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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 Chełm

Abstract: This article aims at examining to what extent Macer's theory "sustainable development chair" (where cultural education, and the axiology and moral education within it comprises one of four fundamentals of education for sustainable development) is reflected in the capacity of knowledge and skills obtained by pedagogy students PWSZ in Chełm. The starting point for consideration is to present and analyse the questionnaire results carried out by students of the 1st and 3rd year of pedagogy PWSZ in Chełm. These results became the basis for the following workshop activities performed with the drama method application (covering those such as improvisation with the literary text, body movement and voice performance, role play).

The authors intended, first of all, to assess students' integrated order concept understanding (and within this concept: axiology and moral education) implemented with traditional instructional methods, and then innovative (drama and staging ones); secondly, to obtain materials enabling the most effective methods of education for balanced development implementation to be defined. An additive element of conducted activities was the analysis of potential students' engagement into a new idea implementation.

Key words: sustainable development, education towards change, axiology, moral education

Introduction

The intention of the authors of this article is to show the place of Sustainable Development (SD) in Polish education. It is also an attempt to examine the extent to which this subject is close to the students of early and preschool education of the PWSZ School in Chelm. For this purpose, a survey and evaluation research were conducted during drama workshops basing on the texts of children's literature, representative to the particular areas of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Practical verification through bibliotherapy and drama of the knowledge and skills of students as future teachers of the 1st level of education was an important element of research for the authors, revealing not only the interpretation of Sustainable Development issues, but mainly the level of expectations as to the place of axiology and moral education in the context of Education for Sustainable Development.

Education for Sustainable Development in Poland in years 1996–2014

The conference in Rio de Janeiro "Environment and Development" in 1992 can be considered as the beginning of the interest of the world in the idea of Sustainable Development. The event, due to the presence of representatives of up to 179 countries, gained the title of "Earth Summit". The message from the Rio Conference was that both rich and poor countries have their different environmental problems and that in many cases unsustainable development is a result of people's ideas about lifestyles. Problems and conflicts are not always locally visible but are often based on a combination of local and global agreements and requirements (*Education For Change*, Mendel and others, 2006).

Sustainable Development (SD) is aimed at improving the quality of life of society and economic development while fostering the protection of the environment and natural resources of the Earth. This concept involves international cooperation within the major areas of human life, the society, economy and ecology (Karbowniczek, 2013).

As a result of this conference, the participating countries have accepted documents, recommending the implementation of the concept of Sustainable Development (SD). For example – in Poland, such recommendations have appeared in most of the documents relating to the protection of the environment and the Polish Constitution (Ch. I, Article 5: “The Republic of Poland (...) ensure the protection of the environment, guided by the principle of sustainable development”) [Constitution of the Republic of Poland]. The years 2004–2014 were referred to as the “Decade of Sustainable Development” (Borys, 2006; Tuszyńska, 2006; Kalinowska, 2011).

The UNESCO report, summarising the first five years of the progress and implementation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) (2005–2014), drew attention to the fact that a variety of approaches to this concept is determined by the conditions and challenges of a country or region. Education for Sustainable Development is defined according to the UNESCO report as a realisation of the following teaching objectives:

1. Raising awareness on the relationship of cultural, social, economic and environmental issues.
2. Developing the skills necessary to improve the environment at local and global levels.
3. Shaping the attitude of care and concern for the quality of the environment, understood as: nature, society, and the products of individuals, groups and societies (Delors, 1998).

The latest Polish state document on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is the “National Strategy for Environmental Education through Education for Sustainable Development”, which in 2012, from

the initiative of the Ministry of the Environment (Department of Environmental Information) became the basis for the work on the expertise of the situation of Polish ESD (Niewinowski, 2012).

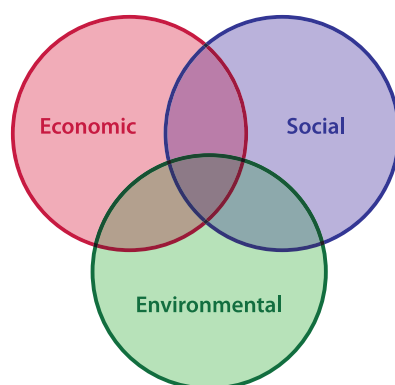
Poland's "Sustainable Development Strategy to 2025" relating to the curriculum assumes that:

1. Students at almost every level of education have the opportunity to learn about issues related to climate, biodiversity and water.
2. To a lesser extent questions concerning the condition and protection of the environment, ecology, agriculture and forestry are discussed.
3. The energy, disasters and sustainable urbanization issues are discussed to a small extent.

