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Introduction

Wprowadzenie

This issue of EETP deals with current and urgent problems in Polish elementary education, which have come to prominence in the wake of the tragic situation of our neighbors – the war in Ukraine. Problems of the spatial and cultural coexistence of individuals and social groups that differ in many respects require further search for solutions, despite the numerous activities of researchers: educators, psychologists, linguists, glottodidacticians, cultural studies experts, as well as teachers who support preschool children, youngest students and their families on a daily basis. Therefore, the main theme of this volume is the educational value of dialogue, its relational nature and the importance that dialogue places on social debate in the public sphere. Bringing this difficult topic, which causes social tensions, under discussion, offers the promise of showing different perspectives on the phenomena under study, thus opening a space for a pedagogy of dialogue, which argues that

The ability to engage in dialogue comes with an attitude of openness, acceptance and respect toward Others. ... Dialogue requires a critical mindset that encourages a rational and thoughtful attitude towards the world and people, and an inquiry into the sources of coexisting, often contradictory, values and positions. Thus, it inspires committed actions – a courageous response wherever a danger, an injustice, a barrier to development occurs in social life (Jankowska, 2017, p. 9).

The social debate, in which this volume participates, is a necessary and, we hope, useful part of support, which we understand as offering a sense of hope, showing

concern for people who are struggling, who need help, demonstrating interest in their daily troubles or pointing out possible ways of acting in difficult situations.

The articles published in this volume address new problem areas within the familiar framework of multiculturalism. The authors name the circumstances that entail the need for educational support under transcultural conditions (Welsch, 1998; Nikitorowicz and Guziuk-Tkacz, 2021). Indeed, more and more often different cultures are mixing, blending and hybridizing within a single country, which makes it necessary to change the approach to the education of new generations. This is a natural phenomenon that has emerged in Polish educational institutions as a result of social changes and the increasing cultural heterogeneity of children's groups in different regions of the country.

Both theoretical and empirical findings on transcultural value education reveal that we must incorporate into the education of children (already at preschool age) not only regional values, but also those relating to tolerance of otherness, respect for differences, and moving towards understanding the value of peaceful coexistence and unfettered use of the resources of different cultures. Learning the Polish language is an indispensable part of nurturing children's cultural identity and of effectively accommodating refugee children in Polish educational institutions, and this requires proper attention on the part of universities, teachers and publishers (e.g., Miernik, 2022; Młynarczuk-Sokołowska & Szostak-Król, 2022; Szplit & Tamborska, 2022).

The essays in this volume cover the issues of:

- shaping the cultural identity of children and involving the family, educational institutions/teachers and school authorities in the educational process, especially taking into account the role of language as it is desirable for children to be immersed in both/multiple languages, to be exposed to the cultures of their parents and grandparents of different nationalities and to gradually take root in them;
- showing children the heritage and cultural richness of other nationalities in a form adapted to the activity level of the youngest students, for example, as a combination of a (urban) game and a classic book (questing);
- recognizing the didactic potential of transformative learning or a group of methodological, theoretical and practical approaches referred to as plurilingual pedagogies that the literature considers not only innovative, valuable and effective, but also essential in contemporary education in view of families moving towards bilingualism of children, and the number of children with migration or refugee experience increasing in kindergarten groups and school classrooms;
- examining the principles, concepts and standards of international schools and the possibilities of their application to elementary school curricula in Poland.

We would like to encourage you to read the inspiring articles that make up this valuable, coherent volume filled with suggestions for supporting children, their families and preschool and early school teachers. The issue includes recommendations for

various approaches to education in a transcultural society, with regard to the classical values of truth, goodness and beauty, as well as the values necessary for representatives of different cultures living together in the same social space.

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