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The Development of Wisdom in the Context of the Polish Core Curriculum of Pre-school Education

Abstract: The goals of the teacher's work with students are described in the educational documents and priorities specified by the relevant authorities. These guidelines present the current understanding of social development, as well as the government's education policy. Thus, they should also constitute the basis for teachers' actions. Therefore, it is necessary to interpret the current core curriculum of general education in the context of the principles of support for the development of Polish students' wisdom. A proposal for one such interpretation of the current core curriculum used in pre-school education is presented in this article.

Keywords: teaching for wisdom, core curriculum for pre-school education

The gradual development of wisdom in an individual, understood as "...forms of species adaptation to the most difficult challenge – having good control over one's life ..." (Pietrasiński, 2001, p. 32; translation: E.P.), can take place only through the internal development of that individual. On the other hand, the teaching of wise thought and actions should be based on such aspects as dialogue, while teachers should develop tasks that trigger independent thinking and reflection on conditions and actions taken. However, in contemporary Polish schools teachers still focus mostly on the development of memory and the analytical skills necessary to remember and repeat information, which unfortunately does not create favourable conditions for the development of young people's wisdom. Another aspect that remains undervalued is personal development, along with learning about

and establishing positive interpersonal relationships. As modern pedagogical literature also points out, teachers at school require their students to use different methods of thinking than those needed in adult life. Problems discussed in school also differ from the problems of the real world¹.

Educational practice in Poland is also inconsistent with global and European guidelines and priorities. For example, the understanding of the essence of learning and teaching is too narrow, as the learning process is perceived as one of acquiring knowledge provided by the teacher, with the focus on discovery of the external world, while self-knowledge remains neglected. Subject literature also criticizes the dominant role of the teacher, the transmission of culture as symbolic power and didacticism at all stages of education, as well as the schematic and transmission-based approach to education and organization of the school environment². This type of education does not encourage the development of students' wisdom as part of their own activity and harmonious development in all areas. It is therefore necessary to interpret the current core curriculum of general education in the context of the principles of support for the development of Polish students' wisdom.

¹ Cf.: Sternberg R.J. & Spear-Swering L. (2003). *Jak nauczyć dzieci myślenia* [Teaching for Thinking (Psychology in the Classroom); translation; E.P.]; Bonar, J. (2008). *Rozwijanie twórczości uczniów klas początkowych poprzez zadania dydaktyczne w toku kształcenia zintegrowanego* [Developing Creativity of Primary Class Students by Didactic Tasks in the Process of Integrated Education; translation; E.P.]; Wiśniewska-Kin M. (2013). *Dominacja a wyzwolenie. Wczesnoszkolny dyskurs podręcznikowy i dziecięcy* [Domination and Liberation. Earlyschool Textbooks' and Children's Discourse; translation: E.P.].

² Polish educational system is criticized in such publications as: Dudzikowa D. (2001). *Mit o szkole jako miejscu wszechstronnego rozwoju ucznia. Eseje pedagogiczne* [The Myth of the School as a Place of the Student's Comprehensive Development. Pedagogical Essays; translation: E.P.]; Banach C. (2005). *Szkoła naszych oczekiwań i marzeń, potrzeb, projekcji i działań. Od A do Ż* [The School in our Expectations, Dreams, Needs, and Activities. From A to Z; translation: E.P.]; Niemierko B. (2007). *Kształcenie szkolne. Podręcznik skutecznej dydaktyki* [Education in School. Handbook of Effective Teaching; translation: E.P.]; Falkiewicz-Szult M. (2007). *Przemoc symboliczna w przedszkolu* [Symbolic Violence in Kindergarten; translation: E.P.]; Śliwerski B. (2009). *Problemy współczesnej edukacji. Dekonstrukcja polityki oświatowej III RP* [The Problems of Modern Education. Deconstruction of Educational Policy in III RP; translation:

Wisdom as a complex characteristic of an individual

Professor Z. Pietrasiński highlighted the negative effects of the above-mentioned phenomenon in Poland, describing it as the lack of teacher focus on the development of wisdom. Teachers introduce new methods of thinking, but with no reflection on their purpose, since "... they treat students as storehouses to be filled with yet another skill..." (Pietrasiński, 2001, p. 59; translation: E.P.).

