understand him, a specific response appears and 'I' starts opening for 'you'. Then a deeper understanding of myself is possible. The link that connects people together is a meeting that, according to the followers of the philosophy of the dialogue, is being realized in conversation. A good conversation is one when only those words are uttered which contribute to developing of a relation, for an excess of words causes destruction of the I – you relation. An authentic meeting and dialogue is possible only when each conversation partner is treated as unique and exceptional existence. It is thus necessary to accept the otherness of every individual so that the dialogue would not be an attempt at dominating others. A real conversation, according to Buber, and thus the realization of relations between people means acceptance of otherness (Buber 1992, p. 135). Buber's thesis was developed by Józef Tischner, who claimed that it is necessary to be responsible for those with whom we really want to be, instead of being near them. Tischner was also reflecting on the conditions that should be fulfilled so that the meeting would be possible. He borrowed the concept of the face from Levinas and assumed that a real meeting with other person is possible only "face to face". It is essential then 'to uncover the face' so that there would be no veil or mask that would enable hiding anything or lying. Being opened to other person is precisely 'uncovering of the face', which according to Tischner, means 'taking responsibility for another person paying the price of helplessness, consent

for a blow that can be dealt (quoted from Kłoczkowski 2005, p. 121). Helplessness is an important issue here. It is not only the helplessness towards other person but my way of perceiving others as well, that is noticing helplessness in others. The helplessness of both partners results in the authentic, disinterested relation, and is simultaneously an invitation to reciprocation.

According to the philosophers of the dialogue despite being an independent individual each of us needs 'others', for the nature of the human is in relation, it realizes in the contact with other person. Only 'other' allows for becoming oneself. There exists a symmetric system in the dialogue for each of the parties: I exist thanks to the meeting with you, you exist thanks to the meeting with I. There is no appropriating, assessing, dominating, stigmatizing, which enables forming identity becoming an individual. Willing to meet the requirements made by the postmodern world school should become a place of a dialogue. The space of the teacher – pupil relation, especially a pupil with a social stigma, should be a true meeting-dialogue. Thus, conversation aimed at sincerity and trust becomes a key to education. Still it is essential for the sense of utterance to be free of domination, prejudices or slogans. Communication between partners should be used for exchanging information. Above all, it should contribute to getting to know each other and thus – continuous understanding. Therefore, a bond should be formed between the educator and their pupils. The result, containing the risk of taking up a strike, is building individuality, so affirmed in the present times. The individuality of the teacher and the pupil. It seems that it is worth the risk to trustfully uncover oneself, taking responsibility for another person at the cost of becoming human.

It is not necessary to convince anybody that it pays to talk. Lack of conversation explains many social problems such as family disintegration, youth's demoralization. It is appreciated, among other things, by psychotherapy and politics. Skills of leading a discussion are required also from journalists, candidates for university or a job. It also has a wide range of applications in pedagogy. 'It is possible to combine in it the teacher's knowledge, experience and communication skills with the activity, knowledge and communication skills of the pupil' (Bochno 2004, p. 57). The most vital in the educational process is to make the dialogue the basis of mutual understanding. It should create conditions in which a person's freedom would develop and should also give opportunities to discover one's own potential. Only participation in a meeting where a dialogue exists gives an individual opportunities to achieve personal dignity, which is a milestone in the independent formation of identity.

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# Technology
# of Education

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The New Educational Review

# A Student Academic Conference Devoted to Bruner's Model of the Relation between Learning and Teaching

## Abstract

The work is an elaboration on the relations between a student and a lecturer in the general cultural context. It focuses on one of the forms of activating students, namely through a student scientific conference.

By using Bruner's model the author of the relation between the learner and the teacher, the author analyses 87 written assignments collected from the participants of the conferences.

The analysis is an attempt to answer three questions:
1). How do the participants of student academic conferences perceive the meaning of their education?
2). What does the management of their own agency look like?
3). How does the sharing of knowledge by the participants of student academic conferences manifest itself?

Key words: *culture, education, reflection, activity, collaboration, teacher – student interaction*

## Introduction

Current debates on academic culture 'pay most of their attention to the results and standards of education, while the means by which both teachers (lecturers*[1])

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[1] the author's words

and students fulfil their tasks in real-classroom (lecture-hall[2]) situations, namely – how teachers teach and learners learn, are mostly overlooked.' (Bruner 2006: 125). However, taking such means of educating into consideration might become especially crucial in the way the relationship between learning and teaching is perceived in the widely-understood cultural context. This is especially true when these relations are considered in the context of academic education, and should be understood as a de facto tutoring of a professor and a student.

In this work, I would like to embark on a debate about the relationship between learning and teaching and to take a closer look at one of the methods of activating students, namely, a student academic conference. This debate is analysed through the prism of Bruner's model of the learner and the teacher.

Using this model, I will try to answer three questions:

1). How do the participants of student academic conferences perceive the meaning of their education?
2). What does the management of their own agency look like?
3). How does the sharing of knowledge by the participants of student academic conferences manifest itself?

Taking into consideration the relationship between learning and teaching, I am going to try to conduct a qualitative interpretation of 87 answers, which were given by students who participated in a student academic conference. In my interpretation, I am going to try to indicate those elements (reflection, and collaboration) which play a decisive role in the transfer and creation of culture in academic education.

## The concept of student academic conferences

The idea for the conferences was conceived during the process of preparing syllabuses for the pedagogical pre-seminary and diploma pre-seminary courses. We took into account how to organise and conduct lessons whose goal would be to prepare students for doing research and writing master theses. Apart from such an obvious goal, though, we were interested in, as U. Eco wrote, 'using the process of writing a thesis as an opportunity (even if the whole time spent at university had been disappointing and frustrating) to regain the feeling of meaning and aim of study, seen not as the process of collecting definitions, but rather as the process of learning how to draw conclusions from experiences, acquire skills (useful

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[2]  the author's words

in further life), choose concepts, analyse them through the use of a particular method and present them through the use of certain communicative techniques' (Eco 2007: 21).

We decided that within the pre-seminaries we had been giving we could organise a student academic conference. This is in relation to the method of understanding the process of studying, and the completion of students' yearly work on the preparation and carrying out of the research and on analysing, describing and interpreting its outcomes. It is also worth mentioning that the work we have done took place both during lesson time, as well as during individual or group meetings with the students after the lessons.

Every year, at the end of the second semester, the students of Rehabilitation, Sociology and Health Education at Zielona Góra University together with the staff members of the Social Interaction Department (Ewa Bochno and Artur Doliński) prepare a conference entitled 'Social Contexts of Prevention and Rehabilitation'. A number of second-year students help in the organisation of the conference, some fourth-year students carry out the topic sections and discussions and third-year students act as speakers. There have been four such conferences with 250 participants so far.

Student academic conferences are becoming a platform for exchange, a common discourse, which takes place not only during the conference debates, but also during a year-long preparation of work, before the conference itself.

Considering the above, it is worth analysing the responses given by the participants of the conferences, as these may enrich a reflective way of thinking about the relationship between university students and teachers.

Using J. Bruner's theoretical model, a qualitative analysis of 87 stated opinions was made concerning two ideas:

1. Participation in the student academic conference, entitled 'Social Contexts of Prevention and Rehabilitation', was for me…
2. Participation in the student academic conference, entitled 'Social Contexts of Prevention and Rehabilitation' was for us – my peers…

When working on the research material I focused on particular material which responds to the three questions asked in the introduction. It also determined the order in which the gathered research material was interpreted as well as the content-based order of the text. Although it constitutes only a certain fragment of the analyses of the students' subjective perspectives, the results allow to draw an initial outline of educational relationships which can be observed during one of the forms of activating students, in a cultural context.

## Reflection as learning with understanding

In order to learn it is essential to understand the point of learning. This is possible thanks to reflection – which is 'the understanding of the point, moving into the meta-level, reflecting on what we have learnt through exposure, and even thinking about one's own thinking' (Bruner 2006: 128). During student academic conferences, as respondents pointed out, it was the 'experiencing of this sense of learning' that became a pure phenomenon:

> *It was amazing. I understood the sense of my research, description and thesis.*
> *At the beginning of the semester I rebelled against such a form of presentation*
> *although as the time passed I began to see the sense of what we were doing* (Student's words).

The students understood that their year-long pre-seminary work had its aims and that it was solid preparation for the writing and defence of their master theses:

> *The conference was a test of our abilities. Thanks to it we will be more well*
> *prepared for the defence of our master theses – the most important event, crowning*
> *the 5 years of our study* (Student's words).

This perception of the essence and aim of learning is connected with the understanding that the cognitive actions of individuals are highly dependent on themselves. This is because, 'according to the theory of social cognition, people are self-reflective, which enables them to analyse and evaluate their own thoughts and experiences' (Bańka 2005: 8). This is connected with thinking about reflection as an opportunity to relate to oneself:

> *It was definitely a new experience, which enriched and developed me. Thanks to*
> *my participation in the conference I was able to challenge my own limitations and*
> *overcome them*(Student's words) .

Self-reflection makes an individual 'critically approach various information, both peripheral and central' (Zdukiewicz – Ścigała, Maruszewski 2000: 424). On the one hand, it makes us more systematic and more inclined towards consideration before taking any action (Reber 2002: 617), on the other hand, we take action more willingly:

> *The conference was a step forward. Every little achievement is a step forward,*
> *a reflection and a desire for another personal success* (Student's words) .

Reflection, however, is a process which does not only relate to the intellect. To a great extent it is also connected with emotions (Illeris 2006). It is important to note that the subjects experienced a mixture of stress-related emotions before the conference, however, as they emphasised, eventually those emotions turned in a very positive direction:

> *It was an amazing experience, which involved a lot of stress as well as a lot of joy and also, after the whole thing, I can say there was pride. We were proud and happy that we had been able to fulfil this task* (Student's words).

Furthermore, the year-long preparation, such as: collecting and working out the background literature, preparing and conducting the research and analysing and interpreting the research material fostered reflection in situations where research problems were being solved. This is the case because the problems were connected with acquiring and improving a reflective cognitive style which is based on the control of accuracy, precision, method and problem solving when the level of the tolerance of a cognitive risk was low (Matczak 2000). The preparation provided 'a chance for the transformation of "cold" external information to "hot" internal self-knowledge' (Sztompka 2008: 17).

Because of that, the organisation process of student academic conferences fosters the acquirement of reflection through the opportunity for students to experience 'constant transformation and revelation (under the influence of their experiences) of their personal education theories' (Gołębniak 2002: 18) in a widely-understood cultural context.

## Agency as the management of one's own activity

When considering Bruner's elements of the relationship between the teacher and the learner,  the activity of the subjects of education is also worth considering. For it is education that determines the activity of individuals in the presence and management of one's mental activity in the future. It also creates the feeling of self-effectiveness. This feeling 'is the central part of the mechanism of personal agency, also known as meta-cognition. This mechanism governs the intentional actions of an individual (Bańka 2005: 13):

> *Thanks to my participation in the conference I could challenge my own restrictions and overcome them. Also, I had the opportunity to express my opinions publicly and in the way I had chosen and prepared them* (Student's words).

According to the students' experiences, their participation in the student academic conference helped them discover their own abilities – even those which the students were not aware of in the first place:

> *It was an important experience. I learnt how to write a proper academic text and how to conduct and work out research – I didn't realise that this was within the range of my abilities* (Student's words) .

As far as the advantages of their participation in the conference are concerned, the respondents especially pointed out the feeling of change and effectiveness of their own actions. It is those two elements that belong to the criteria of the feeling of agency (Reber 2002: 700). They also constitute the expression of conviction of the degree to which it is possible to fulfill a particular task (Myers 2003: 65):

> *The conference was something we could consciously create. What happened there depended on us – because we were those who were mostly responsible, our involvement was even greater – such 'creators' we became* (Student's words).

This is a very positive situation because 'the concept of self-effectiveness means faith in one's own abilities to organise and to bring into effect actions which will be necessary in potentially difficult situations in the future. It is a specific evaluation of one's own competences and abilities to fulfill various tasks in a particular field, in other words, it is each person's individual judgement which concerns their abilities to deal with certain tasks' (Bańka 2005: 9):

> *Thanks to this conference it was possible to measure 'stage fright'. It is not everyday that I have the opportunity to read out my research publicly. This, in turn, will probably help me predict how I will behave in a similar situation in the future* (Student's words).

It is important to note that it is not only words which are the way to build one's own agency, but more so the actions of an individual. During carrying out such actions, an individual has the opportunity to strengthen their self-esteem, to confront other people and to make their own decisions. This opportunity can be given to a student by their collaboration with their lecturer and other students during preparation and performance at the student academic conference.

## Collaboration as sharing knowledge

Agency in the learner–teacher relationship in a cultural context is to be understood as being assimilated with collaboration. As J. Bruner claims, 'otherwise the process of learning could be perceived as either too individual or not individual enough' (Bruner 2006, s. 133). It is the assimilation of the two elements that allows the participants of the conference to join their individual knowledge with their social knowledge:

> *The conference was an opportunity for me to share with my peers what is mine, in the sense of knowledge, what is theirs, and also to acquire – or discover together – what is the authors'* (Student's words).

The respondents emphasised that the ability to perceive the importance and difficulty of dialogue with others is the basis for understanding another person. It is dialogue that nowadays constitutes a condition to fully understand others as well as oneself (Bochno 2004, 2007). This is connected with the process of decentration, which is a cognitive method of moving beyond a perspective other than one's own (Kurcz 2004):

> *It was a very interesting and non-typical experience. We had an opportunity to listen to, discuss or even 'argue' with our peers. I perceived some of them in a completely different way* (Student's words).

Perceiving perspectives other than one's own fosters liberation from stereotypes (Skarżyńska 2004: 18) and the ballast of habits. It also fosters an escape from routine actions:

> *I saw different kinds of presentations of theory and research, different types of behaviour – it surprised me. Now I read literature in a different way. I think this is a precious lesson for students. Such conferences should be included in an obligatory syllabus for university courses* (Student's words) .

Working in a group is a pre-requisite for collaboration. It requires a lot of effort and persistence. It is connected, on the one hand, with synergy and on the other hand with facilitation:

> *Working together on our texts was quite stressful because we all knew that, whether we liked it or not, we would have to speak at the conference. This, on the other hand, made us feel better, because we all were in the same situation* (Student's words).

When it comes to collaboration, the most complex systems of trust begin to appear. This is connected with the fact that, in the case of collaboration, the success of an individual depends on the actions of many people. This is why trust becomes 'a necessary condition and at the same time, a product of successful collaboration' (Sztompka 2007a: 138). This undoubted advantage was also experienced by the participants of the student academic conference:

> *What was the student academic conference for me? It was a lesson on how to have faith in people, my lecturers and my peers. The faith that they will help, support and constructively criticise* (Student's words).

Collaboration acts as the scaffolding of being in culture, because 'we do not learn a way of life and develop the mind without support' (Bruner 2006: 133). Support gives us the feeling of safety in our actions and thought. This, among other things, allows reflection.

## Summary

Culture, which on the one hand is continuous and constant, and on the other hand constantly changes, is a creation of pedagogical discourse. This is the kind of discourse where individuals (students and lecturers) are intentional and active, their knowledge is constructed, established, interpreted and discussed with its contemporary, as well as past, creators and it is fulfilled in direct interactions.

It is worth noting that it is those direct relations which decide what makes up 'what people «do, think and possess» as members of a community' (Sztompka 2007b: 255). It is a process which undergoes constant transmission and creation. Not only is it a language product, but also a means of mutual interaction and influence which involves a lot of elements relating to the program of education, assessment, forms of communication or the relations between the contents of education and the identities of lecturers and students. The process is also inseparably connected with four elements of the relationship between the teacher and learner, distinguished by J. Bruner (2006: 124–141). Those four elements include: the idea of agency – which is an increase of the level of management of one's own activity, reflection – understanding the essence of learnt material, collaboration – sharing of knowledge by subjects of education, and culture – 'a way of living and thinking which we create, negotiate, institutionalise, so that finally, having established all those issues for our own reassurance, we can call it "reality"' (Bruner 2006: 126).

As pointed out in my analysis, during the preparation and fulfillment of student academic conferences, the students experience their own agency with the use of reflection and collaboration. Not only do they learn 'a way of thinking about the environment, they also learn techniques which facilitate the use of the mind and use technologies for broadening their own abilities. They learn to use reflection and to get to the core of their own knowledge easily in order to convey it to others, and later to make use of it themselves. They also adapt a clear picture of what culture in learning looks like' (Bruner 2006: 126).

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# Self-concept of University Students and Their Motivation

## Abstract

The research study deals with self-assessment by university students. Its results confirm the significant influence of self-concept on achievement motivation, motivation for creativity and partially also on academic achievement of adolescents.

**Key words:** *self-concept, achievement motivation, motivation for creativity, academic achievement*

The symbolic social criteria of assessment form the basis for *assessing oneself,* **self-assessment**, which lies in the fact that already in childhood one starts to form a picture of oneself, which contains not only judgement about oneself, but also an emotional attitude to oneself (self-emotion). One looks for one's own identity, wants to be oneself and accepts some attributed characteristics whereas does not accept others (the level of self-acceptance). **Self-esteem** is an evaluative part of self-concept and includes internalized social judgements or conclusions. People with high self-esteem are usually active, communicative, optimistic, able to cope with criticism and totally more successful. They have higher goals and achieve them more often. Low self-esteem is accompanied by lower goals, conventionality and dependence on the opinions of others, health problems such as insomnia, headache and digestion disorders. Cultivating self-esteem is an important part of guiding children to mental health. Sources of positive self-assessment are complex, however, the style of education and personal goals surpass the others. We can agree with Hayesová (2000) that personal self-esteem is supported by education which contains elements of esteem, clearly defined value criteria and requirements and guidance to independent problem solving. A well-structured environment which

places reasonable requirements is more beneficial in building independence than a too permissive environment.

**Self-confidence** is another frequently used term in relation to self-concept. We understand it a**s** an attitudinal component of the self-system. It involves self-assessment, accompanying self-assessing emotions (happiness, satisfaction, pride, shame…), and it also determines student's final focus on preferred activities, tasks, subjects, interests and the like. Self-confidence reflects the feeling of self-worth and consequently determines activities which a person will prefer and which he/she will avoid. Self-confidence is connected with the motivationally emotional sphere through self-assessment, and thus becomes an important regulatory element in the psyche of man. Coopersmith (in Kusák, Dařílek, 2000) claims that already pupils of younger school age, but latest before completing school attendance, form a stable idea about their self-worth.

Advantages of healthy high self-confidence are indisputable. Individuals with high self-confidence are more active, assert themselves more and express their opinions more openly, they are more resistant against negative influences and inadequate pressures. They are also less conformist, they approach new tasks, situations, people with greater trust and can find friends easily. They have fewer personal problems.

In relation to the area of achievement we talk about **self-assurance**. We understand it as anticipation of successful mastering of planned tasks or as a general conviction of an individual that things will go as he/she wishes or expects.

*Critical periods in the genesis of self-assessment*. In the period of a *toddler*, the basis of self-assessment lies in the assessment of personally important people. It happens on the basis of fulfilling or not fulfilling requirements, norms which represent a certain criterion. Causes of self-assessing tendencies can therefore be looked for in parents' requirements for independence and precision of the child's achievement. Vágnerová (2001) stresses emotional experience at this age, given by the character of emotional acceptance by the mother and other family members. Certainty of positive emotional acceptance leads to the strengthening of the feeling of self-worth and to the support of self-assurance.

When a child gets into the role of a *schoolchild*, the picture of his/her self acquires a new dimension. A pupil as an object of assessment is exposed to evaluative statements by teachers, classmates and also parents, but also by the wide public with which he/she gets in touch, a dimension of success – failure appears. This is a big impetus to achievement motivation. Assessment awakens and guides pupils' activity, which is connected with pupils' positive motivation to learn, but can also be a negative factor of motivation (Vašašová, 2004). We talk about the so-called

dialogic interaction between a child and its environment. This includes the whole range of persons that are most frequently divided (Kusák, Dařílek, 2000) into:

- significant (persons whose assessment the child takes and accepts as an unreserved source of self-reflection),
- salient persons (the child accepts their assessment only with reservations or only in specific situations or activities),
- neutral (persons without influence with regard to the self-reflection of a child).

*The pubescent* acquire a new appearance within maturation which forces them to change their idea of their own body systems. As regards the self-concept, the importance of identification with family changes, it remains only at the symbolic level, in a latent form. It is replaced by identification with a peer group, the so-called social identity. Self-assessment at this level is unclear and unstable. To find new criteria is part of efforts to create one's own identity.

An important part of *adolescent* identity is the physical appearance, even though at this stage the physical development does not show any revolutionary changes. Competence and achievement are also part of adolescents' identity. The value of achievement is relative, it depends upon its social importance. In comparison with the pubescent, their plans are more realistic, the set goals are usually high and represent an opportunity to show competences and thus confirm their self-worth. Adolescence is defined by the need for independence and more active attitudes toward the solution of various situations. Their relationship to achievement becomes complete, the complex of experience and personality characteristics forms a prerequisite for the preference of an active or a passive strategy, focus on success and risk or vice versa on certainty which does not risk.

*Young adolescence* is characterised by achieving the desirable variant of new personal identity and its stabilisation.

For our research purposes we have selected youth at the turn of adolescence and early adulthood. We assume that an overwhelming majority has undergone the period of experimentation and searching and has started the way of building one's own unique identity. We have focussed our attention on the self-assessment or self-concept in relation to motivation of the personality of a young person.

The relationship between positive perception of one's own abilities and intrinsic motivation was dealt with by several authors (e.g. Stipek, 1988, Skaalvik – Rankin, 1990…). We have focussed on the verification of the links between positive self-concept and **achievement motivation** of a young person. Contemporary society, mainly achievement-oriented, provoked our reflections on the role of self-concept in forming achievement motivation of man. Apart from this, also the

results of some studies indicate that the positive perception of one's own abilities is a significant condition for the origin and maintenance of efforts in learning and achievement situations (e.g. Helmke, 1992). Also the results of a Slovenian study (Kobal Grum, Lebarič, Kolenc, 2004), where the sample consisted of 287 students of the fourth grade of secondary schools, show that the academic self-concept correlates significantly with motivation for education. Apart from this, these results also indicate a relationship between the level of motivation and academic achievement.

Also Atkinson connects the achievement motive with I (Atkinson, Raynor, 1974). The author claims that failure can enhance as well as decrease the level of motivation. It depends upon the strength of the achievement motive, difficulty of the task and upon to which extent the task which has not been fulfilled is ego-related.

The Washington school of motivation led by Richard De Charms (1976), considers *personal causality* as the starting point of achievement motivation. Their Origin – Pawn Concept is based on the thesis that a person is not only reactive, but also active. Objective causes of a person's behaviour can be outside events, but for people the causes of behaviour are they themselves if they decide on this behaviour on their own initiative. Exactly in these internal causes, De Charms sees the fundamental prerequisite for motivation. The aim of programs enhancing motivation, based on this concept, is to form a model 'origin' of behaviour, it means active, involved and competent personality (in contrast to aimlessness and helplessness).

The dynamic present, however, places high requirements not only on the achievement level, but also on the **motivation for creativity**, or creative tendencies of personality. The only certainty in the hectic period is change; creative adaptation is therefore very desirable. And this raises the question to what extent these creative tendencies of personality are related to its self – concept. Actually, creation becomes the subject of assessment and the outside appraisal of the results of our efforts influences our self-assessment and self-image to a considerable extent. According to Hlavsa (1985) one with one's production also forms oneself. However, we think that this relationship is reciprocal, and therefore the creative process and output reflect the perception and assessment of the self.

The need to study self-concept in relation to creative motivation also corresponds with the latest trends in research on creative personality, which stress interactionist and dynamic aspects. One of the main representatives of interactionist conceptions is Amabile (1983, p. 26), according to whom "creativity is best conceptualized not

as a feature or general ability, but as behaviour resulting from a specific constellation of personality characteristics, cognitive abilities and social environment."

The results of numerous empirical studies confirm the existence of certain essential (core) characteristics of creative personality, which also include self-assurance, both with adult population as well as with children and youth (e.g. Jurčová, 2001). To commonly stated characteristics of creative people belong, among other things, intrinsic motivation (Tardiff, Sternberg, 1989), the need for competence, and autonomy.

## Research objectives and hypotheses

Our main objective was to study self-assessment, self-concept by adolescents (university students), which stabilizes in this period, in relation to the motivation sphere of personality. Favourable or positive self-concept in our understanding is represented by the awareness of one's own abilities, competence and self-efficiency. We found this interpretation in Meyer's theory (the concept of one's own talent, further COT).

From the main objective resulted particular research objectives:

1. To analyse the relationship between self-concept and selected kinds of motivation, namely achievement motivation and motivation for creativity, which we consider to be crucial in the contemporary social situation. Achievement, flexibility and originality as part of creative thinking are valued these days in all spheres of activity.

2. To find out the rate of possible relationship between self-concept and students' academic achievement, i.e. whether the concept of one's own talent is reflected in academic outcomes.

In connection with research objective no. 1 we assumed that:

H1: The concept of one's own talent will correlate positively with students' achievement motive and with the level of aspiration.

H2: The fear of social consequences (as opposite to COT) will on the contrary correlate with hindering anxiety or a fear of failure.

H3: Students with the high concept of their own talent will score as origins = originators (active, autonomous) and students who fear social consequences will, on the contrary, score as pawns (passive, resigned).

H4: Motivation for creativity (or creative tendencies) will be higher with adolescents with positive self-concept (or with high COT). We assumed a positive correlation trend.

In connection with the objective no. 2 we assumed that:

H5:  Among extreme groups of students, in view of academic achievement, there will be a statistically significant difference in the concept of one's own talent.

## Research methods and research selection

With regard to our research objectives and hypotheses we used well-known and less well-known research tools in our professional environment in order to obtain the necessary data. They all are constructed as questionnaires or attitudinal scales.

### 1.  SCEA-M / Self – Concept of Ability Questionnaire (Engler – Meyer)

The Czech version of Engler – Meyer's Self – Concept of Ability Questionnaire was validated by Man and Blahuš (1998). The questionnaire measures two factors: the concept of one's own talent (positive self-image, or the image of one's own abilities) and the fear of social consequences (further FSC), or social anxiety which can also be perceived as a fear of assessment.

### 2.  DMV (Pardel – Maršálová – Hrabovská)

It contains three scales: 1 – the scale of achievement motive, 2 – the scale of anxiety hindering achievement (fear of failure), 3 – the scale of anxiety supporting achievement. For the needs of our research activity, the first two scales are important.

### 3.  ORIGIN/PAWN (De Charms)

The questionnaire is based on De Charms' theory of motivation (De Charms, 1976). It divides individuals into origins (they have their destiny in their own hands, trust their own abilities, are active, show initiative and control their action) and pawns (who do not trust their own powers, are resigned, dragged by destiny or organized from outside). The questionnaire is in the form of an assessment scale. The higher the score, the more competent, capable, independent, active and full of initiative a person feels.

### 4.  PACT – Pennsylvania Assessment of Creative Tendency (Rookey, 1971)

It is a technique for measuring creative tendencies, it determines motivation for creativity, students' potential for creative production, not the creativity itself. The

questionnaire has a character of Likert scale. The higher the score a respondent achieves, the higher his/her motivation for creativity.

### 5. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Academic achievement served as an indicator of academic outcomes, or the grade point average during the first year of study at university.

### 6. STATISTICAL METHODS

The results were processed by means of the statistical program UNISTAT, version 47 and the program Statistika 5.0 (correlation analysis – Pearson, t – test, Mann-Whitney U test).

## Research sample

With regard to the objectives of our research, which concern adolescent youth, we selected a research sample composed of the second-year students at university. The research sample consisted of 19 – to 21-year-old students at the Pedagogical Faculty and Faculty of Natural Sciences at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica. Their average age was 19.71. We did not attempt to balance the research sample in view of the gender, since the inter-gender differences were not originally the subject of our attention. However, while analysing the results, in spite of the inhomogeneity of the research sample, the differences between men and women were manifested. That is why we also present the distribution of the research sample in terms of gender. There were 152 women and 40 men. The research was conducted in a group form and was anonymous.

## Research results

Although it was not our intention and we did not adapt the research sample from this point of view, certain differences between the genders were so relevant that they manifested themselves.