The most common model of Education for Sustainable Development is the separation of content into the economics, environment and society issues (Fig. 1).

There are also models available reflecting four dimensions, including the Culture one.

**Fig. 1. The sustainable development has three fundamentals:
Environmental, Economy and Social**



The diagram shows that everything happens within the “ecosphere” – the common area of three fields – sustainable environment, economy and society. This way of presenting the SD issue turned out to be insufficient, especially when it comes to education within the field of society that was too broad and vague at the same time (Guzowska, Kucharska and others, 2014).

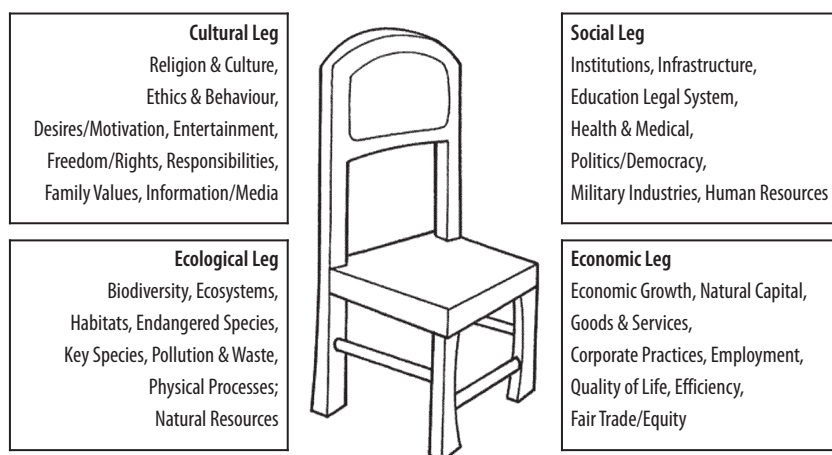
The Chair of Sustainable Development

Hence, the idea of the “chair of sustainable development” of Macer (in 2004 year) developed, according to which the contents have been included in the four areas, so-called, support: 1) economic – economic growth, natural capital, goods and services, business practices, employment, quality of life, productivity; 2) social – institutions, infrastructure, education, law, health policy, democracy, the arms industry, human resources; 3) cultural – religion and culture, ethics and behaviour, desires /motivation, entertainment, rights/freedoms, duties/responsibilities, family values, media; 4) organic – biodiversity, ecosystems and their inhabitants, endangered species, keystone species, pollution and waste, ecological processes, natural resources (Tuszyńska, 2006; Bator, 2010).

Sustainability has to be integrated, which means that it should be broad and all-inclusive. “The Chair of Sustainable Development” of Macer (in 2004) is a handy comparison that aids both memory and understanding.

This chair of sustainable development has four connected ‘legs’ of sustainability and all four legs have to be included in policy and management for sustainable development. If one leg is over-emphasised, such as the “economic leg” or “cultural leg”, the chair will be unstable and uncomfortable. The figure below indicates what the cultural, social, ecological and economic “legs” of the chair represent (Education For Change, 2006):

Fig. 2. The Chair of Sustainable Development, Macer (EduC, 2006)



What do pedagogy students of PWSZ in Chelm know about ESD?

Since the 1990s the attempts have been made to implement the principles of Sustainable Development to Polish education within the teaching content (mainly the ecology programs) and to involve students in a range of ecological and cultural activities. The students researched (mostly aged from 20 to 25 years) are already the next generation, which should be brought up in the spirit of Sustainable Development. Does it correspond with the reality?

Research participants and methodology – part one

The study was conducted in a group of 48 students of the first and third year of preschool and early education of PWSZ in Chelm – 46 women and 2 men with secondary education (only 1 person with higher), mainly from rural areas and small towns (36 people from villages and 12 from cities). The questionnaire was divided into four parts: the 1st – included understanding the concept of Education for Sustainable Development,

2nd – problem of the perception of sustainable development principles in public life and the desire to be involved in its implementation on the part of the respondents (PWSZ students), 3rd – axiology and moral education, and the 4th – the tasks for the drama workshops in the context of moral education as an important support of the “chair of sustainable development” according to Macer’s taxonomy.