This is perhaps the reason why the authors of recent Polish psychological and pedagogical publications have called for the organisation of the purposeful development of wisdom as a complex individual characteristic³. In her overview of various psychological concepts of wisdom, A. Kałużna-Wielorób (2014, pp. 63–79) showed how wisdom can be perceived: as an ideal, as a quality that can be reached as part of development, and as a phenomenon described by popular ideas. She also pointed out the holistic understanding of wisdom, which depends on an awareness of the limitations of knowledge – both one's own and generally accessible, as well as:

- Tolerance for ambiguity and understanding of the role of various contexts and determinants of human life and development,
- The ability to control one's life and development, taking into account both personal well-being and the common good,
- Reflective reference to the sense of life, values and life priorities,
- The ability to formulate judgements and offer helpful advice to others, to overcome uncertainty and take effective action in complex

E.P.]; Kujawiński J. (2010). *Ewolucja szkoły i jej współczesna wizja* [The Evolution of the School and Its Contemporary Vision; translation: E.P.]; Klus-Stańska D. & Nowicka M. (2013). *Sensy i bezsensy edukacji wczesnoszkolnej* [Sense and Senselessness of Early Childhood Education; translation: E.P.]; Waloszek D. (2014). *Między przedszkolem i szkołą. Rozważania o gotowości dzieci do podjęcia nauki w szkole* [Between Kindergarten and School. Meditations on the Children Readiness for Learning in School; translation: E.P.].

³ Cf.: publications of Z. Pietrasiński, K. J. Szmidt, J. Czapiński, A. Sękowski, E. Płóciennik.

and ambiguous situations, or when the amount of information is insufficient (Kałużna-Wielorób, 2014, pp. 69–70).

The American psychologist R. J. Sternberg was the first researcher who used purposefully selected educational programmes, adapted to the various needs of students at individual stages of education, in activities aimed at the development of his students' wisdom. His programmes included guidelines concerning simultaneous development and integrated use of three aspects of the human mind: Wisdom, Creativity and Intelligence (*WICS: Wisdom, Intelligence, Creativity Synthesized*). According to Sternberg's concept, wisdom is one of the characteristics guaranteeing the proper use of intelligence and creativity when solving various problems, as it allows for the accounting of both individual achievements and the common good, and then for their combination (Sternberg, 2003). In this understanding, wisdom is a part of practical intelligence and its use results in effective implementation of socially useful ideas (Sternberg & Davidson, 2005, p. 327–340). Thus, education aimed at simultaneous stimulation and development of wisdom, intelligence and creativity – in contrast to the traditional educational model based on the development of memory and analytical skills – enables realistic and effective solutions to important problems of civilization, as well as to everyday difficulties. Simultaneous development, stimulation and use of those three characteristics of an individual allows for optimal use of memory, knowledge and analytical skills in transgressive thinking and creative problem solving. It is also useful in the analysis and evaluation of existing solutions, as well as analysis and verification of the usefulness of new ideas, decisions, actions taken and various undertakings. Effective use of the discussed characteristics is additionally supported by the individual's own activity and his or her commitment to the task (Sternberg & Davidson, 2005, p. 340; Sternberg et al., 2009). An individual needs creativity to be able to find solutions and create projects, visions, individual and group plans, or programmes for specific institutions. Analytical intelligence, on the other hand, is required to estimate to what extent those creative ideas are new, good, appropriate and feasible, while practical in-

telligence allows the individual to bring those ideas to life and convince others of their value.

According to R. J. Sternberg, all these important factors of human behaviour are united by *wisdom*, which is the only guarantee that ideas and actions will be valuable and useful not only to the individual, but also in a broader context. The abilities and skills conferred by wisdom include:

- Reflective thinking – This allows for development of specific strategies for actions to be taken, analysis and monitoring of their effectiveness, and modification in order to find the best solutions that account for the short- and long-term interests of both the individual and society.
- Dialogical thinking – This allows for accounting for various perspectives and points of view when acting.
- Dialectical thinking – A requirement for the integration and synthesis of two varied points of view (Sternberg et al., 2009, pp. 106–110).