It follows from the data in the table that a statistically significant difference in the concept of one's own talent did not appear between men and women as it could have been expected. Perhaps, this could be attributed to age, in the period of adolescence self-concept is much more objective and real and therefore the differences between boys and girls in the understanding of one's own abilities and

**Table 1.  Significance of differences in the concept of one's own talent (COT) and in fear of social consequences (FSC) between men and women**

|      |       | M       | SD     | p         |
|------|-------|---------|--------|-----------|
| COT  | men   | 23.6000 | 3.0951 | 0.8222    |
|      | women | 23.4868 | 2.7573 |           |
| FSC  | men   | 13.6250 | 2.8884 | 0.0064**  |
|      | women | 15.0263 | 2.8539 |           |

** p< 0.01 ( statistical significance at the level of 1% )

**Table 2  Correlation coefficients expressing the relationship among the concept of one's own talent (COT), fear of social consequences (FSC) and motivational  characteristics of personality**

| n = 192 | AM       | AH         | O / P      |
|---------|----------|------------|------------|
| COT     | 0.1663** | −0.4883**  | 0.2702**   |
| FSC     | 0.1013   | 0.5251**   | −0.3224**  |

** p< 0.01 (statistical significance at the level 1% )

AM = achievement motive AH = anxiety hindering achievement O/P = origin / pawn

capabilities disappear. Further, this result could also reflect the character of the era in which we live today. The possibilities of education and professional carrier are balanced today and the differences between the roles of a man and a woman are not so striking.

Contrary to this finding there is the fact that in the fear of social consequences the inter-gender difference was manifested as statistically highly significant ($p \leq 0.0064$), and unfavourable for women. We explain this interesting finding by the fact that even in adolescence girls react much more emotionally to social assessment and criticism of their own person, and we can therefore assume that they derive their own self-concept to a greater extent from the assessment of their environment. Apart from that, it has been proved that women are more sensitive and more anxious than men (e.g. Flešková, 1994).

The correlation coefficient expressing the relationship between the concept of one's own talent and the achievement motive reaches the so-called critical value (r=0.1663). It means that although it is not a strong dependence, there is some relationship between both factors (H1). Our assumptions about the relationship between self-concept and motivational characteristics of personality, however, are confirmed by a highly statistically significant negative correlation trend between the concept of one's own talent and anxiety hindering achievement (r=-0.4883). From this we can deduce that anxiety which prevents an individual from achieving a successful performance is incompatible with an adequate concept of one's own talent, or positive self-concept.

Individuals with positive self-concept (high COT) really tend to assert the so-called origin behaviour. They are active, independent, show initiative and take responsibility for their life. This relationship was proved to be statistically significant $(r = 0.2702; p < 0.01)$ and confirmed our assumptions (H3).

The scale of the fear of social consequences, in other words also fear of assessment, shows a very close relationship $(p < 0.01)$ with anxiety hindering achievement according to DMV $(r = 0.5251)$. Hypothesis H2 was thus confirmed and we can state that the fear of social assessment (as the opposite of the concept of one's own

**Table 3  Correlation coefficients expressing relationships between self-concept (COT, FSC) and creative tendencies of personality (PACT)**

| N = 192 | COT | FSC |
|---------|-----|-----|
| PACT | **0.2925**** | –0.1897** |

** p< 0.01 (statistical significance at the level 1% )
COT = concept of one's own talent FSC = fear of social consequences
PACT = creative tendencies

abilities and positive self-concept) is one of the relevant factors which inhibit adequate achievement or contribute to failure. A statistically highly significant negative correlation relationship between the fear of social consequences and the so-called origin behaviour indicates that individuals who are tied down by concerns over social assessment and its consequences tend to behave passively, resignedly, do not believe in their own powers, let others lead them or are dragged by destiny.

The correlation analysis confirmed that there is a relationship between the perception of oneself, one's own abilities and competences and creative tendencies of personality $(r = 0.2925)$. We can accept hypothesis H4 and state that also positive self-assessment belongs among the sources of creative thinking and action. Between the fear of social consequences and motivation for creativity, there is a rather negative correlation relationship $(r = -0.1897)$. Although the correlation coefficient is not high, we can agree with the idea that excessive dependence upon outside assessment and concerns about it probably do not encourage creative motivation.

As we have already indicated, we also wanted to verify in practice the theoretical assumptions about the influence of self-concept on the motivational structure of adolescent personality. That is why we extended research objectives and supplemented achievement characteristics, measured by questionnaires, with real academic outcomes in the first year of study. These results represent the real achievement of adolescents because their study is an area in which they fulfil themselves and try to achieve something.

**Table 4  Significance of differences in the concept of one's own talent (COT) and in fear of social consequences (FSC) between extreme groups (successful: n=60;unsuccessful: n=60)**

|  | U-value | P |
|---|---|---|
| COT | −2.68360 | **0.00728**** |
| FSC | −0.29292 | 0.76958 |

** p< 0.01 (statistical significance at the level of 1% )

We decided to verify whether the concept of one's own talent is reflected in academic outcomes of university students. By means of applying U – statistics this was verified in extreme groups.

The statistical analysis confirmed a significant difference between extreme groups of students in the concept of one's own talent. The assumed link between the positive perception of one's own abilities and competences and the real performance or academic achievement (H5) was confirmed. However, we want to stress that in forming extreme groups we used only half of sigma and thus we extended extreme groups at the expense of the average group. Between the original extreme groups (formed by means of the whole sigma) a statistically significant difference was not manifested. There are several possible interpretations of this partial result: a) an average grade may be, but need not be, a sufficient indicator of real achievement or a student's success; b) the value of academic achievement is subjective for adolescents; c) the first year at university can be considered as adaptational, i.e. it need not reflect students' real achievement abilities and capabilities. We can assume that with lower age categories the relationship between the concept of one's own talent and academic outcomes would be closer (Man, Blahuš, 1998). However, this assumption will have to be verified in research.

Also Průcha (1997) attributes great importance to motivation resulting from students' self-assessment in view of educational processes. He presents Bloom's analysis of the influence of individual factors determining students' academic outcomes. Apart from cognitive input characteristics (50 %), the quality of teaching has a 25 % share on the variability of academic outcomes and affective input characteristics represent a 25 % share. And exactly within them, the most significant representation belongs to motivation related to students' self – assessment.

## Conclusion

Our aim was to point to the importance of young people's positive self-concept. We can state that we managed to reach this aim and our research results confirmed the central role of self-concept in the dynamics of personality. The first

two hypotheses can be accepted (H1, H2), which refer to achievement motivation in connection with high or low self – concept. Persons with a high score in the concept of one's own talent report higher achievement motive, on the contrary, persons who are excessively preoccupied with social assessment are significantly more anxious which prevents them from achievement.

A significant relationship between self-concept and motivation was also confirmed in relation to De Charms' motivation theory (hypothesis H3). As origins, it means autonomous, independent, active and competent students with the so-called positive self – concept (high concept of one's own talent). Therefore we can also accept hypothesis H3.

Hypothesis H4 was focussed on the link between self-concept (perception of one's own abilities and competences) and creative tendencies of personality. The research results confirmed our assumption about the positive correlation trend. The growing concept of one's own talent is accompanied by growing creative tendencies of personality in our research sample.

The last hypothesis (H5) about a statistically significant difference between extreme groups of students in view of academic achievement was confirmed, though not so unequivocally as, for example, with older pupils (Man, Blahuš, 1998). This assumption will have to be verified in research.

In conclusion, we want to state that self-concept is reflected in university students' achievement motivation, their expectations and aspirations. It is reflected in their attitude toward tasks (passive or active) and toward the life proper. It even supports or inhibits creative tendencies of personality. In view of educational process, what is relevant is also the implied relationship between self-concept and academic outcomes of adolescents, which represent their current achievement level.

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# Investigation of K-12 Teachers' ICT Competences
## and the Contributing Factors
## in Acquiring These Competences

## Abstract

This study investigates K-12 teachers' ICT competence levels, the differences in teachers' ICT competences based on their demographic characteristics, and factors that have an impact on their ICT competences. The data were collected from 1,429 K-12 teachers by means of a questionnaire. The findings of the study indicate that the majority of the participants do not perceive themselves as competent in basic and advanced ICT. Gender, prior preservice education ICT courses, and computer ownership are significantly related to the perceived ICT competences of K-12 teachers. Personal interest, possession of a home computer, and family and friends were rated as the most influential factors in acquiring ICT competences.

**Key words:** *ICT competences; acquiring ICT competences; factors that influence ICT competences; K-12 teachers; computer usage in K-12 schools*

## 1. Introduction

Information and communication technologies (ICT) play a proven critical role in enhancing the quality of education. They are particularly important in helping teachers and students to perform more effectively. To make the best use of ICT, teachers must be equipped with adequate ICT competences. In the process of integrating ICT into education, both teachers' ICT competences and how they perceive the role of ICT in their teaching/learning processes play key roles. Analy-

sis, design, development, implementation, evaluation, and management of ICT in education require diversified competences and knowledge (Adelsberger, Collis, and Pawlowski 2002; Kozma 2002).

Competence has been defined in the literature as the state or quality of being adequately or well-qualified to perform a task. For example, Mandl and Krause (2003) defined competence as a "system of prerequisites for successful action in certain domains that can be influenced by practice and learning" (p. 69). According to Klein, Spector, Grabowski, and de la Teja (2004), competence is "a set of related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable an individual to effectively perform the activities of a given occupation or job function to the standards expected in employment" (p. 14). According to Clark (2008), "a person gains competence through education, training, experience or natural abilities. While there are many definitions of competence, most of them have two common components: 1) the competences are observable or measurable knowledge, skills and abilities; 2) these knowledge, skills and abilities must distinguish between superior and other performers" (p. 1).

The demand for teachers with high ICT competences and skills is increasing. In the literature (Algozzine, Bateman, Flowers, Gretes, Hughes, and Lambert 1999; Tinmaz 2004; Toker 2004), there are two general clusters of ICT competences, namely basic and advanced competences. Basic competences are represented by entry-level skills related to basic computer operation, and the use of an array of software that supports and enhances professional productivity. Advanced competences extend the application of basic competences to teaching, administration and counselling, and to other professional activities. To determine the level of competences, the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) formed technology standards for K-12 teachers. These standards define the fundamental concepts, knowledge, skills, and attitudes for applying ICT in educational settings. All teacher candidates seeking certification or endorsements in teacher education must meet these educational technology standards. It is the responsibility of preservice teacher education programs in all universities and at cooperating schools to provide instruction that will allow teacher candidates to meet these standards (ISTE, 2000).

In order to use ICT effectively and to integrate it in K-12 schools, the schools should not only make investments in ICT, but also provide the necessary training and support to enable teachers to become fully capable of using these technologies (Mims, Polly, Shepherd, and Inan 2006). Investments in ICT cannot be fully effective unless teachers learn how to use and integrate ICT into their future teaching.

In keeping with international practices, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in Turkey also prepared standards for various types of teachers regarding effective and efficient ICT integration into educational settings (MoNE 2006). These standards reflect fundamental concepts, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that teachers should possess when applying ICT in educational settings. It is the responsibility of teacher education programs in Turkey for providing instruction that will allow all teachers to meet these standards. Turkish teacher education programs have accordingly redesigned their curricula to enable prospective teachers to become competent users of new technologies. Within both primary and secondary teacher education programs, ICT courses, namely 'Computer' and 'Instructional Technology and Material Development (ITMD) became compulsory requirements for attaining teaching credentials (Goktas, Yildirim, and Yildirim 2008).

In Turkey, the ICT integrated preservice teacher education curriculum has been in use since 1998. Although some of the prior studies, which were designed to facilitate the development of teacher education policies and the integration of ICT, affected the ICT competences of K-12 teachers (Becker 1999; MACQT 1999; Moursund and Bielefeldt 1999; SRI 2002; Thompson, Bull, and Willis 2001; Yildirim 2000), there is currently insufficient research on this subject regarding Turkey. Very few research studies have investigated the outcomes of this curriculum. Hence, it is not presently clear whether this curriculum is sufficiently helping prospective teachers to acquire the required ICT competences, and what the contributing factors are in acquiring ICT competences. Therefore, this study aims at investigating the current state of ICT competences of Turkish K-12 teachers in regard to gender, computer ownership, ICT related courses and training, and the influencing factors in acquiring ICT competences. This study addresses the following research questions:

1). What are the K-12 teachers' perceived ICT competences?
2). Are there any significant differences in perceived ICT competences among K-12 teachers regarding gender, prior preservice education ICT courses, prior in-service ICT training and computer ownership?
3). What are the contributing factors that influence the acquisition of ICT competences of K-12 teachers?

## 2. Method

In this study, the descriptive research method was used to investigate K-12 teachers' perceived ICT competences and the related issues. The data were collected

by means of a questionnaire. According to the MoNE statistics, there were 558,876 primary and secondary school teachers in Turkey in 2004. In the study, initially the K-12 teachers were clustered into twelve statistical regions using Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics (NUTS) Level 1 as representative of the population. Subsequently, 92 K-12 schools in 35 provinces (including at least one province from each region) were selected by the convenience sampling method. The questionnaires were sent to 3,353 K-12 teachers from the selected schools in May 2005. Follow-up questionnaires were sent to those who did not respond to the first query in June and July 2005. In all, 1,429 K-12 teachers responded to the questionnaire. The return rate was 42.6% percent (cf. Table 1).

The questionnaire used in this study was developed by the researchers following a review of similar instruments in the literature (MirandaNet 2000; Orhun 2000; Queitzsch 1997; SEIRTEC 1998). It consisted of three main sections: demographics, ICT competences, and influencing factors in acquiring ICT competences. The demographics section consisted of 16 open-ended and multiple choice items. The ICT competence section consisted of 24 five-point Likert-type items (1 indicating 'Completely Insufficient' to 5 indicating 'Completely Sufficient') of which 13 items for basic ICT competences and 11 items for advanced ICT competences. The influencing factors in acquiring ICT competence section was composed of 11 five-point Likert-type items (1 indicating 'Strongly Disagree' to 5 indicating 'Strongly Agree'). After a peer review by four graduate students, seven test construction and ICT experts examined the instrument, and based on their feedback, the instrument was revised. It was then checked by a Turkish language expert for clarity. After the revision, a pilot test was conducted with 121 K-12 teachers from three different provinces, and the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was calculated as 0.81. After gathering data from 1,429 K-12 teachers, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was recalculated as 0.97. Both values are higher than the 0.80 criterion which is regarded as internally reliable (Bryman and Cramer 1997). Subsequently, a factor analysis was calculated to identify whether the items measured two factors: basic ICT competences and advanced ICT competences. The Cronbach Alpha was found to be 0.97 for factor 1, and 0.94 for factor 2.

The data collected by means of a questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis was used to investigate the K-12 teachers' perceived ICT competences and the influencing factors. The data were coded and prepared for analysis using the statistical analysis software SPSS 12.0. Frequencies, means, percentages, and standard deviations of each item were calculated, and then the items were rank ordered from highest to lowest. Inferential statistics methods, such as Pearson Correlation, Univariate Analysis of Variances (ANOVA),

and Post-Hoc tests, were used to investigate the relationship between demographic characteristics (gender, computer ownership, prior preservice ICT courses, and prior in-service ICT training) and perceived ICT competences, and differences in perceived ICT competences relating to demographic characteristics.

## 3. Findings

Before presenting the results of this study, the participants' demographics were provided in the following section. The findings of the study are then provided in relation to the research questions.

### 3.1. Demographic Information of the Participants

As shown in Table 1, 61.2% of the K-12 teachers who participated in this study were male, and 38.8% were female. Regarding computer access, 59.8% of the teachers had computers at home, and 35.3% of the teachers who owned a computer had Internet access. 87.1% of the teachers indicated that they had computer access at school, and 75.4% of those had Internet access. While 57.6% of the teachers had taken in-service ICT training, 35.4% had not received any ICT training. As can be seen in Table 1, approximately 57% of the teachers had taken preservice ICT courses during their undergraduate study.

**Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the K-12 teachers**

|                                       | *f*  | %    |
| ------------------------------------- | ---- | ---- |
| **Gender**                            |      |      |
| Male                                  | 875  | 61.2 |
| Female                                | 554  | 38.8 |
| **Prior Preservice ICT Courses**      |      |      |
| No Response                           | 100  | 7.0  |
| Had Not Taken                         | 506  | 35.4 |
| Had Taken Only 'Computer' Course      | 293  | 20.5 |
| Had Taken Only 'ITMD' Course          | 259  | 18.1 |
| Had Taken both Courses                | 271  | 19.0 |
| **Prior In-service ICT Training**     |      |      |
| No Response                           | 106  | 7.4  |
| Not Taken                             | 846  | 59.2 |
| Had Taken in-service ICT training     | 477  | 33.4 |

|  | $f$ | % |
|---|---|---|
| **School Computer** | | |
| No Response | 25 | 1.7 |
| No school computer | 160 | 11.2 |
| Have school computer | 1244 | 87.1 |
|   With Internet access | 1077 | 75.4 |
|   Without Internet access | 167 | 11.7 |
| **Home Computer** | | |
| No Response | 19 | 1.3 |
| No home computer | 556 | 38.9 |
| Have home computer | 854 | 59.8 |
|   With Internet access | 504 | 35.3 |
|   Without Internet access | 350 | 24.5 |

Note: n = 1429

### 3.2.  Perceived ICT Competences of the K-12 Teachers

The perceived ICT competences were examined using the ICT competence subscale in the questionnaire. The subscale includes competences on 1) basic ICT knowledge and skills, and 2) advanced ICT knowledge and skills. The participants rated their levels of agreement with the questionnaire statements by using a five-point Likert-type scale.

As presented in Table 2, the findings indicate that the majority of the participants did not perceive themselves as competent in both basic ICT competences (M = 3.26) and advanced ICT competences (M = 2.97). The majority were neutral regarding most of these competences. The majority of the K-12 teachers perceived their competence levels as 'sufficient' or 'completely sufficient' in the "use of operating systems" (71.5%, M = 3.64), "identifying legal, ethical, and societal issues related to ICT" (64.5%, M = 3.57), and "use of word processor for personal and institutional purposes" (68%, M = 3.55). On the other hand, "use of hypermedia and multimedia tools to support instruction" (33.1%, M = 2.61) was perceived as the lowest competence. The mean scores of the remaining competence statements were at the 'neutral' or 'insufficient' level (ranging from M = 3.26 to M = 2.61).

### 3.3.  The Effects of Demographic Characteristics on the K-12 Teachers' Perceived ICT Competences

The second issue investigated in this study is the differences in the K-12 teachers' perceived ICT competences in relation to their demographic characteristics: gender, computer ownership, ICT courses taken during their preservice teacher education program, and prior in-service ICT training. For this purpose, correlation

## Table 2. Perceived ICT competences of the K-12 teachers

| Competences | Completely Insufficient | Insufficient | Neutral | Sufficient | Completely Sufficient | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | % | | | | |
| Use of operating systems | 7.4 | 15.3 | 5.8 | 49.2 | 22.3 | 3.64 | 1.19 |
| Identify legal, ethical, and societal issues related to the use of ICT | 12.1 | 13.0 | 10.4 | 34.8 | 29.7 | 3.57 | 1.35 |
| Use of word processors for personal and institutional purposes | 11.5 | 13.2 | 7.3 | 44.8 | 23.2 | 3.55 | 1.29 |
| Use of spreadsheets for personal and institutional purposes | 14.3 | 19.6 | 10.2 | 37.6 | 18.3 | 3.26 | 1.34 |
| Use of ICT for communication | 15.5 | 17.7 | 10.5 | 40.4 | 15.9 | 3.24 | 1.33 |
| Use of ICT for collecting data | 15.8 | 17.6 | 10.7 | 40.9 | 14.9 | 3.22 | 1.33 |
| Use of communication tools to support instruction | 14.0 | 20.5 | 12.1 | 42.5 | 10.9 | 3.16 | 1.26 |
| Use of ICT to enhance personal development | 15.1 | 20.1 | 11.5 | 40.3 | 12.9 | 3.16 | 1.30 |
| Use of ICT to support instruction out of classroom | 14.1 | 21.2 | 11.3 | 42.6 | 10.8 | 3.15 | 1.27 |
| Use of ICT to support instruction process in classroom | 16.6 | 22.0 | 10.7 | 38.9 | 11.9 | 3.08 | 1.32 |
| Use of computer-aided instruction materials | 17.0 | 21.5 | 10.2 | 39.8 | 11.5 | 3.07 | 1.32 |
| Use of ICT for knowledge management | 17.5 | 19.6 | 13.9 | 36.6 | 12.4 | 3.07 | 1.32 |
| Use of presentation software for personal and institutional purposes | 18.8 | 21.3 | 12.2 | 32.6 | 15.1 | 3.04 | 1.37 |
| Use of ICT in assessment process of a course | 19.8 | 20.3 | 13.2 | 36.1 | 10.7 | 2.98 | 1.33 |
| Evaluation of computer-aided instruction materials | 18.0 | 22.3 | 15.4 | 34.8 | 9.3 | 2.95 | 1.29 |
| Use of ICT in implementation process of a course | 20.6 | 20.9 | 12.6 | 35.2 | 10.7 | 2.94 | 1.34 |
| Identify, select, and evaluate ICT resources | 17.0 | 23.6 | 18.5 | 32.4 | 8.5 | 2.92 | 1.25 |
| Use of ICT for decision-making | 19.9 | 20.1 | 19.6 | 30.9 | 9.6 | 2.90 | 1.29 |
| Use of ICT in design process of a course | 20.8 | 21.9 | 16.3 | 31.7 | 9.2 | 2.87 | 1.31 |
| Use of ICT in development process of a course | 21.3 | 21.4 | 15.8 | 33.1 | 8.4 | 2.86 | 1.30 |
| Integrate ICT into courses | 19.4 | 23.2 | 17.9 | 31.3 | 8.2 | 2.86 | 1.27 |
| Use of ICT for problem solving | 21.2 | 21.5 | 16.8 | 31.5 | 8.9 | 2.85 | 1.31 |
| Use of ICT in analysis process of a course | 21.9 | 23.6 | 18.8 | 28.3 | 7.4 | 2.76 | 1.27 |
| Use of hypermedia and multimedia tools to support instruction | 28.2 | 24.2 | 14.5 | 24.2 | 8.9 | 2.61 | 1.34 |
| **Factor 1 (basic ICT competences) overall** | | | | | | **3.26** | 1.07 |
| **Factor 2 (advanced ICT competences) overall** | | | | | | **2.97** | 1.10 |
| **Overall** | | | | | | **3.10** | 1.05 |

analysis, ANOVA, and Post-Hoc tests were conducted. The teachers' demographic characteristics are shown in Table 1.

Table 3 presents the correlation analysis results between the perceived ICT competences and the demographic characteristics. Three of the demographic characteristics: 'gender' (−.094), 'preservice ICT courses' (.162), and 'computer ownership' (−.212), are significantly related to the perceived ICT competence scores. However, the 'gender' and 'computer ownership' variables have a negative correlation with the perceived ICT competences scores.

**Table 3.  Correlations between perceived ICT competences and the demographic characteristics**

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Gender | | .061* | .023 | −.017 | −.094** |
| 2. Preservice ICT courses | | | .066* | −.020 | .162** |
| 3. In-service ICT training | | | | .045 | −.039 |
| 4. Computer ownership | | | | | −.212** |
| 5. ICT Competence | | | | | |

Note: levels of significance: p < 0.01 level: **, p < 0.05 level: *

Table 4 presents the ANOVA results. There were main significant effects from 'gender' ($p = .000$), 'preservice ICT courses' ($p = .000$), and 'computer ownership' ($p = .000$). The other main effects did not reach a significant level.

### 3.3.1. Gender

The ANOVA results indicate that there is a significant effect of 'gender' on the 'perceived ICT competence' scores; $F (1, 1187) = 14.529$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.012$ of the variance in the perceived ICT competence scores was due to gender (cf. Table 4). Moreover, as presented in Table 5, the 'perceived ICT competence' mean score of the males (M = 3.18) is higher than that of the females (M = 2.97). It can be stated that the males perceived themselves to be more competent ICT users than the females did. This is a consistent result in the correlation analysis. In this correlation analysis, males were coded as 1 and females as 2. That is, while gender is increasing, perceived ICT competences score is decreasing, and negative correlation between gender and the perceived ICT competence was observed (cf. Table 3).

**Table 4.  Main and interaction effects of demographic
characteristics on perceived ICT competences**

| Source | df | F | Sig. | Partial η2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | 1 | 14.529** | .000 | .012 |
| Preservice ICT courses | 3 | 9.408** | .000 | .023 |
| In-service ICT training | 1 | .451 | .502 | .000 |
| Computer ownership | 1 | 41.986** | .000 | .034 |
| Gender* Preservice ICT courses | 3 | .422 | .737 | .001 |
| Gender* In-service ICT training | 1 | 2.616 | .106 | .002 |
| Preservice ICT courses* In-service ICT training | 3 | 2.963* | .031 | .007 |
| Gender* Preservice ICT courses* In-service ICT training | 3 | .109 | .955 | .000 |
| Gender* Computer ownership | 1 | .001 | .981 | .000 |
| Preservice ICT courses* Computer ownership | 3 | .856 | .463 | .002 |
| Gender* Preservice ICT courses* Computer ownership | 3 | 1.006 | .389 | .003 |
| In-service ICT training* Computer ownership | 1 | .062 | .803 | .000 |
| Gender* In-service ICT training* Computer ownership | 1 | .015 | .903 | .000 |
| Preservice ICT courses* In-service ICT training* Computer ownership | 3 | .978 | .402 | .002 |
| Gender* Preservice ICT courses* In-service ICT training* Computer ownership | 3 | .535 | .659 | .001 |
| S within-group error | 1187 | | | |

Note: levels of significance: $p < 0.001$ level: **, $p < 0.05$ level: *

**Table 5.  The K-12 teachers' perceived ICT competences in relation to gender**

| Gender | N | Factor 1 (basic ICT competences) | | Factor 2 (advanced ICT competences) | | Overall | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD |
| Male | 875 | 3.34 | 1.06 | 3.06 | 1.09 | 3.18 | 1.04 |
| Female | 554 | 3.12 | 1.09 | 2.84 | 1.10 | 2.97 | 1.05 |

### 3.3.2. Preservice ICT Courses

The ANOVA results (cf. Table 4) indicate that ICT courses taken in preservice teacher education programs exerted a significant effect on the perceived ICT competences scores; $F(3, 1187) = 9.408$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.023$ of the variance in the perceived ICT competences scores was due to preservice ICT courses taken in. Follow-up Post-Hoc tests were performed for the main effect of the four groups. The follow-up tests consisted of all pair-wise comparisons. The results of these tests, and the means and standard deviations of the groups, are presented in Table 6. As indicated in the table, there are significant differences among the groups. Those K-12 teachers who had taken either both courses ('Instructional Technology and Material Development,' and 'Computer') or only the 'Computer' course perceived their ICT competences as higher compared to K-12 teachers who had not taken any ICT courses. This could mean that K-12 teachers who took 'Computer' or both ICT courses during their preservice teacher education program tend to perceive themselves as more competent ICT users than those who did not take 'Computer' or either of the ICT courses.

**Table 6.  Tukey HSD analysis results regarding differences among the groups**

| Groups | N | Factor 1 (basic ICT competences) | | Factor 2 (advanced ICT competences) | | Overall | | Differences | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1.Had Not Taken Any Preservice ICT Courses | 506 | 3.05 | 1.11 | 2.78 | 1.12 | 2.90 | 1.08 | – | * | | * |
| 2. Took Only 'Computer' Course | 293 | 3.33 | 1.03 | 3.06 | 1.07 | 3.19 | 1.02 | | – | | * |
| 3. Took Only 'ITMD' Course | 259 | 3.18 | 1.06 | 2.92 | 1.09 | 3.05 | 1.04 | | | – | * |
| 4. Took Both Courses | 271 | 3.64 | 0.94 | 3.30 | 1.02 | 3.43 | 0.94 | | | | |

Note: * = significant according to Tukey HSD analysis.

### 3.3.3.  Prior In-service ICT Training

The ANOVA results (cf. Table 4) show that there was no significant effect of in-service ICT training on the perceived ICT competence scores; $F(1, 1187) = 0.451$, $p > .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.000$. Table 7 presents the perceived ICT competence mean scores and standard deviations of K-12 teachers who took and who did not take ICT training. Though there is a slight difference between the mean scores in favour of having ICT training, the difference is not significant.

**Table 7. K-12 teachers' ICT competences in relation to having
in-service ICT training**

|  | N | Factor 1 (basic ICT competences) | | Factor 2 (advanced ICT competences) | | Overall | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD |
| Had in-service ICT training | 477 | 3.33 | 1.04 | 3.07 | 1.06 | 3.19 | 1.01 |
| Did not have | 846 | 3.26 | 1.07 | 2.97 | 1.11 | 3.10 | 1.05 |

### 3.3.4. Computer Ownership

As presented in Table 4, the ANOVA results indicate that there is a significant effect of computer ownership on the perceived ICT competence scores; $F$ (1, 1187) = 41.986, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.034$ of the variance in the perceived ICT competences scores was due to computer ownership. The means and standard deviations for computer ownership are shown in Table 8. The perceived ICT competence mean score of K-12 teachers who owned a computer is higher than the score of those who did not. It can be concluded that K-12 teachers who own a computer perceive themselves to be more competent ICT users. This finding is consistent with the correlation analysis (cf. Table 3).

