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**Inclusiveness in Preschool and
Elementary School Education
as a Space for Diversity**

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Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow

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Editorial

A priority of the European Union is promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship yet this cannot be achieved without the integration of children with special needs into public education. The process of special education involves the individually planned and systematically monitored arrangement of teaching procedures, adapted equipment and materials, and accessible settings. These interventions are designed to help learners with special needs achieve a higher level of personal self-sufficiency and success in school and their community. Giftedness is also a difference in learning and can also benefit from specialized teaching techniques or different educational programs. To help to give an idea of the recent achievements in this field, the eighth issue of the *Journal of Preschool and Elementary School* focuses on *“inclusiveness in preschool and elementary school education as a space for diversity”*.

The article of Rozalina Engels-Kritidis (Sofia University, Bulgaria) provides useful insights and contributes to the arguments in favour of an individualised approach in preschool education with the presentation of research that was carried out for 12 weeks with the participation of experimental groups of 61, and control groups of 63 children. The study confirms that the individualized and differentiated approach has a measurably positive effect on preschool-age 3–4 and 6–7 old children.

Monika Krajčovičová and Erika Novotná’s paper presents a broad overview of the characteristics of children and families with refugee backgrounds, and provides strategies and practical suggestions as to how educational institutions in Australia can provide the best support for members of such communities in order to achieve their successful inclusion into formal schooling by creating culturally inclusive, safe and supportive learning environments. The topic is particularly relevant as more and more families with refugee backgrounds need to be catered for in an increasing number of countries in the world today. The paper confirms

that the education system in Australia has already prepared for the challenge of the increased diversity and special needs that the inclusion of children with often traumatic backgrounds and experiences might pose to teachers and schools. The purpose of the paper is to provide an overview of the government initiatives, a thorough presentation of the needs and backgrounds of these families and recommendations to teachers and educational institutions with regard how to provide a safe and inclusive learning environment.

The Hungarian authors (Krisztina Katona, Attila B. Kis) focus on issues in first language acquisition: problems that might arise in the process of access to the mother-tongue, factors that may hinder the acquisition of the first language, as well as the symptoms that children can exhibit if linguistic communication is hindered. The paper explores the Hungarian context and emphasizes the importance of successful first language acquisition for integration into wider social groups and communities, including schools. The other focus of the article is the ways in which pre-school teachers can assess the levels of first language competence in children: some measurement tools and tests are presented and discussed.

The Polish researchers Iwona Lewkowicz and Elżbieta Jaszczyszyn are concerned with the issue of inclusion of children with special educational needs in pre-school and primary school education in Poland. The article summarises the legal acts treating disability, and reviews the handling of this issue by Polish law and discusses the applications of inclusive education in pre-school and primary education. The authors also outline the implications of inclusive education to teacher education and raise greater awareness to the importance of inclusion and equal opportunities to all in education.

Anna M. Manowska (Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow) presents the background and results of a research project in the area of the use of drama and Kolb's learning cycle in the education of children aged 6–10, based on an enquiry carried out with students studying for a Master's degree in education. The chosen topic is relevant and valuable as it represents the innovatory approach of using drama to encourage children to acquire correct behaviour toward children with special needs,

which is less widely used in Eastern European contexts. The author comprehensively presents the background and history of the use of drama in Polish education, and argues in favour of the Kolb cycle effectively and convincingly.

Austrian professors Bernd Traxl and Johannes Huber (Innsbruck) focus on the issue of the need for more male role models in educational processes. The choice of the topic is an important and relevant one, due to the need for more empirical research on the gender aspects of child development. The paper describes a research project carried out with 10 groups of pre-school age children in Austria. The day-to-day activities of these groups were observed systematically while five groups worked with mixed-gender staff and five with all-female staff. The paper clearly suggests that the lack of male teachers is unfavourable for boys and boys can be "led into a more inviting and less confrontational situation more easily by male staff."

There are detailed reports prepared by committed participants in our present issue on exciting international conferences held in 2015 as well. Three of them were organized in Poland: one in the circle of "Speech, Language and Communication" in Kielce, the other in Poznan with the title "Values and Meaning of Life", the third one with the meaningful title "Thinking Symbols" in Pułtusk. The fourth European conference, an annual meeting of experts of developmental psychology, was held in Braga, Portugal in July. Through the extensive accounts we can have a deep insight into the conference topics even if we did not have the chance to participate at the events in person. It is also very exciting to have an overview of the current special books to which we might have no access e.g. due to poor command of a given language. Our Polish colleagues help us with reviews of up-to-date publications in the field of sociotherapy and educational reform in Poland.

The editors hope that the volume gives readers inspiration for new research, useful best practices and ideas to ponder with regard the pivotal topics of inclusiveness.

Attila B. Kis

Articles

Rozalina Engels-Kritidis

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Inclusiveness for All: The Importance of Individualization and Differentiation for Achieving Educational Progress in Children in Kindergarten

Abstract: The publication outlines the importance of individualization and differentiation when selecting and developing educational content, as well as when planning the goals of pedagogical interactions in the kindergarten. The results of a study involving experimental and control groups of 3–4- and 6–7 year-old children are presented; they indicate greater improvement in the progress of children in the group where an individual and differentiated approach had been systematically applied to all pupils.

Keywords: individualization; differentiation; individual educational progress; 3–4 year-old children; 6–7 year-old children.

Inclusiveness for all: the importance of individualization and differentiation

The ideas of differentiation and individualization in pedagogy are as old as the idea of effective tuition. It is related to planning high-value pedagogical interaction that accounts for individual characteristics even in large groups of children. Besides being an overall educational approach, differentiation and individualization can be utilized in practice through various methods, procedures and other pedagogical instruments related to the direct application of a way of viewing the process of learning and tuition that is focused on the child/pupil.

Even in his own time, Comenius spoke of the importance of the individual approach. Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" theory does not delineate the same "territory" for all children; even at the same age, this "zone" is different for each child.

Contemporary pedagogical research presents some aspects related to drawing attention to the importance of individualization and differentiation in pedagogy while at the same time drawing up some requirements for its proper application.

According to Tomlinson (2014), differentiation and individualization require the use of small sub-groups or individual tasks based on educational content that accounts for the different needs of each child or sub-group. She also states that the targeted use of flexible sub-grouping within the daily or weekly pedagogical interaction schedule, which is planned in accordance with the specific needs of individual children in the group, lies at the heart of quality tuition.

Thus, for example, Kuznetsova & Régnier (2014) use some of the methods of the French educator C. Freinet to apply in practice the principle of individualization in modern educational practices, in the area of foreign language tuition, and they have established a heightened motivation for learning in the participants of the educational experiment they describe. Kratochvílová & Havel (2013) examine the application of individualization and differentiation in Czech primary schools as one of the characteristic features of inclusion. They define the "application of individualization and differentiation" as one of the five basic principles of inclusive schooling (along with communication; cooperation; open-mindedness of teachers regarding the maximum expectation from pupils; respect among the children and the school staff). They also state that "a teacher can differentiate education in terms of content, timing, methodology and organization" (p. 1523) and thus ensure the potential for all children to be able to learn optimally and to achieve their maximum, regardless of their differences.

We are in total agreement with Căprioară & Frunză (2013) who, while uncovering the important role of differentiation and individualization in the tuition and learning of mathematics, nevertheless warn of the possi-

ble risks that might arise when this approach is applied one-sidedly. They point out the importance of teachers being specially trained in organizing this kind of tuition. Furthermore, individualization and differentiation are often related to children's inquisitiveness and it is very important that teachers have a clear idea of how to channel it in the right direction. In this regard it is important to mention Engel & Randall (2009), who reasonably consider that "a teacher who believes the goal of an activity is to complete a worksheet (a common goal in U.S. classrooms) might go about a learning activity very differently than a teacher who believes the goal is to help the child learn more about a given domain (science, literature, etc.)" (p. 189).

Similar to the above, Mircheva (2013) examines the question of "differentiation in education" and its direct connection with "open education", focusing on the possibilities of using differentiation in primary school; however, some of the author's ideas could be adapted and applied in ways specific to children of preschool age. Thus, with the aim of "achieving learning that brings pleasure and satisfies children's interest", Mircheva (2013) also supports the use of a "differentiated methodology that provides a variety of paths to learning" (p. 7).

Taking into account everything written above, *the aim of this article* is to describe the role of individualization and differentiation for the definition of educational goals, as well as for the selection and structure of educational content and its application in pedagogical interaction in order to expand the possibilities for educational progress of children in preschool age. The publication focuses on research in two different stages of interaction with kindergarten pupils: when starting and when finishing kindergarten, i.e. interaction with children aged 3–4 years and 6–7 years respectively.

The need for the increased application of individualization and differentiation in the kindergarten

The key role of the kindergarten teacher is to discreetly and effectively manage to transform life situations that are important to the child

into pedagogical ones (Engels-Kritidis, 2012), while at the same time provoking and maintaining the child's interest. This endeavor cannot have lasting success without accounting for the individual features and achievements of each child, combined with differentiation and/or individualization of the pedagogical interaction goals. Even from the early stage of selecting and structuring the educational content in a given pedagogical situation, a good kindergarten teacher will skillfully select and set the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes, some of which will reflect the specifics of individual children, or account for the potential of sub-groups within the class at a given time and development stage. In this regard, it is vital not to forget that a complete understanding of the essence of the individualized approach, as well as the principle of individualized educational goals when interacting with children of preschool age (Roussinova et al., 1993), are connected to the provision of more effective options regarding each separate child in the group, as well as to the clear understanding that the above does not concern only (or mainly) children belonging to the so-called "vulnerable groups" (children with special educational needs or difficulties, children of immigrant or minority descent, etc.). Fortunately, the opportunities for the successful application of individualization and differentiation at the preschool age are much greater in comparison to the options within the standard educational process for older children; one of the main reasons for this is the specific nature and, especially, the flexibility of the pedagogical interaction in the kindergarten. The teachers are the ones who can elaborate, reduce or present specific educational content in a way that allows discovery of the optimal or even maximum potential of each separate child or each subgroup (defined and redefined often as per specific criteria, at a given time, in accordance with specific circumstances or aims of the teacher). As well as accounting for the specifics of the educational system used, the kindergarten teacher should also plan several variations of different complexity for the educational content of pedagogical situations, adhering to the principle of the individualization of educational goals even in unplanned interactions with children outside of the normal schedule.

In each pedagogical interaction, the teacher needs to adequately assess which of the already known elements must be brought forward as a basis to introduce the new knowledge/skill/attitude, with regard to the varied educational focuses, in a way that reflects their existence in the real world (Engels-Kritidis, 2012). In a children's group, even one that is structured on an age basis (as is the case in Bulgaria), these stages are different for each child. Thus, not only is the group competence of two separate groups of e.g. 3–4-year-olds, different, but within the group itself there are individual and differential variances which, regardless of their connection to faster or slower development, have to be taken into account. Understandably, it must be noted that in order to successfully apply an individualized approach, especially when it comes to large classes (of 30 or more children) as is the case in the larger metropolitan areas of Bulgaria, it is important that the teacher is deeply familiar with each child's peculiarities.

The pedagogue is the one who, taking into account both the individual characteristics of each child and the group competence as a whole, "ensures" a series of pedagogical situations of increasing complexity that keep each child "awake" at his/her acquired level of mental development by giving him a constant source of "food" to maintain development. The kindergarten teacher should provide scope for the application of children's acquired experience; by individualizing and differentiating the complexity of the presentation, the teacher provides opportunity for comprehension and lays the foundation for the conscious use of the experience in real-life scenarios (Engels-Kritidis, 2012).

The principle of individualization of the educational goals is implemented to ensure "uniformity in the educational strategy and an individual rate of development" and is one of four basic principles of selection and structure of the educational content of the groundbreaking for contemporary preschool pedagogy in Bulgaria "Programme for the Education of the Child from 2 to 7 Years Old" (Roussinova et al. 1993, p. 14). However, to what extent is this principle applied in practice today?

Over the years, pedagogical observation of interactions, even in kindergartens that customarily apply forward-thinking methods and

resources, have focused attention on the insufficient use of individualization and differentiation in the aforementioned aspect. In order to further identify the issue, expert opinions of teachers in the capital and other cities in the country were used; their analysis confirmed that the potential for individualization and differentiation of pedagogical interaction is not used to its full extent.

Aim, hypothesis, methodology and design of the research

Before continuing to the hypothesis, it is important to review some basic information on the way preschool education is organized in Bulgaria, where the research took place. In Bulgarian kindergartens, the children are assigned to groups based on age (3–4-, 4–5-, 5–6-, and 6–7-year-olds); for each of those groups, several educational program system alternatives have been developed, comprised of materials for use by the children and books for the teachers. These program systems are directly linked to the expected results as per the country's official educational requirements for preschool education and preparation (Decree № 4 for Early Childhood Education and preparation of children for the primary school, 2000; updated 2005), according to which there are nine educational directions - Bulgarian language and literature; mathematics; social orientation; natural environment orientation; fine arts; sport activity; music; constructional, technical and everyday essential activities; games and play culture.

Aiming to find proof of the importance of individualization and differentiation of educational goals in the process of interaction in the kindergarten, the following research **hypothesis** was formulated: the degree of educational progress of each child with regard to mastering the educational content (defined as an estimated average of the different educational directions) is higher in groups where there is more frequent and wider application of the individualized and differentiated approach, in comparison with groups where this approach is applied via infrequent and inadequate methods and techniques.

This article tries to test the above hypothesis by applying it to two age groups: 3–4 year-olds (first age group) and 6–7 year-olds (fourth age group), i.e. to the youngest and to the oldest children attending kindergarten in Bulgaria.

A psychological-pedagogical experiment was conducted in two kindergartens in the capital city of Sofia; the experiment involved the application of a 12-week experimental educational interaction to a group of 31 children aged 3–4 years, as well as to a group of 30 children aged 6–7 years, for the period of March 1st – May 22nd, 2015. The aim of the interaction was to widen the scope and variety of application of individualization and differentiation by the kindergarten teachers during their work with children. Additionally, children from two control groups were researched for comparison purposes; these consisted of 31 and 32 children respectively, for which the experimental interaction was not applied.

Continuous daily psychological-pedagogical observation of the children by the kindergarten teachers was used as the main research method; this allowed for on-the-fly evaluation of the dynamic process of development of the mental processes and skills, as well as the progress and achievements of the children with regard to mastering the educational content. With the parents' consent, the kindergarten teachers gave expert opinions of each child's success rate by filling out evaluation data cards at the start and after the end of the experiment; the data was used to group and regroup the children in accordance with the criteria and indicators system developed by the author. This article will present the results of the researched experimental and control groups with regard to the indicator *Degree of educational progress of the child toward mastering the educational content as per the official educational requirements for preschool education, defined as an estimated average of the progress in different educational directions* (Bulgarian language and literature; mathematics; social orientation; natural environment orientation; fine arts; sport activity; music; constructional, technical and everyday essential activities; games and play culture). At the start of the experiment, as well as after the end of the 12-week interaction, kindergarten teachers were called upon to distribute the children's names into 5 informal (i.e. only

on paper) separate subgroups according to *each child's degree of success in mastering the educational content*, defined as an estimated average of his/her degree of success in the separate educational directions (see *Table 1*). During instructions, it was stressed that each child should be placed in the subgroup which best fits his/her achievement *at the time of distribution*; the appeal for teachers was to be as objective and impartial as possible. It is important to note that the required qualification for Bulgarian kindergarten teachers is a university degree (Bachelor's at minimum), which includes extremely competent psychological and pedagogical preparation. In addition, the kindergarten teachers who participated in the research have been training teachers themselves for more than 20 years; additionally, they have a wealth of experience with scientific-practical research and projects, so it is definitely safe to accept their expert opinion as such.

Table 1. Subgroups according to degree of success in mastering the educational content as per the official educational requirements for preschool education.

