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## Introduction

Contemporary education can be understood as a system of different connections and interconnections that influence each other not only on the local scale, but on a much larger scale. None of the processes that take place in one country apply only in its territory, but affects other societies. Such a situation has been defined as globalization that fosters building the concept of one, unified world. Zbyszko Melosik shows two of its aspects when analysing this phenomenon. The first, positive one indicates the equality of nations and increasing sensitivity towards cultural differences. The process of globalization is accompanied by the phenomenon of multiculturalism and a consciousness of cultural diversity, which should lead to the acceptance of otherness and integrity. The second one concentrates on showing the negative attributes of globalization – the dominance of some societies upon others, the dissemination of Western cultural standards, the homogenization of world or the lack of understanding of cultural otherness<sup>1</sup>.

The two perspectives of seeing the process of globalization outlined above indicate the importance of the education of kindergarten and elementary school children. In a dynamically changing world, on one hand, a child should find and build their own identity with its cultural distinctiveness, on the other hand, he/she should accept and respect assertively the points of view of others. The increased wave of migration, easily built personal contacts, fast communications and the co-existence of diverse cultures in one area shows that the phenomenon of multiculturalism is going to be a process which will only become more powerful. Education has to reply to the issues of the co-independence and co-existence of varied cultures, however, not in the perspective of a problem, but rather a challenge. Therefore, the current edition of Quarterly “Elementary Education in Theory and Practice” presents articles on the theme *Multiculturalism as a model of open education*.

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<sup>1</sup> B. Surma, *Wychowanie religijne dziecka w wieku przedszkolnym i wczesnoszkolnym wobec wyzwań współczesnego świata*, [w:] *Nowe wyzwania i perspektywy dla wychowania przedszkolnego i edukacji wczesnoszkolnej*, red. B. Surma, Kraków 2012, p. 205–206.

The authors of the texts undertake to voice their perspectives in a discussion upon the process of multiculturalism showing its different understandings. In this Quarterly one can find practical solutions concerning the intercultural education of children at the early school age. These solutions postulate the use of varied practices such as storytelling while the theoretical analyses present the difficulties of elementary education for those hard of hearing and in an ethnic minority society – the Kashubians. The publication contains a number of examples of authorial research with interesting results.

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