**Table 8. K-12 teachers' ICT competences in relation to computer ownership**

|  | N | Factor 1 (basic ICT competences) | | Factor 2 (advanced ICT competences) | | Overall | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD |
| Have Own Computer | 584 | 3.45 | 1.02 | 3.15 | 1.07 | 3.28 | 1.01 |
| Do Not Have | 556 | 2.96 | 1.08 | 2.70 | 1.08 | 2.82 | 1.04 |

### 3.4. Factors that Influence K-12 Teachers' ICT Competences

The third issue examined in this study is the factors that influence K-12 teachers in acquiring their ICT competences. As can be seen in Table 9, the findings show that personal interest (M = 4.32) and possessing a home computer (M = 4.04) were rated as the most influential factors, while administrative staff in school (M = 2.98) and ICT resource teacher (M = 2.91) were rated as the least influential factors. The other leading factors that contributed to the acquisition of ICT competences were' my family and friends' (M = 3.73) and' experienced teachers in my school' (M = 3.44). The results also indicate that 'ITMD' and 'Computer' undergraduate

courses are not the leading factors (M = 3.08, M = 3.02 respectively) that influence ICT competences. Fewer than half of the participants rated these two preservice ICT courses as important factors in acquiring ICT competences.

Table 9. Factors that influence K-12 teachers while acquiring their ICT competences

| Factors | N | % | | | | | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | | |
| **Personal Level** | | | | | | | | |
| Personal interest | 1177 | 2.0 | 3.1 | 3.9 | 42.6 | 48.3 | 4.32 | 0.85 |
| Having a home computer | 980 | 6.8 | 7.4 | 4.3 | 37.4 | 44.0 | 4.04 | 1.18 |
| My family and friends | 1039 | 4.9 | 14.1 | 6.4 | 51.9 | 22.7 | 3.73 | 1.10 |
| Private courses | 799 | 16.1 | 52.3 | 11.3 | 32.5 | 14.8 | 3.05 | 1.34 |
| **School Level** | | | | | | | | |
| Experienced teachers in my school | 1039 | 9.6 | 18.5 | 7.5 | 46.6 | 17.8 | 3.44 | 1.24 |
| In-service ICT training | 1048 | 10.4 | 19.5 | 11.5 | 43.6 | 15.1 | 3.33 | 1.24 |
| Computer teachers in my school | 962 | 14.7 | 22.6 | 7.3 | 39.1 | 16.4 | 3.20 | 1.35 |
| Administrative staff in school | 1076 | 12.1 | 29.9 | 15.1 | 33.6 | 9.2 | 2.98 | 1.22 |
| ICT resource teacher[1] | 897 | 17.6 | 27.9 | 11.7 | 31.4 | 11.4 | 2.91 | 1.32 |
| **Preservice Training Level** | | | | | | | | |
| 'ITMD' undergraduate course | 743 | 14.5 | 26.8 | 9.3 | 34.9 | 14.5 | 3.08 | 1.33 |
| 'Computer' undergraduate course | 882 | 17.9 | 28.6 | 6.2 | 27.7 | 19.6 | 3.02 | 1.44 |
| Overall | 1330 | | | | | | 3.54 | |

Note: [1] ICT resource teacher: These are the teachers trained by the Ministry of National Education to become "ICT trainer teachers." Their role is to train other teachers, and help successful ICT integration at the school level.

## 4. Discussion

The analysis of the data reveals that overall the K-12 teachers did not perceive themselves as competent in ICT, and they responded neutrally regarding both the basic ICT competences and the advanced ICT competences. Specifically, the K-12

teachers perceive themselves to be less competent in regard to integrating ICT into the educational process. Ertmer (1999), Graham, Culatta, Pratt and West (2004), Mims, Polly, Shepherd, and Inan (2006), Phillips and Kelly (2000), and Yildirim (2007) have all stated that teachers are instructed in basic ICT applications rather than in advanced ICT applications. Teachers need to learn not only how to use ICT, but also how to integrate ICT into their future teaching.

The findings indicate that there is a significant difference between the male and female teachers' perceived ICT competences in favour of the males. In the literature, some studies report similar results (Lynch 2001; Toker 2004; Torkzadeh, Pflughoeft, and Hall 1999) while others report different findings (Chao 2001; Hornung 2002; Haderlie 2001; Nanasy 2001; Snider 2003). These different findings might be due to the social roles of males and females in Turkish society. While the males were expected to perform better in technical tasks, the females were expected to perform better in domestic tasks. Another reason may be limited financial conditions. People who do not own a computer use public environments such as Internet cafés to access ICT. Cultural factors within Turkish society might encourage males to make greater use of public computer environments than females, as Yalcinalp and Yildirim (2006) mentioned. Thus, cultural factors may be one of the reasons for the difference (Odabasi 2003; Toker 2004).

Another finding of the study is that taking preservice ICT courses has a significant effect on the perceived ICT competences. K-12 teachers who had taken 'Computer' or both ICT courses during their preservice teacher education program perceived themselves as significantly more competent ICT users than those who had not taken any ICT courses. Though the perceived ICT competence mean score of the K-12 teachers who had taken ICT courses during their preservice teacher education program was not very high, it is promising that ICT courses in the teacher education programs did make some difference for a portion of the teachers. Altun (2003) found a parallel result, which suggests that there is a significant difference between those who have taken a 'Computer' course and those who have not. Regarding ICT integration, the redesign of the teacher education curricula by the Higher Education Council in 1998 was successful to a certain extent. Another reason for the significant differences might be the increased access to and availability of ICT facilities in schools and homes since 1998. It can be concluded that well-designed preservice ICT courses in teacher education programs and available ICT facilities can increase teachers' ICT competence levels.

In-service ICT training did not have a significant effect on the perceived ICT competence scores. In-service training activities which instruct teachers in the use of ICT are typically organized at the local level. It is clear that in-service ICT

training for K-12 teachers has some limitations. It may be argued that in-service ICT training needs to be revised to be more efficient and effective. When planning in-service ICT training, personal, reinforcing, and enabling factors must be taken into consideration. For instance, training programs can be designed according to K-12 teachers' subject area needs. The training could also focus on "teaching with ICT" rather than "basic ICT applications" in either short-term workshops or seminars. In-service training may be concentrated on pedagogical use rather than on technical skills or background knowledge for ICT. According to McCarney (2004), in-service training that is based on technical skills or background knowledge for ICT is unsatisfactory in terms of its impact on teachers' uses of ICT in the classroom. It is important that the pedagogy of ICT should be made the main focus of in-service training, and this should be built upon in a constructive manner in order to allow teachers to experience more benefits from using ICT in their classrooms (McCarney 2004; Wu, Chen, Lee, Ho, and Chiou 2004).

Computer ownership was found to have a significant effect on the perceived ICT competence scores. The K-12 teachers who have their own computer perceived themselves as more competent in ICT. This finding is consistent with the literature (Novick 2003; Toker 2004; Chao 2001; Askar and Umay 2001; Cinar 2002). Owning a computer appears to increase the practical usage of ICT, as it allows the owner to gain more experience. Therefore, it is not surprising that this factor has a positive effect on the perceived ICT competence scores. The results suggest that computers should be made available and accessible to teachers for use in schools. With this in mind, in the past few years, MoNE has initiated a campaign to purchase PCs and notebooks at low-cost for K-12 teachers. Further studies are required to ascertain the results of this campaign.

In this study, the factors which influence the acquisition of ICT competences were categorized into three levels: the personal level, the school level, and the preservice training level. The findings show that the majority of the participants perceived the personal level factors—such as personal interest, possessing a home computer, and family and friends—to be more influential than the school level and preservice training level factors. The results also show that preservice ICT courses were not regarded as important influencing factors in the acquisition of ICT competences. This may be due to the fact that the majority of the participants completed their preservice teacher education programs before the curriculum revision in 1998. The factor most significant in influencing K-12 teachers' ICT competences was personal interest. Another interesting finding is that the factor "ICT resource teacher" was rated as the least influential factor in the acquisition of ICT competences. The purpose of having an "ICT resource teacher" in schools

is to help other teachers learn and integrate ICT. According to Moallem and Micallef (1997) ICT resource teachers were effective in increasing teachers' ICT competences. This statement could be true in Turkey if the innovator teachers could be selected and trained as ICT resource teachers. However, the findings indicated that having "ICT resource teachers" in the current school system may not achieve its intended aim.

## 5. Conclusion and Implications

Ultimately, we hoped to provide both teacher educators and professional developers with specific suggestions for preparing and supporting preservice and in-service teachers in their efforts to become effective ICT users.

This study highlighted that K-12 teachers need to be aware of more advanced ICT applications than the basic ones (like MS Office), and they need to be further educated regarding methods of integrating ICT into educational processes. The integration of in-service ICT training in K-12 schools was found to be ineffective. The evidence suggests that alternative training methods and strategies should be employed instead. New training procedures can be designed according to K-12 teachers' subject area needs, and these procedures should also focus on "teaching with ICT" rather than "basic ICT applications." Instead of having "ICT resource teacher" in schools, "innovators and early adapters" within the teacher population might be identified and encouraged to help other teachers with the ICT integration process. We also suggest that special funds may be created to financially assist every teacher to purchase a personal computer. Regarding future research, further studies utilizing random sampling should be designed to increase the generalizability of these findings. In addition, follow-up interviews or observations would help to generate a fuller understanding of our reported survey results. To be able to explain the findings of the current study more deeply about "ICT resource teacher", further research studies that examine the selection criteria used, their field of expertise, ICT conditions provided for them, their course load need be to conducted.

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The New Educational Review

# Analysis of Turkish Secondary School History Examination Questions According to Cognitive Levels

## Abstract

The main aim of this paper is to analyse and compare the questions asked in history exams at different secondary schools in two cities of Turkey, in terms of the stages of cognitive domain of Bloom's Taxonomy. The study was conducted in eleven high schools (student age: 14–17), which are eight Ordinary Secondary Schools (OSS) and three Anatolian Secondary Schools (ASS), in the cities of Trabzon and Rize. During the 2000–2001, 2001–2002, 2002–2003 and 2003–2004 academic years, 498 written exam questions asked by 22 history teachers in history exams in these schools were collected. 498 written exam questions were analysed in terms of the stages of the cognitive domain of Bloom's Taxonomy. In this research a document analysis method was used. In the light of the data it can be said that the great majority of history questions asked in the Turkish secondary schools are knowledge and comprehension levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. In sum, it can be said that in Turkey students in history courses are generally evaluated by their ability to recall historical dates, names and events, which means that students are not encouraged to develop deeper and more reflective thinking by written history exam questions in secondary schools.

**Key words:** *assessment, teaching of history, history examination questions, Bloom's Taxonomy, Turkey.*

One of the main aims of the teaching of history is to encourage students to become critical thinkers and active problem solvers in the modern world. Because life is getting complicated and people need to have the above qualifications in order to adapt to the modern world and solve the problems which they encounter in daily

life. For this reason, education institutions should transfer higher order thinking skills to students (Yuretich, 2004 cited in Bissell and Lemons, 2006). One way of doing this is to help students to develop higher order thinking and problem solving skills through effective oral and written exam questions in education activities (Chin, 2004). In other words, teachers should have competence in planning and evaluation in teaching and know how to prepare and implement effective questions which help students to gain problem solving and higher order thinking skills.

In educational activities, learning takes place basically in three main domains which are cognitive (develop critical thinking / intellectual) effective (address values, interests, attitudes, opinions) and psychomotor ones (fine and gross motor skills) (http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html; Spafford et al., 1998). The cognitive domain deals with gathering information and putting the acquired knowledge to use (Spafford et al., 1998). In 1956, Benjamin Bloom and his colleagues created the taxonomy of objectives for the cognitive domain, which describes a list of educational objectives. Bloom identified six different kinds of thought process in the cognitive domain, from the lower order cognitive skills (LOCS) to the higher order cognitive skills (HOCS), which are knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Lefrancois, 1997). Teachers have to pay attention to these educational objectives in the classroom activities and assessment process. Especially in the examination process of the cognitive domain, they have to make a link between the objectives of lessons and written exam questions. The objectives of lessons in the cognitive domain can require both lower order cognitive skills (LOCS) and higher order cognitive skills (HOCS) of students. For this reason, teachers have to know how to frame questions for different kinds of thought process in the light of lesson objectives . In other words, Bloom's Taxonomy, which is a road map for teachers, can help them to prepare effective questions in the light of lesson objectives. Furthermore, it is an important tool to assess and evaluate students' learning (Lord and Baviskar, 2007).

Quality assessment is based on the quality of questions (Çepni, 2003) and questions asked in written exams effect the type and level of students' thinking operations. For this reason, to promote students' critical thinking skills, oral and written exams should be based on higher order questions. If exam questions include only lower level questions, students do not show higher order thinking which means that they cannot think critically or creatively. In other words, to educate creative problem solvers and critical thinkers in schools, questions used in exams should encourage students to show higher order thinking.

Higher order thinking skills are an important part of history curriculum in developed countries (http://www.answers.com/topic/historical-thinking; http://

www.ncaction.org.uk/subjects/history/levels.htm). To educate creative and prob-
lem solver students through history courses, students should be required to express
higher order thinking skills activities based on the study of artefacts, documents,
records, illustrations music and painting (Wallece, 2003). In this process, students
should be given opportunities to express higher order thinking skills. However, in
some history lessons, although the objectives of lessons require HOCS of students,
teachers usually use written questions to elicit recalling of previous knowledge and
detailed factual information (Garvey and Krug, 1977; Vella, 2003). However, this
kind of written questions is not suitable for developing HOCS in history lessons.
In sum, effective assessment in history teaching involves asking different written
questions, which ask students to show both lower and higher order cognitive skills
in the light of the objectives of history lessons.

In Turkey, although there is no empirical evidence of the levels of questions
asked in history exams, in the light of the researcher's experience as a teacher
educator, it seems that some history teachers do not have enough knowledge about
the list of six different kinds of thought process in the cognitive domain and are
unable to frame effective written exam questions in the light of the objectives of
history lessons. In other words, the majority of them do not have enough knowl-
edge to prepare written exam questions according to the thought process in the
cognitive domain. When the questions asked in history and other subject course
examinations are studied, it can be seen that they are usually at the low levels of
Bloom's Taxonomy. Because in history courses Turkish history teachers usually
present a large amount of factual historical information by lecture (Demircioglu,
2001). In sum, it can be said that in Turkey students in history courses are generally
evaluated by their ability to recall historical dates, names and events, which means
that students are not encouraged to develop deeper and more reflective thinking
by written exam questions.

Although there is no related research into history exam questions according to
cognitive levels, there is some valuable research regarding examination of physics
teachers' exam questions according to cognitive levels (Karamustafaoglu et al.,
2003; Çepni, 2003). In the light of these studies, it seems that the majority of physics
teachers' exam questions are at the first three levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. It means
that in Turkey, students are not asked higher order questions in science education
and exam questions of physic courses do not foster students' critical or creative
thinking.

## Secondary Education in Turkey

In Turkey, every individual has the right to receive education. All education is under the control and supervision of the state through the National Ministry of Education, which takes all the decisions concerning education. Formal education comprises the institutions of pre-school education, primary education, secondary education and higher education. Secondary education, which includes the entire general, vocational, and technical institutions of education, namely secondary school education, comprises a minimum of 4 years of schooling. Students are educated in six kinds of schools, which are Ordinary Secondary Schools, Anatolia Secondary Schools, Science Secondary Schools, the Anatolia Fine Arts, Teachers Secondary Schools, Evening Secondary Schools and Private Secondary Schools, in general secondary education. Besides this, within the scope of the vocational-technical secondary education, there are four kinds of schools, namely Technical Secondary Schools for Girls and Boys, Trade and Tourism Secondary Schools and Secondary Schools for Religious Education. The students who complete primary education can enrol for the secondary education institutions.

### Purpose:
The purpose of this study was to analyze the secondary school history exam questions from the perspective of the cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

### Method:
In this research a document analysis method was used. The term of document refers to a wide range of written and physical materials (Merriam, 1988). One of the main advantages of documentary research is stability (Merriam, 1988). In educational research, this method also gives opportunities for researchers to examine educational files and records, which are valuable sources of data (Johonson, 1984 cited in Bell, 1997). In this research, secondary school history exam questions were analysed as a document.

The research was conducted in eleven secondary schools (student age: 14–17), which are eight Ordinary Secondary Schools (OSS) and three Anatolian Secondary Schools (ASS), in the cities of Trabzon and Rize. Those two provinces are in the same region, namely the Black Sea Region, in the North of Turkey. Trabzon, which is the second biggest city in the Black Sea Region, has a university, a harbour and an airport. The population of the city is over 200,000 and the level of income is above average in Turkey. Rize, a small town in Turkey, is located in the East part

of the Black Sea Region. Its population is around 80,000 and the level of income is medium in Turkey. Those two cities have all kinds of secondary schools and the success rate of these two cities in the university entrance education is below average, in comparison with the other cities in Turkey (Karamustaafoğlu et al., 2003).

In Turkey, students that have completed primary education, can register for Ordinary Secondary Schools, namely grammar schools, without any entrance examinations. Vocational and Commercial Secondary Schools offer education concerning knowledge, skills and job habit needed for a profession. The students who want to have a profession without university education enrol for this kind of schools. Anatolian Secondary Schools, which accept students a on the basis of nation-wide selection examination, have a special place in secondary education in terms of the quality of education. In Turkey, almost every city has one or two Anatolian Secondary Schools.

During the 2000–2001, 2001–2002, 2002–2003 and 2003–2004 academic years, 498 written exam questions asked by 22 secondary school history teachers in these schools in eight academic terms were collected. 498 written exam questions were analysed in terms of the stages of the cognitive domain of Bloom's Taxonomy. SPSS (Statistical Program for Social Science) software was used for the analysis of the questions. During the analysis of the questions, distribution and frequency of questions were found.

**Results:**

Based on the data it can be said that the great majority of history questions asked in eleven secondary schools are lower order according to the cognitive domain. Table 1 indicates the distribution of 498 history exam questions in terms of the school type and cognitive level. According to Table 1, only 9.03% of the history questions were at the higher levels of cognitive domain (analysis and evaluation levels). On the other hand, 90.97% of the questions asked in history exams in Turkish secondary schools were at the lower levels of cognitive domain: 69.07% at the knowledge and 21.88% at the comprehension levels. In the light of these results, it can be said that in history courses secondary school students were required to memorize facts such as names, dates and events. These results are in line with the similar research regarding physics exam questions carried out by Karamustafaoglu et al. (2003), Cepni (2003) and Tsaparlis (1997 cited in Çepni, 2003).

When the questions asked in history examinations in eleven Turkish secondary schools were examined in terms of school types it could be seen that the great majority of the questions at OSS were at the knowledge (72%) and comprehension

(20.19%) levels. Besides this, the rate of the questions devoted to the higher order thinking skills was only 7.73% (Analysis). On the other hand, the majority of the questions asked at ASS history examinations were also at a low level. 85.56% of the questions were at the knowledge and comprehension levels. In addition to this, the rate of the questions asking students to show higher order thinking skills was only 9.03% (analysis and evaluation levels), which reveals that there were more analysis and evaluation level questions asked at ASS as compared with OSS.

**Table 1:  Distribution of written exam questions according to school type and cognitive level**

| School Types | OSS | | ASS | | TOTAL | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Questions Level | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| Knowledge | 289 | 72 | 55 | 56.7 | 344 | 69.07 |
| Comprehension | 81 | 20.1 | 28 | 28.8 | 109 | 21.8 |
| Application | – | 0.0 | – | 0.0 | – | 0.0 |
| Analysis | 31 | 7.7 | 12 | 12.3 | 43 | 8.6 |
| Synthesis | – | 0.0 | – | 0.0 | – | |
| Evaluation | – | 0.0 | 2 | 2.06 | 2 | 0.40 |
| TOTAL | 401 | | 97 | | 498 | |

**Table 2:  Distribution of the questions analysed according to school type and city**

| Question Level | TRABZON | | | | RİZE | | | | TOTAL | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | OSS | | ASS | | OSS | | ASS | | Trabzon | | Rize | |
| | F | % | f | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | f | % |
| Knowledge | 155 | 72.0 | 31 | 58.40 | 134 | 72.0 | 24 | 54.5 | 186 | 69.4 | 158 | 68.6 |
| Comprehension | 43 | 20.0 | 13 | 24.50 | 38 | 20.4 | 15 | 34.0 | 56 | 20.8 | 53 | 23.0 |
| Application | – | 0.0 | – | 0.00 | – | 0.0 | – | 0.0 | – | 0.0 | – | 0.0 |
| Analysis | 17 | 7.9 | 7 | 13.20 | 14 | 7.5 | 5 | 11.3 | 24 | 8.9 | 19 | 8.2 |
| Synthesis | – | 0.0 | – | 0.00 | – | 0.0 | – | 0.0 | – | 0.0 | – | 0.0 |
| Evaluation | – | 0.0 | 2 | 3.77 | – | 0.0 | – | 0.0 | 2 | 0.7 | – | 0.0 |
| TOTAL | 215 | | 53 | | 186 | | 44 | | 268 | | 230 | |

Table 2 reveals the distribution of 498 questions according to school type and city. As can be seen from Table 2, the questions asked in history lessons in both cities were at the low levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. In the secondary schools of

both cities, the great majority of history questions were at the knowledge and comprehension levels. Only Trabzon ASS's questions included evaluation level questions.

To sum up, it can be said that in Turkey students in history courses are generally evaluated by their ability to recall historical dates, names and events, which means that students are not encouraged to develop deeper and more reflective thinking by written history exam questions in secondary schools.

## Conclusion and recommendations

The data indicate that the great majority of history questions asked in the Turkish secondary schools were at knowledge and comprehension levels which do not foster students' creativity, critical thinking skills and higher order thinking. It means that Turkish secondary school students are required to show lower order thinking skills through written history exams. Besides this, in the light of the history examination questions it can be said that in history courses students are required to memorise historical dates, names and events. These results are in line with some other studies regarding the teaching of history in Turkey (Ozbaran, 1998 and Demircioglu, 2005). Research also reveals that questions requiring analysis, synthesis and evaluation are rarely asked in history exams and this situation has a negative effect on students' future intellectual development in a democratic society. Furthermore, these results are in line with the general belief in Turkey that secondary school students can be easily successful in history lessons through memorising facts, names and dates. This study also shows that Turkish secondary school students are accepted successful by answering questions which are at knowledge and comprehension levels, although some objectives of history lessons require showing HOCS.

The data also shows that there are no big differences between the questions asked at history exams in OSS and ASS. This is a surprising result because ASS which do not accept all students and require passing a national entrance exam, are expected to offer higher quality than OSS. Besides this, teachers of ASS are well-educated and selected by the Ministry of National Education in the light of some criteria. The research results indicate that history education is carried out in a traditional way in both OSS and ASS and the great majority of written exam questions of both schools do not measure higher order cognitive skills.

In sum, the questions examined in this research indicate that history examinations questions are not suitable to measure HOCS. Because the great majority of the questions requires LOCS and students cannot develop problem solving and

systematic thinking skills, which are crucial in a democratic society, in history lessons. These results are in harmony with the general belief in Turkey that the majority of secondary school students are not given an adequate education on how to use knowledge of history in their daily life and cannot make connections with social events taking place in their society. For this reason, in the eyes of some students, history lessons are useless, dull and boring (Ozbaran, 1998 and Demircioglu, 2005).

In the light of the data, the following recommendations can be made:

- History teachers should be taught how to prepare written exam questions to measure higher order thinking skills through in-service education.
- History teachers should be required to ask questions which foster higher order thinking skills.
- History student teachers should be taught how to prepare questions which are at different levels of cognitive domain during their university-based studies.
- History teachers should be taught how to prepare questions which are at different levels of cognitive domain through in-service training.
- History teachers should be taught that the teaching of history is not only teaching facts, dates, and names but also teaching how to use historical knowledge to gain systematic thinking and problem solving skills.
- Universities should encourage their history-teacher educators to undertake research into effective questioning in the teaching of history and results of these studies should be shared by history teachers.
- Large scale research regarding evaluation of history exam questions should be carried out and the results of these studies should be used to improve written exam questions in the teaching of history.

## Appendix: Examples and analysis of questions

During the analysis of the questions, the following criteria were used.

1 – **Knowledge Level:** Students are asked to recall or recognise what they have learned at the knowledge level.

**Objective:** To be able to name Sultans of the Ottoman Empire.

**Question:** Can you write the name of the first Sultan of the Ottoman Empire?

2 – **Comprehension Level:** Students are asked to comprehend, interpret and translate what they have learned at the comprehension level.

**Objective**: To be able to describe the Ottoman Culture.

**Question:** Can you describe the culture of the Magnificent Suleyman Era in a paragraph?

3 – **Application Level:** Students are asked to use what they have learned previously to complete a problem or task that has a single or best answer.

**Objective:** To be able to use information about the Culture of Anatolia in studying the Ottoman Culture.

**Question:** Can you write how the Culture of Anatolia is similar to and different from the Ottoman Culture?

4 – **Analysis Level:** Students are asked to distinguish, separate or classify evidence, an idea, a question or structure of a statement.

**Objective**: To be able to identify the main elements of the Ottoman Culture

**Question:** Can you write the main elements of the Ottoman culture?

5 – **Synthesis Level:** Students are asked to integrate and combine ideas into a new proposal or plan.

**Objective**: To be able to propose a scheme to make history lessons concerning the Ottoman Empire interesting and beneficial for secondary school students.

**Question**: Can you develop a scheme in order to make history lessons more interesting?

6 – **Evaluation Level:** Students are asked to judge an event or the worth of some idea or product based on the standards or criteria.

**Objective**: To be able to evaluate the quality of the education system in the Ottoman Empire.

**Question**: Can you evaluate the quality of primary education in the Ottoman Education system during the 19th century?

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# A New E-learning Strategy for Cognition
# of the Real World in Teaching and Learning Science

## Abstract

Computer supported inquiry based learning environments are developing along the lines of integrated learning and combining multiple approaches; but till now, they have rarely included virtual and remote experimental environments to form a unified body of information and knowledge in both collaborative and constructivist way.

With progress in information technologies, the chance to handle real objects by application of remote and virtual experiments across the Internet has emerged. This paper describes how a scientifically exact and problem-solving-oriented remote and virtual science experimental environment might help to build a new strategy for science education. The main features of the new strategy are (1) the observations and control of real world phenomena, possibly materialized in data, their processing and evaluation, (2) verification of hypotheses combined with the development of critical thinking, supported by (3) sophisticated relevant information search, classification and storing tools and (4) collaborative environment, supporting argumentative writing and teamwork, public presentations and defense of achieved results, all either in real presence, in telepresence or in combination of both. Only then real understanding of generalized science laws and their consequences can be developed.

This science learning and teaching environment (called ROL – Remote and Open Laboratory), has been developed and used by Charles University in Prague since 1996, offered to science students in both formal and informal learning, and also to science teachers within their professional development studies, since 2003.

**Key words:** *inquiry based learning, remote and virtual technologies, science education, remote and open laboratory, e-lab*

# 1. Background

### Contemporary problems in Science Education – the needs

Contemporary problems in science education are closely connected with a general teaching and learning paradigm shift, which has become necessary in the few last years as a result of the reality of the globalized world together with the information revolution and ongoing knowledge society needs.

According to Derrick (2002), some general features can be recognised in this movement, and all of them should be reflected in teaching and learning science and also in any new science e-learning strategy.

- A focus on uncertain (not exactly defined) situations
- Much of the academic environment today, presents students with ready-made problems, but reality is rarely that clearly defined. Today's learners and teachers have to be more familiar and comfortable with **uncertain situations**.
- A focus on conceptual understanding
- Conceptual understanding is the ability to apply knowledge across a variety of instances or circumstances. Several strategies can be used to teach and assess concepts, e.g., inquiry, exposition, analogies, mnemonics, imagery, concept maps, and concept questions.
- Uses a holistic, as opposed to discrete, approach
- Much of the education and learning environment today is still divided into rigid academic disciplines, focused on discrete units of research. However, the **holistic understanding** of systems thinking and **inter-disciplinary** research approaches are seen as critical to achieving a more comprehensive understanding of the complex reality currently facing the world system.
- Team work and virtual teams around the world

There are many arguments that collaborative learning (also computer-supported or mediated) enhances team performance through tools for communicating each person's ideas, structuring group dialogue and decision making, recording the rationales for choices, and facilitating collective activities."[1] Closely related to this point is the need for enhanced virtual and networked activity.

