

Editorial

Preschool and elementary education constitutes a fundamental and propaedeutic stage of education within the whole structure of the school system. Children in early and middle childhood demonstrate particular flexibility and intensity of development in different spheres, susceptibility to personality changes and an enormous potential for acquiring and processing knowledge. The experiences gained in childhood are consolidated and generalized and also determine the course of development for many subsequent years. This constitutive “chapter” of individual’s life requires high quality education, competent teachers, optimal organizational, methodological and curricular solutions, systematic preparation for active participation in the real socio – cultural – informative world.

Elementary education is also a significant challenge from an individual and social perspective. Its current shape is determined on the one hand by the development of science, especially psychology, pedagogy and didactics, on the other hand, by the changing socio-cultural and political-economic reality. Therefore, elementary education should be now perceived in a multilevel, complex, multi-functional manner, taking into account many factors merging. On account of these dynamic changes and new knowledge, the rapid spread of technology and digitalization of society, it has to be assumed that the metamorphosis of ways of upbringing, learning and teaching in preschool and school is needed. A number of new opportunities offered by many fields of science should be considered. Effective learning can be ensured if modern education systems take into account innovative child developmental trends, transform their previous activities by restructuring diagnosis, objectives, methods, educational space and preparation of teachers to work with children, thus seizing new educational opportunities. The eight articles presented in this issue of our journal present the views of the scientific community on this matter.

Ewa Jagiełło, in her article *"A Pre-school Child of Initiative"*, covers issues concerning economic education. In the contemporary world, in which the ideas of promoting wise consumer attitude and financial education since the early age are gaining popularity, parents and teachers are responsible for promotion of economic ideas. However, according to the author, parents rarely communicate economic knowledge to their children, discuss financial instruments or teach responsibility for one's own actions. The author concludes that it is undoubtedly necessary to shape enterprising attitudes among children and teach them how to manage finance in a clever way.

The intention of Jolanta Karbowniczek, Beata Kucharska and Augustyn Okoński was to show the place of Sustainable Development in Polish education. In their article, *"Axiology and Moral Education for Sustainable Development in the Context of Surveys and Workshops Conducted in a Group of Students of Early and Pre-school Pedagogy in the State Higher Vocational School (PWSZ) in Chelm"*, the axiological and moral education perspective of Sustainable Development was underlined. The results of research and observations during the workshop activities and after them indicate the need to change the approach in the current teaching strategies at all levels of education. The authors state that the actual effects of this education will not be possible to achieve by focusing solely on the transfer of knowledge. They suggest that the effectiveness of the Education for Sustainable Development can be achieved through the development of curricula and the use of methods tackling specific problems and searching for possible solutions.

Elżbieta Płóciennik in the article *"The Development of Wisdom in the Context of the Polish Core Curriculum of Pre-school Education"* addresses issues concerning teaching for wisdom, which is still new and scientifically unexamined topic in the field of pedagogy. According to the author, in contemporary Polish schools teachers still focus mostly on the development of memory and the analytical skills necessary to remember and repeat information, which does not create conditions for the development of wisdom. The author states that teachers should be familiar with the principles of teaching for wisdom, and give the pupils the opportunity

to develop not only their knowledge and analytical intelligence, but also creative and practical intelligence, reflectiveness, ability to deal with various life and social situations, decision-making habits and ability to act in both their own and other people's best interests.

Anna Klim-Klimaszewska and Ewa Jagiełło in the article "*The Change in Approach to Preparing Children to Learn to Read and Write*" examine issues concerning innovative methods of teaching pre-school children. Due to the fact that one of the most important educational tasks of the kindergarten is preparing children for school, a readiness to learn to read and write must be shaped at the level of pre-school education. The authors present the natural language teaching method developed by Wenda Pye, in which learning process is accompanied by children's creative activity. In the conclusion of the precise description of the method, the authors underline that preschool literacy learning may be nice and easy and children can find a lot of joy in it, if the process is supported with children's activity and a passion for knowing.

Anna Szkolak in her article "*The Innovative Early Childhood Education Teacher – A Summary of Own Research*" addresses issues concerning the creative competences of the early childhood education teacher. The results obtained by the author showed that teachers are aware of the fact that creative competences are indispensable in their everyday work and significantly increase its effectiveness. The majority of respondents declared being engaged in searching, examining and experimenting, thus going off the beaten track when it comes to improving their teaching and training skills. But on the other hand, the teachers are not always ready to design their own curriculum or write individual educational projects. The author postulates that teachers will need to continue to experiment and test alternatives to see what is effective in the situation in which there is no one right way for helping young children achieve their creative potential.

Martin Kaleja and Eva Zezulková in their article "*Preparedness of Czech Primary School Teachers for Inclusive Primary Education*" describe current transformations in the Czech education system and the (un)preparedness of primary school teachers for designing school inclusion in a practical

sense. The authors outline the barriers in the education of children with special educational needs within the environment, family and school (with emphasis on the teachers) and educational and upbringing process. According to the authors, the preparedness of the teacher in terms of formal requirements is usually fulfilled by necessary qualifications, but subjectively perceived preparedness of teachers for the inclusive education is low.

For readers from the circle of Western culture, two articles by authors from Ethiopia may prove to be especially interesting. In the first one, "*The Practices and Challenges of Kindergarten Education in Addis Ababa City Administration: Ethiopia*" Sisay Awgichew Wondemetegge describes the educational reality in this African country. The author precisely details the deficiencies of kindergarten education in his country and their effects on children's interest towards learning and schooling, mental developmental needs, physical development and social development. The author is also trying to formulate recommendations for potential improvement, based on the collaborative work of parents, investors, colleges, government, non-governmental organizations, educational experts and the media.

In the article by Sisay Awgichew, Anwar Ahmed and Tamrat Zelalem "*The Role of the 'Post Graduate Diploma in Secondary School Teaching' Program in Improving the Quality of Teaching in Eastern Ethiopian Secondary Schools*" the authors assess the quality of teaching in Ethiopian schools. The results of the research showed that teachers, in their own opinions, were implementing several classroom activities into their work in order to make use of pupils' knowledge and skills and their subject matter knowledge was good. The observations conducted by the researchers showed instead that teaching was dominated by traditional methods, in which students were passive, less confident, unreflective and poorly motivated to enjoy learning. Therefore, the researchers suggest that continuous training to secondary school teachers about active and constructivist methods of teaching should be provided.

A brief overview of all of the articles in this issue shows the variety of exploration directions within the field of preschool and elementary school education. The authors of these articles take up and analyze different aspects of the subject matter focusing on the child, teacher, orga-

nizational settings, or cultural specificity of the early education. What they have in common, however, is that all are in the pursuit of better knowledge as to how to make early education more effective, meaningful and better adapted to the challenges of the contemporary world.

Jolanta Karbowniczek, Irmina Rostek