Using such concepts in education should result in increasing the students' activity in various areas (including those that are characteristic for the school environment), and making them more persistent in pursuing their goals and more reflective when faced with new contents and phenomena. Hence, R. Sternberg suggests creating conditions for students to formulate their own conclusions when performing tasks that require integration of materials and development of the above-mentioned three types of thinking. He also believes in the importance of awarding students' wise behaviour and using natural situations to condition it.

Thus, teaching wisdom for educational purposes requires discussion and changes in the way the expected effects of teaching are formulated in the Regulation of The Polish Ministry of National Education on the Core Curriculum for Pre-school and General Education in Individual Types of Schools (23 May 2014). The goals of the teacher's work with students are described in education documents and priorities specified by the competent authorities. Those guidelines present the current understanding

of social development, as well as the government's education policy. Thus, they should constitute the basis for teachers' actions, and also in terms of developing their students' wisdom. They should encourage tolerance and openness to ambiguity and allow students to develop their creative and reflective thinking, as well as their skills in dialogue, effective cooperation and resolving problems and conflicts at school. However, with the exception of Z. Pietrasiński's book, 'Mądrość, czyli świetne wyposażenie umysłu' [Wisdom – the Perfect Accessory of the Mind; translation: E.P.], the recognized Polish psychological literature does not offer any specific guidelines on the development of wisdom in schools. Such areas of educational or methodological activities as 'teaching for wisdom', 'teaching wisdom' or 'wisdom education' currently do not even exist in Polish terminology and pedagogical tradition.

Teaching for wisdom

The term 'teaching for wisdom' (in Polish: *edukacja dla mądrości*) is used in Professor J. Czapiński's Polish translation of the American publication 'Positive Psychology in Practice' ([Psychologia pozytywna w praktyce] Joseph & Linley, 2007, p. 132), which includes a chapter entitled 'Jak nauczyć podopiecznych mądrego myślenia: program <Edukacja dla mądrości>' [Teaching Students to Make Wise Judgements: The <Teaching for Wisdom> Program], written by A. Reznitska and R. J. Sternberg (creator of the concept). That term was also used in S. Juros's (2010) 'Nauka mądrości – odpowiedź na współczesne zapotrzebowania edukacyjne' [Learning of the Wisdom – the Answer to Contemporary Educational Needs; translation E.P.], published in the Internet magazine *Moj@klanza.org.pl* (No. 2, pp. 31–33), in which the author of the article refers to Sternberg's concept. In this author's own articles on the development of wisdom, which she has been publishing for three years⁴ now, the term 'teaching for wisdom'

⁴ This author's initial reflections and analyses on that subject are described in four articles published in separate books: Plóciennik, E. (2013). *Edukacja dla mądrości*

means a purposeful educational process, i.e. 'helping children to acquire wisdom'. This process covers both teachers' educational actions and the students' activity. For example, situations when students experience the effects of good and wise behaviour as part of their active participation in the school environment and the life of their community. This in turn allows students to learn more about themselves and their surroundings and encourages them to participate in actions that are beneficial not only for themselves, but also for their community. In addition, it makes them more focused on and committed to shaping new cultures of life based on universal values. However, in order to develop methodological solutions it is necessary to interpret the current Core Curriculum in the context of the principles of teaching for wisdom, so that every teacher could know 'why' and 'how' they are supposed to support the development of Polish students' wisdom.

Arguably, this can be achieved in two ways. The goals and effects of each stage of teaching can be supplemented by the effects of the development of wisdom, its factors and predictors. The interpretation of those goals and effects can highlight the social abilities, skills and competences of both teachers and students that need to be stimulated, practised and