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[1] Qin, Johnson, Johnson (1995) studied the impacts of cooperative and competitive efforts on problem solving. They compared 46 studies, published between 1929 and 1993, and examined them according to the type of problem solving measured: linguistic (solved through written and oral language), nonlinguistic (solved through symbols, maths, motor activities, actions), well-defined (having clearly defined operations and solutions), and ill-defined (lacking clear definitions, operations, and solutions). Members of co-operative teams outperformed individuals competing with each other on all 4 types of problem solving (effect sizes = 0.37, 0.72, 0.52,

- Blurring the difference between mental and physical labour

The global system of production and distribution is based upon the blurring of the distinctions between mental and physical labour and the increase in the application of knowledge to the production process itself (Derrick, 2002). This change is so significant that it represents a fundamental shift for much of the world, and it is necessary to respect it in underlying teaching and learning strategies.

### Contemporary problems in science teaching – the reality

The general teaching and learning paradigm shift mentioned above is not yet reflected in contemporary teaching methods in many traditional teaching and learning environments.

Over the past couple of decades, science education researchers have studied the effectiveness of existing teaching and learning practices: conceptual understanding, transfer of information and ideas, beliefs about science and problem solving in science. The definitive conclusion is that no matter what the quality of the teacher, typical students in a traditionally taught course are learning mechanically, memorizing facts and recipes for problem solving, but not gaining a true understanding. In spite of the best efforts of teachers, students often consider science boring and irrelevant to the world around them.

### The role of cognition of real world phenomena in science

There is no doubt that lab-based courses in particular play an important role in scientific education and mainly in the cognition of the real world.

Nersessian [1991] goes so far as to claim that "hands-on experience is at the heart of science learning" and Clough [2002] declares that laboratory experiments "make science come alive." Lab courses have a strong impact on students' learning outcomes, according to Magin et al. (2000). The role of labs in sciences is well described in the very instructive and still valid document of the American Association of Physics Teachers (1977), formulating five goals that the physics laboratory should achieve.[2]

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0.60, respectively). These results held for individuals of all ages. The superiority of co-operation, however, was greater on nonlinguistic than on linguistic problems.

[2] 1. The Art of Experimentation: The introductory laboratory should engage each student in significant experiences with experimental processes, including some experience designing investigation. 2. Experimental and Analytical Skills: The laboratory should help the student develop a broad array of basic skills and tools of experimental physics and data analysis. 3. Conceptual Learning: The laboratory should help students master basic physics concepts. The use of computers with laboratory interfaces allows real-time recording and graphing of

## 2. E-labs – general issues

At the present time, information and communication technologies have invaded science education in all directions. They have undoubtedly changed the laboratory "landscape".

The nature and practices of laboratories have been changed dramatically by the new technology-intensive automation:

- simulated labs (also called virtual labs),
- remote labs, and
- computer mediated hands-on labs as an alternative for conventional hands-on labs, generally called e-labs.

The present state of art is characterised as reaching the level of the quantitative increase of parameters that can bring about very deep qualitative changes. In the very recent issue of European Journal of Physics, devoted to Student undergraduate laboratory and project work, Schumacher (2007) brings examples of the invasion of computers in contemporary laboratory work such as project labs, modelling tools, interactive screen experiments, remotely controlled labs, etc. It is plausible to adopt the statement that these kinds of e-labs will be the typical learning environment for physics students in the future.

### Educational issues of e-labs

Although researchers still discuss each type of e-labs from different perspectives, the relative effectiveness of the new laboratories compared to traditional hands-on ("recipe based") labs seems to be undoubted.

The following aspects are often discussed:

- Design skills
- Conceptual understanding
- Social skills (including team work and networking)

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quantities. The qualitative use of real-time graphing in microcomputer-based laboratories (MBL) has increased interest in using the laboratory to enhance conceptual understanding. The combination of two factors — laboratory course design based on an understanding of the preconceptions that students bring to the study of physics from their past experience, and the continuing development of MBL and other laboratory technology — has the potential to significantly improve the effectiveness of laboratory instruction. 4. Understanding the Basis of Knowledge in Physics: The laboratory should help students understand the role of direct observation in physics and distinguish between inferences based on theory and the outcomes of experiments. 5. Developing Collaborative Learning Skills: The laboratory should help students develop collaborative learning skills that are vital to success in many lifelong endeavours.

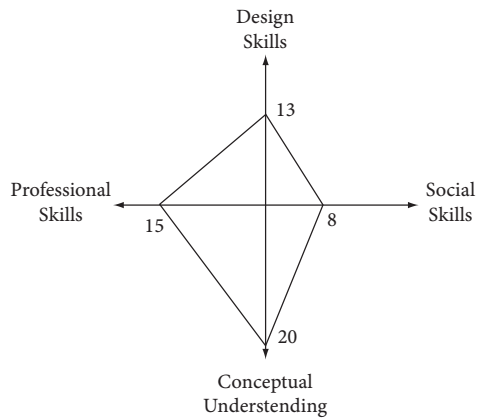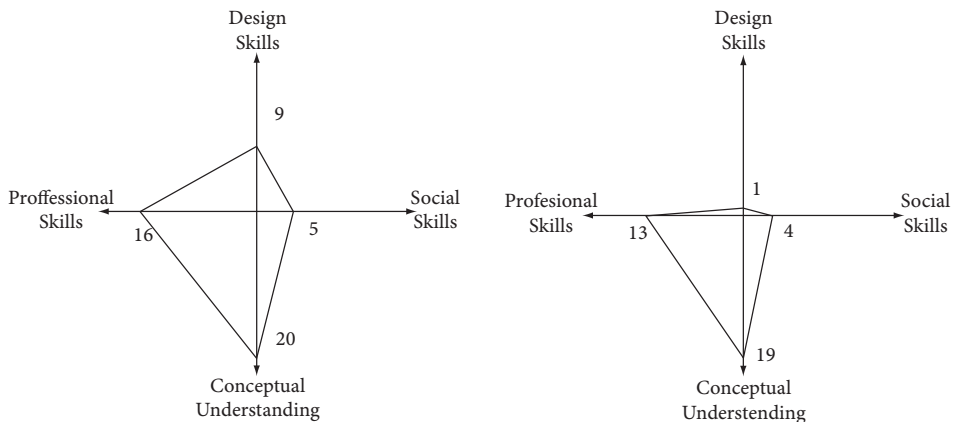Fig.1  Educational goals of hands-on labs (Ma, Nickerson, 2006)



Fig.2  Educational goals of virtual labs (left), Educational goals
of remote labs (right), ( Ma, Nickerson, 2006)

- Professional skills

Although there is a lack of criteria for judging and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the three new types of labs: computer mediated hands-on, virtual and remote labs, the results of the comparative literature study (Ma, Nickerson, 2006), including more than 60 research studies, are very instructive.

### Economic issues

As a backdrop for these phenomenological issues, there is a set of economic issues.

Traditional hands-on labs put a high demand on space, instructor time, expensive apparatus and experimental infrastructure, often in a number of identical lab stations, which can be little used for other purposes. All of these aspects are subject to rising costs. Remote and virtual laboratories may provide a way to share specialized skills and resources (also with research institutions) and thus to reduce overall costs and enrich the learning experience.

### Psychological issues and the problem of "presence"

Sheridan (1992) identified three types of presence: physical presence, telepresence, and virtual presence. Physical presence is associated with real labs and understood as "physically being there."

Telepresence is "feeling like you are actually there at the remote site of operation," and virtual presence is "feeling like you are present in the environment generated by the computer". The author argued that by suspending disbelief, we can experience presence in a virtual environment. Noel and Hunter (2000) claimed that the critical issue in designing virtual environments is to create a psychologically real setting rather than to recreate the entire physical reality. In our strategy we offer students the combination of all the three kinds of presence identified by Sheridan.

## 3. New e-learning strategy in science education

The motivation and inspiration for this new e-learning strategy in science education came from our own research work on remote and open laboratories (ROL project) (Lustigova, Zelenda, 1996), introducing the very early stage of virtual presence through a remote labs potential for blended learning in Science[3], then

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[3] Appreciated as the Best Science Software Project by Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education during the 12 th conference in Orlando, Florida, USA.2001.

from the recent paper of Wieman (2006) and Wieman, Perkins (2005), supporting and calling for the change in the educational technology, seeing the remedy at hand in the existence of simulations, and also from Thomsen and his co-workers (2005), who present the new approach called e-LTR (eLearning, eTeaching, eResearch) using the remote experiments (RLC). They also introduce eResearch, based on the existing e-laboratories, composed of the remote Internet-mediated experiments, enabled to fill the link (missing till recently) to e-Learning.

This new e-learning strategy in science education is actually copied from the method that sciences use in their cognitive work. It is based on the observations of phenomena in the real world, together with the processing and interpretation of ensuing data and their presentation, and the effective search for relevant information and effective ways of classification and storing. Teachers are not bound by strict rules of the teaching unit; some unveiled problems are proposed to students for their own independent and project work.

The learning process itself is based on the active participation of students, whose involvement is strengthened by dynamic simulations of the real phenomena, co-operative teamwork (both real and virtual), public presentations and the defense of achieved results, all either in real presence or in telepresence.

## 4.  ROL components and first experience

### Remote observation and data collection

This set of modules teaches basic concepts in remote sensing. Learners are shown how this characteristics of system and sensors are used, and how they affect the amount and quality of data collected. A sampling of ways to use the data for activities such as weather forecasting and scientific research are demonstrated. At the completion of each module, learners are given opportunities to apply what they have learned to actual data collected by MFF researchers.

Learners start from the simplest observations (weather observations – temperature, air pressure, wind speed and direction, sunshine, etc., cf. Fig.3) and continue to more and more sophisticated data acquisition and research design.

### Hands-on remote labs and process control

The oldest, most popular and the most fun part of this blended learning environment is the "hands-on" remote laboratory, which allows learners to operate equipment such as simple robots, mechatronic systems, programmable logic controllers and wet process control systems over the Internet. It includes detailed

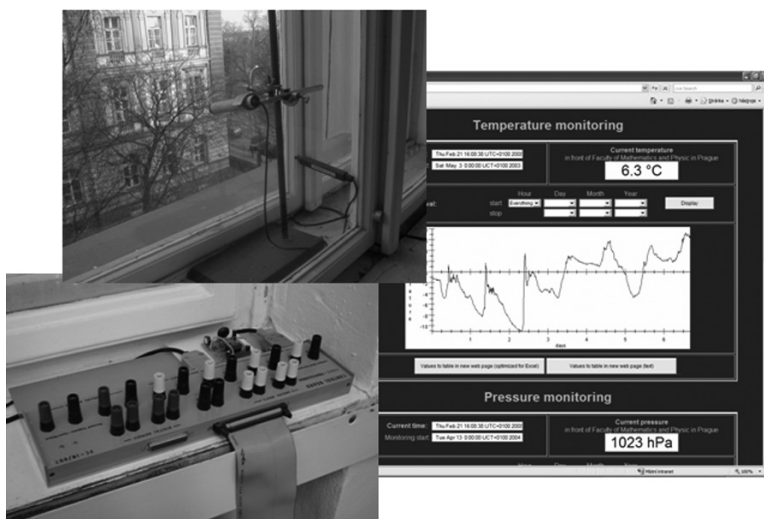**Fig. 3  Remote observation – students' meteorological station**



**Fig. 4  Remote process controlling**

expert instruction, video and audio feedback (cf. Fig.1) and evaluation. Each component takes students through a complete, progressive learning system that first teaches through simulation, and then allows interaction through real-time remote lab operation.

### E – simulations (virtual labs)

Virtual lab tools offer a large variety of e-simulations and models, including Java applets, Flash visualization and/or different kinds of computer mediated mathematical models. Applets were primarily developed to visualize the phenomena and help to understand in a graphic way. They are not primarily focused on data providing, although some of the applet creators enable the drawing out of the full data set. That is why the vast majority of virtual laboratories, spread all over the "web world", do not provide the data output or input we need in science for the comparison of real experiments and models. The new and the most far-sighted branch of applets or models, offered by the Remote and Open Lab, is connected to the real experimental setup (even physically) and thus enables the import of real measured data as well as their simulation.

**Fig.5 Real remote data collection and process controlling in connection with e-simulation and modelling**
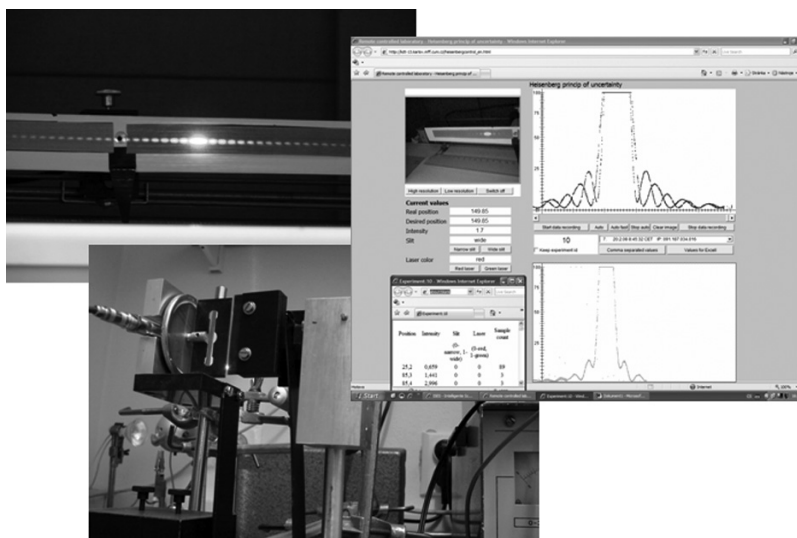
### E-simulation in connection to real data acquisition and process controlling

This sophisticated and complex approach enables students to observe specific and rare phenomena (earthquakes for example) without losing the sense of being in a place, to manipulate remotely dangerous objects and chemicals in a very safe way, and to accomplish complicated measurement and data acquisition at a high level without being lost in technical problems and setups; and thus to focus on conceptual understanding through different methodological approaches (e.g., social constructivism – virtual team discussion and co-operation tools, consultancy services, or individual inquiry– e.g. real data and mathematical simulation results comparison).

As an example of what is mentioned above, we propose the Heisenberg uncertainty principle experiment, which experimental setup enables telepresence through computer mediated mechanical manipulation with real objects (e.g. laser, aperture), computer-mediated set up of the experiment (frequency of the light, parameters of the aperture ) and through visual observation of the observed phenomena (web camera). It also enables computer aided data acquisition (pure data and visualized data – graph), together with the possibility for immediate comparison of the real data and simulated results.

### E – worksheets for the teamwork

The new e-learning strategy is part of interactive teaching and learning, based on the observation of the real world phenomena by the real E-experiment and E-simulations, and includes also e-teaching and learning tools and interactive E-worksheets for team work, and E-manuals and instructions providing information and theoretical background for the understanding and quantification of observed phenomena.

The E-worksheets present the theory, offering exercises and pre-solved problems, glossaries for quick orientation in the theory covered, and multiple-choice tests with immediate evaluation of the acquired knowledge, etc.

## 5. Conclusions

### Students:

As part of the development we are constantly evaluating it and are including student feedback into its improvements. We discuss students' reactions to this new way of gaining practical experience and understanding. Generally, students'

responses are positive and are improving over the years as the technology becomes more available and students get more experienced in using it. Although students are quite often aware of the limitations of the remote and open laboratories they also value their advantages: 1) at any time from any place, 2) remote access, 3) simple and comfortable operating and control (mentioned mainly by girls) and safety. From the social and psychological point of view they appreciate mostly virtual consultancy support and the potential for building virtual teams (to lose the feeling of the loneliness in the lab). From an educational point of view it is the immediate comparison of real (measured) and simulated data, which is appreciated the most.

**Faculty:**

Although remote and open laboratory use is frequently put forward as a new way of working, the management of complexity, uncertainty, and communication in science education and research, and integrating selected parts of ROL – the remote data acquisition, data processing and process control theme across the curriculum – is not a completely seamless process. That is why the Remote and Open Laboratory is offered to students in a parallel way to traditional labs. Mostly students with part or full time jobs, distance students, in-service teachers and both faculty members and students involved in professional training and lifelong learning use these facilities. Some numbers are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Total Number of completed experiments data downloads
– selected examples (since February 2004 till February 2008)

| Water level control | Meteorology station | Electro-magnetic induction | Natural x driven oscillations | Solar energy conversion | Diffraction on micro-objects | Σ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3573 | 2401 | 2748 | 1282 | 1515 | 862 | 12 381 |

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# Teachers' Conventional and Unconventional Opinions on the Slovak Language Coursebooks

## Abstract

The aim of this paper is to introduce the evaluation of Slovak language course books for the 7th grade of primary schools based on a questionnaire about the course books.

**Key words:** *coursebooks, Slovak language, teachers, evaluation, questionnaire survey research*

## 1. Slovak language course books

School coursebooks consist of didactically processed content that is defined by teaching plans and that is the basic means of implementation of the process of education. School books are used by pupils of the 1st-9th grades of primary schools and the 1st-4th years of secondary schools. Eight-year grammar schools have a special position in the structure of Slovak primary and secondary school system. They are actually parallel to the 5th-9th grade of primary schools and the 1st-4th years of secondary schools.

In the academic year 2003/2004 teachers at primary school could choose for the first time to teach from two coursebooks of Slovak language – one written by Eva Tibenská et al. and the other written by J. Krajčovičová. Both coursebooks reflect the document *New concept of teaching the Slovak language at primary schools*, a concept that promotes the communicative and cognitive principle in teaching a language. The creation of the new concept is related to the preceding research that showed that in the past pupils had studied the Slovak language thoroughly,

however, they were often unable to apply different language phenomena in their social communication.

Coursebooks of the Slovak language (as well as special textbooks with linguistic tasks and exercises) of both groups of authors stem from valid pedagogical documents approved by the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic; i.e. from the teaching plans and from educational standards.

Both coursebooks represent a high level and the texts that they work with are processed in a very unconventional way.

## 2. Questionnaire survey research

The aim of our research was to find out by means of a questionnaire that consisted of 26 research questions how the teachers view the new Slovak language coursebooks for the 7th grade and how they use them. In 6 questions in the questionnaire the teachers could choose from proposed answers, in the remaining 20 questions they were supposed to formulate their answers based on their teaching experience.

The research was conducted by M. Kubinská. Within 6 months she sent out 116 questionnaires by mail and e-mail to primary schools in different regions of Slovakia. 51 respondents replied and based on these responses the co-author of this paper made an analysis and synthesis of her findings and presented them in a thesis called *Comparative linguistic and didactic analysis of the contemporary Slovak language coursebooks for the 7th grade of primary schools.* 49 of the respondents were women, 2 of them were men; the age of the respondents was from 23–64. As for their teaching experience, 12 teachers had been teaching for under 10 years, 39 of them had been teaching for over 10 years. All of the teachers knew both course books and they had used both of them.

We present the research findings in a concentrated form and show the responses to several questions in blocks.

### 2.1. Responses to questions related to general opinions on the coursebooks, comparison of their structure and the respondents' preferences

- Evaluations of the coursebook by E. Tibenská et al.: the coursebook has a more complicated structure than Krajčovičová's coursebook; there is too much text and too many exercises and tasks, it is difficult to orientate in it, the division into pages is not clear, titles of different chapters and tasks are

too childish and not relevant for the 7th grade pupils, the topics change too quickly, there are not enough exercises for revision, application exercises are too difficult, some exercises are formulated in an incomprehensive way, and the whole coursebook is oriented on rather smarter pupils.

- Evaluations of the coursebook by J. Krajčovičová et al.: the coursebook is more transparent as for its structure, it is more systematic (and the students of primary school need system a lot), it is more accessible and more comprehensive, the tasks and exercises are structured in a better way, the elements of the teaching content are clearly identified in the text, the definitions are more clear, the content is better formulated, the tasks are better related to the theoretical content, individual linguistic levels are processed more clearly, and composition as an integrated part of the Slovak language is well connected with the theoretical content and grammar. The coursebook is more interesting from the perspective of pupils.

Based on the verbal evaluation we provide the percentage evaluation of the coursebooks:

### Structure

96.07% of the teachers prefer Krajčovičová's course book; 11.76% Tibenská's course book. 3.93% of the teachers could not or did not evaluate the structure of Krajčovičová's course book. 4.70% of the teachers consider Tibenská's course book demanding and 23.54% cannot evaluate the structure of the coursebooks.

### Full satisfaction with the structure of the coursebooks

100% of the respondents like the structure of the course book by Krajčovičová et al. as it is simple, systematic and easy. 7.85% of the teachers are rather satisfied with the structure of Tibenská's coursebook and 92.15% are not satisfied with its structure.

### First partial conclusion

Based on our own experience, we can confirm the research findings about the more demanding composition and content of Tibenská's course book written by university teachers. The titles of different chapters are metaphorical, the pages are full of texts, tasks and interpretations and many exceptions. The stiffness of pages can cause problems with orientation in the text and make its users think that there is no system in the coursebook or that the structure is too complicated. The coursebook is more suitable for students that are above the standard. However, due to the existence of eight-year grammar schools the number of extraordinary

students at standard schools is decreasing and thus most of the pupils might find the coursebook too difficult. The coursebook by Krajčovičová et al. is more clear in presenting its content and in formulating tasks for pupils and thus it is more preferable than Tibenská's coursebook.

## 2.2. The following questions were related to the experience of both teachers and students with using both coursebooks.

We asked the respondents *how they liked working with the coursebooks.* 96.07% of the teachers stated that the pupils preferred the coursebook by Krajčovičová; 3.93% stated that that they were more successful when using the book by Tibenská.

We also asked *which coursebook the pupils preferred.* 92.15% of the teachers stated that the pupils prefer the book by Krajčovičová, 3.925% stated that they prefer working with the book by Tibenská and 3.925% of the teachers could not answer the question.

### Second partial conclusion

The research finding that both teachers and pupils prefer the book by Krajčovičová et al. can be analyzed from two points of view. The first perspective – Tibenská's course book is more difficult to prepare from and thus the teachers prefer Krajčovičová's book. The second perspective – the choice of a coursebook is determined not only by teacher's maturity but also by mental abilities of the pupils. Since many gifted students are leaving for eight-year grammar schools, the teachers choose Krajčovičová's book, which is easier. We think the second reason stems from present educational practice and thus consider it more relevant.

## 2.3. Another set of questions was focused on the experience of teachers with formulation of tasks and exercises and with the revision of the content they had already covered

We asked the respondents *how they evaluated the formulation of tasks in the two course books.* 78.43% of the teachers stated that the formulation of tasks is clearer and simpler in Krajčovičová's book; 78.43% stated that the formulation of tasks is more complicated in Tibenská's book. 21.57% of the teachers stated that they liked the formulation of tasks in both course books.

We also asked *which of the books was easier for comprehension for pupils without the help of their teacher.* 92.15% of the teachers stated that the pupils could comprehend more easily the tasks from Krajčovičová's book and only 7.85% of the teachers stated that the pupils could better understand the tasks in Tibenská's coursebook.

Another question was *how many exercises pupils could accomplish during one lesson.* 96.06% of the teachers stated that pupils usually had no time left to work on tasks in Tibenská's coursebook, 3.93% can do it. As for Krajčovičová's book, 58.82% of the teachers state that their pupils could work on the tasks on the lesson and 41.18% of the teachers state that pupils did not have time to work on the tasks even in Krajčovičová's book.

We also asked the teachers *whether the new coursebooks provided enough space for the revision of the material previously covered.* In case of Tibenská's coursebook 56.86% of the teachers stated that the coursebook did not provide enough space for revision, in case of Krajčovičová's coursebook it was 50.97%. The remaining teachers thought that the new coursebooks provide enough space for repetition – i.e. 43.14% of teachers reviewing Tibenská's book and 49.03% reviewing Krajčovičová's book.

### Third partial conclusion

The formulation of tasks and exercises and the difficulty of their solving are determined by the general concept of course books which can be either standard or demanding to fulfill. The exercises in Krajčovičová's coursebook are formulated more adequately and thus the course book is more relevant for the needs of the global practice; it is more suitable for the majority of teachers and students. Tibenská's coursebook is more demanding from the perspective of the possibilities of the 7th grade students. Most of the teachers agreed on the fact that none of the coursebooks provided enough space for revision. It would be interesting to compare the opinions of teachers teaching at standard schools and those teaching at eight-year grammar schools. In comparison with standard schools with standard pupils, eight-year grammar schools usually work with the more talented students who leave standard primary school after completing its first level. It would be also interesting to expand our research by differentiating between teachers' opinions based on the length of their teaching experience.

## 2.4.  Another set of questions focused on the pupils' activity and creativity during the lesson on which they worked on the analyzed exercises

We asked the teachers *whether they observed differences in the activity of the pupils when working with the new coursebooks.* 58.82% of the teachers stated that the pupils were more active when working with Krajčovičová's book in comparison with Tibenská's book. 31.37% of the teachers stated that they saw no difference in the activity of the pupils. 1.96% could not tell the difference in the activity of the pupils when working with the two coursebooks.

We also asked *what the teachers thought about the quantity and quality of the creative tasks in the coursebooks*. 37.25% of the teachers think that the creative tasks in Krajčovičová's book are more interesting than the tasks in Tibenská's book. There are less creative tasks in Krajčovičová's book, however, they are sufficient and the pupils have more time for their solving. On the other hand, 15.68% of the teachers think that the creative tasks in Tibenská's book are more interesting. The coursebook is full of them, however, they sometimes get lost in the number of the sections. 47.07% of the teachers stated that the creative tasks in both books were approximately on the same level.

We also asked about the *types of exercises that the teachers prefer*. 45.10% of the teachers stated that they use more convergent exercises, e.g. when they want to practise grammar while they only offer one right answer. 35.30% of the teachers use both convergent and divergent types of exercises. 19.60% of the teachers use more divergent types of exercises because they offer more solutions and they are focused on practising communicative and argumentation skills and thus they develop creativity.

### Fourth partial conclusion

The general concept of a coursebook is also reflected in the adequacy of the difficulty of the tasks due to the possibilities of the education practice. The level of difficulty also determines pupils' activity. Many teachers stated that the pupils were more active when working with Krajčovičová's book. In comparison with Tibenská's book, the number and quality of creative tasks is more adequate in Krajčovičová's book.

### 2.5. The last set of questions focused on findings about what teachers like and do not like about the new coursebooks or what they would add/leave out.

We asked the teachers *what they liked/disliked about the new Slovak language coursebooks*.

- Things that they *like:* in Krajčovičová's book they particularly like its transparency, use of innovational methods, holistic and comprehensive approach, summaries of facts on the book's cover, range of exercises focused on practising different linguistic phenomena, theorems in graphically highlighted boxes, spiral method of teaching new subjects/topics, possibility of complementing the exercises with tasks form the textbook.
- Things they *do not like*: the teachers criticize the small space for creativity of teachers and students, too many parts dealing with composition and cumula-

tion of some composition topics, not adequate connection between grammar and composition. In Tibenská's book they criticize too many exceptions in grammar that the pupils find confusing, the length of some excerpts (they are often too long and not particularly related to the grammar of the unit), difficult dictations, the use of Latin terms and the book's format and bonding.

We also asked *what they would add to the new coursebooks or what they would leave out*.

- Things they would *add*: the teachers would add "fun stuff", e.g. crosswords, fill-ins, etc. that would make the lesson more attractive and that would expand the pupils' vocabulary; they would also appreciate more object lessons, examples of complete compositions so that the pupils would better understand the extent and composition; more exercises focused on orthography, more tests for self-correction, tests after each new lesson, better connection with literature (especially in Krajčovičová's book), better relatedness of the lessons with real life – focus on vocabulary and communication, focus on the target culture (while young people today use vulgar language), they would appreciate focus on basic topics rather than on exceptions that are not prevalent in written and spoken language and more exercises in the form of questions and answers.

The teachers would also appreciate it if the coursebooks also included work sheets with easier tasks for pupils with learning defects so that they would not feel inferior to smarter students.

- Things they would *leave out*: the teachers would leave out the orthography of foreign words while it is too difficult for pupils, they would also leave out details about some topics because they are irrelevant for the weaker pupils, also some tasks concerning composition. Some teachers advocate making composition an independent subject.

Things for which the teachers criticize those who make study plans: they criticize them for not providing enough time for practising orthography, insufficient time for correcting essays (one lesson is not enough), insufficient number of lessons devoted to revision (due to this fact many students have weak foundations), too many topics covered in each year, insufficient number of lessons of the Slovak language and literature.