Group 1:	Group 2:	Group 3:	Group 4:	Group 5:
Almost always have difficulties	Frequently have difficulties	Frequently achieve good results	Mostly achieve very good results	Almost always achieve excellent results
(they have difficulty managing without help and are significantly behind the core group)	(they need improvement in lots of cases, but can sometimes achieve their goals with little or no help)	(they need improvement in some non-important or few important aspects, but can mostly manage on their own)	(they only need improvement in non-important aspects)	(almost always without any issues)

The part of the research presented herein can be associated with the following **4 main tasks**:

1. To have the expert opinion of kindergarten teachers in the experimental and control groups of *3–4 year-old children* regarding

- their degree of success in the initial and control stages of the experiment.
2. To have the expert opinion of kindergarten teachers in the experimental and control groups of *6–7 year-old children* regarding their degree of success in the initial and control stages of the experiment.
 3. To measure the degree of educational progress of *3–4 year-old children* and *6–7 year-old children* by estimating the difference in success rates of children between the experimental groups and the control groups.
 4. To apply suitable statistical methods in order to adequately prove and visualize the hypothesized larger degree of progress of children from the experimental groups in comparison with the control groups.

The results, presented in numerical format based on the establishment of grades to the association of children with the separate subgroups defined by teachers at the appropriate moments during the research, were subjected to statistical processing using the SPSS 19 software.

Table 2. Distribution of 3–4 year-old children and 6–7 year-old children in Experimental Groups and Control Groups in accordance with their association with the subgroups based on degree of success in mastering the officially-required educational content – estimated average of all directions, in Initial Stage and Control Stage.

№	Subgroup Description:	3–4 year-old children Experimental Group		3–4 year-old children Control Group		6–7 year-old children Experimental Group		6–7 year-old children Control Group	
		Initial Stage	Control Stage	Initial Stage	Control Stage	Initial Stage	Control Stage	Initial Stage	Control Stage
1	Almost always have difficulties	7	2	4	3	2	2	0	0
2	Frequently have difficulties, but have often shown they can achieve good results	11	9	12	12	4	3	8	5

3	Frequently achieve good results	5	8	7	7	6	5	9	11
4	Mostly achieve very good results	4	3	2	4	12	8	11	12
5	Almost always achieve excellent results	4	9	6	5	6	12	4	4
Total children in the group		31	31	31	31	30	30	32	32

The first examined null hypothesis, correlating to the *research hypothesis*, is the following: the degree of progress of separate 3–4 year-old children toward mastering the educational content is not larger in the experimental group in comparison to the control group.

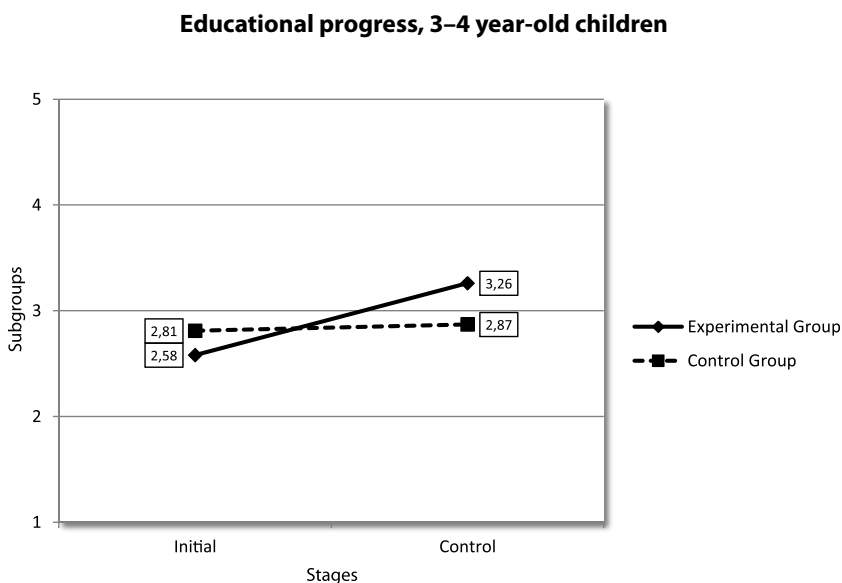
In order to check the null hypothesis, the following statistical methods were applied:

1. *Student's t-test* method for checking statistical hypotheses regarding difference between two average values from paired samples (to compare the estimated averages of the experimental and control groups, separately for the initial and control stages).
2. *Student's t-test* method for checking statistical hypotheses regarding the difference between two average values from independent samples (to establish the statistical significance of the change in the experimental and the control groups separately).

The results of the statistical analysis show that during the control stage there is no significant difference between the experimental and control groups ($t = 0.67$, $p = 0.507$). The change in the Control Group is statistically insignificant ($t = 0.81$, $p = 0.423$), while in the Experimental Group there is a statistically significant change ($t = 0.629$, $p = 0.000$) that can be clearly seen in Fig. 1. Although no statistically significant difference is registered between the experimental and control groups in the control stage ($t = 1.17$, $p = 0.246$), a fact that appears to confirm instead of rejecting the null hypothesis, is the statistically significant change in the Experimental Group children, along with the fact that they start from

lower values in the initial stage and go on to overtake the Control Group in the control stage, is at least a partial confirmation of the alternative (research) hypothesis.

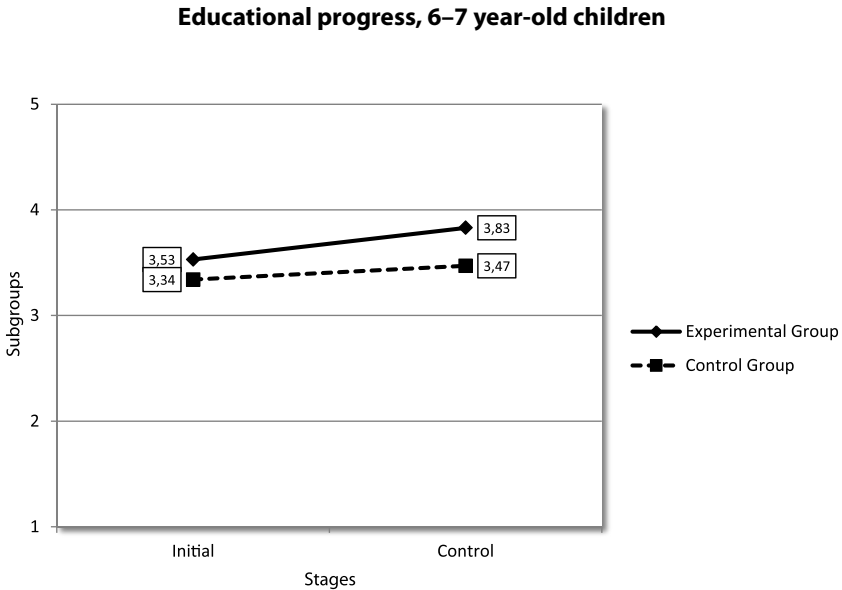
Fig. 1. Differences in the degree of success between the experimental and control groups of 3–4 year-old children during the initial and control stages.



The second null hypothesis to be examined is the following: the degree of progress of separate 6–7 year-old children toward mastering the educational content is not larger in the experimental group in comparison to the control group.

The examination of the second null hypothesis was made using the same statistical methods used to check the first hypothesis; the results are visualized in Fig. 2.

Fig. 2. Differences in the degree of success between the experimental and control groups of 6–7 year-old children during the initial and control stages.



The results of the statistical analysis show that, even though the Experimental Group starts from a higher value, during the initial stage there is no significant difference between the experimental and control groups ($t = 0.69$, $p = 0.495$). In both groups there is a significant change (Control Group: $t = 2.10$, $p = 0.044$; Experimental Group: $t = 3.53$, $p = 0.001$); however, the change in the experimental group is bigger than in the control group, which is evident in Fig. 2. Even though in the control stage there is no significant difference registered between the experimental and control groups ($t = 1.31$, $p = 0.196$), which appears to confirm the null hypothesis, the greater degree of progress of the Experimental Group children is at least a partial confirmation of the alternative hypothesis.

We thus tried to prove and visualize the positive difference in the degree of educational progress of individual children in groups where an

individualized and differentiated approach is actively applied in pedagogical interactions. The reasons why the change during the control stage for both age groups, though evident, is not statistically significant, are most probably related to the limited number of children observed. A sample that is at least three times larger and includes more children from all age groups processed together is expected to alter the picture and outline a statistically significant connection.

This publication outlined the importance and potential of the enhanced application of individualization and differentiation in pedagogical interactions within the kindergarten; this reasoning was supported by the pilot research results presented herein. Different aspects of this issue will be examined in more depth in upcoming publications by the author.

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Cultural Inclusion: Formal Schooling for Children from Families of Refugee Backgrounds

Abstract: All communities of refugee backgrounds should feel supported by the state and the majority, and have the power to strive for a better quality of life, while still being able to proudly proclaim their own culture in formal schooling. Culturally inclusive schools appreciate diversity, perceive it as a natural part of a modern society, and encourage all individuals regardless of their cultural background, race, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, gender, or language. This study is a theoretical introduction to the pilot project concerning the expectations and experiences of parents with refugee backgrounds in the context of early learning for their children in Australia. We look at diversity and the successful inclusion of children from refugee backgrounds families into formal schooling by creating culturally inclusive, safe and supportive learning environments.

Keywords: Cultural Inclusion. Diversity. Inclusion. Formal Schooling. Refugees. Refugee Backgrounds People. Australian Education. Culturally Inclusive Schools. Safe and Supportive Learning Environment.

1. Introduction

One of the major challenges facing the world today is protecting refugees who have been forced to leave their homes by armed conflict

and human rights abuses. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that there were 45.2 million forcibly displaced people worldwide at the end of 2012, the highest number since 1994. Of these, 28.8 million were internally displaced persons, 15.4 million were refugees and 937 000 were asylum seekers (Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2015).

The conflicts occurring in Syria and Iraq represent one of the worst humanitarian disasters of our time. More than 11 million people have become displaced due to these conflicts, with most people fleeing to neighbouring countries such as Jordan and Lebanon. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that more than 25% of people fleeing conflicts in Iraq and Syria are children, with more than 3,700 children in Jordan and Lebanon currently living without one, or both of their parents or adult care givers.

On 9 September 2015, the Australian Government announced that a total of 12,000 humanitarian places would be made available for those who have been displaced by the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. Priority will be offered to refugees who are deemed most vulnerable, in particular women, children and families and persecuted minorities who have the least prospect of returning safely to their homes. Australia will also provide support to more than 240,000 Syrian and Iraqi people who have been forced to flee their homes or seek refuge in neighbouring countries (Australian Government, Department of Social Services, 2015).

According to the United Nations *Convention and protocol relating to the status of Refugees*, a refugee is a person who is outside their own country and has a well-founded fear of persecution due to their race, religion, nationality, member of a particular social group or political opinion, and is unable or unwilling to return. These people are seeking refuge from situations of conflict and trauma some may require an extended period of adjustment once they arrive (Australian Government, Department of Social Services, 2015).

Many refugee families come to Australia each year, from different parts of the world and with a vast range of experiences. They struggle to deal with the consequences of their exposure to traumatic experiences

and with the resettlement process, which in most cases lasts a lifetime. Their lack of familiarity with the Australian 'system' and the services available to them impacts on their level of access to those services and ultimately on the health outcomes of refugee families. However, despite being one of the most vulnerable groups in our society, they are also very resilient. Refugees have much to offer our society including a wealth of experience, knowledge and skills that can benefit Australia as a whole (NSW Refugee Health Service, 2004).

2. Challenges for families with a refugee background

The refugee experience, and the diverse circumstances that refugee families find themselves in when arriving in Australia, have impacts on their health, their families, parenting and other issues related to settlement (NSW Refugee Health Service, 2004). Australian government institutions and authorities provide an important framework for the resettlement of refugees. At a practical level, many newly arrived refugees learn about Australian law, social institutions, norms and society through government administered social services and programs. These institutional encounters are not judged on face value alone; rather people try to make sense of them by attaching meaning to their experiences (Losoncz, 2015).

People from refugee backgrounds are often significantly affected by the trauma they have experienced. Children of refugee parents who are born in Australia can also be affected by generational family trauma, simply by being part of a family that is dislocated, grieving and mourning the loss of loved ones and homeland. Many, but not all, people from refugee backgrounds, including parents and children, will suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder or significant depression or anxiety.

Resettlement in Australia brings with it many challenges for refugee families. Families may feel further isolated by the language barrier and significant cultural differences between their place of residence and their country of origin. Financial difficulties are common and add additional pressures for newly arrived families. Schooling in the country of origin or

in refugee camps may have been limited or disrupted, or there may have been no access to education. Refugee children may be entering your school with little or no previous formal schooling experience.

Limited educational opportunities, possible exposure to war and trauma, the difficulties of adjusting to a new culture, and limited understanding of the English language all profoundly impact on a child's ability to learn and their social and emotional wellbeing. In addition, a history of poor maternal health during pregnancy and inadequate neonatal care in the refugee camps, combined with malnutrition and disease, can further compromise a child's wellbeing and impact on their smooth transition to learning in your classroom.

Refugee children may have experienced the death of a parent or other significant family member. They may be in the care of a relative or family friend. Some children may not be with their biological mother because in cultures where a man can have more than one wife, the family sometimes migrates with all of the children and only one wife. Children may have had the experience of being child soldiers. Grief and sadness can compound experiences of dislocation, confusion, limited language and homesickness. Trauma reactions are not necessarily short-term and can have ongoing impact. Children from war-torn countries often come to Australia without fathers, older brothers and other significant male role models (Murray, Ganim, 2011).

3. Culturally inclusive schools

Schools are a stabilising feature in the unsettled lives of children from refugee backgrounds. They provide safe spaces for new encounters, interactions and learning opportunities. They also deliver literacy, the key to educational success, post school options, life choices, social participation and settlement (Matthews, 2008). Children from refugee backgrounds in schools, especially those with disrupted or no previous schooling, require additional support to develop the English language and learning skills they need to succeed in Australian schools. They may

also require specific support in relation to settlement, dealing with migration and pre-migration experiences and transition to mainstream schooling (Victoria State Government, Education and Training, 2015).

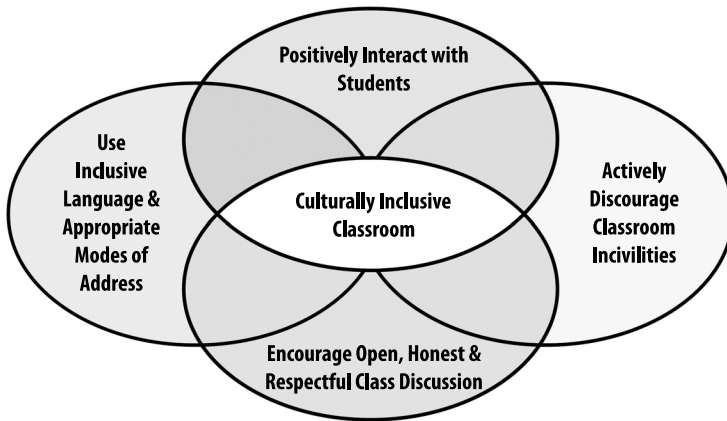
Schools are in a unique position and have a wonderful opportunity to provide a safe and supportive environment for the children and families of refugee background and can assist in rebuilding their shattered lives. Acknowledging and celebrating cultural diversity throughout the school community can foster a sense of belonging and create a positive school culture across the whole school (Murray, Ganim, 2011). Many schools in Australia have worked hard to raise awareness about refugee issues and develop many effective programs to support refugee children and their families.

Culturally inclusive schools appreciate diversity, perceive it as a natural part of a modern society, and encourage all individuals regardless of their cultural background, race, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, gender, or language. Abood et al. (2011) mention that inclusion also involves taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity in curriculum decision-making processes. The intent is to ensure that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and that educators make curriculum decisions that uphold all children's rights to have their cultures, identities, abilities and strengths acknowledged and valued, and respond to the complexity of children's families' lives.

Creating a Culturally Inclusive Classroom Environment

A culturally inclusive classroom is one where children and staff alike recognise, appreciate and capitalise on diversity so as to enrich the overall learning experience. Fostering a culturally inclusive learning environment encourages all individuals – regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation or political beliefs – to develop personal contacts and effective intercultural skills (Barker, Frederiks, Farrelly, 2009). The following Figure 1 demonstrates useful strategies for establishing a classroom environment characterised by cultural inclusivity, mutual respect, and genuine appreciation of diversity.