With the first part of the questionnaire concerning the need for clarification of abbreviations and terms like: Education for Sustainable Development and ESD, Education towards changes and EduC, most students (85% of respondents) had a problem. Among the responses dominated such ideas as “it’s an education that will teach according to the needs of the labour market”, “introducing a man to the world of human values”, “education towards change involves the education of children, taking no only professional, but also moral sphere.” Among the most frequent responses (from 38 respondents) dominated generalisations, such as “education, which leads to the development” or “system of education that aims at comprehensive development”, but none of the respondents explained what is meant by this development and which area is affected by this development. What is interesting is that none of the respondents associated the issue of Sustainable Development with UNESCO or local institutions, like the Ministry of State Education, however, references to the “principles of the United Nations” appeared (at 20 respondents).

In the second part of the survey questions have arisen regarding the presence of sustainable development in public life and regarding whether the respondents are interested in this issue and willing to be involved in its implementation. Of course, beyond the declarations made by the respondents that are curious and eager to better recognise the problem of ESD and then to pursue teaching content in their future professional practice, it is difficult to consider the results to be meaningful. Indeed, as follows from the first part, the vast majority of respondents incorrectly or insufficiently understood the principle of Sustainable Development itself. The authors of the survey in the part about age included a general data as a range of 20 to 25 years, so it is not possible to tell whether the information obtained apply equally to students of the 1st and 3rd year. The

results indicate that almost 65% of respondents incorrectly explained the problems of Education for Sustainable Development, 50% of which have never encountered this subject. Assuming that this type of response occurred mainly among the 1st year students, one can hope that the knowledge of the respondents will be completed in the next stages of education as part of their studies. Among the explanations of ESD definitions synonymous with the education of the child also appeared, such as: "I understand sustainable development as dividing it into stages. In each of them, a child learns and develops the skills, it should not be accelerated" or "it is to maintain the balance between intellectual development and upbringing of a child".

It should be noted that even the properly provided responses on sustainable development lacked references to global education and understanding of ESD issues in the context of international cooperation. In the question about which area of social life is the easiest to introduce the assumptions of sustainable development, over 90% of respondents answered "in the field of education", "educational program", "the school from the beginning of education", and the rest formulated vague answers like "in every area of life" or "sustainable development is important at every stage of life".

Research participants and methodology – second part

Other parts of the survey, the third and fourth ones, were carried out immediately after the drama workshop, where the starting point was the work on a literary text.

Considering Education for Sustainable Development as teaching within the four areas – the environment, society, culture and economy – is beneficial from the point of view of arranging the teaching content of school programs. In preparing the literary texts and tasks of the workshop for the surveyed students, the authors accepted that the main objectives would be:

- 1) to verify how these texts will be helpful in Education for Sustainable Development,
- and
- 2) to examine the cultural and axiological competence of students of PWSZ in Chelm participating in the activities.

After carrying out the first and second survey it appeared that the texts developed by the authors may also prove to be an additional source of knowledge on Sustainable Development, not only (as previously assumed) their methodical use in working with students in early school age.

The texts selected by the authors have been developed in the context of moral education and philosophy of children. The first group of texts concerned emotions, and the other principles of social life (as part of The Chair of Sustainable Development of Macer). All were addressed to the reader in the age group of 5 to 7 years, not vast (up to 32 pages with illustrations) and all related to an axiological problem.

First group	Second group
<i>Jedna chwilka uczuć kilka, czyli z uczuciem o uczuciach, [One Moment, a few Feelings, i.e. with a Feeling about Feelings]</i> Marcin Brykczyński, Lidia Głazewska-Dańko; Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Czarna Owca, 2010.	<i>Kosmita, [Alien]</i> Roksana Jędrzejewska – Wróbel; Warszawa: Wydawnictwo ING Bank Śląski, 2009.
<i>Can You Whistle, Johanna?</i> Ulf Stark; Poznań: Wydawnictwo Zakamarki, 2008.	<i>Śmierdzący ser, [Smelly Cheese]</i> Gilles Deleuze; Gdańsk: GWP, 2004.
<i>Kocha, lubi, szanuje, czyli jeszcze o uczuciach, [Loves, Likes, Respects]/</i> Grzegorz Kasdepke; Warszawa: Nasza Księgarnia, 2006.	<i>O Elku, złamanym skrzydełku i nauce języków, [About Elk, His Broken Wings and Language Learning]</i> Wojciech Prus; Poznań: Wydawnictwo W drodze, 2004.
<i>Dwa serca anioła, [Two Hearts of an Angel]</i> Wojciech Widłak; Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Media Rodzina, 2013.	<i>Samotny Jędrus, [Lonely Andrew]</i> Wojciech Widłak; Warszawa, 2012.
<i>Dobro i zło. Co to takiego?, [Good and Evil]</i> Oscar Brenifer; Poznań: Wydawnictwo Zakamarki, 2013.	<i>Marudek i Pogodek na wakacjach, czyli jak być szczęśliwym, [Marudek and Pogodek on Vacation, or How to Be Happy]</i> Ewa Zubrzycka; Gdańsk: GWP, 2008.
<i>Uczucia. Co to takiego?, [Feelings. What is that?]</i> Oscar Brenifer; Poznań: Wyd. Zakamarki, 2012	<i>Ja. Co to takiego?, [I. What is that?]</i> Oscar Brenifer; Poznań: Wyd. Zakamarki, 2014.