we wczesnej edukacji – propozycje rozwiązań metodycznych [Teaching for Wisdom in Early Childhood Education – Methodical Solutions; translation E.P.]. In: J. Bonar & A. Buła (Eds.), Poznań – Zrozumieć – Doświadczyć. Konstruowanie wiedzy nauczyciela wczesnej edukacji (pp. 191–200). Cracow: Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls; Płóciennik E. (2013). Edukacja dla rozwoju potencjału i mądrości dziecka w świetle koncepcji R. Sternberga [Education for the Child's Potential and Wisdom Development in the Light of the R. Sternberg Concept; translation E.P.]. In: Jabłonowska M. (Ed.), Uczeń zdolny i jego edukacja. Koncepcje. Badania. Praktyka (pp. 260–273). Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Universitas Rediviva; Płóciennik, E. (2013). Teaching for Wisdom in Early Modern Education. "Journal of Preschool and Elementary School Education", 2(4), 27–48; Płóciennik, E. (2014). Edukacja dla mądrości – perspektywa teoretyczna i praktyczna [Teaching for Wisdom – Theoretical and Practical View; translation E.P.]. In: M. M. Adamowicz & I. Kopaczyńska (Eds.), Pedagogika wczesnoszkolna wobec zmieniających się kontekstów społecznych. Volume 1 (pp.148–161). Toruń: Adam Marszałek Press. The book (written by this author) entitled *Rozwijanie mądrości dziecka. Koncepcja i wskazówki metodyczne* [Developing a Child's Wisdom. The Concept and Methodical Instructions; translation: E.P.] is currently being edited at the Łódź University Press.

shaped by teachers and parents alike. As no one can personally change the core curriculum for pre-schools and general education in any way, it should be to discuss selected goals and effects of teaching with reference to the principles of teaching for wisdom. It will be attempted to show that the current core curriculum can be used by teachers as a basis for intentional and purposeful development of wisdom in Polish general education and nursery schools – it only depends on correct interpretation of the curriculum's provisions. As such, this paper will analyse the new provisions of the current core curriculum used in pre-school education.

Interpretation of the effects of teaching specified in the core curriculum of pre-school education⁵ in the context of teaching for wisdom

Having analysed the interrelations between the goals and effects of teaching specified in the current Polish core curriculum of pre-school education (2014, p. 1–2), and the principles of teaching for wisdom, it can be concluded that the goals for teaching are the same in both cases. In order to develop children's wisdom, it is necessary to support the development of their potential and various talents, along with the intellectual activity needed in everyday situations and further education. In other words, pre-school teachers have to support the intellectual, emotional, social, ethical, physical and aesthetic development of children, while taking into account the children's various abilities and physical, intellectual and health-related capabilities. The provisions of the core curriculum of pre-school education are consistent with the principles of teaching for wisdom. They highlight the necessity of arranging various activities for children as part of their education and comprehensive preparation for future tasks requiring reflective, dialogical and dialectical thinking, as well as creativity and practical

⁵ Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 30 May 2014 on the Core Curriculum for Pre-school and General Education in Individual Types of Schools. Journal of Laws of 18 June 2014, item 803.

intelligence. These goals also include guidelines for the ethical development of children, i.e. the development of competences associated with making decisions that will not be socially harmful (on the contrary – we should support positive actions for the benefit of others).

In addition, the core curriculum states that children of a pre-school age should be introduced to the world of values in order to prepare them to accept themselves and other people, know right from wrong and respect the natural environment (it also mentions the development of appropriate attitudes to nature). What's more, it highlights the importance of increasing children's emotional resistance, and also in the context of dealing with stress and failure. From the perspective of teaching for wisdom, these goals are crucial, as they concern such issues as the ability of self-assessment, encouraging children to explore their strengths and weaknesses, persistence in pursuing their goals, responsibility, and getting them into the habit of thinking and acting prudently and responsibly, as well as learning such personality traits as making justified judgements, showing tolerance for different points of view and decisions, being open to novelty, otherness and ambiguity, showing empathy, and being able to consider what is good for others when aspiring to their own success. In addition, goals for the development of the ability to know right from wrong provide the basis for the introduction of educational situations that can lead to the development of the abilities of reflection, analysis of values and acting for the benefit of the natural environment, which is also in accordance with the principles of teaching for wisdom.