Figure 1. Recommended strategies to assist with creating a culturally inclusive classroom



(Barker, Frederiks, Farrelly, 2009)

Engage in Positive Interactions with Students

- Establish an introduction system or “meet-and-greet” process that enables students and staff to gain information about the cultural backgrounds of others, and the diversity of experience in the classroom (e.g., ice-breaker activities in the first week of semester). For example, consider a “name activity” that encourages students to talk about the origins of their name, how they came to be given it, or what it means. This can help to encourage interaction between students, as well as opening up discussion about diversity.
- It is important to celebrate similarities, as well as discovering differences between students. Refer to the GIHE document “Managing Intercultural Conflict Productively” for suggestions about activities that promote the discovery of common interests and shared experiences between students to help build cohesiveness in the group.
- Promote computer and information technologies as an easily accessible method of student-lecturer interaction, particularly electronic bulletin boards, course mailing lists, and other online mediums.

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- At the start of each semester, provide students with some information about your teaching style and instructional methods, perhaps on lecture slides or on your own website. Include details of your own cultural background and any cross-cultural teaching, learning or research experiences you have had.
 - Communicate to your students that you are committed to understanding cultural differences and understanding your own assumptions, values and beliefs associated with diversity. This sends a message to students that culture is valued and respected in the classroom.
 - Provide opportunities for your students to interact with you informally. Before and after lectures or tutorials is an ideal time.
 - Make an effort to learn something unique about each student. While this is challenging in large tutorials, exercises such as the “name activity” mentioned earlier can help in this regard.
 - Display positive nonverbal behaviours (e.g., inviting facial expressions, eye contact, posture, hand gestures, physical distance) to ensure you appear approachable to students.

Use Appropriate Modes of Address

- During one-on-one interactions, ask what name or form of address students prefer.
- During class discussions, refer to students by name as much as possible.
- Correct pronunciation of names is very important, as it demonstrates cultural awareness and respect. Remember – if you are in doubt, check with students.
- Use inclusive language that avoids ethnocentric tones (e.g., “family name” rather than “last name”, and “given” name rather than “Christian name”).

Eliminate Classroom Incivilities

- Establish explicit ground-rules for appropriate classroom conduct to protect against cultural exclusion and insensitivity.

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- Communicate, verbally and non-verbally, high expectations for displaying mutual respect toward all students.
 - Encourage students to negotiate an accepted “code of conduct” and set of disciplinary measures for inappropriate classroom behaviour (refer also to the GIHE document “Managing Intercultural Conflict Productively”).
 - Respond promptly to any behaviour (verbal or non-verbal) that could be considered prejudiced, biased or discriminatory in nature. Do not tolerate racist, sexist or culturally insensitive comments made by students. Explain Australia’s laws in relation to discrimination and the University’s Student Charter.
 - Avoid ignoring or neglecting the needs of individual students. For example, ensure you do not have a tendency to favour one group over another when answering questions.
 - Avoid stereotypes and preconceived assumptions in your teaching practices and course content.
 - When presenting information on culturally and linguistically diverse individuals or minority groups, clearly cite published literature and research findings, rather than expressing your personal opinion. Similarly, encourage students to draw on diverse data sources/evidence to develop their arguments and critiquing opinions.

Encourage Open and Inclusive Classroom Discussion

- Prompt students to ask questions by using open-ended statements, such as “Would anyone like to share a different opinion or perspective?”
- Avoid singling out individual students or putting anyone “on the spot”, particularly when discussing culturally or personally sensitive issues. For example, a student will feel pressured if it is assumed they can speak on behalf of all people from their country or culture of origin.
- Promote turn-taking when discussing controversial issues. For example, ensure students take turns expressing their own opinions

while also listening to (and genuinely considering) the views of others.

- Ask students how they prefer to learn, and, where possible, examine how you might adapt your teaching and learning activities accordingly. For example, inviting students to write a “self-reflective essay” to explain their learning style; completing a learning style inventory assessment, or providing an online forum to openly discuss how they like to learn are ideal methods to explore learning styles (Barker, Frederiks, Farrelly, 2009).

Belonging, Being & Becoming, The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF) has been developed to assist educators in providing all young children with opportunities to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for future success in learning. The EYLF puts great emphasis on the value and importance of demonstrating respect for diversity and cultural competence within your child care service and states that “*learning outcomes are most likely to be achieved when early childhood educators work in partnership with families*” (EYLF, 2009, p. 12).

The Early Years Learning Framework talks a lot about diversity of culture and emphasises the importance of cultural competency to support the development of every child’s sense of ‘belonging, being and becoming’. Abood et al. (2011) mention that educators need to always be looking to learn more about other cultural practices and develop skills for communication, and interactions across cultures. There are some things to consider:

- Parents may come from different cultural backgrounds and may each be bi- or multi-lingual.
- Families can feel torn between cultures. It can be hard to find a balance so building strong connections to community support is important in times of transition.
- In some cultures it is inappropriate or challenging to have direct eye contact, so when you are speaking to someone they may have their eyes to the ground. Looking down may be a sign of respect so if you are unsure you may need to clarify this.

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- In some cultures it is inappropriate to touch a child on the head, or anywhere.
 - In some cultures it may be more appropriate to speak to the mother about the children than the father, however, keep in mind that the father may be the decision maker.
 - In some cultures, men do not shake women's hands, and some find it inappropriate to meet alone in a room with someone from the opposite sex.
 - Parents may not be accustomed to playing with or entertaining their children so do not assume that toys and books are readily available in the home or that this is something children are used to.
 - Some cultures do not see play as important and may not be aware of the educational benefits of learning through play (Abood et al., 2011).

4. Formal schooling of children from refugee backgrounds

Some children from refugee backgrounds have had very little or no access to formal education as a consequence of their refugee experience. These students will have limited literacy skills in their first language and knowledge gaps across the curriculum (Victoria State Government, Education and Training, 2015). In addition to traumatic experiences of war and displacement, they may lack English language skills and have had limited schooling. While parental support is important to a child's education, many parents from refugee backgrounds have themselves had little access to schooling. They are unfamiliar with the Australian school system, may have limited literacy and numeracy skills, and their English language may be limited. They may feel unable to help their children with school work (The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture Inc., 2015). In the next part, we present some strategies intended to support children from refugee backgrounds at schools in Australia.

Strategies to support children from refugee backgrounds

- **Attend professional development sessions on working with refugee children.** In Australia, there are a growing number of workshops, seminars and professional training sessions that cater for teachers working with children from refugee backgrounds. In Victoria, for instance, the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (Foundation House) offers regular free professional development workshops for teachers. It has also developed a number of excellent resources for schools and teachers of students with refugee backgrounds. These are available to download free at the website <http://www.foundationhouse.org.au>.
- **Designate a staff member to be the refugee contact or support person.** This may be the deputy or assistant principal, psychologist or student welfare coordinator, or a multicultural education aide. This person should be the key contact person at the school for families from refugee backgrounds. They must have a good understanding of the refugee experience and develop relationships with key support agencies to assist the child and family with financial, health and community services. It is ideal if the staff member speaks the same language as the child.
- **Consider small group and/or whole class programs** to increase the child's connectedness to school and acceptance by peers. It is recommended that you deliver these programs in conjunction with the school nurse, psychologist or staff member in charge of wellbeing. Two excellent programs are available at no charge through the website: <http://www.foundationhouse.org.au> 'The Rainbow Program for Children in Refugee Families (2002)' (a small group program) and 'Classroom Kaleidoscope – a program to facilitate connectedness and wellbeing in the culturally diverse classroom (2007)' (a whole class program).
- **Talk to the parents or carers about the child's previous school experience.** It may be possible for a school staff member, preferably the refugee contact or support person, to establish this when the child is enrolled. It can be helpful to talk about the

child's previous schooling to gauge the level of the child's educational experience. Useful questions might include 'Has your child attended school?', 'Was schooling disrupted?', 'How many years of schooling has your child completed?', 'How many days or hours per week did your child attend school?' and 'What language was your child educated in?'. Often, children learn second and third languages in refugee camps so it is important to ascertain the language of the home and where English fits in the child's language repertoire (Murray – Ganim, 2011).

What teachers can do

Teachers need to develop a relationship with families from refugee backgrounds to build trust. It is suggested that a teacher begin this process at the first interview with the family and take this opportunity to find out information that will be needed to ensure a positive experience for the family. It is our job as teachers working with families from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds to find out about their culture/s, and to show respect by asking questions to avoid misunderstandings or offending the family.

- Teachers should present themselves politely, but positively assertive, particularly when dealing with issues that may conflict with their own cultural beliefs or practices.
- Teachers first need to identify the cultural background of the family. If you are unsure, remember, all you need to do is ask. If possible, before a family comes in to the service to enrol, familiarise yourself with the family's cultural background and have some pictures or resources available to show your interest and respect.
- Show a sincere interest about a family's cultural background when asking about languages spoken, geography, politics, religions, festivals, holidays etc.
- Get to know each child's family. Encourage the family and extended family members of the child to be involved and participate in programs and activities.
- Help children and families to meet and socialise with other families.

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- Encourage families to talk about cultural diversity with their children (Adapted from “Tip Sheet 2. Celebrating Cultural Diversity in Early Childhood Services”, by Abood, J. et al., 2011, *Diversity in Practice*. Copyright 2011 by the Family Worker Training and Development Programme).

International research has shown that parental engagement (of various kinds) has a positive impact on many indicators of student achievement, including higher grades and test scores, enrolment in higher level programs and advanced classes, higher successful completion of classes, lower drop-out rates, higher graduation rates and a greater likelihood of commencing post-secondary education (Emerson, Fear, Fox, Sanders, 2012).

5. Conclusion

For Taylor, Sidhu (2009), schools have a critical role to play in the settlement of refugee background children and in facilitating transitions to citizenship and belonging. Although there have been a number of reports by community organisations on how to facilitate good practice in the provision of schooling for children from refugee backgrounds there have been few documented examples in Australian schools. It is important to have a broader understanding of how schooling may contribute to cultural inclusion as every family is individual, unique.

We need to respect the diversity of families and communities and the aspirations they hold for their children and to uphold all children’s rights to have their culture, identities, abilities and strengths acknowledged and valued. We need to be particularly careful not to group cultures according to where they come from, or use stereotypes as most cultural groups have many different languages, dialects, sub-cultures and practices within each group. We need to encourage families to ask for support and information and to share their cultural practices (Abood et al., 2011).

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Development of Linguistic-Communication Competences in Preschools.

Factors Influencing Language Competences – Their Level and Measurement

Abstract: Children entering institutional education can activate the linguistic and non-linguistic norms they bring from home. These norms, however, are very diverse in their nature and children from the same age-group remain at different levels in terms of language-acquisition. In our paper we seek to identify where and what sort of problems may arise in acquiring the mother-tongue, what factors may hinder the acquisition of the first language, what are the symptoms of backwardness in the field of linguistic-communication and which areas measuring tests tend to focus upon. Finally by presenting an indication system we would like to show what opportunities observation may have in purposeful development.

Keywords: native language acquisition, linguistic competence, measurement of communication skills, observation of children's language performance.

Introduction

The correlation between language and society preoccupied scholars in various disciplines for centuries but an empirical study in the context of mother-tongue development in institutional education was not carried out before the 1950s. Out of these, the most commonly shared and far-reaching, although criticised in many aspects, was Basil Bernstein's

research and the language sociological theory which was founded upon it (Bernstein, 1971). In his theory Bernstein connects special forms of linguistic communication with social class and family role, as well as school chances and achievement to social background. His theory made the assertion that the family's status in society and economy definitely determines a child's language development generally accepted together with the related idea that this has a considerable impact on his general achievement in educational institutions (preschool, elementary school). It is a commonly shared idea that advanced mother-tongue competence, the possession of speech, gives way not only to intellectual growth but social advancement as well, having a dominant influence on the development of the whole personality. Quoting Zita Réger's words: "the way to the language is, by the same token, a way to the world". When a child acquires his mother-tongue he becomes able to understand and interpret the linguistic and behavioural norms of his social environment and meet the requirements of the surrounding society even in his non-linguistic attitude (Réger, 1992, p. 88.).

Children entering preschool and elementary schools are at different stations on this "road". The surrounding adults and educators may help the children's successful progression or occasionally compensate for their problems if they take account of several conditions. Teachers should know and use optional tools of development in their everyday work which can only be effective if they are fully aware of the starting point: at which stage the child is blocked and what are the causes responsible for this.

Later on we seek to identify where and what sort of problems arise in the process of mother-tongue acquisition, what factors may hinder the acquisition of the first language, what are the symptoms of backwardness in the linguistic-communication field and what are the areas to which measuring tests pay special attention. Finally, by presenting an indication system, we would like to show what opportunities observation may have in terms of purposeful development.

Non-negligible factors of acquiring native language skills

The child establishes communication with his environment as early as in the intrauterine phase and this disposition remains and even becomes stronger after birth. The interaction of more factors later enables children to complete their communication, which appears at the non-verbal level in its early form, with verbal channels, leading to learning their mother-tongue. Acquisition of a language requires the existence of certain anatomical–physiological conditions: the integrity of speech organs; the adequate operation of their neurological background ensuring their synchronization; the correct functioning of the perceptive basis in the brain, responsible for the detection of sounds and speech. In terms of other factors, seeing and touching play a decisive role in the formation of non-verbal communication in early childhood but they have a crucial impact on native language learning as well. The process of verbalization, extending from naming objects to formulating concepts, are deeply influenced by the establishment of a proper connection between visual–auditory and visual–tactile impulses (Dankóné, 2000; Bilibókné, 1981).

Few contest that language skills improve and function to a certain degree independently from other knowledge systems and general cognitive abilities (Győri and Hahn, 2006). Nonetheless, we should note that in diagnostics and therapeutic processes they cannot be divided from other cognitive and sensory-motor systems (Kas, 2009). The proper functioning of attention, memory and imagination attached to the group of general intellectual abilities plays a minor role in spontaneous language-acquisition but a crucial role in purposeful development.

Beyond biological factors, primary socializing environment also has a decisive impact on early language-learning. For a typical child it means the family where he acquires linguistic-stylistic patterns and social behavioural norms by imitation, those which he can activate when he enters other groups later. Therefore his chances for integration into a wider group and participation in a communication with grown-ups and contemporaries depend on how the language instruments acquired by him before are suitable for meeting the communication challenges he faces

in the new situation (Katona, 2000). If only a narrow range of patterns are available he may often feel incompetent either in terms of grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, strategic aspects or indeed in all of the above.¹ If this situation arises, the child will show backwardness in his communication and, potentially, his whole personality development as well (cf. Aranka Csertő).

Aranka Csertő calls attention to another psychological reason for the failure of speech activity: frustration in motivation. She claims that this barrier in speech goes back to an experience when “a child did not reach his goal with his communication, his demand, which prompted communication, was not satisfied” (Csertő, 1982, p. 3): e.g. a babbling, moaning infant was not attended to, or an inquiring child who regularly received either inadequate or no answers, or experienced even rejection or an aggressive reaction. This type of parental behaviour leads to “apathy, shortage of speech activity, or strong frustration blocking or suppressing any attempts to communicate even if the intention for verbal contact keeps alive for a while” (Csertő, 1982, p. 83).

¹ See Reinhold Peterwagner, *What Is the Matter With Communicative Competence?: An Analysis to Encourage Teachers of English to Assess the Very Basis of Their Teaching*. Lit Verlag, 2005. Definition of the cited Canale and Swain's Model of communicative competences:

(i) **Grammatical competence** includes knowledge of phonology, orthography, vocabulary, word formation and sentence formation.

(ii) **Sociolinguistic competence** includes knowledge of sociocultural rules of use. It is concerned with the learners' ability to handle for example settings, topics and communicative functions in different sociolinguistic contexts. In addition, it deals with the use of appropriate grammatical forms for different communicative functions in different sociolinguistic contexts.

(iii) **Discourse competence** is related to the learners' mastery of understanding and producing texts in the modes of listening, speaking, reading and writing. It deals with cohesion and coherence in different types of texts.

(iv) **Strategic competence** refers to compensatory strategies in case of grammatical or sociolinguistic or discourse difficulties, such as the use of reference sources, grammatical and lexical paraphrase, requests for repetition, clarification, slower speech, or problems in addressing strangers when unsure of their social status or in finding the right cohesion devices. It is also concerned with such performance factors as coping with the nuisance of background noise or using gap fillers.