### *Fifth partial conclusion*

The proposals for amending the course books clearly show the teachers' need to add such topics (exercises) that would highlight the basic facts and that would provide a transparent system of their presenting and practising with the purpose of acquiring standard knowledge and skills.

Our research findings show the following professional conclusions:

1. The quality of a coursebook is determined by its capacity to fulfill teaching plans and educational standards taking into consideration the needs and possibilities of the educational practice.

2. The teacher's acceptance of the quality of the course book is determined by the teacher's maturity and mental possibilities of the pupils. The teacher's maturity can balance the differences between the pupils in the class. The students' mental possibilities can signalize the potential and the borders in the education of the class as a unit of various qualities (classes for gifted students, standard classes with a big or small number of students, classes with or without integrated students – cf. Odaloš, 2007, and Odaloš-Kutláková, 2008).

3. The comparison of the coursebooks revealed the perception of Tibenská's coursebook as a material with a demanding composition and content that is more suitable for gifted students. As we have mentioned, their number at standard primary schools is decreasing due to the fact that many gifted students decide to study at eight-year grammar schools. The teachers' opinions also showed that the authors of Krajčovičová's coursebook were more successful in determining an adequate level of difficulty of the coursebook with regard to the global needs of practice – i.e. mastering the knowledge by a greater number of pupils through a greater number of teachers.

The comparison of the coursebooks implied conventionality and unconventionality of the practice, stereotypes and creative impulses, possibilities and limits. The same elements that some pupils and teachers consider limiting can be stimulating for others. Thus, education also means moving the borders as well as surmounting oneselves.

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# The Coefficient of Memorization and a Hypothesis on Other Coefficients in the Process of Learning

## Abstract

Cybernetic pedagogy introduced the so-called '*coefficient of remembering*', which expresses the amount of received information which a learner can remember (from a group of letters without meaning) after one repetition. One can remember approximately 1/23 (4.34 %) of received information.

On the basis of analogical reflections, we formulated a hypothesis that there is a similar progress in other processes related to learning. We derived the '*coefficient of learning with understanding*', the '*coefficient of improving fine motor skills of hand*', and the '*coefficient of revealing*' concepts when reading pictures.

The presented coefficients enable an effective and at the same time very brief evaluation of the difficulty of curriculum if we have a standard class. If the curriculum is standard – we can assess pupils' abilities.

**Key words:** *coefficient of remembering, coefficient of learning with understanding, coefficient of improving fine motor skills of hand, coefficient of revealing*

## Introduction

Many recognized sciences nowadays have become sciences thanks to mathematics and its apparatus, which enables to express values of the studied phenomena in numbers and on the basis of this expression to formulate a law. A law is a statement which is generally valid under certain, precisely defined conditions. Measuring and quantification of conditions represent part of research, which enables to express

a law in the form of a function (Brincková, J., 2006). On the input of a function (independent variables) there are all (numerically expressed) input conditions and on the output there is a numerically expressed outcome.

Quite often, physical but also other laws are taught and learned incorrectly. Prhaps they are incorrectly formulated already in textbooks, or according to 'tradition' they have been taught and learned incorrectly from time immemorial.
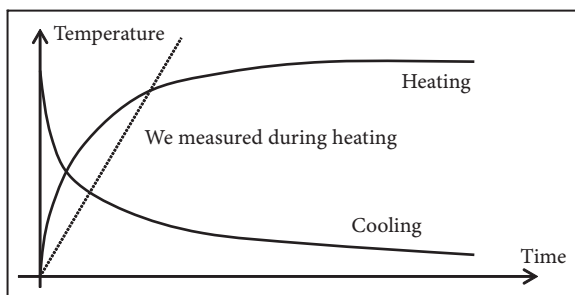
I can remember a school experiment in which we were heating up water in a beaker, measuring the time and we found out that the temperature of water increases uniformly under a constant flame dependetly upon time. Since it was a law, we rounded our deviations in the measured values and it worked out well. In fact, it is untruth, because at the beginning of the measurement the water temperature was about 12° C, at the end of the heating its temperature was approaching 100° C. The amount of heat transferred from one body to another one depends upon the difference of temperatures between the heater and the cooler. We did not take this difference in temperatures into account. In fact, the amount of heat transferred to water (per unit of time) was bigger at the beginning of the heating than at the end of the heating (without the phase change), which is the result of difference in temperatures of the heated body. The process of heating is illustrated in Graph 1.

**Picture 1**                                            **Graph 1**
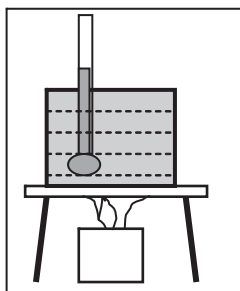


Heating of water in a beaker.          Changes in temperature dependently on time.

It is evident from the Graph that the curve does not approach the final temperature (temperature of the heater) in a linear way, but becomes its tangent in a very remote point. (We deal only with the heating of the body without phase changes.) Cooling of the body proceeds in a similar way, the cooling curve becomes a tangent to the line illustrating the temperature of the environment.

## 1.  Comparison between the forgetting curve and the cooling curve

The cooling curve in Graph 1 is very similar to the well-known forgetting curve. The heating curve in this graph bears a striking resemblance to the curve of memorization (Bohony, P, 2005). It is evident that the shape of these curves causes a reduction in differences between the 'temperature of the medium' and the 'final temperature', which in learning reduces the difference between the 'already mastered curriculum' and the 'target curriculum'.

The value of the coefficient of learning in case of memorization reached k = 0.043, (K = 4.3 %). It means that a pupil remembers approximately 1/23 of the explained curriculum after one repetition. If the amount of not-learned curriculum decreased, respondents again remembered approximately 1/23 of the reduced amount after one repetition. In the research, the respondents learned by rote groups of letters without meaning (Frank, H, 1996,). The curve of the graph declines gradually. When the respondents learned groups of letters with meaning, the coefficient of learning (remembering) was markedly higher.

## 2.  Hypothesis

If we apply an analogy between some physical phenomena and pedagogical phenomena, it seems very probable that many processes will be described by the same function. That leads us to the statement of the following hypothesis.

The progress of the curve of:
- learning with understanding,
- improving fine motor skills of hand,
- revealing an unknown concept,

is described by the geometric progression $ai+_1 = k \cdot ai$, where coefficient $k$ is approximately constant for the given curriculum with the given pupils, $ai+_1$ is the state of knowledge after the action (repetition), the state $ai$, is state of knowledge before the action.

In order to verify the hypothesis, we selected such a curriculum and such pedagogical phenomena which do not require additional testing of learning outcomes. The basic research sample comprised 229 children from nursery school and from the so-called zero classes of primary schools. In case of additional testing, the outcomes would be distorted due to the fact that a child also learns during the test.

## 3. The coefficient and graph of understanding curriculum – an ideal graph

If a pupil understands the curriculum, we assess the curriculum as intelligible and adequate to the given age. All pupils do not comprehend the whole curriculum for the first time. Let us produce an ideal graph (for 128 pupils) of curriculum understanding, assuming that the hypothesis is valid, so that after each following repetition (explanation) the same proportion of pupils, k = 0.5 (half), who did not understand the the curriculum will understand it. The number of pupils who did not understand curriculum (after explanation) is recorded in Table 1; the progress of understanding is illustrated in Graph 2. The function (geometric progression $a_{i+1} = k \cdot a_i$ with the coefficient = 0.5) declines as a tangent to axis x. Since the function has discrete values in practice, we chose a column graph for its illustration.

**Table 1. Comprehension by 128 pupils with the coefficient of understanding K = 50 %**

| 128 pupils | Did not understand | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | for the 1st time | for the 2nd time | for the 3rd time | for the 4th time | for the 5th time | for the 6th time | did not understand |
| Learned | 64 | 32 | 16 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Coefficient k | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.50 |

**Graph 2**
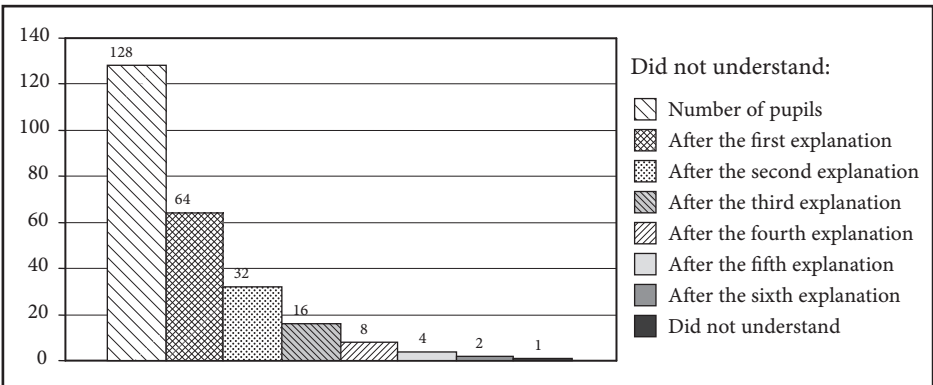
The ideal graph of comprehension with the coefficient of understanding k = 0.5. The columns contain the numbers of pupils who did not understand the curriculum after the given explanation.
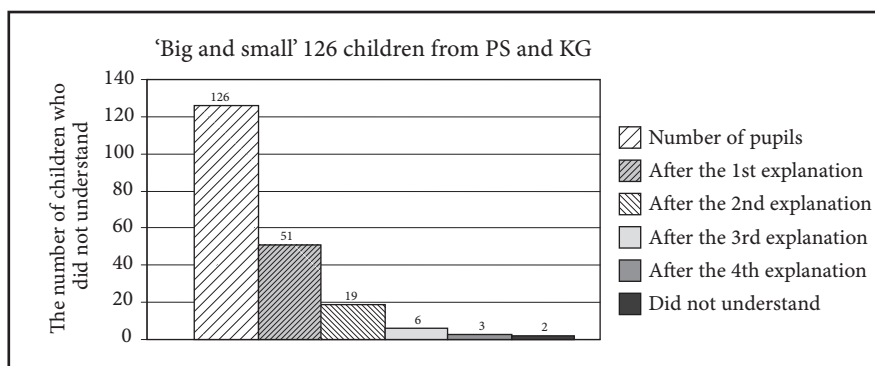
## 4. Understanding of curriculum

The research was conducted on a sample of 126 children – preschoolers. (The nursery schools in Banská Bystrica: Lazovná, Lúčičky, L. Sáru, Buková and Nursery School Tajov. In zero classes of primary schools: Detva, Handlová, Jelšava and Zvolen.) We selected an explanation of the concepts 'big' and 'small'. We focused on the comprehension of the situation described in the joke *Big and small: A big dog and a small dog had a quarrel over a bone. The big dog was strong, but the small one was smart. Finally, the small dog won, because he realized that he can escape the big dog through a hole in the fence, which was too small for the big dog to go through.* Comprehension was accompanied by laughter, joy and efforts to tell somebody the joke. The numbers of pupils and coefficients of understanding in the process of learning by zero class pupils are presented in Table 2, the progress is illustrated in Graph 3.

**Table 2.  Understanding of 'Big and small' in nursery schools and in zero classes of primary schools**

| Primary schools and Nursery Schools | Number of pupils | Understood for the 1st time | Understood for the 2nd time | Understood for the 3rd time | Understood for the 4th time | Understood for the 5th time |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PS and KG | 126 | 75 | 32 | 13 | 3 | 1 |
| Coefficient of understanding k | | **0.60** | **0.63** | **0.68** | **0.50** | **0.33** |
| Did not understand | 126 | 51 | 19 | 6 | 3 | 2 |

The studied sample of children from nursery schools in comparison with the 'ideal' state, with the coefficient of understanding k = 0.5 in Graph 2, reaches a higher value of curriculum comprehension. According to the curve and the weighted average of the coefficient of understanding, k = 0.61, we consider the curriculum as easily intelligible. (This is about 14-times better than for memorization where k = 0.043.) The progress of the curve of understanding the notions approaches the 'ideal' shape of the learning curve.

**Graph 3  Understanding of the concepts 'Big and small' in nursery schools and in zero classes of primary schools**



'Big and small' 126 children from PS and KG

Legend:
- Number of pupils
- After the 1st explanation
- After the 2nd explanation
- After the 3rd explanation
- After the 4th explanation
- Did not understand

## 5.  Improving of fine motor skills of hand

On a selected research sample of 30 children – preschoolers and on 10 pictures, which children coloured in chronologically during 4 months, we measured the third longest 'departure' **D3** in millimetres. (Out of the children's works we selected thirty best coloured in workbooks.) The children coloured in pictures which are presented in the workbook Bude škola 1 (There will be school 1). We developed and used our own evaluation of the precision of the colouring. We measured the length of the departure from the border line of the object (in millimetres); departures over 5 mm were marked with number 5. (Other unintentional 'scribbles', sometimes even with values over 20 mm, will significantly distort the results, they are not manifestations of fine motor skills of hand.)

- D(5) is the sum of values of the five longest departures in mm.
- D(10) is the sum of values of the ten longest departures in mm.
- D1 is the length of the first longest departure in mm.
- **D3** is the length of the third longest departure in mm.

After measuring D1, D2, D3, D4, D5 … and calculating values D(5), D(10) we reached the conclusion:

a)  Almost all measured values D1 were equal to 5. It means that in each picture there was some careless colouring beyond the edge of the picture. The data has small information value. Similarly D2.

b)  Value D3 seemed to be more interesting. We compared the measured values for 10 children in three pictures (watering can, flower, girl). In Table 3 we

compare D3 with D(5)/5 and with D(10)/10, it is an average length of the departure falling on one picture, determined by three various methods.

**Table 3. Comparison of the third longest departure and the average
of the five and the ten longest departures**

|  | D3 | D(5) | D(10) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Measured on 10 pupils and in 3 pictures | 94 | 512 | 734 |
| The average departure per one picture | 94/30 = 3.1 | 512/150 = 3.4 | 734/300 = 2.44 |
| The average | D3 = **3.1** | D(5)/5 = **3.4** | D(10)/10 = **2.44** |

We found out that a more effective (less time consuming) way to achieve the same outcome is to measure only the third longest departure. Thus, we eliminated two scribbles and uncoordinated nudges. Our evaluation did not involve other lines with zero deviation, which occur with the last values of ten departures. (Naturally, lengthy evaluation of the sum of the ten longest departures is more precise.) Further, we processed the measured values of the third departure.

\* **Note:** *With this evaluation we would have 6 classes of precision, expressed by the length of the third departure by numbers: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. It is similar to the evaluation scale.*

We discovered progression which reveals an improvement in fine motor skills of hand expressed by improved precision. Table 4.

**Table 4. The sum of values of the third longest departure by 30 pupils**

| Number of pupils 30 | Watering can | Frog | Boot | Flower | Lollipop | Cakes | Chickens | Girls | Boy | Rabbit |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TOTAL | 120 | 108 | 104 | 93 | l89 | 84 | 79 | 80 | 78 | 70 |

Tables 3 and 4 and Graph 4 indicate that the precision of D3 improved during 4 months, the duration of the experiment, by (120−70) . 100/120 = **41.7 %**. Improvement between two subsequent pictures achieved the average value k = 0.046, which is only slightly better than the coefficient of memorization. An anomaly in the graph occurred while colouring in the picture of a girl and its surrounding, where we expected uniform improvement, however the outcomes got worse. Here the

learning coefficient reached a negative value. Since the progress of the graph is not linear, in the following 4 months we can expect a lower value of (absolute) improvement of fine motor skills of hand with the same coefficient of improvement. A low value of the coefficient k = 0.046 indicates that the given curricular activity is very demanding.

**Table 5.  The coefficient of improving fine motor skills of hand**

|  | Watering can Frog | Frog Boot | Boot Flowers | Flowers Lollipop | Lollipop Cakes | Cakes Chickens | Chickens Girls | Girls Boy | Boy Rabbit |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Coefficient of learning k | 0.10 | 0.037 | 0.106 | 0.044 | 0.056 | 0.059 | -0.01 | 0.025 | 0.102 |

**Graph 4.  The progress of improving pupils' graphomotor skills is expressed as the sum of values of the third longest departure by 30 pupils. We draw from Table 3**
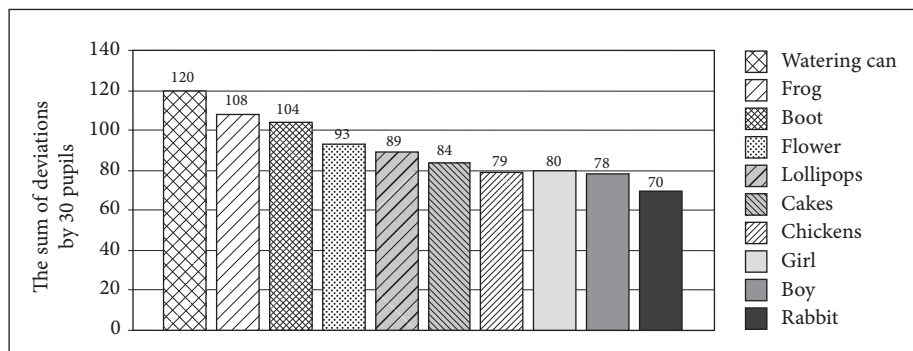


## 6.  Revealing the situation in the picture

219 children participated in the experiment (out of the total experiment sample of 229 children). They had 2 pictures illustrating a curricular situation.
- In the first picture their task was to reveal: Why is the figure (crayon) sad? They revealed that the crayon cut its finger and is bleeding.

- In the second picture a car stopped sharply in front of a pedestrian crossing. The children were to reveal why it had happened. They revealed that the car had stopped because a snail on the pedestrian crossing had a right-of-way.

The teachers and parents who examined these picture situations with children were instructed not to tell the children the right answer. The outcomes are presented in Table 5. (Since the children were revealing two concepts, we divided the number of concepts by 2, and thus we got 'the number' of children who understood both concepts.) The value of the coefficient of revelation ranges from k = 0.38 to k = 0.31. More relevant results could be reached in a more extensive experiment on a bigger sample of pupils and on a bigger sample of pictures illustrating curricular situations. The average value of the coefficient of revelation is approximately k = 0.35. This means that from the children who did not reveal the concept during one observation of the picture, approximately 35% will reveal the searched concept. On the basis of the value of the coefficient we infer that the curricular activity 'revealing the situation from the picture' – 'reading the picture' is adequately demanding for children.

**Table 6.  Revelation of finger injury and the right-of-way of the snail**

| Number of children: 219 | 1st attempt | 2nd attempt | 3rd attempt |
|---|---|---|---|
| Did not reveal | 135 | 87 | 60 |
| Revealed (concepts/2=children) | 166/2 = 83 | 96/2 = 48 | 54/2 = 27 |
| Coefficient | k = 0.38 | k = 0.36 | k = 0.31 |

## Conclusion

On the basis of observing the process of liquid heating and the memorization of groups of letters (we assumed an analogy), we formulated a hypothesis that also other curricular processes can have similar progress. We were also inspired by one example from cybernetic pedagogy, which introduced the '*coefficient of remembering*', expressing the portion of received information which a learner can remember. The validity of the stated hypothesis was verified on small samples.

- The coefficient of memorization k = 0.043 (Frank, H, 1996).
- Improvement of fine motor skills of hand, we measured k = 0.046. This can be regarded as a very demanding curricular activity.
- Understanding of the concepts 'Big and small' in a joke reached the coefficient k = 0.61. We can conclude that a curriculum explained in this way is easy

for pupils. During classes, only two children out of 126 did not comprehend the curriculum.

- The coefficient of revealing the situation in the picture (finger injury and the right-of-way of the snail) scored the average value k = 0.35. Difficulty of the curriculum determined by the picture – (reading of the picture) is adequate to the age and abilities of children.
- The ideal state of teaching and learning which all teachers desire, is coefficient k = 1. Then, after the first explanation, all pupils would master the curriculum.

Our research results cannot be considered as generally valid, because they were conducted under specific conditions on relatively small samples of respondents.

In practice, results can be used in two ways:

3. If the sample of pupils is standard, the curriculum difficulty can be determined from the values of coefficients of learning.
4. Research can be focused on finding out values of coefficients in learning processes.

It is obvious that the value of coefficients in the process of education, regardless of how the curriculum is set, is also influenced by the style of teaching and teachers' skills and didactic abilities. These can act as an uncontrollable variable in the research.

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Special
Pedagogy

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# The Image of Children with Intellectual Disabilities: An Analysis Based on Research Conducted in Full-time Care Institutions in Poland[1]

## Abstract

Practically all of us use stereotypes to describe people with disabilities or impairments. Many social psychological studies have shown that stereotypes often lead to biased judgements about individual group members. The purpose of my research was to identify the social perception of children with intellectual disabilities. In this paper, I describe the social perception of children with intellectual disabilities and the institutions established for care of them in Poland. In spite of the attitudinal change in Poland towards persons with disabilities and the social approval for placing children with intellectual disabilities into full-time care institutions, I argue that doing so still results in discrimination against them.

## Introduction

The experiences, observations and thoughts originating from my 12-year professional practice in a full-time guardian-educational centre for children with intellectual disabilities became the source of my reflections on many aspects of such a centre's functioning. My methodical perspective improved my perception of various social phenomena, such as the acceptance of socially integrating the intellectually disabled from guardian institutions.

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[1] This paper is based upon a doctoral dissertation written under the supervision of Prof. T. Lewowicki, Warsaw University, Poland.

In Poland in 2001–2002, when my research was conducted, several forms of full-time care institutions for children were supported, namely:

1. Orphanages (*domy dziecka*), subject to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, for children who have been, partially or totally, deprived of parental care.

2. Special educational-guardian centres (*specjalne ośrodki szkolno-wychow-awcze*), subject to the Ministry of Education, in which full-time care was provided for children with disabilities.

3. Residential homes (*domy pomocy społecznej*), subject to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, were designed for persons with severe disabilities needing full-time care of others.

4. Nursing homes (*zakłady opiekuńczo-lecznicze*), subject to the Ministry of Health, provided full-time nursing care for persons with severe disabilities but who did not need hospitalization.

I want to show that in spite of the attitudinal change towards persons with disabilities and the social approval for integration, placing children with intellectual disabilities in full-time care institutions still results in prejudice against them. The stereotyped perception of children with intellectual disabilities in Poland imposes institutional forms of care that are regarded as the most appropriate form of treatment for these children.

In this paper, I relate the results of my research to three theoretical concepts: (a) the theory of stereotyping, (b) the theory of prejudice, and (c) the theory of total institutions. This article deals with only a fragment of social life by presenting the level of social awareness apparent in the answers of the groups that were interviewed for this study.

## The theoretical basis for attitudes towards people with disabilities

Lippman (1922) first introduced the term *stereotype* to the social sciences. According to him, stereotypes are employed to help impose order in a complex world. He defined the term as the picture (of the world) that a person has in his or her head. As a picture, it is definite, which also means that it reduces the world to simple characteristics represented as permanent in nature. A stereotype provides a shortcut in the processing of data, which, in Lippman's words, "precedes the use of reason" (1922, p.98). Lippman also remarked that stereotyping has a social function as a "projection upon the world of our own sense, of our own value, our own position and our own rights" (1922, p.96). In sum, he defined stereotypes

as necessary overgeneralizations and oversimplifications that are rigid, resistant to charge, undependable in their actual content, and produced without logical reasoning. He considered the acquisition of stereotypes to be no different than acquisition of any other kind of knowledge.

A stereotype is a form of perception which precedes the use of reasoning. The use of stereotypes enables a person to cope with a complex social environment and also fulfills a different function: it constitutes a guarantee of our respect for ourselves, and a projection of our system of values, our position and rights. Stereotypes are permeated with emotions which we cannot separate from the target of our stereotyping. For this reason, the image of the characteristics of the members of a stereotyped different group is often distorted. The social stereotype results from the tendency towards simplified and deformed perception of human groups. Moreover, people with stereotyped perceptions usually believe they are the product of sensory perception and the thought process accompanying it.

Recently, Trope and Gaunt (2003) and Cameron and Trope (2004) suggested that we are doomed to use stereotypes because of the huge amount of information impinging on us, and our limited ability to assimilate this information by using cognitive processes. Everyone is trying to simplify the information from his or her environment by organising it into notional categories which contain a limited number of assigned characteristics for the objects in each category. The process of stereotyping involves the tendency to assign similarities to the individuals grouped together in each category and to assign differences to the individuals belonging to different categories. In the context of people with disabilities, the stereotyped perception of children with intellectual disabilities assumes that we are only marginally able to help them with their development. The persons who control the fates of children with intellectual disabilities (e.g., parents, physicians, and teachers) often have this perception. Ignorance or fallacious beliefs are most often the basis for stereotyped perceptions of a given social group. As well, strong emotions accompany stereotypes; thus, individuals in the mainstream often tend to fear people with intellectual disabilities: (a) we are afraid of what we do not know, (b) we fear because we do not understand, and (c) we do not understand because we do not want to know any more about people with intellectual disabilities what we think we know well and what we have established as a stereotype. The practice of segregating people with intellectual disabilities is a major cause of this fear. Many studies have found that stereotypes often bias judgements about individual group members (e.g., Fiske, 1998; Hamilton & Sherman, 1994; Hilton & von Hippel, 1990; Olson, Roese & Zanna, 1996).

A consequence of fear of the unknown is prejudice, which limits the possibility of developing a rational attitude towards persons perceived as different. Stereotypes

are based on prejudice, and prejudice finds expression in stereotypes. Prejudice, as the name implies, is the process of "pre-judging" something. It implies forming a judgment without having direct experience of its target. The briefest of all definitions of prejudice is "thinking ill of others without sufficient warrant" (Allport, 1979, p. 6). This definition is derived from the Thomistic moralists, who regard prejudice as "rash judgment." Allport (1979) provided the following definition more than 60 years ago, and it is still used as authoritative: Prejudice is "an aversive or hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, simply because he belongs to that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to that group" ( p.7).

Allport (1979) tried to define prejudice against different ethnic groups, but his classic definition can also be applied to prejudice against people with disabilities: "[ethnic] prejudice is an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he is a member of that group" (p.9).

Prejudice is seen as having different causes, with the main ones being different forms of fear. Stephan and Stephan (1993) described prejudice as a negative affect associated with outgroups. Their Integrated Threat Theory of Prejudice (Stephan & Stephan, 2000, pp. 25–28) focuses on several different types of threats:

1. Realistic threats "are threats to the very existence of the ingroup (e.g., through warfare), threats to the political and economic power of the ingroup, and threats to the physical or material well-being of the ingroup or its members (e.g., their health)".

2. Symbolic threats "are threats to the worldview of the ingroup". Esses, Haddock, and Zanna (1993) argued that the more the values, customs, or traditions of the ingroup are blocked by an outgroup, the more negative the attitudes of the ingroup toward the outgroup will be.

3. Intergroup anxiety results when people feel personally threatened in intergroup interactions because of being concerned about negative outcomes for the self (e.g., concerns about being embarrassed, rejected, or ridiculed) (Stephan & Stephan, 1985).

4. Negative stereotypes create a fear of negative consequences and negative, conflictual, or unpleasant interactions.

Fear is a major cause of prejudice. In relation to the other, we have a fear of the unknown, a fear of the unfamiliar. "If fear is the father of prejudice, ignorance is its grandfather" (Stephan & Stephan, 2000, p. 38).

Sherif and Sherif (1953) and Sherif (1966) provided a simple explanation how prejudice forms, known as the "theory of intergroup conflicts". According to Sherif,

intergroup conflict results from realistic competition between groups that intensifies ingroup bias and outgroup hostility. Conflict and ingroup bias can also result from the simple act of categorizing individuals into groups (Tajfel, 1969, 1978). Both realistic group conflict and social categorization can generate ingroup bias, prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination (Alexander & Levin, 1998).

Perceptions based on stereotypes are a form of labelling. A label changes the social rank of a person because the label causes an attitude characterized by dislike, suspicion, fear, or rejection. A person becomes what he or she is described as being. A person reacts to the labels applied to him or her and acts more and more like the label would suggest, taking on more and more of its traits. Farber (1959) was the first researcher who used the theory of labelling to analyze issues involving people with intellectual disabilities. These people are assigned a special social status preventing them from undertaking normal social tasks and, at the same time, leading to distorted perceptions of them. Farber thought that a person with intellectual disabilities could be labelled as "deviant" or as "incompetent". A "deviant" has his or her own system of values and aspires to achieve what is not accepted socially. A deviant, consciously or not, acts in ways contrary to current norms. However, the incompetent tries to obey these norms but does so ineffectively.

The labelling of people with intellectual disabilities can increase in degree and is dependent on – among other factors – the demographic, economic and organizational aspects of societies and on an individual's degree of disability.