Another important goal of both pre-school education and teaching for wisdom is showing children how to establish appropriate social relations, as well as helping them to develop a sense of social belonging (to their family, peer group and ethnic, national or language community), and preparing them for using a modern foreign language. Teaching for wisdom also stresses the importance of children being able to get along with their peers in various ways, as well as other members of their local community and society in general. This will allow them to gradually develop their empathy and respect for different opinions resulting from different living, learning and housing conditions. In addition, developing

children's awareness of multiculturalism and instilling in them respect for and openness to different physical, intellectual and health factors, views, customs, preferences, ideas, choices and decisions is an important element in teaching mature wisdom. Thus, setting such goals for Polish pre-school education provides a basis for the development of the children's future competences and abilities associated with living in a culturally changing environment and solving everyday school, local, regional, national and international problems.

According to the core curriculum, pre-school education should also be aimed at developing the systems of values and skills that children need in order to explore and understand the social, natural and technological world, and to gain the ability to present their thoughts in a clear and comprehensible way. Understanding the world depends on having the above-mentioned intellectual and social competences. However, these goals are also important in the context of teaching for wisdom. It should be remembered that children gain experience mostly when they are curious about the world, asking questions, seeing problems and acquiring skills and knowledge without adults' help, but learning from their own mistakes and repeated attempts to find the best way of doing something. What's more, children should feel like partners in discussions and actions, including those taken for the benefit of others. They should be able to express their emotions, thoughts and ideas in various ways, and understand what others want to communicate. This makes children more willing to establish social bonds, develop harmonious and friendly relationships and learn to understand and respect otherness and ambiguity.

Thus, having analysed the core curriculum of pre-school education in the context of the theoretical principles of teaching for wisdom, one can reach the conclusion that long-term goals are the same in both cases. However, as demonstrated by the following analyses, the authors of the list of skills, competences and knowledge to be gained by children attending Polish nursery schools (i.e. the effects of teaching), did not pay as much attention to the diversity of goals and children's activities necessary to develop their wisdom.

As regards social skills, children who finish their pre-school education and start attending primary school should already be able to communicate, not only with other children, but also with adults, and to get along well when playing and performing various tasks. Even though this educational goal seems to be clear and in accordance with the principles of teaching for wisdom, the details remain ambiguous. They do not mention the development of the abilities required for dialogue and negotiation in conflict situations, communication and explanation of one's needs, cooperation in establishing rules at the nursery school, taking into account the needs of other children when dealing with everyday situations, predicting the consequences of being rude to others or not knowing one's first name, surname or address, etc.

Another example, not necessarily about pre-school educational goals in terms of teaching for wisdom, is the provision in the curriculum that highlights the need to teach self-care, hygiene and cultural habits, and instil in children the need to keep their surroundings clean and tidy. However, such phrases as "...children should behave appropriately at the table..." (p. 3; translation: E.P.) and "...children should keep their surroundings clean and tidy..." (p. 3; translation: E.P.) are a bit vague. Firstly, these standards are subjective and ambiguous, dependent on specific customs and social contracts. Thus, it is uncertain how 'appropriate' behaviour at the table should really be understood. Should children comment on the taste of dishes, discuss events and situations they find interesting, or instruct one another on how to use a knife or a napkin? Or should they – as many nursery school teachers believe – sit straight (to prevent spinal curvature), not talk (not to make noise), not squirm (not to hurt themselves), and wait until all the children have finished their meal (not to distract those who eat more slowly or reluctantly)? Secondly, interpretation of this provision depends on the teachers' attitudes and competences, as they can develop the discussed skills in another way, without necessarily taking into account the development of wise thought and action in their pupils (including appropriate use of cutlery, self-reflection, self-assessment and taking responsibility for the effects of their actions during meals). The idea that children should keep their surroundings

clean and tidy is also ambiguous. Does this mean that children cannot, for example, rearrange the chairs and toys in the room and take necessary elements from cupboards to bring their creative ideas to life? Or should it be interpreted as reminding children to make sure that their 'mess' does not disturb others and to clean it up after playing? Or maybe the room should be 'clean' and 'tidy' all the time (which would mean that children have no right to creative, expressive and free play) to meet the aesthetic needs of the teacher or the headmaster?