If a deficiency goes back to anatomical-physiological reasons or affects certain areas of general intellectual abilities the educational institution should involve a professional expert for treatment. Backwardness stemming from the social environment of the child can be compensated for by teachers with controlled and purposeful development work, occasionally involving psychologists if the disorders indicate a level of background frustration.

Monitoring the level of linguistic competence

A child's successful integration into preschool activities and later his school achievements are considerably influenced by his linguistic-communicative competence. Institutional education plays a more and more important role in its development. This goes back not only to the fact that from September 2014 it has been compulsory for all Hungarian children to attend preschool from the age of three but also to a gradual change and re-interpretation of the family's role. Earlier it was the dialogues of the surrounding adults, the parents and grandparents, in which the everyday text types appeared in a child's primary socialization, while today their places have been taken over by mass communication – it is these models which now shape the typical speech genres of our children. The role of story-telling has been largely left by parents to television, video or computer devices, and family time at home is confined to silently staring at info-communication screens or short conversations limited to a few sentences. Another observable phenomenon is that some parents make do with a low level of speech culture for their own and their child's use. They are satisfied with situative communication which is only understandable in a given context by a narrow circle of people without considering the disadvantages of their child's low level of linguistic competence (cf. Réger, 1990). The facts above mean that preschool teachers should be aware of the relevant state of a child's linguistic-communication development from the first moments of their admission to kindergarten. Permanent monitoring and registration of the progression of these skills are also justified

by the fact that acquiring the basic forms of language skills has a universal impact: a disorder occurring in any areas affects all subsequent and more complex forms of communication.

There are two basic methods available for preschool teachers to determine the relevant level of linguistic-communication competence: situation analysis based on observation or survey examination carried out by test or measurement. Experts' opinions are divided with regard to which one we should use for evaluating 3–6–7-year-old children's performance. A group of professionals completely reject any evaluation based on measurement in preschools, while others tolerate these methods more readily. Stressing the primacy of observation, we need to note that measurement cannot be completely excluded from a preschool teachers' work. There are cases when only measurable results can show how to carry out a child's development and there are areas where the exact progression level cannot be identified exclusively by observations. But it should be emphasized as well that preschool institutions cannot be turned into "tiny schools" by the overestimation of measurement and that the misinterpretation of outcomes may occasionally produce a negative effect on children's development (Katona, 2007. p. 185).

Observation and measurement, and their correct evaluation, may give us a picture of children's achievement in the field of verbal communication. Moreover, at this age it is also important to monitor the progression of those partial abilities without which the writing-reading "mechanism" cannot be implemented in elementary schools. The preschools' responsibility in this field, in close collaboration with the family, is very complex nowadays: it should focus on developing communicative competences in a way that, on one hand, a child's oral performance should not be below what is expected of their age but, on the other, they must acquire the necessary basic skills for decoding and encoding written communication.

Standard measuring tests, exercise types

Measurement is not a typical method in preschool education but in certain situations it is an unavoidable and useful tool. The series of various tests, orientating and screening examinations and diagnoses for determining the relevant progression of a certain area are endless. Some of them extend to the complete repertoire of basic skills, others focus narrowly on understanding speech or language skill development. Test items, however, show many similarities. Based on the tools typically used by preschool teachers in Hungary, we would like to present those areas to which measuring tests pay special attention.

Both speech perception and speech understanding have a decisive role in acquiring language and the series of the complex potential problems in these areas are usually monitored by tests and screening surveys. Some of these exercises concern the examination of **serial perception** which can be measured by repetition following the exact identification of meaningless voice series. Among them are the GMP-test, devised by Mária Gósy, and the language skills measuring part of the MSSST (Meeting Street School Screening Test),² which include exercises created to identify disorders in this field. Successful communication cannot be realized without the correct perception of not only a random series of voices but definite speech sounds as well. The spontaneously developing skill to either perceive speech sounds separately or in diverse sound-environments is optimally acquired in preschool age. However, 40% of the children entering elementary school have not developed this ability fully (Fazekasné Fenyvesi Margit, 2004) which is why it is important for preschool teachers to be aware of the children's relevant progression in this field as early as before their admission to elementary school. Tests of this kind examine the ability to differentiate speech voices by using changing tonic or oppositional word-pairs in a way that link certain subtests with pictures (DIFER).

² Meeting Street School Screening Test (adapted for the Hungarian context by Mária Zsoldos, Kamilla Sarkady, 1997).

In addition to identifying various problems of perception, the GMP basic test system places great stress on discovering other difficulties associated with **sentence and text understanding**. The typical example for measuring the level of understanding a text is when children listen to an orally told text, typically a tale or a small story from his everyday life, and then answer questions relating to its contents.

The other large area is speech production, which can also be partially measured by tests. Tests of this kind are typically concerned with children's vocabulary. Small children, however, have more than a thousand words as early as preschool age and it is impossible to fully cover a child's **general vocabulary** by exact measurement due to the difficulties in recording the emergence of all words correctly. Compilers of the tests extract only a few language elements, typically nouns, and apply some special criteria. During the testing procedure children are required to recognize objects, animals in pictures, and the proportion of recognized elements forms the basis of a conclusion concerning the child's full vocabulary (PPVT,³ PREFER). In addition to general vocabulary, there are approximately 300–400 words in all languages expressing correlations, called "relational words" (József Nagy), without which languages are unusable. Relational vocabulary tests seek to evaluate the process of the acquisition of words expressing spatial, temporal, quantity and similarity relations. These tests (PREFER, DIFER) fail to include the examination of suffixes, paying more attention to adverbs and postpositions. We also find different exercises concerning spatial relations in the PPL Language Development screening survey, including a process adapted for the Hungarian language in order to determine the level of grammatical consciousness in Hungarian children between 3–8 years. The examinations defined by the authors as "pre-screening process" include four subtests, the first of which measure the usage of noun-endings, the second the locative suffixes, the third postpositions and the fourth is an adaptation of the Token Test for children,⁴

³ Dunn (1958): Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (adapt. Csányi Yvonne 1974).

⁴ De Renzi E, Vignolo LA. The Token Test: a Sensitive Test to Detect Receptive Disturbances in Aphasics. *Brain*. 1962.

including various specific instructions which should be followed by the children.

But we need not neglect monitoring the partial abilities required to develop writing-reading skills in elementary school. For detecting weakness in terms of partial ability and exposure to learning disorders, preschool teachers in Hungary usually use a test book known as *What Preschool Teachers Need to Notice. Survey on 5–6-year-old Preschool Children's Ability and Skill Level*. In the test series we find exercises which can be done collectively by children: drawing the human body, form copying, visual discrimination, orientation in a square grid. There are also numerous simple exercises to be performed individually by children. In the field of visual perception the children should be able to recognize the difference between or identify concrete and abstract forms, assemble a whole from parts, determine the part-whole relation, identify object-pictures and arrange them under main notions. The test also focuses on visual memory by measuring the imprinting and retention of sequences. Exercises affecting auditory perception and memory work with word pairs in which only one sound is different or require children to repeat a longer word series. Regarding spatial orientation, the children should be able to solve tasks measuring the active and passive usage of postpositions and there are tasks for determining time correlations: whether the child is able to formulate and verbalize the subsequence of events, the temporal order of a story, the "cause and effect" relations. The method suggested by this edition helps to discover disorders in speech production and perception and also addresses the topics of visual perception, motorium, body schema, lateral dominance, memory, attention and time perception.

A method of observation: children's individual tale-telling

A preschool-age child should spend their everyday life playing, saying rhymes, listening to tales, moving, dancing – with a feeling of wonder towards the surrounding world. These experiences prepare children for school by extending their knowledge and improving their abilities.

Preschool teachers may get an indication of the relevant level of their communication and language progression by performing *observations* as well. A child's individual tale-telling for example may provide the educator with the opportunity to observe the syntactical character of the child's "half-reproductive" speech.⁵

Observation based on a child's tale-telling should be carried out by using a textological criteria-system including the presence or absence of titles ensuring the global cohesion of the text; the arrangement of the text into macrostructural units, meaning in this age whether the child uses the tale-beginning or tale-closing turns; types and frequency of the occurrence of semantic elements ensuring linear cohesion. The observation may relate to the elements attaching text sentences or limbs. Articles can also be regarded as an element creating cohesion. Observation may extend to the correct use of definite or indefinite articles in an individually created text during tale-telling. With regard to the integrity of the text the most typical connexion tool is the replacement by pronoun, by which word repetition can be avoided and co-references made to make the text more connected. In addition, pronouns in Hungarian may sometimes disappear if their role is taken over by deictic suffixes. Observation may show how correctly a child use linguistic references in his speech production.

Finally, the preschool teacher may observe how a child uses folk-tale patterns to ensure the stylistic coherence of the text during his individual story-telling. Observation of preschool-age children's individual tale-telling may help to develop the skills of text creation and prepare the foundation for later written text composition. The discovery of gaps, recognition of inappropriate forms and playful practice with correct expressions may all make children more competent in their communication.

⁵ Half-reproductive discourse occurs when the formulas of a known text and the speaker's own expression are mixed with each other. This type of text creation enables children to incorporate collocations, word combinations into the text and acquire different types of the laws of the language in an implicit way.

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The Development of the Idea of the Inclusion of Children with Special Educational Needs in View of Pre-School Education and Primary School

Abstract: Modern views on education have evolved to regard it to be the right of every human being (regardless of gender, nationality, colour of skin, state of health or individual capabilities) to education. In order to provide the best conditions of education for students with various educational needs it is necessary to create a proper climate for working with them at school and in the family environment. What is needed here, is: a) a coalition of all entities responsible for providing psychological-educational assistance for a child and, b) a high level of education offered, c) development of schools and kindergartens, which will properly satisfy the needs of children with special educational needs. In this process it is necessary to create the legal basis for such actions, a climate of social acceptance, preparation of teachers and other staff working in educational institutions and organizing conditions and situations for direct contacts and interactions of children of diverse needs and development capabilities. Mutual relations can be maintained in a climate of acceptance, understanding, joy and sense of one's personal development. Inclusive education is our hope for providing able-bodied students and students with special educational needs the sense of belonging to the same community, which is a school/kindergarten as well as to a globally organized human civilization.

Keywords: inclusion, inclusive education, special educational needs, kindergarten, school.

Introduction

The learning process of a young child, including those with special educational needs, involves the quest for knowledge, developing skills and accumulating experience. According to global standards – everyone has the right to full participation in the life of a society on equal opportunities. The right to education is one of the most important human rights related to his personal development opportunities, and thus the acquisition of the knowledge and skills enabling him to protect his individual interest and smooth functioning in society. Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child: “The Child disabled mentally and physically should enjoy a full and normal life in conditions that protect its dignity, enabling achievement of self-reliance and facilitating active participation in social life” (Convention on the Rights of the Child art. 23 point 1, Journal of Law as of y.1991).

Disability is currently one of the most important social issues of the contemporary world, which is highlighted by the biggest international organizations (e.g. United Nations, the Council of Europe, European Commission, International Labour Organization, World Health Organization, United Nation Fund for Helping Children -UNICEF, UNESCO). Among the many priorities of world and European social policies of different states, the education system in conjunction with the rehabilitation of disabled children and young people is becoming a strategy of conduct, providing them with the possibility of exercising their rights and participating in social life and the European economy. There are a number of legal acts pertaining to this situation, among other things: “Charter of the Rights of the Child” (1923), “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (1948), “The Convention on the Rights of the Child” (1989), “World Declaration on Education for All” (1990), “Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities” (1993), “European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms” (1993), “Declaration of Salamanca” - guidelines for action in the field of Special Needs Standard Rules (1994) and the “Madrid Declaration” (2001). During this period actions were taken on an unprecedented scale to raise

awareness about the problems of people with disabilities. For the first time in history it was shown consistently that the root of the difficulties of people with disabilities was not only in their own limitations, but in their relationship with the surrounding environment. All international organizations dealing with such issues pointed to the indispensability of new priorities in state social policies. The main objective of the created legislation is therefore to provide people with disabilities with the same rights and obligations that are granted to other citizens.

Education: law of all people

In the above-mentioned documents a key place is occupied by the issue of education as a basic right for all people, regardless of age, gender, or disability. Thus the idea emerges of a preschool education and a school open to all children, including those with special educational needs resulting from a physical, mental, intellectual and social differences or child prodigies.

In European countries the idea of inclusive education is well known and has been implemented for a long time. The changes taking place in Europe led to the fact that many of the provisions relating to the opening up of our society to people with disabilities also appeared in Polish law ("the Code of Family and Guardianship" of 1964, the Act of 7 September 1991 on the education system and implementing acts to this Act). Poland ratified the "Convention on the Rights of the Child" in 1991 and the main legal act regulating the issues of social integration of people with disabilities is "the Polish Constitution" of 1997. The guidelines for the development of people with disabilities found their place also in the "Charter of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" of 1997 and, as a result of these pieces of legislation, special education is an integral part of the educational system in Poland. These Acts focus attention on the equal rights of the disabled person to full participation and equal opportunities in society. With these documents the idea emerges of education for all children, regardless of the degree of disability: physical, mental, intellectual

or social. This idea is based on the equal treatment of all people, given the proper education and support in achieving the maximum normal functioning in society. This idea has been given the term "inclusion", meaning involvement.

The idea of inclusive education (inclusion) in pre-school and school education.

Inclusive education is a relatively new idea that occurred in education in the 1970s. Initially, the concept of inclusion in education was equated with the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream education. "Education for all" since the world conference in 1990, has become a major educational program of UNESCO, attended by most of the developed countries in the world (UNESCO Paris, 1994). The definition of inclusive education proposed by the organization highlights the fact that inclusive education is a continually ongoing process aimed at offering quality education for all and respect for diversity, different needs and abilities, appropriate expectations of students and the community to eliminate all forms of discrimination (Mitchell 2010).

In the late eighties and early nineties, the Ministry of National Education, tasked with reforming Polish education, placed great emphasis on creating an inclusive model of education and raising healthy children with special educational needs.

The challenge for contemporary Polish education has increasingly become the idea of the inclusion of an extremely wide group of people comprising the mainstream, those defined as children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) (Szumski 2013 p. 105). Educational policy ensures the implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in particular with regard to Article 24 of the Convention, which obliges Members ratifying the Convention to ensure inclusive education at all levels of education (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006). The education of students with disabilities in schools and public kindergartens was

one of the main initiatives of state educational policy in the school year 2012/2013. In the school year 2014/2015 authorities implemented the state educational policy initiative on "Inclusive education of students with disabilities". Broadly understood, the idea of the inclusion of students with disabilities in public kindergartens was translated into the changes in the organization of psychological-pedagogical assistance and special education introduced, the implementation of which had already begun in September 2011 (Jaszczyszyn, Dabrowska 2012, p. 89). The change in understanding and recognizing the diverse needs of students has generated an increasingly complex system of solutions. This process reflects the changing education in the context of the education system: the model of segregation, through integration, to inclusive education. Narrow issues, connected with disabled students, whose path of special education used to be projected 'beforehand', today enters into the scope of readiness to accept and support the needs of all students, which is reflected in a broad, inclusive policy, i.e. involving education.

The presence of the idea of inclusive education in Polish schools is the result of evolution in terms of thinking and the accompanying socio-political changes that have been taking place for years (in Europe, the beginnings of inclusive education date back to the 1990s). Initially, the popular medical approach of placing restrictions on a person and excluding him from mainstream society began to be replaced over time by the social model, one which blamed inherent barriers in the external environment for the restrictions. Currently, under the so-called interactive model, both the capabilities of an individual student and the training conditions are taken into account. In the words of Zbigniew Wozniak: "The main reason for partial ability lies in the interactions essential for concrete action – in the interaction between individual skills / abilities and environmental conditions, in which the potential of a human updates, for which the point of reference for standards, patterns and social values and social expectations shaping the experience of people with reduced efficiency, which is reflected in the implementation of social roles and in the course of social participation (socialization)" (Wozniak 2008, p.83).

The conditions of education which a school, kindergarten or other educational institution should provide at different stages of education, are described in the Act on the education system and the resulting regulations. The aim of inclusive education is to create an educational institution which would be able to take on, effectively educate and bring up all the children of a given community, regardless of their place of residence, origin, disability and needs. The development of inclusion implies overcoming many obstacles that may arise in a situation of children appearing with such diverse needs in kindergarten.