<i>Baśnie o szczęściu, nieszczęściu i o tym, co jest najważniejsze w życiu, [Fairy Tales about Happiness and Unhappiness – About What is Important in Human's Life]</i> Elżbieta Zarych; Kraków: Wyd. WAM, 2009.	<i>Piaskowy wilk i ćwiczenia z myślenia, [Sand Wolf and Exercise of Thinking]</i> Åsa Lind; Poznań: Wyd. Zakamarki, 2008.
<i>Jabłko Pana Peabody, [Mr. Peabody's Apples]</i> Madonna; Warszawa: Wyd. Zysk i Spółka 2012.	<i>Tajemnica Michasia, [The Mystery of Michael]</i> Ewa Zubrzycka; Gdańsk: GWP 2008.
<i>Draka Ekonieboraka, [Eco-Poor-Soul Trouble]</i> Emilia Dziubak, Eliza Saroma-Stępniewska; Poznań: Wydawnictwo Albus, 2012.	<i>W pogoni za życiem, [In pursuit of life]</i> Przemysław Wechterowicz and Emilia Dziubak; Warszawa: "Ezop", 2012.

The students had the right to make a choice from 1 to 3 of the following texts from a given group to illustrate in a theatrical way the indicated scenes or to propose drama solutions. In the first group of texts they had a choice of various interpretation of emotions and their importance in the lives of adults and children, for example *Dwa serca anioła* [Two Hearts of an Angel] by Wojciech Widłak refers to the relationship between patients – a boy and an elderly man, who are angels to themselves in a hospital; both books of Oscar Brenifer place before the child a series of questions and stimulate them to seek answers, like: *Why do we love someone? What does it mean that we love someone? How does a mom love? And how do I love?* etc.

The second group of texts of children's literature refers to peer and social relations, often marked by various problems, such as: a new member of the family with autism, little brother – the titled "alien"; and violence between children at school [*Śmierdzący ser – Smelly Cheese*] and the need to respond in this situation. There are, however, also texts teaching curiosity in observing and recording the world [as in *Piaskowy wilk i ćwiczenia z myślenia – Sand Wolf and Exercise of Thinking*] and the balance between us and the world, as in books of Wojciech Widłak and Ewa Zubrzycka. Why such a subject? Because the theme of axiology and moral education is an important element of the Chair of Sustainable Development – its cultural legs (Religion & Culture, Ethics & Behaviour, Desires/Motivation, Entertainment, Freedom/Rights, Responsibilities, Family Values) and its social legs (Education Legal System, Health & Medical, Politics/Democracy, Military Industries, Human Resources).

This article does not include a full report of the workshop activities, it rather focuses on the presentation of the achieved results. As animators of drama workshops, our primary interests were the choices made by students, as well as their interpretations and the methodological approach of the texts. Most participants noticed the courage of the discussed problems (aggression, disability, illness and death, life and love, the complexity of human relationships, prejudice and alienation, etc.), stressing that in their existing practice they have not worked with students using this type of texts. Later, completing the evaluation part of the survey, the third and fourth part, they wondered whether all the proposed titles can be used in working with early school children (almost 85% said definitely yes, 10% – yes, but after selection, the rest needed time to think).

The most common choice of texts from the first group of children was the book of the famous singer, Madonna, entitled *Mr. Peabody's Apples* (2012). The main characters of this story are: Mr. Peabody, a history teacher and a pupil – Tommy. The starting point of the story is a misunderstanding – one Saturday Tommy noticed that Mr. Peabody, returning after the game, had gone to the store and chosen a most beautiful apple, which he threw into his bag and did not pay for. The following Saturday, Tommy saw the same situation and soon told many people that the teacher, liked by everyone, was a thief. As a result of these rumours, only one boy came to the weekly game organized by Mr. Peabody, and he explained to the teacher that people suspected him of stealing. The teacher took Tommy to the store and there it turned out that every Saturday morning he pays for the apple in advance, and collects it directly after the game. The boy apologises for the accusation, but the rumour is not so easy to reverse, and the harm caused is not so easy to fix. To help Tommy remember the difficult lesson better, Mr. Peabody tells him to rip open a feather pillow in the wind and then collect all the fluttering feathers. The boy explains that this task is impossible and then the teacher explains that, like the feathers would be blown all over the town, so does the rumour spread. It takes a lot of effort to change it and compensate for the harm done to the accused person.