Other ambiguous provisions concerning stimulation of children's wise behaviour as part of the development of their competences specified in the Polish core curriculum read as follows:

- "Children who finish their pre-school education and start attending primary school should: know how to look after themselves, [...] accept medical treatment, e.g. they know that taking medicines and injections is necessary..." (p. 4; translation: E.P.). This is further referred to in the next area of the effects of teaching: "...Teaching children how to take care of their own and their peers' safety, which includes such provisions as [...] children know that they cannot take medicine and use chemical agents (such as detergents) without adult supervision..." (p. 5; translation: E.P.). From the perspective of teaching for wisdom, two elements of this are unclear. It has not been verified whether children really do gain those competences. We can only judge on the basis of the knowledge the children are provided with by adults. However, this stands in contradiction to teaching for wisdom, which places the emphasis on children's activity, their experiences, reflection on making choices and decisions, and ability to put knowledge into practice. The method of verifying and developing these competences is also doubtful. How can pre-school teachers do all of that, when they are not authorized to organize treatment of children and are not present during doctor's appointments? In addition, the following question comes to mind: Is the taking of medicine and injections always necessary? Especially when we consider

such widely discussed social problems as drug addiction, abuse of children and adolescents, and overuse of medication, stimulants and designer drugs. So, perhaps we should start explaining to children that looking after themselves doesn't always require taking medicine and having injections, while the responsible use of prescription drugs, even without adult supervision, can save a life (e.g. in the case of allergies). Of course, we could also reach the conclusion that children should not take responsibility for their own health, which would mean that we should take absolute control of this aspect of childcare. In this case, though, what would be the purpose of those core curriculum provisions?

- According to one of the items in the core curriculum, in the section entitled 'Art Education – Children as Actors and the Audience' (p. 5; translation: E.P.), children that finish their pre-school education and start attending primary school should know "...how to behave during special events, such as concerts, fairs, theatrical performances or cinema screenings..." (p. 5; translation: E.P.). Again, this provision suggests verification of knowledge, instead of analysis of using that knowledge in practice. Thus, it lacks reference to the development of practical intelligence (after all, children don't always behave according to their level of knowledge). In addition, the understanding of appropriate behaviour during performances or at fairs might be totally different, and thus depend on the teacher's subjective opinion, unless the teaching technique applied is based on such activities as, for example, simulation of a theatrical performance during which children switch between the roles of actors and audience members that disturb the cast's work with loud talking or eating. Children can also analyse the meaning and course of various events or celebrations and then suggest appropriate behaviour, also on the basis of their own experiences. Therefore, the goals discussed herein should be supplemented with methods of reaching them, so as to bring the teacher's attention to the fact that children should first experience certain

educational situations before they begin correcting their habits and learning to act wisely in similar situations. Providing them with relevant knowledge by means of 'dos and don'ts' is clearly not enough, as at this age such knowledge is quickly forgotten.

- In the section 'Supporting children's intellectual development through constructive games and making them interested in technology' (p. 6; translation: E.P.), as well as in others sections, apart from artistic activity, the authors of the Polish core curriculum failed to consider a very important factor that encourages wise thinking and behaviour – creativity. The core curriculum of pre-school education does not include the effects of teaching in such areas as designing, making associations, divergent and interrogative thinking, combinations and transformations, despite the fact that these areas are most strongly connected with children's development.
- In the core curriculum section entitled 'Helping children to understand the nature of atmospheric phenomena and avoid dangerous situations' (p. 6; translation: E.P.), we can find a provision pursuant to which children who finish their pre-school education and start attending primary school should be able to "...take rational decisions and do not put themselves in danger in case of bad weather (e.g. do not stand under a tree during a storm)..." (p. 6; translation: E.P.). This is another provision which seems problematic in terms of verification and development of children's competences by the teacher. How are teachers focused on education for wisdom supposed to achieve that? Should they arrange situations in which children are to make decisions where to stand during a storm to be safe? Apart from the issue of child safety and the possible negative consequences of such actions, this would cause some organizational problems. The process of gaining that competence should be analysed in the case of each child, so that the educational situation in question should be organized as many

times as there are children in the group to provide each child with an opportunity to make the decision independently. Besides, pursuant to the rules of verification, checking the competence only once is not enough. To ensure that the child has a specific ability or acts in a specific way in a given situation, their reactions should be observed and repeated at least several times. It is therefore clear that this provision should be reconsidered and rewritten.