Providing each disabled child with the right conditions to grow, especially in times of crisis development, is an extremely difficult but important pedagogical task. Therefore, the pre-school period requires extremely responsible decisions in the education of children. Inclusion should provide a sense of belonging to a common preschool/school community to both able-bodied pupils and those with special educational needs.

The key aspect in the development of inclusive education is accurate and reliable diagnosis of individual children at an educational/preschool institution and then the development of the assistance plan and supportive actions aimed at the implementation of this support. My research and observations have proven that a teacher/psychologist is an essential person in every educational institution and that through their knowledge, experience and skills, the process of an inclusive education can be effectively implemented already at the very first stage of education. The early identification of needs is an important factor in the development of children with special educational needs.

The necessity of taking into account diversity has become a guiding principle in contemporary systems of child education (providing equal access to education for all students regardless of skin colour, country of origin, religion or disability). Phil Baylis believes that "inclusion is something more than integration. It rejects a traditional approach to disabled people, it proposes to recognize the phenomenon of disability as part of human experience and treat it as the focal point in planning services which are to serve a man" (Baylis 2002 p. 21–30). The theory of inclusion

raises issues connected with the right of a child to attend to a public educational facility where they should be provided with the necessary support for the proper development, where they will be respected and valued for who they are. Every child should receive help and assistance, not only due to their intellectual or physical disabilities, but because of poverty, origin, race, nationality or social maladjustment (Zacharuk 2011, p. 2).

The presence of the idea of an inclusive education in Polish education is a result of an evolution in terms of thinking and the accompanying social-political changes which have taken place during the last two decades. Initially, the popular medical approach which located a person's limitations inside him, excluding him from the social mainstream, began to be replaced by the social model which blamed the barriers inherent in the external environment for these limitations. At present, as part of the interactive model, both are taken into consideration: the individual capabilities of a student and the training conditions.

Inclusive education can be defined in relation to: values, public policies or concrete actions taken by educational facilities. Among different terminology and meanings, Mel Ainscow (Ainscow, Booth, and Dyson 2006, p. 5–6) distinguishes the following understandings of inclusive education:

1. Care only about people with disabilities: children and youth, manifesting "special educational needs".
2. Attention to early school leavers for disciplinary reasons.
3. Attention to the diverse needs of students, stemming from the problems arising in groups which are at risk of social exclusion.
4. Care of training conditions and preparation of schools to enrol students of different needs, which means creating 'School for All'.
5. Attention to the needs of all students, so-called 'Education for All'.
6. Care for the development of a system of approach to education and society.

These understandings can penetrate and complement or exist separately, constituting an extension of the idea of full inclusion.

Actions of an inclusive character and non-segregation education.

The aim of inclusion as a movement and a social and educational process at the same time is to counteract segregation, isolation, non-accepting tendencies, as well as stigmatization, intolerance and discrimination against people with disabilities, as social phenomena that do not fit in the modern, humanistic culture. The ultimate objective of inclusive actions is therefore, preparation of children, youth and adults to live a dignified life in an open society and to take up actively various social, family, professional and cultural roles (Dykcik 2005). Such understood inclusive education focuses on one basic objective – placing children with disabilities in the school environment with healthy peers. Thanks to it, a child receives the opportunity to study in a local school, close to home. "Childhood of a disabled child, similar to fully-able child, is a world of subjective, individual experience, developed in course of relationship with other people. Because of existing barriers stemming from the child's dysfunctions, it must, however, build much more often a sense of satisfaction and make a number of attempts to search for the quality of their own lives. An important element of these actions is an acceptance, by the surrounding world, of his limitations and capabilities in implementation of his aims and effective performance of his tasks, as well as trends in attitude towards disabled people, including close ones" (Szymanowska 2010, p. 41). Undoubtedly, non-segregation education inspired by the concept of inclusive education makes an integral whole.

Special education is a way to ensure education for those students whose special educational needs cannot be satisfied by the normal education system. The system of aid and support in education of children with special educational needs gives promise to visible progress in the field of training and education. "Non-segregation education is morally right, allows the present school systems to fulfil the functions imposed to them in a better way than segregation education. Non-segregation education may have a wide range and high quality, if it is treated as a joined task of general and special education" (Szumski 2013, p. 96). *Special educational needs* – this term was made popular mainly thanks to the Report

of the Committee, chaired by Mary Wornock, which was prepared for the British government in 1978. The report drew attention to the fact that some children had visible organic damage which did not disturb functions important from the learning point of view, thus the authors of the report emphasized the existence of a large group of students who, despite the lack of visible damage, were not able to achieve the education program objectives. The term *special educational needs (SEN)* covers all children of compulsory school age who have learning difficulties significantly greater than most of their peers. Special educational needs – a situation, in which a student is not able to meet the school learning requirements without special educational assistance.

The challenge for contemporary Polish education is increasingly becoming the inclusion of really large groups of children into education in the common stream, children who are defined as those with special educational needs (SEN) and who are sometimes mistakenly identified with people with disabilities (Szumski 2013, p. 106).

Many European countries went through the transformation from segregation to inclusion earlier, therefore there is a considerable literature on existing practices in the area of inclusive education. The report *Teacher Education for Inclusion European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education* talks about the need to prepare teachers to deal competently with a diversity of educational needs. Also the definition of the term Inclusion was adopted by UNESCO and is more wide-ranging than the previously used definitions, focusing mainly on the issue of overcoming disharmony: special education versus integrated education. In this sense, inclusive education is the process aimed at providing high level of education which takes into consideration the diversity of pupils' needs, capabilities, individualities and educational aspirations and eliminating any forms of discrimination. According to the UNESCO guidelines, we can talk about three types of arguments in favour of promoting the idea of inclusion:

1. The educational justification – integrating education system should search for ways through which all children will be able to find their place in public school and derive benefits.

2. The social justification – inclusive education is an instrument of changes of attitudes in society towards greater openness to otherness and protection against discrimination practices.
3. The social justification – public inclusive education system is much cheaper than maintaining separate education systems, specializing in working with different types of recipients (Plichta 2012, p. 103).

The right to education in Poland creates conditions for education and upbringing and care, with regard to the age and level of development reached. The Act of 7th September 1991 on the system of education provides the opportunity to receive education in all types of schools by disabled children and youth in accordance with individual development and educational needs and their predispositions. Schools and institutions supporting the development of children should guarantee them educational opportunities so that they can fully realize their mental-physical potential and achieve results consistent with development potential.

Poland ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2012 and thereby declared that the aim of the state policy regarding education is the introduction of an inclusive education model. This requires, *inter alia*, changes in public education and, in accordance with Art. 24 of the Convention, in order to exercise the rights of persons with disabilities to education, member states provide them with access to inclusive, free compulsory education of high quality. Member states are responsible for ensuring facilities that are rational and consistent with individual needs, so that people with disabilities can receive necessary support from the general education system. For the education system it means abandoning the segregation model in which a large percentage of children with disabilities (not only those with the most severe dysfunctions) are educated in special schools. Inclusive education should be promoted, conducted in normal classes, in district schools which are closest to the pupil's life environment. This requires the preparation of schools to enrol all children, including those of special educational needs and ensuring special, professional support for teachers and head teachers. This

is a long-term and complex task, requiring the engagement of authorities responsible for schools and kindergartens, head teachers and teachers to implement changes and build up an organizational culture which is conducive to addressing the needs of all children.

In the last-half century in Poland there has been unprecedented, qualitative progress relating to the quality of life and rehabilitation of people with disabilities. These changes are evident in various spheres of life: education, employment, access to culture, art. They are inspired by different concepts: the social paradigm of disability, paradigm of normalization, self-determination and quality of life (Krauze 2011, p. 16–17). Without a doubt, non-segregation education inspired by the concept of inclusive education constitutes the central element of changes in contemporary education. In special needs education there is no other concept of similar theoretical or practical idea; departure from it may cause the stagnation of the education system of people with disabilities or special needs education.

Educational and social inclusion is the idea of the openness of children with special educational needs in the field of education; it refers to the opportunity of taking advantage of widely available and special forms of education, rehabilitation consistent with the type of dysfunction and to educational and therapeutic support. "Regulation of the Minister of Education directs the attention of people involved in the process of formal education, inter alia, to recognize and satisfy the individual development and educational needs of children participating in it. A collection of reasons of children's needs for variety includes: 1) disability, 2) social maladjustment, 3) risk of social maladjustment, 4) special abilities, 5) specific learning disabilities, 6) impaired verbal communication, 7) chronic diseases, 8) experiencing crisis and traumatic situations, 9) educational underachievement, 10) social negligence related to material status of the child and its family, the way of spending free time, social contacts and 11) adaptive difficulties caused by culture differences or a change of educational environment (including the difficulty related to prior education abroad) (§2.1)" (Dąbrowska, Jaszczyszyn 2012, p. 96).

Children are different, have different disorders, dysfunctions, habits and they need an individual approach. A key factor in teaching children

with special educational needs is flexibility, which means a recognition that children can work at their own pace and the teachers need skills so that they can support their training process in a flexible manner. Inclusion means that the process of learning of each child is supported in order to get the highest possible result of each child. Individualization manifests itself in adapting to the needs and capabilities of pupils, educational and upbringing strategies, used in everyday work with pupils, in each class conducted by the teachers. In order for the objectives of inclusion to be implemented, engagement is necessary by all teachers employed in a school. The teacher should allow pupils to choose their ways of achieving the objectives and methods of acquiring knowledge and skills through adapting the pace of lessons, methods and forms of work, so that not only each student is involved, but also the work of the whole class is properly organized. Individualization is mainly a form of work with each pupil, including those with special educational needs, in each class and on each lesson.

Preparing teachers to work in a system of inclusion

Preparing teachers to work in the system is a process of searching for new, innovative and effective methods to work with children. It is also a process of improving and acquiring knowledge by educational staff, enabling them to work efficiently with children. Teachers have a significant impact on how a child perceives themselves and how they feel in relation to the teacher and other children, because every act of teacher – student communication either strengthens or weakens the child's faith in their own strength. Any form of individualization regarding children with special educational needs should be based on identifying and exploiting the potential of children to overcome deficiencies. If the teacher allows the children to achieve success as far as their capabilities, then the children will have the chance for both general and educational development. It is also connected with a very important aspect of creating appropriate conditions for learning since the teacher should not only adapt

methods and forms of work to children and their capabilities, depending on dysfunctions or social situation. It is also connected with the following actions:

- Adjustment to the way of communication with children,
- Extension of working time,
- Applying, providing and activating methods alternatively,
- Frequent reference to the concrete,
- Enabling multi-sensory cognition,
- Adjustment of the number of stimuli connected with the process of teaching,
- Varying the degree of difficulty,
- Clear delimitation of boundaries and enforcing compliance.

Only the properly organized process of teaching such children, psychological support and access to various forms of development of talent will allow them to learn as far as their capabilities. With the right educational work of teachers towards these children there is a chance of modelling their behaviour, attitudes, motivation on gifted students.

In order to ensure the optimal education conditions for children with diverse educational needs, it is necessary, inter alia, to build the proper atmosphere to work with them in school and the family environment. What is needed here is a coalition of all of the entities responsible for providing psychological-educational assistance to children and families, a high level of education and the evolution of schools and facilities which will adequately meet the needs of students with special educational needs. In this process, a direct contact and interaction is necessary between students of various needs and capabilities of development during classes at school. Mutual relations should be maintained in a climate of acceptance, understanding, joy and the sense of one's personal development. It is inclusive education which should provide a sense of belonging to a common community to able-bodied students and those with special educational needs.

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Drama and the Kolb Cycle: a Solution for the Inclusiveness of Children with Special Educational Needs in the Preschool and Elementary School Education Spectrum. Research Report

Abstract: The article deals with the application of drama, a solution for inclusiveness in teaching children with special educational needs in the pre-school and elementary school education spectrum, with the use of the Kolb cycle in the construction of classes. It presents the main principles of a training which was provided to a group of 78 students of pre-school and early school education, including forty-two professionally active teachers. Subsequently, in order to diagnose the application in practice of the acquired skills, a questionnaire of the author's own design was used in a survey conducted one month and one year after the training. The results revealed that, according to the assumptions, professionally active teachers generally use drama in pre-schools and at school; what is more, the Kolb cycle is used creatively in combination with other educational and preventive techniques.

Keywords: values, the meaning of life, purpose in life, conference.

Introduction

One of the main goals of the modern education system in Europe is to create equal opportunities for all children. Children with special needs encounter rejection by peer groups already in kindergarten and primary school. Drama is one very effective method of working with a group and can be used for prophylactic, revalidation and inclusion purposes. During

drama classes, a participant assimilates the correct social behavior and the most important aspect of drama is emphatically 'being in the role of' someone in a difficult situation, seeking a solution.

Children with special needs and drama

The term *drama* derives from Greek *drao* and means I work, I am trying. In Poland it began to develop in the mid-1980's and came to us through the English educational theater. Unlike the theater, in drama the task of the participant is not to play for others but the personal experience of a given situation (Aichinger and Holl, 1999; Way, 1995). In the theater we are mostly concerned with the division into the audience and actors while in drama there is no such division and all participants should be engaged. The actor receives a finished scenario while in drama participants improvise without a script, based on their own strategies for dealing with difficult situations, hence the possibility of their development and possible correction under the influence of, among others, empathy and observation.

Therefore, the objectives of drama are the versatile development of personality, expression and emotions of a young man; the development of the ability to talk about their own feelings and inner experiences, states, fears, troubles and joys; becoming aware of their own individuality while respecting the autonomy of others. Also important is the development of a given social behaviour and shaping the abilities to resolve social conflict and group problems as well as preparation for active participation in culture: developing vocabulary, phraseology, a range of concepts (McCaslin, 2006).

Drama is used to activate the development of children and youths. Acting out various social roles in improvised situations, situations from events that in reality are associated with strong emotions, is a pretext to re-live them in secure circumstances and explore the possible reactions of others under the supervision of an educator (Manowska, 2005).

The advantage of drama is the team nature of work on the problems of children in the peer group. For the child, the peer group is as important as

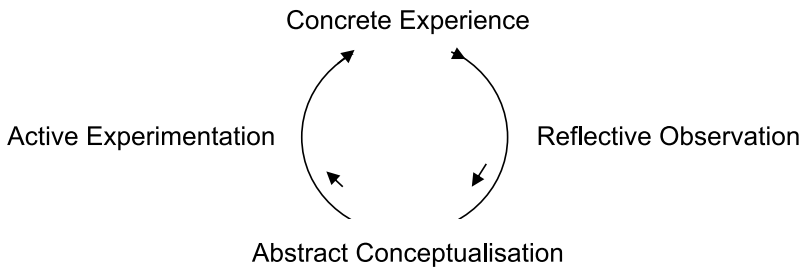
the family. At a younger age it gives the child the opportunity to experience conflicts in the fun. It contributes to effective communication and co-operation, which in turn allows the child to overcome egocentrism, to train and learn new roles. Children can play themselves or their loved ones, which allows them to better understand them and verify the existing social norms. Activity in the group requires the determination of one's attitude towards others and one's role in the group as a whole. In child psychodrama, the group becomes a testing ground to exercise the ability for the proper articulation of expectations, claims, signaling various changes, and in the communication process it creates the conditions to establish norms, rules and sanctions (Pankowska, 2013; Szymik, 2013; Winston and Tandy 2009).

An analysis of difficult and conflicting characters is conducive to acquiring the basis for moral judgments. Drama gives the educator the possibility of unique contact with the child and is an effective way to know the peer group, to observe inter-group relations and strategies of coping in social situations.

An interesting suggestion of application of the drama method in a pre-school and elementary education would be to incorporate the Kolb cycle into the class scenario.

Kolb Cycle

Developmental psychology shows that children and young people have considerable potential and abilities to learn. Didactics offers many creative methods to activate students. Kolb (1984) proposed an alternative to lectures and talks. His method refers to experience, so the first part of the training is to provide the students with experience in solving problems, achieving goals and getting to know a new phenomenon. Drama seems like a perfect source of such an experience which would influence the course of the training. The students' experiences are considered valuable and useful during training, the participants can express themselves without fear of being judged, they can make mistakes which further adds to the experience.



Source: D. Kolb(1984): Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 1984, p. 47.

According to David Kolb's method, in order to learn effectively, man should go through all four phases of the proposed cycle. The didactic process of training should be designed so that participants can freely start learning on their chosen stage.