The negative effects of a label are the process of stigmatisation (Hayward & Bright, 1997) and the process of establishing deviant identities (Schlosberg, 1993). Corrigan and Penn (1999) argue that a "stigma" is a different term for "prejudice" based on negative stereotyping. The clear deduction is that the "negative" aspect reflects not only the unfavourable stereotypes, but also the stigmatiser's negative attitudes and unpleasant behaviour.

With regard to the labelling of people with intellectual disabilities researchers from many countries (e.g., Avoke, 2001; Christiansen, 1992; Kopelman, 1984; Kossewska, 2003; Kurtz 1977) found that (a) stigmatization depends on the characteristics of the judged person and on the information about him or her which is socially transferred (b) information about a person's physical appearance provokes the greatest stigmatization and (c) a person's level of education does not influence his or her tendency to stigmatize others.

Polish people have a strong tendency to stigmatize persons with disabilities. Kowalik (1999), one of the Polish researchers dealing with problems of people with disabilities, has formulated the connection between discrimination and prejudice as follows:

1.  Every typical person has his or her own conception of social order.
2.  An individual's conception of social order can be more or less in accordance with the existing social order.
3.  People's conceptions of the social order differ in scope.
4.  People with different conceptions of the social order can be prejudiced towards each other.
5.  All people want to prove that their assessments of the social world are correct and that their cognitive processes, which help to create their conceptions of the social order, are functioning properly.
6.  A person's conception of the social order contains an epistemological and pragmatic model of the person: (a) the epistemological model includes the person's rationality, reflectiveness and ability to appropriately express his/her point of view, and (b) the pragmatic model consists of the person's ability to control his/her own actions, to plan actions, to achieve his/her intentions, and to cooperate with others.
7.  The belief that another person's concept of the social order differs from one's own generates the perception that this person is "incompetent". This perception, in turn, leads to the exclusion of this person from the category of people belonging to the epistemological model of the perceiver and – sometimes – also from the pragmatic model of the perceiver. This process of dehumanization deprives specific groups of people of universal human characteristics.
8.  After people have been dehumanized, they can be easily discriminated against because the moral principles that normally inhibit discrimination are no longer in force. (pp. 170–171)

The above theoretical model suggests why discriminatory practices can be permanent and immune to other social influences. Moreover, this model is particularly relevant to understanding the results when children with intellectual disabilities are placed in Polish full-time care institutions. These institutions, referred to by Goffman (1961) as "total institutions", have several common features:

First, all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority. Second, each phase of the member's daily activity is carried on in the immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same thing together. Third, all phases of the day's activities are tightly scheduled, with one activity leading at a prearranged time into the next, the whole sequence of activities being imposed from above by a system of explicit formal rulings and a body of officials. Finally, the various enforced activities are

brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfill the official aims of the institution. (p. 6)

Full-time care institutions in Poland have all these features. The Polish scientist Tarkowska (1997), who studied full-time care institutions for children with intellectual disabilities, lists the following negative effects of these institutions:

1. The objectification of the residents, with whom the staff has a paternalistic relationship.
2. The strengthening of passive behaviours in the residents.
3. The standardization of the elements of everyday life.
4. A focus on the residents' minimal needs, rather than on the residents' development.
5. The failure to attend to the residents' social and cultural needs.
6. The lack of possibilities for fulfilling the residents' emotional needs, which require the continuity of interpersonal contacts, closeness, friendship, and love in order to be satisfied.

As the above list suggests, a full-time care institution in Poland brings together two groups of people in a relationship resulting in the residents' subordination and dependence. Presumably, all the restrictions on the residents, which limit their contacts with the outside world, help to maintain and reinforce the negative stereotypes of them.

## Methodological Assumptions

The purpose of my research, undertaken in Poland and presented in this paper, was to discover the social perception of children with intellectual disabilities. This article reports on only one aspect of a much larger study of the attitudes towards children with intellectual disabilities living in full-time care institutions. My research questions concerned the perception of full-time care institutions and of the children with intellectual disabilities living in them:

1. What kinds of perceptions of children with intellectual disabilities are typical in Poland?
2. What kinds of perceptions of full-time care institutions for children with intellectual disabilities are typical in Poland?
3. What is the connection between the stereotyped perceptions of children with intellectual disabilities and of the full-time care institutions?

To explore these research questions I sent questionnaires to principals, pedagogical and care staff, and parents whose children with intellectual disabilities had

been placed in full-time care institutions. I also analyzed a variety of documents (e.g., the public opinion polls from 2000, 2002 and 2004 concerning attitudes in Poland towards persons with disabilities).

The data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed by using descriptive statistics to determine frequencies and correlations. The data were also content-analyzed to provide rationalization, verification, and spreading out of the findings.

This research drew its purposive sample of institutions from the six counties of the Silesian province in Poland. Frank-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996) explain:

With purposive samples (occasionally referred to as judgment samples), researchers select sampling units in an attempt to obtain a sample that appears to be representative of the population. In other words, the chance that a particular sampling unit will be selected for the sample depends on the subjective judgment of the researcher. (p. 184)

Silesia, a wealthy area of Poland, has a well-developed economy because of the abundance of natural resources. As I was a resident of Silesia, I chose it for my research area in order to limit my expenses and travel time.

I examined public and private (e.g., religious) full-time care institutions for children with intellectual disabilities: 5 public orphanages (for average children), 3 public and 1 non-public educational-guardian centres (for children with a mild and moderate degree of disabilities), and 1 public and 5 non-public residential homes (for children with a severe and profound degree of disabilities), 1 public and 1 non-public nursing homes (for children with a severe and profound degree of disabilities). I gathered my data in 2001 and 2002 from 17 institutions. These data concerned: (a) 410 children aged 1 to 25, all having various degrees of intellectual disabilities (261 [53%] of these children were referred to the institutions by the courts due to family dysfunctions); (b) 136 employees (about 70% of the total number of employees in the 17 institutions): 17 principals, 52 guardians, 46 care-givers, 17 nurses, 2 social workers, and 2 instructors of occupational therapy; and (c) 150 parents of children living in full-time care institutions (184 parents did not reply to my questionnaires; 26 parents changed their addresses during my research; 26 parents refused to reply; and 3 parents died).

## Findings

### 1. Social descriptions of the disabled

Almost everyone has some descriptive term for referring to people with disabilities or impairments. In a poll conducted in 2002 (TNS OBOP[2]), only one per cent of the respondents answered "It is difficult to say" when asked to describe people with disabilities. Poles were most often willing to describe these people as "disabled": almost half of the sample (49%) admitted that this term comes to mind when they see a person with disabilities. Sixteen per cent used the term "invalid"; thirteen per cent used the word "cripple"; and ten per cent used the expression "differently abled". As well, 4% of the respondents referred to persons with disabilities as "unhappy", and 3% described them as "poor fellows".

I was also interested in the respondents' first association after reading the expression "child with intellectual disabilities". One group of the polled parents (28.9%) associated this expression with the term "defenceless", and 25.9% associated it with the description "ill, poor, and worse". When the parents' answers were cross-referenced with the type of institution that their children were staying in, the results showed that the parents whose children were staying in residential homes (36.7%) and nursing homes (53.8%) used the term "defenceless" ("requiring attention, dependent on others") to refer to children with disabilities. The parents whose children were living in educational-guardian centres used the expression "ill, poor, and worse". As many as 25% of the parents whose children were residing in orphanages associated "child with intellectual disabilities" with negative qualities, but did not provide examples. The majority of the residents in educational-guardian centres were children with a mild (48.7%) or moderate (35.8%) degree of intellectual disabilities who could have been mainstreamed, but were being kept in care institutions (cf. Gil, 2007). Probably for this reason, the parents of these children described them as "ill, poor, and worse", for they did not qualify or "were not good enough" to be part of "normal" society. In residential and nursing home care, the children with a profound degree of intellectual disabilities (approximately 56.9% to 60.2% of the residents) often either have limited mobility or are kept in bed. They are really dependent on others, so for their parents, they are "defenceless". Moreover, the parents of disabled children from orphanages inevitably had negative associations after reading the expression "children with disabilities".

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[2]  The poll was conducted in August, 2002, on probability, representative sample of 1017 Polish citizens over 15 years. Maximal statistical measurement error was +/ − 3.1%.

The parents who were involved in court cases concerning the custody of their children, described their own children as "defenceless" and "dependent on others". These replies may reflect the parents' sense of helplessness, and belief that they could not decide the fates of their own children.

The answers from the pedagogical staff depended on the type of the institution in which they were employed ($\chi^2 = 61.004$; $\alpha = 0.05$; df = 28; $\chi^2_{\alpha} = 41.337$, $\chi^2 > \chi^2_{\alpha}$).

The pedagogical staff from residential homes (which are subject to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) suggested the association "requiring special care" (18%). Seven per cent of the pedagogical workers from nursing homes (subject to the Ministry of Health) and educational-guardian centres (subject to the Ministry of Education) made the same association. The expression "children with intellectual disabilities" made the pedagogical staff from orphanages think of "ill, poor, and difficult children". The workers in educational-guardian centres for blind children described the children with intellectual disabilities as "neglected from birth". All these answers reflect the nature of the respondents' places of employment and the type of residents in the respondents' institutions. Children with severe disabilities live in residential homes and nursing homes. In contrast, healthy children are kept in orphanages, where the percentage of children with intellectual disabilities is small: in these institutions, children with disabilities constitute about 6% of all children. The workers in orphanages appeared to associate their work with this small percentage of residents as "difficult".

**Table 1.  Staff's associations with "children with intellectual disabilities"**

| Correlation Coefficients | |
|---|---|
| T Czuprow's Coefficient | 0.304 |
| φ Yule's Coefficient | 0.699 |
| V Cramer's Coefficient | 0.349 |
| C Pearson's Coefficient | 0.626 |

The responses of the pedagogical staff revealed that the perception that even educated persons have stereotyped opinions about the disabled turned out to be false: most of the staff with a higher education (19%) and with a secondary education (18%) associated "children with intellectual disabilities" with "children requiring special care".

In all the age groups, the responses were divided almost evenly. The workers with long-term seniority (about 20 years of work experience) had negative associations.

In my research, I also asked parents and guardians about their first association after reading the expression "full-time care institution for children with intellectual disabilities". Most parents who answered this question had children who were living in orphanages, whereas the smallest group of parents had children who were

living in nursing houses. The parents of children living in residential houses and an educational-guardian centre for the blind associated this expression with the expression "the house". The parents of children living in orphanages had the most *negative* associations, whereas the parents of children living in residential homes had the most *positive* associations. The parents' positive associations probably reflect society's relatively high approval of institutions designed exclusively for children with intellectual disabilities: the children who have severe disabilities and who live in residential homes are accepted by society as harmless, poor, and ill children. However, most residents of orphanages are healthy children (who often come from dysfunctional families). These children have difficulty obeying adults and arouse a general dislike or fear in the neighbourhoods next to orphanages (for example, one of the orphanages included in this study was the target of its community's attempts to close it down).

For the guardians, a "full-time care institution" was an institution which "provides twenty-four-hour comprehensive care and special services". The children in the orphanages and educational-guardian centres included in this study had been sent there by the courts because these children had committed crimes. After applying statistical methods, I found that the guardians' responses depended on the kind of institution in which the guardians were working ($\chi^2 = 64.612$; $\alpha = 0.05$; df $= 28$; $\chi^2_\alpha = 41.337$, $\chi^2 > \chi^2_\alpha$). The correlation coefficients also showed this relationship (cf. Table 2).

The staff who had been working for 5 years or less in full-time institutions described caring for the residents as a "difficult job".

In my research I was interested also in the relationship of the closest social environment to the pupils with disabilities who live in full-time care institutions. According to the parents who responded to my questionnaire,

**Table 2. Staff's associations with "full-time care institution"**

| Correlation Coefficients | |
|---|---|
| T Czuprow's Coefficient | 0.355 |
| φ Yule's Coefficient | 0.816 |
| V Cramer's Coefficient | 0.408 |
| C Pearson's Coefficient | 0.691 |

this relationship is "favourable". This term was chosen by 12% of the parents with children in educational-guardian centres and 22% of the parents of children in residential homes. The parents of children in orphanages (32%) and nursing homes (6%) described this relationship as "indifferent". Forty-four per cent of guardians described this relationship as "favourable", but some also described it as "reluctant." Undoubtedly, the appearances of the buildings housing these institutions, their relative newness (they were built after 1989), and their qualified staff are contributing to the positive perception of them and the approval of their residents. The response

"reluctant" appeared mainly in the questionnaires of parents with children living in orphanages and educational-guardian centres. This finding can be attributed to the fact that unruly children with either average abilities or various levels of disabilities are referred to these institutions.

## 2. Where should children with disabilities be allowed to live?

The parents and pedagogical workers from the examined institutions were asked if children with intellectual disabilities (a) *should stay in full-time care institutions, which guarantee professional-specialist care for them*, or (b) *should be kept in their home, because only a family (their own, a substitute, or an adopted family) can guarantee them total care and broad development,* or (c) *can be kept in any kind of environment because these children have a limited capacity for intellectual-social development*; or (d) *other*. The guardians selected different answers: 14% chose answer (a) and 10% chose answer (b). Nobody chose answer (c), and only 3% – answer (d).

The replies showed a correlation between the parents' answers and the kind of institution in which their children were staying ($\chi^2 = 46.703$; $\alpha = 0.05$; $df = 20$; $\chi^2_\alpha = 31.4$; $\chi^2 > \chi^2_\alpha$). The values of the correlation coefficients also demonstrated this relationship (cf. Table 3).

Only the parents of children living in orphanages (10 of the 26) thought that children with disabilities should live with their families. The majority of the respondents (73 respondents including 40 parents of children from residential homes) replied that their children had to be in special-care institutions that can guarantee professional – specialist care for their residents.

My statistical analysis showed a relationship between the parents' perceptions of children with intellectual disabilities and the choices of the care for them ($\chi^2 = 34.10$; $\alpha = 0.1$; $df = 32$; $\chi^2_\alpha = 33.196$; $\chi^2 > \chi^2_\alpha$).

The parents who thought that children with disabilities should live in special-care institutions described these children as "ill, poor, and worse". The parents who replied that only the family can guarantee the broad

**Table 3. Environment in which children with disabilities should develop – parents' responses**

| Correlation Coefficients | |
|---|---|
| T Czuprow's Coefficient | 0.267 |
| ϕ Yule's Coefficient | 0.566 |
| V Cramer's Coefficient | 0.283 |
| C Pearson's Coefficient | 0.545 |

**Table 4. Choices of the care for children with disabilities made by parents**

| Correlation Coefficients | |
|---|---|
| T Czuprow's Coefficient | 0.205 |
| ϕ Yule's Coefficient | 0.455 |
| V Cramer's Coefficient | 0.262 |
| C Pearson's Coefficient | 0.458 |

development of children with disabilities described these children as "defenceless" and "dependent on others".

It was expected that parents would perceive full-time care institutions as appropriate places for solving the problems of children deprived of parental care: only 3% of the respondents were against the existence of these institutions. I was interested in the basis of this attitude. Applying statistical methods, I found a relationship between the parents' responses and the kind of institution in which the parents' children are living ($\chi^2 = 56.525$; $\alpha = 0.05$; $df = 8$; $\chi^2_\alpha = 15.507$; $\chi^2 > \chi^2_\alpha$). The low values of the correlation coefficients showed that this relationship is weak (cf. Table 5).

The correlation coefficients showed a rather weak relationship between the parents' responses on their perceptions of their disabled children and their responses on the existence of full-time care institutions in the social welfare system. Eighty-seven per cent of the parents who described their children as "defenceless" and "dependent" thought that full-time care institutions can solve the problems of children with disabilities. As well, 77% of the parents who described children with intellectual disabilities as "ill, poor, and worse" also supported full-time institutions ($\chi^2 = 23.885$; $\alpha = 0.1$; $df = 16$; $\chi^2_\alpha = 23.542$, $\chi^2 > \chi^2_\alpha$).

However, 103 of the guardians (76%) offered none of the provided responses to the posed question about full-time care institutions, even though 14% of these respondents believed that placing children with intellectual disabilities in such institutions is necessary.

**Table 5. Legitimacy of functioning of full-time care institutions – parents' responses**

| Correlation Coefficients | |
|---|---|
| T Czuprow's Coefficient | 0.221 |
| φ Yule's Coefficient | 0.371 |
| V Cramer's Coefficient | 0.263 |
| C Pearson's Coefficient | 0.407 |

**Table 6. Correlations between perceiving children with disabilities and legitimacy of full-time care institutions – parents' responses**

| Correlation Coefficients | |
|---|---|
| T Czuprow's Coefficient | 0.21 |
| φ Yule's Coefficient | 0.42 |
| V Cramer's Coefficient | 0.30 |
| C Pearson's Coefficient | 0.44 |

The remaining 22% of the guardians replied "yes", and only 3 people (2%) thought that full-time care institutions are not appropriate for children either permanently or temporarily deprived of parental care.

### 3. Acceptance of disabilities

One hundred and fifty (37%) of the parents responded negatively to the question "Have you ever encountered any signs of dislike towards to the institution in which your child is staying?" Only 1% of the parents (4 people) responded positively to this question. The answers to this question were related to the kind of institution in which the parents' children were staying; however, the values of the correlation coefficients showed that this relationship is weak ($\chi^2 = 55.47$; $\alpha = 0.05$; df = 8; $\chi^2_\alpha = 15.507$; $\chi^2 > \chi^2_\alpha$).

**Table 7. Signs of dislike towards institutions – parents' responses**

| Correlation Coefficients | |
|---|---|
| T Czuprow's Coefficient | 0.219 |
| φ Yule's Coefficient | 0.368 |
| V Cramer's Coefficient | 0.260 |
| C Pearson's Coefficient | 0.404 |

However, the percentage of the "yes" answers increased when the parents were asked if they had encountered signs of dislike for children with disabilities: 7% (29 parents) stated that they had encountered such signs, including insults and laughing. Twenty-five per cent (104 people) had not encountered any such signs. The parents' responses were related to the kind of institution in which their children were staying, but the values of correlation coefficients show that this relation is weak ($\chi^2 = 34.736$, $\alpha = 0.05$, df = 8, $\chi^2_\alpha = 15.507$, $\chi^2 > \chi^2_\alpha$).

**Table 8. Sings of dislike towards children with disabilities – parents' responses**

| Correlation Coefficients | |
|---|---|
| T Czuprow's Coefficient | 0.173 |
| φ Yule's Coefficient | 0.291 |
| V Cramer's Coefficient | 0.206 |
| C Pearson's Coefficient | 0.326 |

The parents and guardians were asked how, in their opinion, the institutions in which their children with disabilities were staying were perceived in these institutions' neighbourhoods. The respondents identified the "closest environment" and "other children" as the environment and the group that had criticized full-time care institutions. Moreover, 12% of the respondents who had expressed critical opinions of full-time care institutions for children with intellectual disabilities believed that "other children" had criticized such institutions, whereas only 4% of the respondents who had supported these institutions identified "the closest environment" as the source of negative opinions. The correlation coefficients show a relationship between the expression and the groups of people who replied to the question about this topic ($\chi^2 = 42.132$; $\alpha = 0.05$; df = 8; $\chi^2_\alpha = 15.507$; $\chi^2 > \chi^2_\alpha$).

In my research, I was also interested in the attitudes of parents towards their disabled children. Sixty-three per cent of the guardians who responded to my questionnaire stated that the parents "are contented that their child lives in a full-time institution, because they cannot guarantee that they can provide full care for their disabled child". As well, 50%[3] of the guardians from residential

**Table 9.  Signs of dislike towards institutions – staff's responses**

| Correlation Coefficients | |
| --- | --- |
| T Czuprow's Coefficient | 0.551 |
| φ Yule's Coefficient | 0.927 |
| V Cramer's Coefficient | 0.656 |
| C Pearson's Coefficient | 0.795 |

homes believed that "parents are almost indifferent to the fate of their children and that parents are embarrassed by having to place their children in a full-time care institutions". These responses strongly suggest that, on the one hand, the parents appreciated the work done by the guardians who were taking care of their disabled children, but, on the other hand, were not interested in the development of their own children. These answers also help to explain the finding that 51% of the parents reported that they visited their disabled children only a few times each year.

Seventy-three per cent of the parents who were contented with their children's residency in residential homes, and 55% of the parents were concerned, believed that their children had to live in institutions because they guarantee full care for residents. However, 12% of the parents were not reconciled to the fact that their child had been taken away from them and expressed hostility towards the guardians in their children's institutions.

The people living near full-time care institutions often do not approve of them. In Poland, many examples can be found to support this observation, for institutions for people with HIV, drug addicts, and young offenders have all been criticized. I asked the pedagogical workers in special care institutions, who are the people most aware of the problems involved in working with the disabled, whether they would live near a full-time care institution for the disabled. Sixty-eight per cent of the respondents said that they would not object to doing so.

## Conclusions

A sub-group of the disabled is the people with intellectual disabilities. Fate has not always been kind to them, but their lives are becoming more comfortable, particularly in terms of the attitudes towards them.

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[3]  Percentages exceed 100% since guardians chose more than one answer.

Independently of any real changes, publicizing life problems as people with disabilities could be experienced as good treatment or improving attitudes towards them.

Delinquent children, who commit crimes, determine how foster children in institutions are perceived as a whole, so all foster children are perceived through the prism of just a small group of children.

How are children with intellectual disabilities perceived? In my study, the pedagogical workers in Polish full-time care institutions for children with profound disabilities perceived them as ones requiring special care, while the guardians in orphanages perceived them as ill, poor and difficult children. This negative perception probably resulted from professional "burn-out" and a lack of patience towards children with special needs.

The children with intellectual disabilities were perceived by the majority of the polled parents as ill, poor and defenceless. Moreover, the parents also perceived these children as dependent on others and, therefore, as requiring more patience and attention than other children. The parents with this perception might either not believe or want to believe that they can help their disabled children. These parents might feel helpless and believe that their only alternative is to place their children in a special care institution, where the guardians can guarantee that disabled children will receive the necessary care.

Parents willing to place their children with intellectual disabilities in year-long care institutions must accept that these institutions will isolate their children from the outside world. Certainly, the decision to place a child in an institution results mainly from the desire for the child to receive the best professional care. However, this decision also often results from the shame of having an "ill" child or from the inconvenience of being burdened by one, especially in lower-class families.

The guardians in care institutions still strongly believe that children with intellectual disabilities should be placed in special care institutions.

The guardians' failure to respond to the question on the meaning of the presence of full-time care institutions suggests that these respondents were trying to protect their work places. In times of social integration, the guardians are likely to be feeling threatened and to be afraid that their places of employment will be closed if children with disabilities are no longer isolated from society. For this reason, a large percentage of the guardians avoided this question in the questionnaire.

The pedagogical workers who responded to my questionnaire were also convinced of the legitimacy of full-time care institutions. On the one hand, these workers were just protecting their work places, but, on the other hand, many of

these institutions really do guarantee professional care for their residents, which could not be guaranteed by other kinds of institutions.

## Recommendations

Prejudice sometimes causes discrimination against people with disabilities, but more often these people either have been or are being ignored. Prejudice creates and increases environmental and social barriers, preventing people with disabilities from participating in social life. Our attitudes towards these people depend partly on our degree of acquaintance with their problems, which, in turn, depends on the number of personal contacts we have with the disabled.

To provide equal opportunities for people with disabilities, the problem of negative attitudes towards disability must be solved. For this reason, we should spread accurate information about people with disabilities, and the media will have to play a major role in this undertaking. The European Year of People with Disabilities in 2003 was a good example; therefore, we should continue to develop similar campaigns. We must spread information about the issues faced by children with disabilities and encourage the implementation of new methods of caring for them (e.g., in non-public care institutions and small buildings with a family atmosphere).

Due to the guardians' professional "burn-out" and impatience with children with special needs, the guardians employed in special care institutions should be allowed to retire early.

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Chosen
Aspects of
Psychology

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# Disorder of Executive Function in Autistic Children

## Abstract

The dynamics of changes in the executive function was examined in autistic children during their middle and late childhood. The executive function relates to the ability of self-regulation including attention, motor reactions, resistance to distractions and delay of gratification. As noted by a number of authors autistic persons show considerable difficulties in this respect. Significant progressive changes in the development of executive functions were observed in the examined children. It allows the conclusion that autistic children are able to acquire an ability to change their former behaviours. They are, therefore, able to refrain from awaiting immediate gratification, and capable of understanding that a previous rule may be changed for another one.

**Key words:** *Autism, executive function, therapy, progress*

## Introduction

It may be noted that many studies on autism concentrate upon the executive function and its impairment. Duncan (1986) as well as Zelazo et al (1997) assume that the executive function (EF) relates to higher order cognitive processes concerning the ability to control one's own actions. As pointed out by Kaczmarek (2003), it is closely connected with a regulatory function of language. At the same time, Luria (1961) stated that a capability to act in accordance with verbal commands given by an examiner is established at the age of 5–6 years when the frontal lobes attain the first stage of maturity. It is worth reminding that both the social use of language and difficulties in controlling their own behaviour are characteristic of autistic persons (cf. Minshew et al, 1997, and Pierce et al, 1997). In fact, it is one

of the characteristic diagnostic features of autism (cf. Schopler, 1990). Moreover, Prior and Hoffman (1990) indicate that autistic children are reluctant to accept any changes, and that requires an ability to plan and monitor their actions.

## Method and procedure

The aim of the present study was finding an answer to the question about the dynamics of developmental changes in the EF performance of autistic children in their middle and late childhood. It was assumed that statistically significant changes in performing tasks evaluating the EF would occur in consecutive experiments done at three age periods: (1) under 55 months, (2) from 56 to 79 months, (3) over 80 months. The above periods were discriminated in accordance with the standards of developmental psychology. The results of the examinations performed in 18–24 month intervals were analyzed. The intervals were due to the changes in the children's performance and to the specificity of the work in the Clinic. The data on the particular experiments, the tasks and the level of performance of the examined children are presented in Table 1.

Table 1:  Procedure description

| Initial Stage | I examination | II examination | III examination |
|---|---|---|---|
| Participant observation | Observation | Observation | Observation |
| Assessment of the severity of autistic symptoms (ICD – 10) | Assessment of the severity of autistic symptoms (ICD – 10) | Assessment of the severity of autistic symptoms (ICD – 10) | Assessment of the severity of autistic symptoms (ICD – 10) |
| | EF experimental tasks | EF experimental tasks | EF experimental tasks |

The study had a longitudinal character and included 25 autistic children, patients of Specialised Clinic of Diagnosis and Rehabilitation in Lublin, Poland, who were in close contact with the clinic for at least three years. The information about the children who were evaluated during three consecutive series of examinations is given in Table 2.

Three tasks making the assessment of an ability to inhibit and to change the principle of action possible were administered in order to evaluate the level of executive disorders:

## Table 2:  Description of examined children

|  |  | N | Mean age | Minimum age | Maximum age |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age in months I examination | Boys | 21 | 52.33 | 48 | 54 |
|  | Girls | 4 | 49.75 | 43 | 53 |
|  | Total | 25 | 51.92 | 43 | 54 |
| Age in months II examination | Boys | 21 | 74.81 | 68 | 79 |
|  | Girls | 4 | 67.25 | 59 | 70 |
|  | Total | 25 | 73.60 | 59 | 79 |
| Age in months III examination | Boys | 21 | 94.71 | 83 | 110 |
|  | Girls | 4 | 92.75 | 90 | 99 |
|  | Total | 25 | 94.40 | 83 | 110 |

- EF 1 – sorting geometrical figures in accordance with a given category. Two categories – the shape and colour – were applied, and changed in random order. As pointed out by Russel (1997),accomplishing such tasks requires an ability to inhibit one reaction and perform the other, which is closely connected with a self-regulation of behaviour.
- EF 2 – the delay of reward that measures an ability to refrain from awaiting immediate gratification.
- EF 3 – selecting pictures in accordance with changing principles given in a random order by an examiner.

Three hypotheses were formulated:

1. Significant statistical changes in the level of figure sorting will occur in consecutive examinations.
2. Significant statistical changes in the level of an ability to refrain from awaiting immediate gratification will occur in consecutive examinations.
3. Significant statistical changes in the level of an ability to make appropriate selections will occur in consecutive examinations.

A statistical analysis of the results was performed with the SPSS 12.0 PL program for Windows. In order to evaluate the statistical significance of the changes observed in particular examinations Bonferronie Test was used.

## Results

Stable progress in the performance of all the examined tasks was noted (cf. Fig. 1). It means that the examined children showed considerable improvement in their ability to change the principle of selection (EF1), to refrain from awaiting gratification (EF2), and to inhibit action in accordance with the requirements of the arising situation (EF3).