- In the core curriculum section entitled 'Teaching respect for plants and animals' (p. 6; translation: E.P.) we can read that children who finish their pre-school education and start attending primary school should "... know what conditions are required by animals (living space, safety, food) and plants (light, appropriate temperature and humidity)..." (p.6; translation: E.P.). From the perspective of teaching for wisdom, the curriculum fails to mention the competences that form creative and practical intelligence, e.g. when children design their own little gardens or grow plants in pots. What's more, including those competences in the curriculum could help teachers to support children in reaching the goal specified in the section 'Art Education – Various Artistic Forms' (p. 6; translation: E.P.), which also covers children's interest in "...architecture (including landscape architecture)..." (p. 6; translation: E.P.).
- Similar problems can be seen in another section: 'Supporting children's intellectual development through mathematical education' (p. 6; translation: E.P.). It states that children who finish pre-school education should "...know how to measure length and are familiar with simple methods of measurements, for example by steps or placing one foot after the other..." (p. 6; translation: E.P.). Children should acquire such knowledge through purposeful actions. Hence, encouraging them to take measurements in various life situations (practical intelligence), to learn methods for measuring height, length and width depending on specific needs and purpose (creative intelligence) and to evaluate the usefulness of

such actions (reflectiveness, criticism, self-reflection and self-assessment) would be much more relevant as regards the provisions of this core curriculum.

- The last of the examples analysed comes from the section 'Family, civic and patriotic education' (p. 8; translation: E.P.), which describes only the effects of such education on the children's knowledge. One of the provisions states that children who finish pre-school education "...know that all people have equal rights..." (p. 8; translation: E.P.). To check whether a child has that competence, the teacher should ask, 'Do you know that people have equal rights?', and look for a positive or negative answer. But it's hard to imagine how the teacher is supposed to verify and develop that knowledge, if not through information from adults conveying truths to be accepted and remembered. This, however, stands in contradiction to the development of wisdom. How are children supposed to understand that they have the same rights as the adults or that children from poor families have the same rights as their rich peers? According to teaching for wisdom, children should instead be provided with examples of the equality of rights and related obligations in various contexts. For example, they should share with others, who are in need, and plan actions to help maintain the equal rights of all children and their families, regardless of their background, material status, predispositions and physical or intellectual abilities. Thus, children should be able to explain human rights, plan individual and group actions to promote those rights, and actively participate in projects aimed at helping those in need, etc. Otherwise, how are we supposed to teach children respect for otherness and ambiguity, or empathy, which results in acting in one's own best interest while taking into account equal rights and the needs of others?

The same interpretation issues arise when we read the core curriculum for higher stages of education. The above analysis is required to de-

cide whether the current Polish core curriculum allows for the implementation of teaching for wisdom in Polish schools. In this author's opinion, the answer is 'yes'. However, this depends mostly on the teacher's competences, including those in the analysis and interpretation of ambiguous and overly general descriptions of the effects of teaching specified in the core curriculum.

Conclusions

First of all, the teacher should be familiar with the principles of teaching for wisdom, and then adapt the educational process to make it as beneficial to their students as possible. In other words, students should be given the opportunity to gain specific abilities and adopt specific habits. This not only applies to their knowledge and analytical intelligence, but also their 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.

Secondly, development of wisdom is a new and scientifically unexamined topic in the field of pedagogy. Therefore, broad practical and theoretical studies ought to be carried out on the conditions necessary to promote the development of children's wisdom. For example, on the system of values in the school and family environment, on teachers' personality competence, interesting teaching resources, and modern teaching methods for improving the student's activity.

Thirdly, diagnosis of the children's wisdom and thought is needed. Teachers should get to know their pupils' conventional wisdom, the way they solve every-day problems and their behavioural interpretation, self-reflection and the sources of their wisdom.

Such pedagogical and academic research can help to form the basis of optimal conditions for developing wisdom and changing the records in the core curriculum, in the context of the theoretical principles of teaching for wisdom. Furthermore, this also applies to the pre-school education level.

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