These important problems of harm and compensation resulted in achieving interesting pedagogical solutions proposed by students, who, acting out the roles of the boy and the teacher, experienced these difficult emotions. It was also considered as the most emotional experience of the workshops.

In the evaluation, post workshop part, the students stressed that their main expectation is clearly a place of axiology and moral education in teaching: 40 respondents indicate the need for such changes at every level of education, as they felt the problems of axiology functions insignificantly. They propose changes to the existing contents of integrated teaching by introducing topics that almost 95% of students considered to be the most current and important in the education of a young child. Examples include: the topics of violence (42 persons), sex education (32), tolerance, acceptance, respect for self and others (48), racism (20 persons), ethics, rules of good behaviour or "cultures in all aspects of life" (48), the topics of philosophy for children: ethical considerations (20 respondents) and philosophical (25 responses).

Cultural and axiological competences of pedagogy students of PWSZ in Chelm, in the context of the workshops – conclusion

How to, in the context of the carried out activities, characterise cultural and axiological competences of students participating in the studies? According to the complex concept of cultural education, taking into account the generative model of linguistic competences and its sociological approach (complexity and specificity of a particular social group, region, or nation) the cultural competences are recognised as the capacity for understanding, interpreting and reinterpreting as well as creating and co-creating culture as a result of social life. It should be emphasised that the one-dimensional perception of cultural competences (as linguistic or sociological) usually leads to the later simplification of cultural content (i.e. reproductive and superficial interpretation of former and contemporary culture), and – what seems to be particularly harmful – to

the adaptive treatment of other cultures (i.e. always from the perspective of our own culture and narrow social group). Wiesław Rogalski adds: "The school is recorded as space-time in which culture appears before of the unit, as the outside world, subjective, multi-element, given by adults, largely incomprehensible, unfamiliar in the face of his earlier, children's release. After a period of primary socialisation in the family, the school is the first institution to assume the duties of introducing young generation into the culture" (Rogalski, 2004).

However, it should be noted that the achievement of cultural competence is the only element of cultural education, not its culmination – it is the beginning of a cultural development and active participation in culture. Thus, the beginning of the student's cultural education – as a structured process of teaching and learning – begins at the stage of integrated teaching. The axiological competences are associated with some kind of ethical sensitivity, which allows a person to safely navigate through the different values offered by the surrounding world (both good and bad ones).

It is important for us, as the authors, to show Sustainable Development in an axiological and moral education perspective, and not, as it is usually realised at school – in the area of economics (emphasising entrepreneurial attitude) and ecology (promoting healthy lifestyles and sustainable consumption). In planning our research and workshop activities we did not know that the main problem will be lack of knowledge (or minimal knowledge of) the principles of Sustainable Development and Education for Sustainable Development among students, which results from a survey carried out by us (Part I and II). Later in the conversation with the students during the workshop we initiated this problem, seeking first the reasons for such poor performance. It turns out that the most commonly reported explanation was a complete misunderstanding of the term – and as far as the respondents had participated in high school in environmental actions (such as "green schools" and other eco activities), and also had classes about economic education (business and economic), but did not linked these experiences with Sustainability. Their previous practice – as pupils and now as students – shows that school

experiences of ESD are episodic (limited to one-time, short-term action) and selective (i.e. relate to one of the areas of SD). These experiences were rarely accompanied by reflection or attempt to summarise.

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. From the perspective of the just finished Decade for Sustainable Development 2004–2014 it is a pretty sad reflection, but the most expedient. Ewa Gajluś-Lankamer and Anna Maria Wójcik, have also written about this, having carried out a detailed analysis of General Education Foundations Program implemented in the Polish school of the school year 2009/2010 in the context of opportunities for ESD at all levels of education in accordance with the ESD Strategy of Europe Economic Commission. It should be agreed with researchers that the actual effects of this education will not be possible to achieve if in the process of education the teachers are focused solely on the transfer of knowledge.

We also agree with Ewa Gajluś-Lankamer and Anna Maria Wójcik, that “the effectiveness of the Education for Sustainable Development can be achieved through the development of curricula and through the use of methods by which it will be possible to deal with specific problems and searching for possible solutions” (Gajluś-Lankamer, Wójcik, 2015).

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