**Figure 1.  Changes in performance of EF tasks in consecutive examinations**
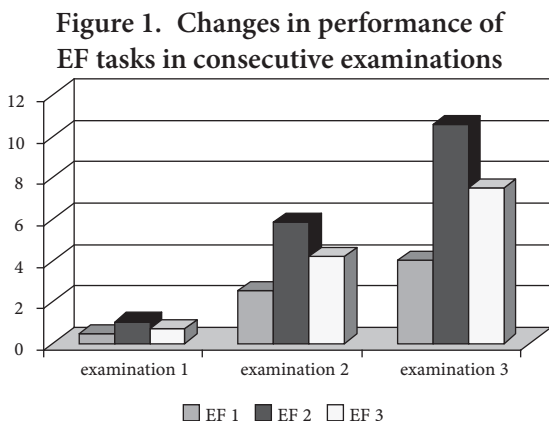


The progress in all of those skills was statistically significant in case of all the three consecutive examinations (cf. Table 3). It allows the conclusion that autistic children prove to be able to plan and control their own actions as well as use working memory to fulfill particular tasks. The above progress, however, is possible only as a result of carefully designed therapeutic procedure, which was described in detail in other publication (Markiewicz, 2007).

## Conclusions

It might be worth pointing out that the tasks given to the children in the present study are highly structured and do not require a capability of flexible and active reasoning in contrast to the ToM tasks (cf. Markiewicz, 2007). Moreover, the inhibition of action is a common experience of most children in their family settings, which means that such a task is closely related to real life situations. At the same time, as pointed out above, the tasks used in the study were performed along with the therapy conducted by the examiner herself in the Specialised Clinic of Diagnosis and Rehabilitation. It means that the examined skills had been trained during the course of therapy. It is also important to remember that the tasks used in the experiments described here were based upon a recurrent sequence of events and were rather stable in their nature. Hence, the results presented in the paper should not be generalised and treated as an indication that in autistic children age

Table 3: Significance of differences between mean results in individual EF tasks in consecutive examinations (Bonferronie test).

| Depend-ent variable | Examina-tion | Examina-tion | Mean dif-ference | Standard deviation | Signifi-cance | Confidence interval 95% | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Upper range | Lower range |
| EF1 | 1 | 2 | −2.098(*) | .489 | .000 | −3.30 | −.90 |
| | | 3 | −3.538(*) | .489 | .000 | −4.74 | −2.34 |
| | 2 | 1 | 2.098(*) | .489 | .000 | .90 | 3.30 |
| | | 3 | −1.440(*) | .494 | .014 | −2.65 | .23 |
| | 3 | 1 | 3.538(*) | .489 | .000 | 2.34 | 4.74 |
| | | 2 | 1.440(*) | .494 | .014 | .23 | 2.65 |
| EF2 | 1 | 2 | −4.802(*) | 1.090 | .000 | −7.47 | −2.13 |
| | | 3 | −9.522(*) | 1.090 | .000 | −12.19 | −6.85 |
| | 2 | 1 | 4.802(*) | 1.090 | .000 | 2.13 | 7.47 |
| | | 3 | −4.720(*) | 1.100 | .000 | −7.42 | −2.02 |
| | 3 | 1 | 9.522(*) | 1.090 | .000 | 6.85 | 12.19 |
| | | 2 | 4.720(*) | 1.100 | .000 | 2.02 | 7.42 |
| EF3 | 1 | 2 | −3.508(*) | .461 | .000 | −4.64 | −2.38 |
| | | 3 | −6.788(*) | .461 | .000 | −7.92 | −5.66 |
| | 2 | 1 | 3.508(*) | .461 | .000 | 2.38 | 4.64 |
| | | 3 | −3.280(*) | .466 | .000 | −4.42 | −2.14 |
| | 3 | 1 | 6.788(*) | .461 | .000 | 5.66 | 7.92 |
| | | 2 | 3.280(*) | .466 | .000 | 2.14 | 4.42 |

is a sufficient factor for acquiring abilities of improving working memory action and of being able to react to adequately dynamic changes in the environment.

The above findings have also more general pedagogical implications. They show that a well-designed therapeutic procedure may lead to developing an ability of self-control even in cases of such a severe disorder as autism. It might, therefore, be also of use in the treatment of other developmental disorders, just to mention ADHD.

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# Evaluating the Surrounding World, One's Own Personality and One's Own Future by the Youth and the Emotions Shown by Them

## Abstract

The basic thesis I intend to prove here is as follows: there is a close connection between emotional resources of young people and the cognitive style presented by them.

To justify the above thesis, some empirical research had to be done, whose aim was to show the educational provision of the youth with emotional resources and the cognitive style. The researches were carried out not only in Poland, but Norway as well. The participants were students of junior high schools, high schools and universities. They also included working people, computer players, and the disabled (paraplegics). It is worth mentioning that the cognitive element of emotions appears in a great number of conceptions.

**Key words:** *cognitive style, personality, emotions*

## Introduction

The conscious emotional representation may, according to J. Reykowski (1974), arise at one of two levels: a lower lever, allowing for a ready-made expressional procedure, and a higher level, allowing for expressing the presented fact or process in symbolical forms.

Arising representation of emotions at the coding level can be found in the conception by K. Obuchowski (1982). According to the author of "The Codes of Orientation and the Structure of Emotional Processes", the sources of emotions are

messages received by an individual, which can be considered taking their objective and emotional value into account. The objective value is the scale of how much the news included in the message suit the individual's needs. The emotional reaction associating the message reception is representation of the needs. K. Obuchowski thinks that cognition is a higher and organized form of orientation, and the lowest code of orientation is the code in which no information about the outer world has any importance for the individual's behaviour. K. Obuchowski calls this a homeostatic code. Outer information is processed by the whole system, and finds its representation in a shift of homeostasis process. As a result of such an approach, it can be stated, following K. Obuchowski, that homeostatic coding is the primary source of emotion.

The current cognitive approach can be found in conceptions of G.L. Clore (1992), and also N. H. Frijd (1993), R. Lazarus (1993) and K. Scherer (1993).

G. l. Clore (1994) thinks that since emotions are states of mind, then there is some cognitive process in them. In his opinion, appearance of a situation perceived as a negative or positive from an individual's point of view is a necessary condition for emotions to appear. According to G L. Clore, cognitive evaluation does not need to have a conscious character. Though information processing which causes an emotion unconscious, the importance of informational and motivating results of emotions depends on their conscious experiencing, as well as conscious focusing of an individual.

According to N. H. Frijd (1993), some elementary level of cognitive engagement is necessary if emotional experience is supposed to go beyond a simple affection.

R. Lazarus (1993) states that a stimulus arouses emotions only on condition of analyzing its meaning, similarly to K. Schrerer (1993) who says that arousing emotions requires some cognitive processes.

Not all conceptions of emotions take into consideration their cognitive concept. Some of them prefer an unconscious affection assuming that emotional processes may take place outside an individual's consciousness. Its example is R. Zajonc's theory showing that an emotion takes first place before a thought and may be independent of it. R. Zajonc states that unconscious cognition differs from unconscious affection in the fact that the first one must always have some objective reference (content), while unconscious affection may freely "flow" from one stimulus to another (LeDoux 2000, pp. 61–71).

R. Bornstein (1992)also attempted to prove unconscious emotion processing. Eventually, J. Bargh's experiments (1992)showed that we can activate emotions under the threshold of our consciousness, however these unconscious processes may influence our way of thinking and acting in social situations.

According to R. Davidson and P. Ekman (1998, p.254), the growing number of data proves that an emotion aroused beyond an individual's consciousness is characterized by different features from those of an emotion aroused by conscious factors.

Paying a lot of attention, in the mentioned research, to a cognitive component of emotions, it was attempted to find out how the respondents in both countries perceive themselves, their future and the surrounding world. All these three components are studied, in the mentioned results, by M. Blackburn and H. Wilkinson's Questionnaire of Cognitive Style. The authors of the questionnaire started from the depressive cognitive triad, therefore the first component is a collection of negative/positive evaluations, convictions and opinions concerning an individual. The second component of the cognitive triad is a tendency to interpret current experiences in a negative/positive way. The respondents perceive the surrounding world as the one demanding too much from them, which they are not able to fulfill. The third component includes negative/positive evaluations and predictions about the future. Images of future events are full of convictions of difficulties and hardships, which

**Figure 1.  The cognitive style in the studied groups**
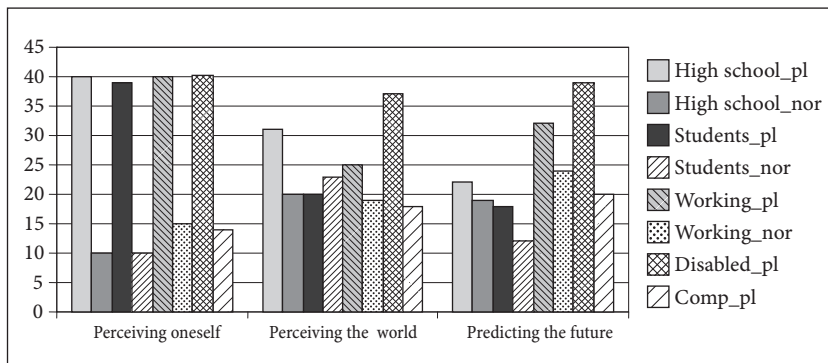


will always be present. Being convinced of future failures and defeats and negative emotions accompanying them makes an individual lose their will to act. They are motivating factor, causing the conviction and feeling of hopelessness.

M. Blackburn and H. Wilkinson's questionnaire includes a series of short descriptions of situations which may happen in everyday life. Each situation is followed by alternative ways of thinking and feeling in such a situation. A given respondent is asked to imagine that these situations actually happened to them and to choose a thought which is the closest to their way of thinking (Stach, Zięba

1992). The questionnaire contains 30 situations, each of which has four possible scores from 1 to 4. The maximum score – 120 – means the worst result. The best score is 30 points for the whole questionnaire.

Let us look at the results obtained by Polish and Norwegian groups after doing the whole questionnaire. The issue is illustrated in Figure 1 and the following tables.

## The Poles

The average point value scored by the respondents in the Polish groups calculated for one person and the average point value for the styles and their standard deviations are presented in Table 1.
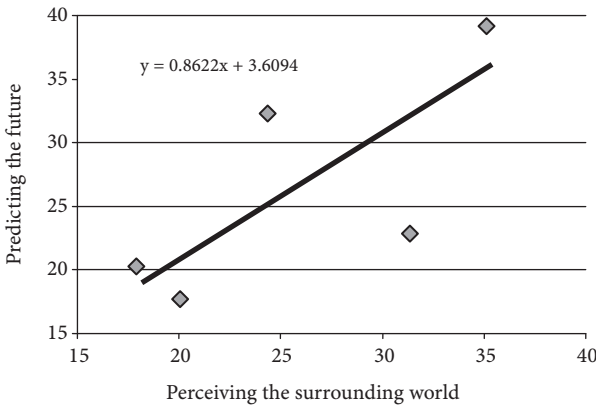
Table 1  The average point value for different elements of the cognitive
style and their standard deviations in the Polish groups.

| Points/ Person | High school pl | Students pl | Working people pl | Disabled pl | Computer players pl | Average | Standard deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceiving oneself | 40 | 39 | 40 | 40 | 14 | 34.6 | 11.5 |
| Perceving the surrounding world | 31 | 20 | 25 | 37 | 18 | 26.2 | 7.9 |
| Predicting the future | 22 | 18 | 32 | 39 | 20 | 26.2 | 9 |
| Total | 93 | 77 | 97 | 116 | 52 | 87 | 24 |

As shown above, the lowest score for perceiving oneself was obtained by the computer players. The players' score is almost three times lower than the one obtained in other groups. They also obtained the lowest score for perceiving the surrounding world, but the difference from other groups is lower than before and almost places itself within the range of changes defined by the standard deviation. The students' score is quite low, as well. The highest score, twice as big as the one obtained by the computer players and students, was obtained by the disabled. All in all, the highest score was obtained by the disabled while the lowest by the computer players. The difference in the score with reference to the average value in these groups exceeds the value of the standard deviation. A clear connection

between perceiving the surrounding world and predicting the future can be seen here, which is shown in Figure 2. The groups which obtained the highest score for perceiving the world also had a high score for predicting the future. No connection with perceiving oneself was noticed.

**Fig. 2  The connection between different elements of the cognitive style in the Polish groups**

$$y = 0.8622x + 3.6094$$

_(Scatter plot: x-axis "Perceiving the surrounding world" ranging 15 to 40; y-axis "Predicting the future" ranging 15 to 40.)_

## The Norwegians

The average point value obtained by the respondents in the Norwegian groups calculated for one person and the average point value for the styles and their standard deviations are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2  The average point value for different elements of the cognitive style and their standard deviations in the Norwegian groups**

| Points/Person | High schools Nor | Students Nor | Working people Nor | Average | Standard deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceiving oneself | 10 | 10 | 15 | 13.4 | 3.2 |
| Perceiving the surrounding world | 20 | 23 | 19 | 21.0 | 2.9 |
| Predicting the future | 19 | 12 | 24 | 20.2 | 6.5 |
| Total | 50 | 45 | 58 | 54.6 | 10.9 |

As seen above, in the Norwegian groups the highest score for all three elements of the cognitive style was obtained by the working people, while the lowest by the students. The latter ones also obtained the lowest score for predicting the future. The difference in their score and the average value exceeds the value of the standard deviation. In the other groups the differences in the score with reference to the average value in these groups do not exceed the value of the standard deviation. A clear connection between perceiving oneself and predicting the future can be seen here (Figure 3). The groups which obtained the highest score for perceiving oneself also had a high score for predicting the future. No credible connection with perceiving the surrounding world was noticed.

**Fig. 3  The connection between various elements of the cognitive style in the Norwegian groups**
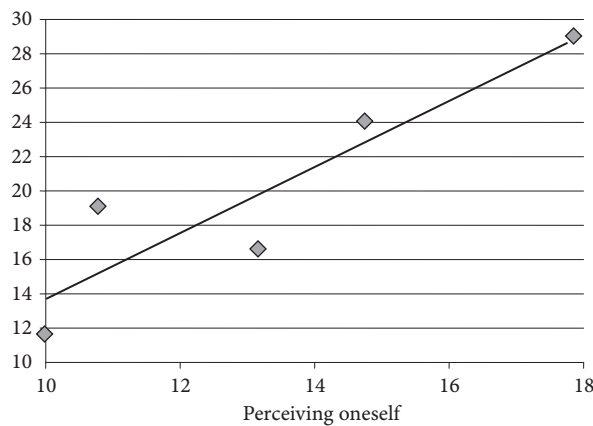


## Comparing the Poles and the Norwegians

With the use of test t, the average scores obtained by the Poles and the Norwegians were compared. The scores for particular styles and totals were higher for the Poles than the Norwegians. The importance of these differences is defined by the levels calculated on the basis of the test of trust level, which is shown in Table 3.

The differences in perceiving oneself in both groups, the differences in score totals, may be considered statistically important. Definitely less important, but still acceptable is the difference in styles of perceiving the surrounding world and predicting the future. It can be noticed that the Poles value the future rather on

the basis of perceiving the surrounding world, while the Norwegians on the basis of the self-perception point of view.

Let us try and sum up the scores obtained in the Polish and Norwegian groups in the range of the cognitive style. So, as for particular components, there are some differences between both countries. In Poland the best scores for self-perception were obtained by computer players. The worst ones were obtained, which seems to be understandable, by the disabled i.e. paraplegics. The high school students, university students and working people have

**Table 3  The average scores obtained for components of the cognitive style and trust levels obtained by the Poles and the Norwegians**

| Components of the cognitive style | A |
|---|---|
| Perceiving oneself | 0.006 |
| Perceiving the surrounding world | 0.111 |
| Predicting the future | 0.132 |
| Total | 0.018 |

low self-perception, although these groups value the surrounding world more. Although, predicting the future looks more or less the same in all the investigated groups, the worst results were obtained by the paraplegics, and what is interesting, the working people.

The situation is different in Norway. In the researched groups from this country the best scores in the range of the three elements of the cognitive style were obtained by the students. The latter ones have particularly high self-assessment, although high scores were also found among the high school students. Whereas the worst results for the whole cognitive style were obtained by the working people, although when compared with the Polish working people, they perceive the surrounding world and predict their own future much better, and have higher self-assessment. In the Norwegian groups a clear connection between self-assessment and predicting their own future appeared. Whereas in the Polish groups there is a different type of connection. It was determined between perceiving the surrounding world and predicting the future.

It is worth pondering if any connection exists between the cognitive style of the respondents presented here and their emotional resources. Figure 4 shows dependences taking place between the results of various tests checking emotional resources ( the multiple-choice test and the Questionnaire of Examining Emotional Experiences QEEE) which were obtained in the Polish and Norwegian groups. Two issues result from the Figure. Firstly, it can be noticed that the scores obtained in the multiple-choice test rise alongside the increase in the number of points obtained in the Questionnaire of Examining Emotional Experiences. The disabled

people, who obtained lower scores than expected diverge greatly from the direction of changes.

**Figure 4  The connection between the cognitive style of the examined Poles and Norwegians and their emotional resources in various tests**
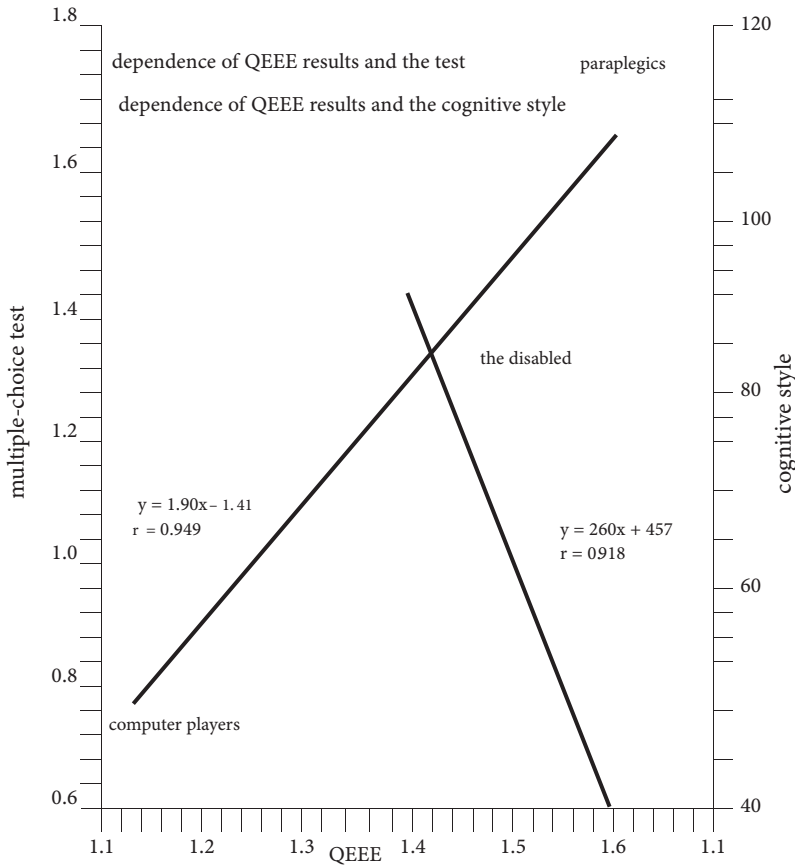


Secondly, it can be seen in Figure 4 that there is a tendency to a decrease in points for the cognitive style alongside an increase in points in the Questionnaire of Examining Emotional Experiences. The disabled are an exception as they have much higher scores than predicted, and the computer players whose scores are lower than predicted. This situation cannot be explained only by means of the measurement. Therefore, it was decided to do quality research and interviews were made with the respondents from particular groups, whose core was transcendental

reduction allowing to get to the essence of experiencing emotions. This method was used mainly because of the fact that the Questionnaire of Examining Emotional Experiences contained two scales, and in each of them the respondent could receive from 0 to 3 points for each statement, and both for proper marking the answers referring to dysfunctional emotions and those pointing at experiencing creative emotions. Whereas, thanks to the use of transcendental-phenomenological reduction it was possible to get to descriptions of senses and the essence of the components which constitute experiencing emotions from the point of view of "I". Here are some examples:

> **CASE 1:** Poland – a disabled man (paraplegia). He scored 98 points altogether for all the three components of the cognitive style, while the worst score was for "perceiving his own person". The respondent scored 34 points in the multiple-choice test and 44 points in the Questionnaire of Examining Emotional Experiences. Both research tools showed clearly that the respondent experiences dysfunctional emotions, such as: sadness, jealousy, which was proved by the following description of emotional experiences in the situation he was in: "There are no reasons to be happy. What can you be happy about after all? When I can see other boys running, cycling then … I get really angry. Why did this unfortunate jump into the water happen to me? The others made it and still are. And I have such bad luck. And now, when my girlfriend is looking at other boys with such admiration … I feel like hurting her, and then doing something to myself. I think about it now and then, but I don't know how to do it quickly, successfully and without any pain."

The picture of emotional experiences of the computer players looks different, which can be proved by the descriptions of these emotions made by means of the phenomenological reduction:

> **CASE 2:** Poland – a youngster, addicted to playing computer games (3–4 hours a day). He scored 47 points in the Questionnaire of Examining Emotional Experiences, while the best score was for perceiving his own person. The total of points for the multiple-choice test was 30, whereas in the Questionnaire of Emotional Experiences – 52 points. Because of the fact that envy and emotional coldness took very high positions in both tools, he was asked to describe the first emotion: "I'm freaking out when I can see what a posh car my mate drives. What is he better than me at? Maybe at one thing, his old man has got loads of money. I have got an itchy hand to mark their car somehow…" When asked about sensitivity to others, he states spitefully: "What is that

supposed to bring? Let everybody take care of themselves. There is no time for that, I've got to think about myself. I'm not a loser."

**CASE 3:** Poland – a boy addicted to playing strategic games. The total number of points scored in The Questionnaire of the Cognitive Style was 38, where the best results were referred to both perceiving his own person and predicting the future. He scored 82 points for the multiple-choice test. His score in the Questionnaire of Emotional Experiences was equally high (80 points). Dysfunctional emotions (mainly hatred and anger) and creative emotions such as satisfaction were noticed in both of the tests. Describing hatred he said: "I can't stand anybody being in my way when I want to achieve something. I feel disgust, repulsion and even contempt towards them." "When I'm angry, everything is boiling inside of me. I'm ready to kill, I speak bluntly, they say I humiliate others but I don't remember that. Lots of things make me angry and I often get angry myself, but my family and friends know about it, so they get out of my way." As for the creative emotion, which is satisfaction, it is mainly aroused by a possibility of playing a new game, and also the situation "when everything goes smoothly." He was not able to describe this feelings in detail, limiting himself mainly to statement such as: "It's cool.", "I'm feeling ok."

**CASE 4:** Poland – a boy playing mainly simulators. He is one of the group of computer players who obtained a high number of points for the cognitive style (89 points). The score obtained in the Questionnaire of Emotional Experiences (76 points) did not match the one the respondent received in the multiple-choice test (48 points). The number is not what matters, but the discrepancy of emotions shown in each test. He described jealousy caught in the test as a dysfunctional emotion in the following way: "I'm suspicious and uneasy when a guy is staring at my girlfriend. If I could, I would kill him." His description was confirmed by the diagnosis of another dysfunctional emotion found in the Questionnaire of Examining Emotional Experiences – greed: "What I lust most in my life is money. You've got the money, you rule the world. Of course, I'm not going to wear my butt working. It's enough to manage to get it and not to throw it about." In both tests the respondent showed a creative emotion i.e. mobilizing fear, and that is how he described experiencing it: "I'm not afraid of anything, unless somebody stronger than me, but still I try to cheat them, keep myself busy with something else to give myself time."

The above descriptions of emotional experiences made by the computer players show that despite the fact that some of them obtained good results for the cognitive

style, their emotions are often diametrically different, and they sometimes literally experience them the other way round.

Let us move on to the effects of the phenomenological reduction used in the other groups.

> **CASE 5:** A high school student from Poland. He received 91 points for the whole Questionnaire of the Cognitive Style, where the best score was for predicting the future, and the worst for perceiving his own person. He obtained 46 points in the multiple-choice test. And not really more in the Questionnaire of Emotional Experiences – 50 points. Anger turned out to be the most domineering dysfunctional emotion in both tests, experiencing of which he expressed in the following way: "When I fly into a rage, I'm like a mad man; I foam at my mouth, throw things around, I vent my anger on others. Later, when I have calmed down, I apologize to everybody and try to make up for it." Whereas noticed in both test a creative emotion – reconciliation – was described by him in the following way: "I don't like being angry with anybody for too long. That's why, even if I don't feel guilty, I make the first step and hold out the olive-branch. I feel relieved then and I want to live".

But the same emotions shown by another respondent from the same group were not experienced identically, which is clearly presented by:

> **CASE 6:** A girl – a high school student from Poland. Her cognitive style was diagnosed at 83 points, where the best scores were obtained for perceiving the surrounding world and the worst for predicting the future. Both the multiple-choice test and the Questionnaire of Emotional Experiences pointed out clearly the respondent's two dysfunctional emotions i.e. anger and sadness. Experiencing the first of them was expressed in the following way: "When I get angry, I mainly get outraged and treat others impolitely". Talking about experiencing sadness, she said: "When I'm sad, I become melancholic, I cry and go to somebody to talk".

A totally different way of experiencing emotions can be noticed in the group of high school students from Norway, which is shown in the description of creative emotions experienced by these students:

> **CASE 7:** A female high school student, who obtained 32 points for the cognitive style. In the multiple-choice test the total number of points was 90 (out of 96 possible), whereas in the Questionnaire of Emotional Experiences the score was 86. And here is how she was describing her emotion of kindness:

"I am friendly towards all people, even my biggest enemies. It surprises some people, they even criticize me for that. But I feel fine with that. I feel happy when I tell others that I don't want anything bad to happen to them. I smile at them then because people expect a smile and a good word".

One of the creative emotions appearing in the group of the Norwegian high school students was most often admiration for achievements of another person, which is contradictory to envy. The respondents expressed experiencing it in a similar way, which is shown among others by:

**CASE 8:** A male high school student from Norway – he received 46 points in the Questionnaire of the Cognitive Style. Equally high results were obtained in the multiple-choice test (84 points) and in the Questionnaire of Emotional Experiences (81 points). Admiration for achievements of another person turned out to be the most distinctive creative emotion in both tools, and was expressed during the interview: "I'm surprised by some of my mates when I can see what they are able to do. I share their enjoyment, especially when their achievements are rewarded by adults".

The same emotion was equally often experienced in a bit different way in the group of the Norwegian students, which is shown by:

**CASE 9:** A male university student from Oslo. She scored 69 points in the Questionnaire of the Cognitive Style. In the multiple-choice test the total number of points was 79, whereas in the Questionnaire of Emotional Experiences the score was 75. Admiration for achievements of another person as a motivating emotion was expressed by her as follows: "When I admire somebody I just go into raptures over this person".

Another creative emotion appearing in the group of the Norwegian students was mobilizing fear, which one of the students described in the following way:

**CASE 10:** A university student from Norway. He received a poor score in the Questionnaire of the Cognitive Style – 93 points, where the worst was perceiving the surrounding world and predicting the future. Much better results were obtained by him in the multiple-choice test (78 points) and in the Questionnaire of Emotional Experiences (80 points). That is how he describes his emotion of fear: "Although I am shaking inside, I collect all my power for fight or run away".

In the group of the Polish students two different emotions turned out to a very significant emotion, i.e. dysfunctional emotion of envy and a creative emotion

– generosity. Sometimes these two emotions were noticed in the same person at their highest intensity, e.g.:

> CASE 11: A female university student from Poland, who received 88 points for the cognitive style, where the worst result was for perceiving her own person. In the multiple-choice test the total number of points was 49, whereas in the Questionnaire of Emotional Experiences the score was 51. Her description of experienced anger looked like that: "When somebody is throwing their money around, I writhe in anger and get really furious". At the same time the student showed, as the above-mentioned tests presented, an emotion of generosity which was described in the interview as follows: "When I have money, I give it away, first of all to those who I love, but also to those who I like. I feel happy then".

However, quite often two other emotions from the group of dysfunctional and creative appeared in the group of the Polish students, which can be illustrated with this example:

> CASE 12: A female polytechnic student from Poland. She obtained one of the lowest scores in the Questionnaire of the Cognitive Style in this group i.e. 102 points. Both the multiple-choice test and the Questionnaire of Emotional Experiences showed that she had a dysfunctional emotion – a destructive fear expressed in the following words: "When I am afraid, my legs just sink into the ground, my body shakes, I can't collect my thoughts", and a creative emotion – kindness and sensitivity towards others, which she describes as follows: "I'm very emotional and affectionate towards those who suffer any harm. My heart breaks if I'm not able to help them in any way, I'll at least stroke them or give them a hug".