1. Concrete Experience

Participants experience something, they can observe how they act and what effects it brings. We refer to what participants have already lived through, or create new experiences, if they do not have them and this activity is on the side of children and adolescents. It is at this stage that the drama is introduced and the children experience specific, concrete situations which will then be the subject of all the subsequent stages of the Kolb Cycle.

2. Reflective Observation

Through appropriate questioning and conducting a discussion, the moderator enables the group to analyze what happened and why it happened. This is an important stage, because the group members have an opportunity to speak out, a person who (possibly) has made a mistake has an opportunity for self-reflection and drawing conclusions for the future, like the other members of the group who need it. The group draws its own conclusions and activity is on the side of children and young people.

3. Abstract Conceptualisation

Now is the time to confront them with theory. This is a part of the process which largely belongs to the coach, although he can also use the activity of the group here, e.g. to write the rules of conduct, important lessons, etc. In this part of the process the coach allows the group to learn, to recall, to name, depending on the level of knowledge, the theory that underlies the explanation of the observed phenomenon.

4. Active Experimentation

Now the participants have the opportunity to test the acquired knowledge in practice. Under the guidance of the coach, they verify whether they can apply the new knowledge in practice and introduce possible corrections. This is the stage at which they give themselves, and receive from the coach, a lot of feedback.

Revalidation, prevention and inclusion

Both for fully healthy children and those with developmental deficiencies, the use of drama techniques, such as exercises developing the senses, moving exercises, intonation and facial expression exercises, various types of improvised or staged scenes and situations, activating and integrating games and plays, facilitates a comprehensive development. The preventive advantages of using drama have been confirmed by the results of an international research on the drama in 2010, conducted within the framework of the DICE project (Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competences in Education).

In revalidation and inclusion work the most often used activities are socio-dramatic ones (Lewicka, Korona i Lesiuk, 2013). The main subject of the sociodrama is a group, not particular individuals, and such activities are also used as a means of removing disturbances within the structure of the organization and dynamics of the group, which may lead to its decomposition, causing conflicts within the group and related disorders in the behavior of group members. The purpose of these actions is to

eliminate, correct and enrich the various functions of the group. In sociodrama the aim is to improve the existing situation in the classroom and in this case one of the main aims is the development of the group.

Postulates for research

In summary, since both drama and the Kolb cycle are highly valued and effective methods, the following question was adopted as the primary research problem: What will be the attitude of teachers to the use of drama in groups of children and young people in conjunction with the Kolb cycle?

The training of a group of pedagogy students was assumed as the main problem task. The aim was to teach scenario-building activities in accordance with the rules of the Kolb cycle using drama and implementation skills training classes. The training program was built according to the four elements of Kolb cycle: experience, conclusions, knowledge and action. The experiment included a group acting out of a drama, according to the topic given by the teacher.

Then, the students shared their own conclusions from the experience and knowledge about the differences between the drama and theater classes. In the third stage, a lecture on drama and Kolb cycle was delivered. In the last stage of the training the students, working in groups, wrote their own lesson scenarios and conducted classes on this basis (tab. 1).

Method

Teaching drama and the construction of scenarios according to the Kolb cycle as well as practical skills necessary for the realization of the classes to students of pre-school and early school education. The study was conducted between 2013 and 2015.

The study was conducted in two stages: one month and one year after the completion of the training. The total sample was 78 third year

extramural students of a Master's Degree in teaching. The age ranged from 25 to 53 years ($M = 28$, $SD = 0.72$). In the group studied, 42 people were employed as teachers: either of pre-school education (12 people) or early school education (30 persons), while 36 people worked as social workers.

The author's questionnaire was used on the opinion on the application of drama and the Kolb cycle in educational practice 'SDiCK'. The questionnaire consisted of 10 closed questions and 5 open-ended ones. To answer the closed questions, subjects had to select a point on a 7-point scale, where 1 meant "completely disagree" and 7 – "completely agree", attached to each of the questions and answer open-ended questions. Some of the terms used to describe drama include: "ineffective", "commonly applied", "appreciated by teachers".

Results

Over 95% of the respondents used drama classes in the first month after the completion of the training and concluded that drama is quite useful in pre-school and elementary education. After a year, this group decreased to 65% of those still using the drama method. At least one class per month constructed in accordance with the cycle of Kolb was realized by nearly 78% of the respondents. The Kolb Cycle was more often used by social workers than pre-school and early education teachers. Twenty-five people introduced drama in their work for the first time. Lack of time and a preference for other theatre forms were cited as the main reason for the infrequent use of drama in pre-school and elementary education (45% teachers). Over half of the respondents were of an opinion that drama is an effective method when working with children. According to 20% of the subjects, drama met with significant interest from the parents. During the training, a total of 23 scenarios were created for pupils both in pre-school and elementary education. An example class on the subject of inclusion can be found in table 1.

Table 1.

<i>Example scenario of classes</i>
<p>Training Title: Together or separately? Date of realization: Venue: common room / small gym Duration: 45 minuts Target group: children aged 6–10 Coach / teacher: Educational objectives:</p>
<p>Main objective: Working through the ability to trust and the responsibility skills of children in the group.</p>
<p>Detailed objectives:</p> <p>KNOWLEDGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the child knows the importance of the notions of trust and responsibility – the child knows known types of trust and responsibility – the child knows the causes and effects of the lack of trust and responsibility <p>ABILITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the child can properly define trust and responsibility – the child is able to enumerate all known types of trust and responsibility – the child can properly explain the causes and effects of the lack of trust and responsibility <p>BEHAVIOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the child can easily perform the tasks with eyes closed – the child safely carries his friend through an obstacle course – the child properly defines and classifies the known types of trust and responsibility and the causes and effects of their absence <p>ATTITUDE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the child is open to trust their peers in a group and interested in taking responsibility for his or her own behavior.
<p>Psychological contract</p> <p>The coach sits in a circle with the children and they agree on a contract in which they jointly determine the rules of the behavior of educators and children during classes. The contract should be written down and all participants in the training (including the coach) sign it.</p> <p>Example elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – We listen to each other: when one person is talking the others are listening – We try to talk to each other politely, in accordance with the rules of good manners – We speak calmly, loudly and clearly – We address the teacher 'Mrs. Jola' and other children by their names – The principle of trust: all personal confidences and behaviour remain in this room. We respect other people's confidences.

Concrete Experience: FEELING
<p>Structure of the exercise: an obstacle course is prepared in the hall. The difficulty is adapted to the age and abilities of children. Before entering the room, the children draw chips of different colors.</p> <p>Then the children are looking for the person who drew the same color. The coach ties the eyes of one person from a pair with a sash. A child with open eyes is to lead their friend through an obstacle course to get past all the obstacles and other teams.</p> <p>During the exercise, participants are not allowed to talk to each other. Then the roles are reversed.</p>
Reflective Observation: WATCHING
<p>After completing the exercise, children sit in a circle with the coach. The coach asks children evaluation questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did you feel in the roles you have played? - What was easy? - And what was difficult? - What is the difference in being the lead and the leader? - Which role was easier, and which one difficult? - What do you think is trust? - Who do you trust? - Who can't you trust? - Why do you find it difficult to trust certain people? - What is, in that case, the responsibility? - What are you responsible for? - Who are you responsible for? - When is it difficult to take responsibility for one's own behavior? - Who is responsible for you?
Abstract Conceptualisation: THINKING
<p>The coach presents the definition and types of trust, responsibility and the causes and effects of lack of trust and responsibility in accordance with current data. We should be based solely on scientific studies.</p> <p>The aim is to confirm or correct children's responses to evaluation questions.</p>
Active Experimentation: DOING
<p>The coach, sitting with the children in a circle, asks transfer questions :</p> <p>You have learned a lot about the trust and its absence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tell me, who from now on will you trust in pre-school / school (the house, the yard, on the street)? - What are you going to take responsibility for from today in pre-school / school (the house, the yard, on the street)? - As a responsible person, how are you going to behave from today (in the house, in the yard, on the street)? <p>What will change in your behaviour?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who are you going to tell and explain what trust and responsibility are? - How are you going to behave towards people who it is difficult to trust?

Business indicator
After completing the training, children in conversations with each other and adults adequately apply the concepts of trust, responsibility, lack of confidence and lack of responsibility.
Children inform teachers and parents about their level of trust in other people and the need or difficulty of taking responsibility for their own behaviour.
In the readings children find characteristic features in the heroes associated with trust and responsibility.

Source: the author's own creation

Discussion of results

Professionally active people, pre-school and early education teachers as well as social workers, mostly use drama in pre-schools and at school. Moreover, they use the Kolb cycle more creatively, also in combination with other educational and preventive techniques. A teacher with fifteen years of experience wrote: 'I believe that drama method is very effective because it enables children to solve not only others' problems, but also their own. Through acting out a role, it is easier to make decisions, children begin to believe in their own abilities, thereby developing their own personality'.

Ms A., working at a pre-school for a year, introduced drama into her classes: 'Before me no one had ever used drama in my institution. I think that this is due to the fact that sometimes teachers are not even aware that they are using drama. This stems from ignorance (...). I conducted the first drama class from first aid in my pre-school. The children were to present situations which make us give the first aid.' Ms. N. confirms this view, 'I admit that the use of drama as a method of education in the institution where I worked was not too popular, theatrical classes being more often used, which does not change the fact that drama is a great way to learn by experience, which gives the pupils the opportunity to develop'. Over 80% of respondents reported a lack of time as the reason for the infrequent use of drama. One of the respondents drew attention to the parents' requirements and needs: 'A theater performance or a concert is better

received by parents because they can see them and what the drama classes are is not fully understood and they cannot see them.’

Ms. Z. emphasizes the educational value: ‘drama method makes pupils speak a nicer language, in their own words, without book schemas. Due to acting out a character, they better understand literary characters and motives of their behavior. They achieve certain skills faster, e.g. they quickly learn nursery rhymes and multiplication tables.’

The classes in which we use drama and the Kolb cycle require openness on the part of the teacher, giving up the role of evaluator and corrective teacher. As Ms. J wrote: ‘I believe that every teacher conducting classes in drama should take part in a course, a training or a workshops on this particular form of work with children, according to the Kolb cycle. It is such a special experience, when you yourself check out ‘how it works’ before proposing it to the kids. I liked the classes in drama very much, they were very creative and to some extent helped me to overcome my own shyness in front of the group’. In the opinion of Ms B.: ‘Participation in drama is a kind of invitation to develop our own sensitivity in ourselves; it makes children get used to expressing their own emotions hidden in somewhere. Certainly, working with drama is somewhat more difficult because the theater is just acting out with the division between actors and roles, while drama depends on improvisation. The children themselves create it. The teacher’s role is different. I do not direct, I just watch. I can help only through the use of questions. It was a little bit difficult for me.’

I will conclude with the words of Ms. O., a director of a pre-school, with over fifteen years of experience, who introduced drama and Kolb cycle classes at the institution which she administered: ‘I think the drama method is very effective because it enables a child to solve not only others’ problems but also his own. Through acting within a role, it is easier to make decisions, children begin to believe in their own abilities, thereby expanding their personality. Drama also has an educational function, because thanks to it it is possible to change bad habits. Drama also teaches independence of thought, action, activity, and openness. It also allows the development of emotion and imagination, eloquence and plasticity of the body. Owing to the team nature, it teaches cooperation and collaboration

with peers, coping with one's own and other people's emotions. We could say that drama shapes the personality, enriches the sphere of experience and sensitivity. Drama directed by the teacher well makes the children learn to make their own, independent decisions and find answers to questions about their identity. For a careful observer it is an invaluable source of information about the group, relationships, conflicts, liking and disliking among the pupils. Drama gives you the opportunity to correct these behaviors."

Conclusion

A great advantage of drama is appealing to cooperation with other people. Drama classes in pre-school group and a school class always have an integrative nature. The modern school should consciously and consistently organize such activities which will awaken in every child their natural activity and ability to cooperate. Correcting behavior is much more burdensome for children and young people. A new look at the prevention and inclusion of children with special needs is an ideal place for the use of drama and the Kolb cycle. This is particularly important in the preschool and elementary education spectrum, because the 'Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience' (Kolb, 1984, p. 25). Therefore, let us start as early as pre-school, thinking of future adults in the society of the future.

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Special Needs of Boys and the Impact of Mixed-Gender Teams

Abstract: Theoretically based on early pedagogical and psychoanalytic research findings, the Austrian W-INN-study aims at confirming research questions as well as finding possible new hypotheses about men's influence on children. The pilot study focuses on different research questions: What similarities and/or differences can be found in interactions with children depending on childcare staff composition (mixed gender vs. female)? What are childrens' (re-)actions in these groups/towards staff? Are there possible 'compensatory effects' of male childcarers for children who don't have much contact with fathers and/or men in general? Our paper will present the main results of the research project and its practical implications.

Keywords: early childhood education – child-teacher-relationship – mixed gender staff – video observation – mixed-method-design.

Introduction & background of W-INN-Study⁶

The slogan "Children need men", often voiced in connection with the lack of men in educational processes, has recently become more popular both in connection with family upbringing as well as public educational

⁶ This research project was thankworthy co-financed by the Austrian Ministry of Social Affairs (BMASK).

provision. In spite of the rise in public awareness of the educational influence of men and fathers on boys and girls, there is still a substantial need for empirical research on the gender aspects of child development, especially around the establishment of interactive relationships between staff and children in pre-school institutions. Previous studies have focussed almost exclusively on the behaviour of male and female staff as self-reported through interviews or on questionnaires without observation of the concrete day-to-day reciprocal interaction between staff and children. The research interest of the pilot study on the effect of male pre-school teachers (Impact study "W-INN") was comprised of a collection of the first differentiated and documented evidence of the possible "gender-specific" effect of mixed-gender and all-female teams on the children in pre-school education. At the same time the potential significance of mixed-gender teams on boys and on girls should be taken into particular account. Besides the general difficulty of assertions about the partially subtle "impact" of the gender of an individual or member of staff on children (cf. Brandes 2012), the multi-methodological approach to the project proved to be a particular challenge. By taking up the already complex and difficult question of pre-school gender research, the W-INN-Study touched on new ground not only from a content but also from a methodical perspective, around which few other empirical studies have been conducted to date. Thus, the treatment of the "theme of impact" within the framework of the study can be classified in two ways as a pilot study.

Sample

We were able to include 10 pre-school groups from Tyrol and Salzburg (Austria) in the study. In five of these groups the staff was mixed-gender and the five other groups were all female. Apart from the direct research on pedagogical staff and children (video observation and anonymised questionnaires), questionnaire-based interviews of the parents were also important parts of the study. Our entire sample thus con-

sisted of 22 members of the pedagogical staff, 206 parents and 163 children. The detailed research concentrated on a small sample: thus the pedagogical behaviour of 10 persons (5 men, 5 women) and the contact behaviour of 30 so-called "target children" (15 boys, 15 girls aged between 4 and 6 years) was surveyed in everyday interactions. It was important for us to obtain the most comprehensive view as possible and thus the issues were approached in a multi-methodological way. The following insights into the methodological process should forge a bridge to the account of our research results.