Creative emotions – kindness and sensitivity towards others could be also found among many working people, although there were more cases of dysfunctional emotions, such as: hatred, envy or greed. Their exemplification can be found in the examples below:

> CASE 13: A young computer specialist from Poland. His cognitive style can be regarded as satisfactory since he received 36 points in the Questionnaire of the Cognitive style. The total number of points in the multiple-choice test was not so impressive since it was only 38 points, similarly to the Questionnaire of Emotional Experiences – 43 points. He expressed the experienced emotion of hatred in the following form: "When I can see my boss, my

stomach turns upside down. I have been hiding this terrible hatred inside because I'm afraid he might fire me. I despise him and I hope that he will be ..." As for the greed he experienced: "We are living in such times that the importance of a person is measured by the amount of money they possess. It's that I don't earn little, but I am supposed to nibble a little bit of the money, I get sick, or I can't sleep." At the same time this young man shows an emotion of kindness towards people expressed not only in the two tests in use but also in the following description: "Except for my boss, I wish all people would have as successful lives as possible, be healthy and have a lot of money ... ha, ha, ha."

**CASE 14:** A female clerk from Poland. She obtained 49 points in the Questionnaire of the Cognitive Style, where the best result was for perceiving the surrounding world. She obtained 46 points in the multiple-choice test, whereas in the Questionnaire of Emotional Experiences – 51 points. The emotion of kindness and sensitivity, which was revealed in the research, was expressed in the following words: "I'm said to be stupid, and I want to give them my heart. I'm touched by the life of other people, especially sick and poor children. I buy them not only sweets and books, but I can also kiss them heartedly". The same woman, showing the emotions of kindness and sensitivity to others, also experiences emotions of envy: "I get angry when the boss favours my colleague, or when I can see her wearing a new piece of clothing".

Envy was not so often noticed in the Norwegian group when compared to the Polish one. Quite the contrary, they had a totally opposite creative emotion – admiration for achievements of another person. Their descriptions can be found in the following cases:

**CASE 15:** A female clerk from Norway. She received 39 points for the cognitive style, which include the best result for perceiving the surrounding world. She obtained 53 points in the multiple-choice test, whereas in the Questionnaire of Emotional Experiences – 55 points. In the interview she said: "It makes me proud when the department manager awards one of my workmates. It's to work with somebody who is above the level, who is hard-working and competent ... I also get delighted with the style of clothing of some of my friends'. I am happy that they have such good taste". She also expressed the feeling of satisfaction saying: "I feel happy when I enter my office".

These two creative emotions were experienced a bit differently by:

> **CASE 16:**  A young university worker from Norway. He received a not too high score in the Questionnaire of the Cognitive Style – 77 points, where the best scores were for predicting the future and perceiving his own person. In the multiple-choice test the total number of points was 63, whereas in the Questionnaire of Emotional Experiences the score was 71. Experiencing an emotion of admiration for the achievements of other people was expressed in these words: "When I can see what other university workers achieve, I feel like living. I congratulate them on that frankly, I am happy with them and decide to get down to hard work not to feel ashamed for doing nothing". Whereas the experienced emotion of satisfaction is expressed by: "I really enjoy working at the university".

Let us sum up all the issues concerning connections between emotional resources of the respondents from both countries and the cognitive system represented by them. On the whole, the respondents who obtained high scores in the tests diagnosing emotional resources (especially in the Questionnaire of Emotional Experiences) most often obtained low scores in M. Blackburn and H. Wilkinson's Questionnaire of Cognitive Style. It means that the higher self-assessment one had, predicted their own future better and perceived their surrounding more precisely, the more creative emotions one had and experienced. Two researched groups diverted from this rule. The first one is the group of computer players who achieving a low score in the multiple-choice test and the Questionnaire of Cognitive Style, also obtained a low number of points in the cognitive style. The other group – paraplegics – inversely; high scores in the tests establishing emotional resources were accompanied by high scores in the cognitive style. Not all the cases proved the rule in all the researched groups. What is more, high scores obtained in the Questionnaire of Emotional Experiences because of two scales used in this tool and an extended range of possible answers for each statement, not always indicated a rich emotional resource of a given individual. Therefore, the transcendental reduction was used, which allowed to reach the essence of experienced emotions. It can be clearly seen that in the group of paraplegics high scores in the multiple-choice test and in the Questionnaire of Emotional Experiences are not always accompanied by high scores in the cognitive style. On the other hand, it is not true that all the computer players achieving low scores in tests establishing emotional resources, also obtained low scores in the Questionnaire of Cognitive Style. Finally, in other groups the one who perceived their own person well, the surrounding world and the future not always showed a lot of creative emotions.

Each of the researched respondents usually showed various results in the range of particular elements of the discussed cognitive triad. Each of them, as shown by the phenomenological reduction, experienced both researched dysfunctional and creative emotions in a different way.

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# Sociology
# of Family

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The New Educational Review

# Stepfather and His Stepson.
# Sociological Case Study of the Stepfamily

## Abstract

In a stepfamily an array of factors disrupt children development, particularly in social, emotional, moral and volitional areas. Abandoning a family by one of the parents as a result of divorce, then remarriage of the parent who gets custody of a child cause nuisance and yield aggravating situations. Although they are difficult to deal with, a child has to face and overcome them. Children development and social functioning is conditioned by childhood experiences-all negative incidents might affect their further life.

**Key words:** *stepfamily sociology, stepfather, stepson, children adjustment.*

## Introduction

According to the data gathered by Z. Dąbrowska (2003, p. 7) remarriage is contracted by 35% of childless people; 31% of people having their own child (or children); 26% of people having children from prior marriages and 8% of people who have children both from previous and temporary marriage.

The numbers shown in the above paragraph confirm structural differences of reconstructed marriages and families (stepfamilies), moreover these statistics indicate how complicated and unusual the relationships are in such families. Quoting Z. Dąbrowska (2003, p. 7), this type of family comes across various psychological, legal, educational and even financial standing problems-problems which are distinctive for reconstructed families not natural ones. Confirmation of this can be found in M. Przetacznik-Gierowska's paper (1993, b). In reconstructed families,

after remarriage of a parent who gets custody of a child or children from the former marriage, specific difficulties in the area of adaptation and education arise. The structure of reconstructed family (stepfamily) is particularly inconvenient for the child's emotional development. Since a stranger replaces a parent it evokes fear of losing mother's or father's love and attention and in consequence disturbs psychological balance and emotional safety.

## Family description. Research method

The family that was the object of the research is a stepfamily. It consists of: a mother, a father, two sons from the mother's former marriage –Maciek and his younger brother, and a daughter – common child of the mother and the stepfather. The mother is a clerk, the stepfather works as an insurance agent. They both completed high schools. Maciek is 27 and is a car salesman.

The main aim of the research was to uncover Maciek's experiences and feelings connected with his stepfamily. I tried to estimate how Maciek finds his relations with his father and stepfather, and if the divorce and remarriage have influenced Maciek's mental and emotional life, moreover how it all affected his school achievements and behaviour.

In the research the employed methods were: not directed interview with general schedule, direct hidden observation and "Unfinished Sentences Test". Additionally, a picture of the family, drawn by Maciek, was enclosed in the gathered data. The research was led in Maciek's flat and his mother and stepfather's flat.

## Case study with reference to other authors' quantitive research

In Maciek's family, his mother's main attempts at educating her children had been conversation, reward and punishment. According to her opinion conversation is the best method as it endows with good relationships and understanding. But the stepfather was willing to default all discipline and authority over Maciek to his natural parent – mother. H. Cudak (2004, p. 76), analyzing the passive attitude of stepfathers, points out: " *Educational process in a stepfamily is perturbed because stepparents tend to be passive and do not take part in educating their partner's offspring. They seem to keep secure distance not to be overwhelmed with problems and educational mistakes*".

In his childhood Maciek has elevated rates of behavioural problems, peer relationship problems, academic difficulties and school discipline problems. He did not attach importance to school duties: he did not do homework or the reading, played truant, did not have basic school accessories such as copybooks for example. In consequence a few times he was given a severe reprimand by a teacher for the blameworthy behaviour. Attending parents-teachers meetings was the duty of his mother as the stepfather, also in this case, did not feel responsible. The mother was very resentful of her son's school behaviour. She kept explaining how important it is to learn and finish school. Occasionally, she helped him with his homework. In fact, the help was too rare and not efficient, mainly because of numerous responsibilities she had. Along with professional work, Maciek's mother dealt with housework, taking care of three children, even completing studies. She confessed that: *"If I had had more time, helped him more often, and controlled his housework, he would have learned much better"*. Pitifully, school problems were not the only and the most serious ones. When Maciek was a teenager, he fell into a bad company and it caused tremendous trouble. His behaviour still worsened: he started to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, play truant, he even began to break the law: he committed offences, even crimes. It happened that Maciek, having lost control of aggression, broke a shop window. Caught by the police, he was fined. When his mother was informed about what her son had done, she was indignant and she made a row. Among all the tribulations, as Maciek admits, the worst thing was stealing his friend's leather jacket. Although induced by the friends, he did commit the crime. As the police investigated the case, the prosecutor wanted to sue him. He was threatened with prison. Maciek was even held in custody for 10 days during the time of investigation. Maciek did not expect such serious consequences, not mentioning that he could lose freedom. Fortunately, his mother and stepfather's help kept him from the sentence. Probably fear and a tremendous stress connected with imprisonment (arrest brought him into contact with an aggressive subculture), made Maciek reconsider his deeds and behaviour. Maciek considers this experience as the real turning point in his life. During the interview he reflects "*All that I underwent in the arrest taught me a lesson for my whole life and then I promised my family not to break the law and abide by it*". From that moment on the stopped his contacts with his former colleagues and endeavored to live responsibly, not coming into conflict with the law. Maciek admitted: "*My poor school achievements, unacceptable behaviour, committed crimes were some kind of vent for my feelings. I discharged my aggression after my parents had divorced and my mom had remarried. I was a small boy and my mother did not give me enough time and attention, my stepfather even less, not to mention my dad, who seemed to have forgotent about*

*me. One can say I was left alone, and the only ally was the playground, which had a strong influence on my behaviour – it simply educated me.*

The above findings are in line with B. Kromolicka's research (1998, p. 49). According to the author children growing up in stepfamilies are prone to have school problems. They make up the most numerous group of maladjusted students. Going further, it is significant that 8% of them are girls and 41.9% boys. Referring to the figures in Table 1. it can be seen that boys, growing up in reconstructed families with stepfathers, have more school problems than girls. They have poorer school achievements and have more difficulties with adjusting to school environment. The comparative analyses of school successes and failure of children from the two types of families (natural and reconstructed), made by B. Kromolicka confirm that the new, transformed family structure influences children's school achievements. Most often children from reconstructed families gain worse marks and generally achieve less.

Table 1:  **Children well-adjusted and maladjusted to school (in %)**

| Family type | Well-adjusted | | Maladjusted | | Total % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | |
| Natural | 36.0 | 39.0 | 9.0 | 16.0 | 100 |
| Stepfamily with stepfather | 29.9 | 24.1 | 8.0 | 38.0 | 100 |
| Stepfamily with stepmother | 4.3 | 4.8 | _ | 3.9 | 13.0 |

Source: B. Kromolicka (1998). Przystosowanie szkolne uczniów z rodzin zrekonstruowanych, *Problemy Rodziny, 1*, p. 49.

Maciek's mother was punitive, she reacted habitually to his delinquencies. Most often she shouted at him, got angry, it happened that she "shook" him, but never resorted to corporal punishment. In case of misbehaviour or insubordination, his mother quite often forbade him from going out, meeting friends or watching TV. On the contrary, the stepfather executed punishments rarely, but if it occurred it was usually a verbal punishment. The mother was an authority for the discipline: she rewarded and punished. The dependence of discipline on the mother in reconstructed families, is validated, among others, by H. Cudak's (2004, s. 75) survey. The data gathered by him indicate that most often the mother is the person who uses rewards and punishments– cf. Table 2. Why is it this way? Because the stepson is not the stepfather's son. Therefore, any corporal punishment would result in growing hatred towards the stepfather. Other fathers' children do not conform to stepfathers rules-they do not want to obey them (B. Kromolicka, 1998, p 49).

**Table 2:  Children's opinion on punishment and reward exercised by parents**

| Utilized educative methods | Mother | % | Father | % | Stepmother stepfather | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Punishing | 107 | 59.4 | 102 | 56.7 | 81 | 45.0 |
| Rewarding | 162 | 90.0 | 106 | 58.9 | 124 | 68.9 |
| Not punishing | 73 | 40.6 | 78 | 43.3 | 99 | 55.0 |
| Not rewarding | 18 | 10.0 | 74 | 41.1 | 56 | 31.1 |

Source: H. Cudak (2004). Oddziaływanie wychowawcze w rodzinach zrekonstruowanych, *Pedagogika Społeczna*, *2–4*, p. 75.

**Table 3:  Kinds of punishment, imposed by parents, other than corporal punishment**

| Kind of punishment | Declarations of parents who have a child under 19 (N=390) |
|---|---|
| A ban on watching TV and films | 19% |
| A ban on going out and meeting friends | 18% |
| A ban on using computer and Internet | 13% |
| Limitation or deprivation of pocket money | 3% |
| Not buying or giving things the child wants | 2% |
| Rebuke, reprimand | 2% |
| Forbidding sweets | 2% |
| Shutting a child, ordering him/her to stand in the corner | 2% |
| Cutting off a mobile phone | 1% |
| Additional housework | 1% |
| Bans (in general) | 2% |
| Limitation of pleasures (in general) | 2% |
| Others | 2% |
| Not resorting to other punishments | 59% |

Percentages do not total 100, as the surveyed parents could enumerated out up to 3 kinds of punishment.
Source: CBOS survey – Violence and conflicts at home. February 2005, p. 14.

It seems interesting to show Maciek's case in terms of other research. Maciek's mother's discipline approach can be compared with the quantitive research conducted on a wider sample by CBOS (Public Opinion Research Centre) in 2005. The study suggests that the most common punishment is a ban on watching TV,

mainly films and cartoons cf. Table 3. Such restrictions are applied by about one fifth of parents who have children under 19 (19%). A bit smaller group of 13%, punish their children, limit access to a computer or the Internet. Another, also popular punishment is a ban on going out. Children are not allowed to meet friends. Moreover, attractions such as a swimming pool, Mac Donald's or horse riding are forbidden. These kinds of penalties are applied by 18% of parents. Some of them use financial penalties depriving children of goods or money. 3% of parents cut off or reduce the amount of pocket money, a bit fewer do not provide children with things they want. A small number of parents (1%) do not permit them to use the mobile phone. Reprimands or rebukes were pointed at by 2% of parents –they admitted that they occasionally shout at children. A similar number of parents forbid eating sweets (2%). Also a group of parents resort to methods which are not corporal punishment but cause physical inconvenience: shutting in a dark room or making children stand in the corner was not frequent (2%). Additional chores at home were imposed by about 1% of the surveyed parents.

In order to compare parents and stepparents' educational methods, H. Cudak's research was taken into consideration (2004, p. 78). In accordance with it 72.5% of natural parents prefer rising voice as a kind of punishment. Whereas only 28.7% of stepparents admitted employing this sort of action. More detailed information can be found in Table 4.

Despite misbehaviour and poor school achievements Maciek always fulfilled his duties at home. He cleaned his room, washed floors in the flat, often cleaned windows, peeled potatoes and disposed of rubbish. It happened that he took care of his younger sibling. Sometimes he picked up his younger sister from kindergarten or his 3 years younger brother from school. His mother rewarded him for performing these responsibilities mainly in verbal ways: she expressed approval, praise and recognition. Occasionally the mother gave him material rewards: a pair of new trousers, a board game, miniature cars or money. Whilst his stepfather, in recognition of his help or acceptable behaviour, no more than praised him. The studies by H. Cudak (2004, p. 77) suggest that natural parents along with stepparents tend to make use of material rewards. As a general rule they offer practical objects and things: clothing, school accessories, books, toys, sweets and so on. Looking at Table 5 it can be noticed that more than one third (35.3%) of the questioned parents often treat money as the best reward. No doubt giving money is the easiest way to motivate children but at the same time the least educative one. On the other hand, having and spending one's own money can teach children how to manage financial resources and economize.

Enquired about his relationship with his biological father Maciek answered that they did not keep in touch. When he was 9 he saw him for the last time. The father

Table 4:  The nature of punishment imposed by parents in stepfamilies

| No. | Kind of punishment | Biological parents N-160 | | Stepparents N-160 | | Total N-230 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 1. | Shouting | 116 | 72.5 | 46 | 28.7 | 162 | 50.6 |
| 2. | Rebuke, reprimand | 86 | 53.7 | 57 | 35.6 | 143 | 44.7 |
| 3. | Corporal punishment | 74 | 46.3 | 29 | 18.1 | 103 | 32.2 |
| 4. | Cutting off privileges | 37 | 23.1 | 31 | 19.4 | 68 | 21.2 |
| 5. | Cutting off pleasures (ban on going out) | 49 | 30.6 | 39 | 24.4 | 88 | 27.5 |
| 6. | Emotional punishment (such as parents' anger) | 52 | 32.5 | 16 | 10.0 | 68 | 21.2 |
| 7. | Additional duties | 34 | 21.2 | 17 | 10.6 | 51 | 15.9 |
| 8. | Humiliation and ridicule | 41 | 25.6 | 43 | 26.9 | 84 | 26.2 |
| 9. | Not punishing | 19 | 11.9 | 48 | 30.0 | 59 | 18.4 |
| 10. | Total | 508 | 317.5* | 309 | 195.0* | 826 | 251.1* |

*  Respondents could enumerate more than 1 kind of punishment, that is why there is more than 100% answers in total.

Source: H. Cudak (2004). Oddziaływanie wychowawcze w rodzinach zrekonstruowanych, *Pedagogika Społeczna, 2–4*, p. 79.

has simply forgotten about his sons. Maciek explained: "*He has never called us, never remembered about our birthdays, he has forgotten that he has sons, as if we have never existed*". *When I asked him what he would have done if his father had asked him for help, he* raised his voice and said: " *I don't want to see him ever again. He doesn't remember about us, why should I remember about him?*"

Maciek went through hard times when his parents separated and father left. He was very sad that his dad could not live with them: "*It does not matter what kind of father he was but still he is our father*". Parents' divorce influenced his life severely. In particular his emotional and mental life was submitted to significant changes. After the divorce he became reserved, introvert and timid. His family situation had also a strong impact on peer relationships:" *I was ashamed that dad had left us, that he didn't take care of us and was not concerned about our life. When my colleagues inquired about my father I kept replying that he worked abroad and visited us rarely*". Maciek tried to steer clear of family topics, because it was embarrassing for him. Only a few close friends knew about his family break-up.

**Table 5.  The nature of rewards, given by parents in stepfamilies.**

| No. | Kind of rewards | Biological parents N-160 | | Stepparents N-160 | | Total N-320 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 1. | Approval, recognition | 48 | 30.0 | 31 | 19.4 | 79 | 24.7 |
| 2. | Verbal appreciation | 57 | 35.6 | 29 | 18.1 | 86 | 26.9 |
| 3. | Extra privileges | 39 | 24.4 | 28 | 17.5 | 67 | 20.9 |
| 4. | Material reward | 86 | 53.7 | 51 | 31.9 | 137 | 42.8 |
| 5. | Money reward | 71 | 44.4 | 42 | 26.2 | 113 | 35.3 |
| 6. | Exemption of duties | 43 | 26.9 | 27 | 16.9 | 70 | 21.9 |
| 7. | Extra pleasures, attractions | 54 | 33.8 | 29 | 18.1 | 83 | 25.9 |
| 8. | Emotional rewards (such as a kiss, a hug) | 51 | 31.9 | 22 | 13.7 | 73 | 22.8 |
| 9. | Not rewarding | 8 | 5.9 | 28 | 17.5 | 36 | 11.3 |
| 10. | Total | 457 | 253.9* | 297 | 185.6* | 754 | 235.6* |

\*  Respondents could enumerate more than 1 kind of reward, that is why there is more than 100% answers in total.

Source: H. Cudak (2004). Oddziaływanie wychowawcze w rodzinach zrekonstruowanych, *Pedagogika Społeczna*, *2–4*, p. 77.

However, in retrospect he admits that: *"My mother was right that she divorced him, that she found another man, at least now she is happy, loved and appreciated. In addition I live in a normal family without quarrels and rows."* Nevertheless, "Unfinished Sentences Test" reflects Maciek's grief: *" I think my dad….. will miss us when he gets older".* Maciek was moved deeply by his father's indifference, at heart he feels sorrow that his father stopped loving him.

His relationships with the stepfather were rather miserable. Always occupied by work, his stepfather did not have time for Maciek. At most he spent time with his younger daughter or daughter from prior marriage. He read them books, took for walks, trained to ride a bike or went ice-skating. Maciek said: "I felt as if only mother took care of me". When his stepfather made any remarks he reacted sharply, although he knew he did not act properly and the stepfather was right, he always riposted: *" You are not my father, go about your business!".* As a result only Maciek's mother was able to influence his behaviour, could talk with him and help. Over the years the stepfather gradually ceased to interfere with Maciek's problems and his education. Adding things up Maciek's stepfather articulated: *"I am helpless. He will always be against what I say because I am not his natural father. What is more*

**Tabela 6: Perception of fathers' and stepfathers' attitudes in natural families and stepfamilies according to children's gender**

| Fathers' attitudes | | Gender – average values of attitude coefficient | | Significance U |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Girls | Boys | |
| Loving | Father | 32.800 | 32.473 | n.i. |
| | Stepfather | 30.727 | 28.796 | n.i. |
| Demanding | Father | 23.956 | 24.455 | n.i. |
| | Stepfather | 22.758 | 26.185 | .007 |
| Protecting | Father | 23.844 | 22.473 | n.i. |
| | Stepfather | 24.152 | 22.370 | n.i. |
| Rejecting | Father | 16.067 | 16.473 | n.i. |
| | Stepfather | 17.545 | 20.389 | .028 |
| Liberal | Father | 23.667 | 24.091 | n.i. |
| | Stepfather | 24.000 | 23.278 | n.i. |
| "Love" Factor | Father | 46.911 | 45.800 | n.i. |
| | Stepfather | 43.121 | 38.352 | .078 |
| "Liberalism" Factor | Father | 29.511 | 29.964 | n.i. |
| | Stepfather | 31.394 | 27.296 | .027 |

Source: B. Kromolicka (1997). Postawy rodzicielskie ojca i ojczyma w percepcji dziecka, *Problemy Rodziny, 4*, p. 49.

*it is the best excuse for a defiant teenager"*. Once Maciek's attitude had changed for the better, his family situation changed too. The stepfather tends to talk more with Maciek, he helps him in case of problems. Maciek is aware that, now and in the future, he can count on him and his help. As he perceived: *"My stepfather is more talkative now, he pays attention to what I do and attempts to make my life good"*. Having appreciated his stepfather's approach, Maciek has changed his attitude too. He mentioned: *"My positive attitude towards my stepfather is significantly conditioned by his relation to my mother, he is good for her, respects and loves her"*.

In Unfinished Sentences Test Maciek wrote: *" I think my stepfather… has changed for the better"*. As an adult Maciek understands his stepfather good intentions and knows, he can count on him, unlike his biological father, who has not made contact either with Maciek or his brother up till now.

In the light of B. Kromolicka's study (1997, p. 48) a stepfather, in comparison to natural father, is perceived as less loving and more rejecting – cf. the figures in

Table 6. According to children from stepfamilies, a stepfather is more reserved and less sensitive than a father in a natural family. New stepfamilies face many challenges. I. Fast and A.C. Cain (1966, pp. 485–491) underlined that a stepfather feels uncertain in the role of a parent for his stepchildren. Moreover, there are numerous obstacles which hamper being a father and fulfilling the role properly. As with any achievement, developing good stepfamily relationships requires a lot of effort. A stepfather may have the willingness and be putting forth the effort to grow into relationship with stepchildren, but they may resist , which occurs quite often. Persistent hostility or isolation arise from either aversion to a stepfather or the determination to test him-check what his reactions to improper acts will be and how much he will tolerate. B. Kromolicka (1997, p. 48) assumes that a child wants to be sure: how a stepfather will love him/her and how much freedom he/she will retain. Stepchildren's resentment and rebellion might have roots in jealousy about the mother's feelings or probably might be the reactions to the stepfather's attitude.

## Conclusions

Regarding reconstructed families, the education process is particularly complex and challenging. Difficulties are encountered not only by parents, who in most cases are not able or do not want to perform stepparent roles, but mainly by children. The stepchildren have problems with adjusting to specific, usually completely dissimilar stepfamily conditions. Having encountered a trauma connected with parents' divorce, they sometimes find it impossible to relate to a new parent. Stepparents' indifference can worsen children's situation and devastate their endeavours.

Children from reconstructed families, with comparison to natural families' children, encounter emotional and mental problems more often. It reflects in their behaviour and burdens the education process in a newly formed family. Stepchildren often hang on their anger and sadness after the loss of natural father or mother. These strong and persistent emotions deteriorate school achievements, school adaptation, cause aggression and hostility. They seem to be the sign of rebellion against the new family situation. Stepchildren miss their natural parents, in addition, they may feel torn between the parent they live with and their other parent who they only visit. Although a stepparent is, to some extent, able to replace a natural parent, stepchildren are reluctant to confer his\her parental status. A stepmother or stepfather cannot be a substitute of a biological parent because of natural, innate emotional bonds.

Summing up, it is worth quoting Ron L. Deal (2002): "*Each man who is a father and became a stepfather knows it is not the same. Although there are some similarities, the new role can astonish. Expecting a baby, discussing with other fathers, referring to one's own parents' experience can help to get ready for paternity. But do not be disguised, hardly anything will prepare for step parenting. We, as a rule, gain natural authority with our own children, which grants easier contact with them, means that we can be direct. It turns out that with children who are not your own you are always a step behind. Being a stepfather is a real challenge, that is why an abundance of stepfathers isolate from the stepchildren and withdraw from everyday responsibilities associated with their education. Since this unknown terrain is dotted with mines, it is easier to retreat than to face the 'enemy'. However, stepfathers can hold a significant and important role of leadership towards their adopted children, can provide advice, suggest the way of life, bestow love and support.*"

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# The New Educational Review

# Chronicle

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Poland

# The Motivational Role of Drama in Language Learning
## ("IMPULS" editing house, Kraków 2008)

The book  describes the outcomes of empirical research undertaken  in Polish secondary schools. The research seeks to investigate how drama improves communicative skills and, through that, how it increases pupils' intrinsic motivation. The research employs dramatic activities  the fictional contexts of which provide an incentive and motivation for talk.

Different theories  and psychological concepts of motivation are analyzed as well as linguistic theories of language acquisition. Drama is the main focus in the book. It is an effective and significant medium of teaching and learning a foreign language.

The book lays a theoretical groundwork for a psycholinguistic understanding of drama in second language acquisition and discusses the findings of a research project. It shows the importance of human interaction in language learning and how drama can promote language development through:

- a new context created,
- new roles established,
- new relationships in operation,
- new language demands made and tackled.

Drama makes things "real" and provides the spark or drive that keeps us interested  and willing to keep trying. In this book the author argues that drama is a kind of hope and thrill that gives joy to language education and leaves students filled with a desire to grow, develop and improve... Individuals are never really learning unless they are being entertained but the definition of entertainment refers to having one's mind engaged rather than having it filled with mindless amusement.

Drama  is an art form, a practical activity, and an intellectual discipline highly accessible to young people. In education, it is a mode of learning that challenges students to make meaning of their world. Through students' active identification with imagined roles and situations in drama, they can learn to explore issues, events and relationships. In drama students draw on their knowledge and experience of the real world. Drama is the enactment of real and imagined events through roles and situations. It enables both individuals and groups to explore shape and symbolically represent ideas and feelings and their consequences.

Drama has the capacity to move and change both participants and audiences and to affirm and challenge values, cultures and  identities.

Drama can develop students' artistic and creative skills  and humanize learning by providing lifelike learning contexts in a classroom setting that values active participation in a non-threatening, supportive environment. Drama empowers students to understand and influence their world through exploring roles and situations and develops students' non-verbal and verbal, individual and group communication skills. It develops students' intellectual, social, physical, emotional and moral domains through learning that engages their thoughts, feelings, bodies and actions. Language learning through drama is effective and powerful.

The book has also practical scenarios of language learning through drama added in the appendix .