The Methodological Process

One methodological focus of the study is video-based recordings from a normal day in the pre-school (a); additionally the above-mentioned questionnaires were used for the pedagogical staff and parents (b). Data from the video and questionnaire data were endorsed through a projective story completion test (c).

a) Video-based Observations

The video-recordings were structured to capture as many different situations from a typical day in pre-school as possible (e.g. free-play situations or guided group games), whereby the camera focus was on the leading member of staff giving instructions for the group games. During this process we focused especially on dyadic interactions between pedagogical staff and children as well as group dynamic processes. Approximately 65 minutes of video material was produced on average for each pre-school group. A rating instrument was developed for the analysis of the video data to assess the pedagogical staff and a further rating instrument to assess the target children. The categories in the pedagogical staff questionnaire took into account the pedagogic quality of the staff member (through the "caregiver interaction scale" according to Arnett 1989), the group dynamic processes within daily group interactions (self-constructed rating scale) and gender-sensitive interactions (self-constructed

rating scale). The rating scale for the target children also looks at three categories: on the one hand attachment-related behavioural tendencies (through the "Attachment Q-Sort" according to Ahnert et al. 2012), observable activities (self-constructed rating scale) and the play & social behaviour (self-constructed rating scale) of the target child. During a research seminar, pedagogy students were trained for the rating process, but without knowledge of research hypotheses, carried out the analysis of the video-recordings. They were able to use a rating manual providing a description of each category with an anchoring example.

b) Questionnaire Survey

As with during the rating process the project team referred partly to standardised categories for the questionnaires for the pedagogical staff and parents (based on questionnaires in similar studies such as ASTAT 2012, Aigner/Rohrmann 2012, BVZ 2006). The pedagogical staff questionnaire consisted, on the one hand, of general questions concerning, for instance, professional qualifications and experience. On the other hand, pedagogical staff were asked to assess behaviour, interactions and relationships of individual children ("Behavioural Assessment of Pre-School Children" according to Döpfner et al., 1993 and "Student Teacher Relationship Scale" according to Pianta 1992). The parents' questionnaire served to gather information about the family situations of the children (e.g. about the socio-economic status or the division of child-care tasks in the family) and to gain information about the behaviour and the relationships of the child within the family.

c) Story completion task

To endorse the video and questionnaire survey, a projective test was carried out with the target children. Through the so-called "Mac Arthur Story Stem Battery" (MSSB) (cf. Bretheron & Oppenheim 2003) the children are told the beginning of a short story with Playmobil figures ('Story stem'), which they then should continue and play through. Each of the seven different story stems implies a specific conflict drama (such as, for example, dealing with hurt, jealousy, a parental ban, conflicts between

loyalties), which the children are invited to take up and to complete the story. In terms of the projective process the spontaneously produced ends to the stories represent depictions of the subconscious relationship models ("Representations") and thus give in-depth insights into the "inner worlds" of the children, especially the internalised family ties to father and mother. The semi-standardised storytelling situations were filmed in order to enable a detailed retrospective analysis. The rating scales were developed for this purpose based on the original instrument. The stories told were, on the one hand, coded according to *content themes*, e.g. the appearance of moral themes, empathetic reactions, dysregulation, avoidance etc. In addition, within the category of *figure representation*, it was ascertained which figures the children use (e.g. whether the mother or the father figure were used more) and whether the child represented these in a rather negative or positive way. The third dimension of the MSSB-Coding was the *performance* of the childlike stories so as to focus on *how* the child told the stories – e.g. coded, how creatively and how coherently.

The most important results

In the following chapter the most important results which are relevant (a) for the professional behaviour of the pedagogical staff and (b) the interactional behaviour of the children will be presented. These quantitative results are complemented through the representation of a qualitative individual case analysis (c).

a) Professional behaviour of pedagogical staff

Professional quality

The "Quality" of the professional behaviour in interactions with the pre-school group was estimated by means of the standardised observation instrument, Arnett's "Caregiver Interaction Scale" (CIS) (1989). The dimensions "positive interaction", "punitiveness", "permissiveness" and

“detachment” were taken into account. The aim was to demonstrate whether and how men and women work in similar or different ways concerning basic forms of interaction. In the direct comparison between the two sexes, no “differences in quality” were found in the overall CIS-data. However, in sub-areas, this was certainly the case: male pre-school teachers interact with the children in their care a little more frequently in a positive way and also less disciplinary. Concerning “detachment” (understood as a type of disinterest in the child), there was no difference. In the area of “permissiveness”, male members of staff show significantly higher levels. This evidence can be preliminary interpreted as showing that the male pre-school teachers in our sample were clearly much more relaxed and less consistent with regard to upholding the rules.

Differences in Group Dynamics

There were no differences observed between the mixed-gender and all-female teams for the appraisal of group structure initiated by the child-care staff (i.e. concerning the vehemence with which children were instructed by members of staff). In the area of “social mobility” (i.e. whether the majority of children were moving actively around the room and whether a lively form of co-operation could be observed) a much more highly developed mobility was observed in mixed-gender groups. It appears that in groups led by mixed-gender teams greater social mobility and mobility dynamics develop than with all-female teams. With regard to transition phases (i.e. whether staff-led group activities move from one activity to another without pronounced “breaks”), there is a tendency towards more gentle transitions between different group activities in mixed-gender teams. Causes for the observed effects have not yet been conclusively clarified and would have to be analysed through the exact observation of the inter-collegial interaction within the professional team. However, at this stage, the hypothesis is that the interaction between male and female members of staff as a tandem in a child-care group evoke other processes or dynamics than in a group led by all-female staff.

b) Child Interaction Behaviour

Behavioural Disorders and Competences

An additional questionnaire based on two standardised instruments ("Behaviour Assessment Questionnaire for Pre-School Children [VBV 3-6; Döpfner et al. 1993] and the "Student Teacher Relationship Scale" [STRS; Pianta 1992]) were completed by the childcare-workers for 30 children (15 girls and 15 boys). The aim was to understand more about behavioural disorders (especially in age-typical forms) as well as about the areas of competence in child behaviour of children aged between 3 and 6 on the basis of assessment by childcare-workers. The "STRS" should allow the assessment of the relationship of a child towards a member of staff on the basis of the behaviour of a child as observed by the childcare-worker as well as the supposed feelings of the child in question. Overall it was shown that girls have slightly higher values in the area of socio-emotional competence whereas boys differ from girls through a tendentially higher degree of oppositional-aggressive behaviour. On the other hand, girls differ from boys through a significant higher degree of persistence and concentration in play behaviour and appear to be significantly less hyperactive ($p < .01$). Overall girls have a distinctly better relationship with staff members. There were no noteworthy differences between the gender groups in the area of emotional conspicuity. These results are partially congruent with the frequent reports of practitioners about rather restless and less socially adjusted boys and the quiet, socially "adjusted" girls with high levels of concentration.

Attachment Tendencies

In tandem with the information gleaned from staff members, the behaviour of the 30 selected children was observed and assessed. The first point of interest was the form of contact (or avoidance) of boys and girls to male and female members of staff. In this way, the behaviour of each individual child was assessed relying on observation categories derived from the Attachment-Q-Sort-method (cf. Ahnert et al. 2012). *Without* aiming for an attachment-style diagnosis, following observation categories

were used: seeking for security and proximity; exploration assistance; enjoyment of physical contact; use of negative communication strategies; interest in communication and affective exchange; as well as the striving for exclusive attention. It is a matter of dyadic focus, in which behavioural (re-)actions towards a specific member of staff initiated by the child are at the centre of attention. When we analysed the 15 girls and 15 boys in our sample with regard to the above-mentioned behavioural dimensions dependent on the sex of the members of staff, significant effects were noted: whilst girls distribute contact behaviour between male and female staff more or less equally (with the exception of exploration assistance and interest in communication and affective exchange, which is expressed slightly more frequently towards male staff members), the behaviour of boys towards male and female members of staff shows obvious differences: in all (!) the above-named behavioural dimensions the boys showed more frequent contact with male members of staff. In the areas of interest in communication and affective exchange, enjoyment of physical contact as well the striving for exclusive attention, the detected differences are even statistically significant ($p < .05$). The use of negative communication towards members of staff was hardly registered during observations, i.e. neither in the observation of boys nor of girls.

Play and Social Behaviour

In addition to the selected staff-child dyad, the general play and social behaviour of individual children in the child-care groups were assessed (through four self-constructed, bipolar rating scales including the dimensions of "concentration/ focussing" versus "fluctuation", "social-spatial mobility" versus "immobility", "social integration" versus "isolation" as well as "introversion" versus "extraversion"), with the aim of ascertaining possible differences or similarities in the behavioural tendencies of children in mixed-gender versus all-female staffed professional teams. Through direct comparison between the sexes it is immediately apparent in our video-recordings that girls are obviously more "focussed" (i.e. more concentrated, spending longer on one activity, calm, etc.), whereas boys show more "fluctuation", changing from one activity to another. This sta-

tistically significant difference is in accordance with the assessments from the questionnaires as reported above. In terms of the analysis of the comparative values of boys and girls in mixed-gender versus all-female teams, further interesting "effects" are apparent: boys show a higher level of extroversion in groups led by mixed-gender teams, whereas their behaviour is significantly more introverted in all-female led teams ($p < .05$). Over and above this, boys are tendentially more mobile in groups led by mixed-gender teams (i.e. using more space, moving more & being less inactive), whilst they are more static (i.e. spending more time in one place) and conform more in all-female led groups. On the other hand, no such "effects" can be verified for girls in relation to the constellation of staff.

c) Qualitative Individual Case Analysis

The quantitative steps towards analysis were complemented through qualitative case analyses. In the so-called case-studies, the data obtained were brought together onto an individual level and to this end comprehensive data sheets bringing together the different research tools which were constructed for the 21 target children (10 girls/ 11 boys) with the aim of facilitating an individual-case perspective. On the level of individual cases, two boys with very little real fathering experience in the family and little outside contact with male attachment figures were of particular interest. The fathers of these children were either strongly involved in their own work processes and hardly integrated into family processes while the contact with the children being concentrated in a few hours per week. On the other hand, the time-intensive mother-child relationships were very strong, with a strong dyadic bonding, but accordingly more conflicts and difficulties. The mothers "left alone" in these situations were solely responsible for more or less all the duties of upbringing, absorbing a lot of energy and causing excessive demand. We were very eager to find out how these children would react towards male members of staff in the day-care centre. Extracts from the raters' descriptions of those boys showed an obvious wish for contact with male members of staff: "He enjoys sitting with the male members of staff"; "Constantly near to the male member of

staff (on lap etc.); "Need for physical contact (with male member of staff)"; "Target child very orientated to member of staff and needing a noticeable amount of attention and care"; "Searching contact with male member of staff, apparently enjoying proximity (sitting between legs of staff member)"; "Very clingy. Constantly with member of staff. Motorically active (running, jumping...)", "Target child clinging to member of staff. Fighting for attention of member of staff, upon whom he has focussed entire attention, whereby he also goes as far as forcing other children back (pushing etc.) to have the member of staff to 'himself' ". The estimations of the raters were verified by the analysis of the video-recordings. The attachment behaviour towards the male members of staff was remarkable in these individual cases. The behaviour showed a strong need for physical contact, for presence and warmth, for support with tasks and play as communication and affective exchange in the relationship to male members of staff. The estimation of the male members of staff confirmed the observed attachment and dependence of the boys. On the other hand, we were only able to partially assess the relationship to the female members of staff. In the case of one boy, the assessment showed particular confrontational and noticeable behaviour for which reason the female member of staff classified the boy as "oppositionally aggressive" on the behaviour assessment instrument and writing the following description of the boy: "leader role, seeking attention, complains and grumbles, tells fantasy stories, outbursts of anger, easily distracted, lies or cheats, insecure, constantly on the move, transcends limits, defensive, sulky, sucks thumb, nervous movements". However, we were able to ascertain that the attitude of the male member of staff and his interactions with this boy were of a completely different nature. There were striking differences between the search for physical proximity and communication with the male member of staff and the confrontational, difficult relationship towards the female member of staff. A similar tendency can be perceived within the family process where the relationship to the mother is described as tendentially confrontational and difficult whilst the – albeit broadly absent – father does not report confrontation and difficulties. The behaviour of the members of staff may be rooted in their different

personalities; however, we do believe that a relevant gender-typical factor can be observed when the family-based transfer tendencies of the children provoke different styles of interaction and estimations of behaviour to male and female members of staff. Regarding the inner representation of the boys as shown in the projective storytelling process, dyadic, harmonious forms of interaction, few confrontational themes (such as competition or rivalry) as well as a tendency towards avoidance are dominant. This structure of processing as the significance of the father figure in the stories are remarkable, at the very least, since the need for conflict-free harmonious and dyadic relationships to responsive and especially male adults can be observed in everyday day-care situations. We believe that a strong longing for a paternal relationship can be perceived in individual cases, where the relationship to a male member of staff is obvious or noticeable in the stories told. The above-mentioned characteristics such as lack of ability to deal with conflicts, lack of triangulation and the strong need for dyadic, responsive relationships with a male adult show up developmental difficulties, which are caused, among other things, by a real lack of a paternal figure in the family. When family structures, observed data, estimations of behaviour and the analysis of the process of story telling are brought together, we have a picture of the behavioural and experiential tendencies of these boys, which we would thus connect with a real father deficit and a resulting "hunger for a father figure" (Herzog 1982), showing the interactions with male members of staff as being transfer induced.

Conclusion and Discussion

The results of the study thus show clear gender specific effects between staff and children. A clear "Man-Boy-Effect" can be seen both in the video analysis as well as in several questionnaire answers. Thus, we were able to observe that it is the children themselves who make a "distinction" between the members of staff. Impressively it can be observed across the criteria applied that boys more frequently look for and hang

onto the contact with male members of staff, which points to a basic need for same-sex exchange and identification. Admittedly, it cannot be excluded that girls do not have the same need, i.e. for exchange and identification with same-sex (adult) persons. However, our data show that beyond the level of various levels of data collection, girls respond less strongly to the gender of the member of staff or the composition of professional teams, whereas it is the boys who are drawn towards a male team member. Through this and with regard to the female dominance in the constellation of the child-caring professions, various possibilities for contact, identification and projection for girls and boys emerge. According to our first results the possibilities are narrower for boys than for girls. In part, we have found clear indications for the fact that the presence of male pedagogues can counteract this tendency, which is unfavourable for boys. It is apparent that boys can be "picked up" and led into a more inviting and less confrontational situation more easily by male members of staff. The claim that this would contribute automatically to the stabilisation or re-establishment of the conventional male gender role cliché appears to us to come from a gender-ideological bias, for which there is no evidence. If male members of staff receive gender-sensitive initial carer training and education, this "Man-Boy-Effect" that we have described can be in fact used to take corrective and modifying pedagogical steps, which would be extremely valuable with regard to the individual cases described above.

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REPORTS & REVIEWS

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Statement of the 6th International Scientific Conference: *Education. In the Circle of Speech, Language and Communication.* October 9–10, 2015

The 6th International Scientific Conference: *Education. In the Circle of Speech, Language and Communication* was organized by the Teaching Department of the Old Polish University in Kielce and the Laboratory of Speech of Opole University and its partners: University of Adiyaman, Turkey, University of Klaipeda, Lithuania, University of Presov, Slovakia and the University Hasan Kalyoncu, Turkey. The conference was held on October 9–10, 2015. The organization of international conference was initiated due to two important university events. Faculty of Education of the Old Polish University in Kielce is celebrating two anniversaries this year. The first is the 10th anniversary of the Faculty, the second is the 10th anniversary of “speech therapy in Kielce”; in 2005 Faculty of Education was set up and the first students began their studies at pedagogy faculty, in the same year the first graduates left the walls of the University’s – Speech Therapy graduates of Postgraduate Studies. These two anniversaries justify the theme of the conference, which was located both in the area of pedagogy and speech therapy – focusing conference discussions in the field of education – speech, language, communication. According to the main theme of the conference the discussion concentrated in the following problem areas:

1. Linguistic competence and communication in training, education, self-education in the course of life from childhood to mature adulthood (seniority).

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2. Speech Therapy as a special area of helping humans in the acquisition / improvement / restoration of language and communicative competence.
 3. Disturbances in the use of language and the flow of communication at children with developmental disorders (DLD).
 4. Multiculturality in contemporary society and the associated multilingualism as a new area of education and speech therapy.
 5. The new phenomenon of spoken and written language and their implications for human communication and understanding (in the context of electronic media: Internet, text messages, community forums, blogs, hates, chats ...).

The honorary patrons of the conference were the Marshal of Świętokrzyskie Adam Jarubas, Governor of the Holy Cross, Bożentyna Pałka-Koruba, Mayor of the City of Kielce, Wojciech Lubawski, the Świętokrzyski Superintendent of Schools, Małgorzata Muzoł and Rector of Old School University College, Dr Jan Telus, Media Patronage was taken by the Echo of the Day Daily newspaper.

The Scientific Committee was attended by eminent representatives of science in the field of pedagogy, linguistics and speech therapy prof. zw. dr hab Zbigniew Tarkowski as chairman and prof. zw. dr hab. Andrew Bogaj, prof. zw. dr hab. Valerian Gabdulhakov, prof. zw. dr hab. Tadeusz Gałkowski, prof. zw. dr hab Stanislaw Grabias, prof. zw. dr hab Bronislaw Kasacova, prof zw. dr hab Grazyna Krasowicz-Kupis, prof. zw. dr hab Viktor Lecht, prof. zw. dr hab Jozef Liba, prof zw. dr hab Edward Łuczyński, prof. zw. dr hab John Honey, prof. zw. dr hab Heliodor Muszyński, prof. Iwona Nowakowska-Kempna, prof. zw. dr hab John Ożdżyński, prof. zw. dr hab Maria Pąchalska, prof. zw. dr hab Tadeusz Pilch, prof. zw. dr hab Mirosław Szymanski, prof. zw. dr hab Danuta Waloszek, prof. zw. dr hab Adam Zych and other distinguished representatives of Polish and foreign science.

The conference was conducted in two phases. The first – a plenary session, and the second – debates in sections. The conference was opened by the Rector of the Old School University – Jan Telus PhD and the Dean

of the Faculty of Education, Jolanta Góral-Pórola PhD. The first presentation was a plenary lecture by Prof. zw. dr hab. Maria Pałchalska on the general-brain interpretation of the world. This was followed by a presentation on communication as a condition attribute and the effect of education which was delivered by prof. zw. dr hab. Mirosław Szymanski.

The main thesis on language competence was presented by prof. nadzw. dr hab. Piotr Zbróg in the speech: The need for lifelong learning communication skills of pupils. Personality determinants of communicating participants in the educational process were presented by prof. nadzw. dr hab. Jolanta Wilsz. Prof. zw. dr hab. Adam Zych prepared a lecture on language, speech and communication as an important space in the pedagogy of the elderly. The plenary was ended by a speech by prof. zw. dr hab. Heliodor Muszyński on the key problems of language in the social sciences. The topics presented during the plenary sessions provided listeners with a lot of interesting content.

In the next part of the conference there were debates in sections and of vital importance was the diversity of themes and issues in the proposed speeches and lectures.

Section I was devoted to the following issues:

- Competence: linguistic and communicational issues in training, education, self-education. New phenomena of spoken language and their implications for communication.

Considerations in this topic began by presenting the educational system and communication skills, which was introduced in the context of the intercultural education of Slovak and Roma children. In terms of the Polish context, an important issue was the formation of the communicative competence of both teachers and students under the law of education. The issue of standards – the actual language skills of speakers and an understanding of the laws resulted in an important debate within the subject. In the next part of the debate, the role of dialogue in the educational process was taken into account by considering some aspects of philosophical views. The next speech was a presentation of the teacher as

the person responsible for effective communication in a school and a teacher's communication skills as a motivating factor in the learning process of pupils.

The issue of readership was reflected in the form of a paper on the impact of modern science reading on school readiness. The issue of multiculturalism is currently very relevant and in the area of teaching this problem was signaled in the form of a presentation on multilingual children in kindergarten and early childhood education – selected areas of communication. With regard to people with disabilities, the state of activities was presented in terms of the communication skills of teachers in public schools and the implementation of special educational needs for students with disabilities. Interpersonal relationships in this area were shown in a paper on the linguistic representation of the causes of humiliation from peers to adolescents with mild intellectual disability.

Selected determinants of the level of language skills of children at the age of six were presented in terms of school readiness, lack of communication skills and interference in communication concerned important issues in human relationships. The continuation of this discourse was the speech on communicative competence in working with clients of social services and the importance of psychological diagnosis in the development of communicative competence in some respects.

A wider range of communication issues was included in the speech on: changes in popular culture and the information society. This topic was continued in the next presentation of ideas on the basis of experience in speech: Is it really dyslexia? The impact of electronic media on the culture of a language and the importance of the media was presented in the speeches: social media in the communication process and pathologies in communication in a virtual world.

Moving on to the school environment, issues on teacher education, challenges, threats, communication at school with parents, and safety-related communication at school were presented. The speakers discussed relations of experiments in the development of communication skills in preschool children. The extended range of the discussed area also included issues such as: the art of dialogue and mutual communication

among middle school and high school students taking psychoactive drugs, the development of professional identity of students, linguistic communication disorders in the family – the family manipulation and safety considerations of social communication in the practice of municipal services. The presented topics led to a discussion which exposed the role and importance of speech and language communication in terms of educational activities.

In Section II, debates concentrated on issues such as:

- Speech Therapy as a special area of helping humans in the acquisition / restoration / improvement of language and communicative competence.

Statements in this area concerned the comparative analysis of Polish and foreign points of view and oscillated around such issues as the twilight of education, communication in the educational process and current trends in educational communication in Russia.

Valuable experience of therapeutic work was presented in the form of papers: communication in the therapist-patient relationship, impact of the environment in the formation of fluent child's speech (in the bilingual context) – reports from research. Research issues were presented in the form of several interesting speeches: a review of research on stuttering at school-age, the role of self-help groups for people who stutter, the speech development of a child with neurodevelopmental perspective, rhotacism in adults – a case study. The role and significance of the impact of speech therapy was presented in the following topics: the image of a speech therapist in Polish society, delayed speech development and speech therapy practice – diagnosis and therapy, speech therapist working with Roma pupils – successes and failures.

Problems of the treatment of people with intellectual disabilities were discussed in the form of speeches on the proper communication with people with incomplete efficiency in the sphere of intellect and the problem of language communication in the social integration of people with intellectual disabilities at moderate and severe level.

The support of the development of the child has become a priority, hence the variety of speeches themes in these areas such as environmental factors determining the communicative competence of children aged 4–6 years, parents' education and communicative competence of children in terms of speech development, help relationship as a healing factor in speech therapy, language and communication in the development of a hearing impaired child, the role of alternative communication in working with children with intellectual disabilities, bilingual deaf children in Poland- postulate, reality or "wishful thinking", the difficulty in acquiring communicative competence considering children with aphasia.

Other speeches included topics such as: the type of obligatory expression, communication limitations in dementia- reports from own research, the use of botulinum toxin on patients with spastic dysarthria and at the end - the importance of speech therapy prevention in the development of communicative competence. A summary of the session was a discussion on the current state of activities and studies in the field of speech and language, it highlighted the importance of the achievements and new areas and elements of therapy.

The plenary session during the second day of the conference was devoted to the further exploration of issues related to education and communication. On the second day both theoretical assumptions and research reports were presented in the plenary session in the form of the following international speeches: development of pupils' key competencies as an educational challenge, the effects of developing social skills of preschool children through programmes Play Time/Social Time I can solve, historic highlights and recent advances in the understanding of cluttering, ways of communicating with people with disabilities, the situation of the dyslexic child at school, communication language and communication skills of children with structural changes of CNS from the neuropsychological prospects, activation of the elderly in the field of communication as an important element of their quality of their life and the communicative competence of social workers in assessing the social assistance beneficiaries.

The presentations were followed by fruitful conference discussions.

The proceedings were devoted to the importance of communication in the lives of individuals and in the process of education – their meanings in different constellations and at different levels of social functioning. During the conference extremely interesting speeches were delivered by experts and teachers representing sometimes very distant studies - from neuropsychology, neuro speech therapy, pedagogy, linguistics, medical sciences and their students: theorists-researchers and practitioners.

The meeting, which was dedicated to updating the knowledge of the participants, the verification of thinking about education, speech, language and communication contributed to the development of knowledge and enrichment of its participants.

Thanks to Professor Maria Pąchalska, President of the Polish Society of Neuropsychology, initiator of the world congresses of neuropsychologists (the first of them took place in Krakow), the audience came closer to the magical world of the brain, whose structure and operation cannot be compared to any other phenomenon, to understand the phenomenon of human communication: the mechanisms guiding the process of speaking and understanding.

Dynamic changes in the space of language development and rapid changes in conditions of the communication process result in emerging, still new research problems.

Within the conference also speech therapy workshop was organized:

- Speech prevention in shaping the child’s communicative competence, aimed at practical implementation of issues presented during the conference.

During the 6th International Scientific Conference: *Education. In the Circle of Speech, Language and Communication*, many interesting issues were presented that are important for the functioning of society in a multifaceted formula.

To conclude, it should be noted that communication is understood as a basic concept in education, including general multidimensional operations and processes for the vocational education of individuals or social groups. At present the implementation of educational tasks for a wide range of impacts is included in the canon of responsibilities of the different factors involved in the educational process of a young man and hence it seems to view the discourse on the issues of speech and language communication as the primary form of communication and means of gaining knowledge. According to the encyclopedia, record-speech is understood as a specifically human way to communicate using the word symbols identifying objects and their properties, actions and abstract concepts, so in the process of upbringing and the education of children and young people, care and concern for the proper development of communication skills is extremely important. Analyzing various aspects of human interaction, it is apparent that individuals exert influence on each other, triggering the mechanism called communication.

It can be concluded that the basis of interpersonal relations and of social life is a process of interpersonal communication.

It is impossible to imagine the process of the implementation of educational activities without the participation of speech, language and communication.

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Report of the 17th European Conference on Developmental Psychology

The European Conference on Developmental Psychology was held on 8–12 September 2015 in Braga, Portugal. It was the 17th periodical meeting of experts from around the world on the theme of life-span development, organized by the European Association of Developmental Psychology. This year the conference host was the University of Minho, and more precisely two of its units: School of Psychology (represented by professor Ana Tomás Almeida) and Institute of Education (represented by professor Isabel Soares).

The conference was dedicated to the issue of development broadly understood. More than 1,000 participants presented results of their theoretical and empirical work and over the five days many events took place: 123 thematic symposia, 11 keynotes, 12 poster sessions and 2 workshops. Presentations concerned different topics: spheres of development (e.g. cognitive, social, emotional, personality), developmental psychopathologies and disabilities, methodological issues, contexts of development.

Among the different areas of studies presented during conference, the topic of education had a special place. Presentations were addressed especially to two aspects of education: school readiness and achievements and social relationships at school. According to the second one, an important issue was the case of difficulties experienced by children and adolescents at school, (such as bullying, cyberbullying and gender stereotyping). The question of efficient interventions which would contribute to the positive development in childhood and adolescence was

also highlighted, and several evidence based programs aimed at promoting teacher and parental competence were presented during the meeting.

School readiness was studied from both individual and social perspectives. For example, Valeria Cavioni, Mara Lupica Spagnolo, Giusy Beddia, Maria Assunta Zanetti and Gianluca Gualdi from the University of Pavia and University of Modena and Reggio Emilia argued that knowing the social emotional profile of a child can be helpful in planning specific early childhood programs to enhance children's social emotional skills, maximize his or her school readiness and to help to avoid future school failure. In their studies, children with very low socio-emotional competences displayed lower scores in language, logical mathematical abilities and symbolization skills. In turns, Pierre Lapointe from Université de Montréal and Christa Japel from Université du Québec à Montréal showed that an important factor in increasing the school readiness of preschoolers is the quality of communication between caregiver and teacher. It has a significant influence, especially in the following fields of school readiness: physical health and wellbeing, cognitive development, social integration and self-regulation.

In the context of school achievements, the role of self-regulatory skills were strongly emphasized. For example, Fitim Uka from the University of Freiburg and Antje von Suchodoletz from New York University showed that the ability to control behavior (especially to inhibit automatic reactions) is an important predictor of emerging academic skills in the fields of mathematics and vocabulary. Children (mean age = 4.8 years) with higher self-regulation had better results in the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the math subtest of the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children both six and twelve months later, even when their fluid intelligence was controlled. Laura Traverso, M. Carmen Usai and Paola Viterbori from the University of Genoa showed results confirming that the training of so called 'executive functions', which are processes responsible for the production of deliberate, goal-directed thoughts and actions, not only increases the level of these abilities but also has transfer effects on learning skills in 6-year-olds. In the studies

of Maša Vidmar from the Pedagogical Institute of Slovenia the level of behavioral problems (internalizing and externalizing behaviors) has an important influence on the academic successes of children starting elementary education. What is important is that the reverse relation was not significant and children who had poor academic outcomes at primary school did not necessarily have any behavioral problems during adolescence.

The role of social support in academic achievements was also indicated. For example, Joana Cadima and Paula Mena Matos from the University of Porto showed that mother-child relationships in preschool are an important factor in elementary school achievement. Children whose relationships with their mothers are qualitatively better have closer relationships with their teachers and more intrinsic motivation to learn. These meditative variables have a significant impact on their school achievements. Karine Verschuere, Maarten Vansteenkiste, Noortje Vervoort and Sarah Doumen from the Catholic University of Leuven and Ghent University supported these results. In their studies, factors that significantly influenced the level of academic achievements in elementary school were: secure style of attachment and maternal autonomy support (both observed in middle childhood).

Children are exposed to gender – stereotyped environment from the very beginning of their lives. During the conference a lot of attention was dedicated to the subject of gender stereotyping in school as well as at home. Christiane Spiel from the University of Vienna emphasized that both sexes are still disadvantaged in the school context. Children are being educated according to common beliefs about what is typically “male” and “female”. This kind of education influences the progress of children at school (girls are better at reading than boys), as well as career planning (girls predominantly choose health services, boys opt for engineering and computing). Moreover, school environment can strengthen gender stereotyped behaviors which, in consequence, leads to vicious circles. Professor Spiel also presented an interventional training program called “Reflect”, whose aim is to enhance gender competence in secondary school teachers and their students.

Other examples of problems experienced in schools which present a severe threat for development are bullying and cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is based on the same background as bullying – both of these aggressive behaviors are characterized by power imbalance and repetition, however cyberbullying is practiced via technologies (for example mobile phones and internet). Being involved in cyberbullying is usually linked with behaviors typical for the traditional bullying, as well as with similar coping strategies and emotional consequences of the negative experiences. Dian Liu from the University of Stavanger investigated cyberbullying among Chinese youth. The results showed that only a small part of the students who experience cyberbullying turn to social support and this is deeply worrying. The analysis indicates that over half of cyberbullying cases are conducted by classmates or friends (only 9.4% of perpetrators are strangers), moreover boys are more likely to be both perpetrators and victims online than girls. Many researches were focused on features that distinguish bullies from victims, defenders and outsiders. Considering bullying as a phenomenon clearly transgressing moral principles, during the conference it was strongly linked to the subject of morality. Evelyne Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger and Sonja Perren from the University of Teacher Education in Lucerne in Switzerland were investigating if the negative relationship between moral judgments and moral emotion attributions and bully-victim problems hold for passive moral temptations. The results show negative links between moral competence and pro-bullying behaviors. However, the relationship of moral competence to helping the victim was indicated to be positive. In the case of bullying, a very significant factor is the teacher's reaction, which can reduce the phenomenon or, in some cases, even worsen the situation. Kristel Campaert, Annalaura Nocentini and Ersilia Menesini of the University of Florence based their study on the sociocognitive theory which shows that students are likely to elaborate cognitively their teachers' behaviors. According to the theory this process can activate or de-activate students' sense of responsibility. Researchers were examining moral disengagement as a mediator between teachers' reactions towards bullying and student's bullying. The results of the study indicate that students of teachers who communicate

that bullying is unacceptable through their behavior showed a lower level of bullying because of the effect that this has on their moral disengagement. These results show clearly that teachers' behavior has a significant impact on their students bullying behavior.

The importance of the results presented above emphasizes the need to implement them in practice. Different types of interventions aimed at reducing school bullying are already in progress. One of the examples is The Friendly School (FS) intervention, which was presented by Donna Cross from the University of Western Australia. The program of FS intervention is based on 15 years of empirical research investigating the most effective strategies for stimulating social and emotional development and reduce school bullying. The very advantage of this program is the wide target group, which includes students (aged 4 to 14 years), as well as families, teachers and policy makers who actively participate in organized interventions as co-researchers and key contributors to program development.

The subject of moral and prosocial development was also presented beyond the context of bullying. A thematic session dedicated to moral development referred to the subject of bioethical issues. Olga Fotakopoulou from the Birmingham City University, together with Triantafyllia Georgiadou and Dimitris Pnevmatikos from the School of Education in Florina conducted research on children's bioethical judgments. The idea of the research was extremely interesting, as the first attempt to examine primary school children's judgments and opinions about contemporary bioethical issues, as well as the values that are strong enough to form bioethical judgments. Using grounded theory methodology, researchers analyzed children's judgments and developed a theory based on the collected data. Findings indicate that primary school children emphasized the value of human life. The main category – respect for human life – was generated from three categories: protection of human and animal lives, the implications of human intervention in patients' lives and helping other people. What is more, young participants were concerned about current scientific developments and their consequences for society.

During the European Conferences on Developmental Psychology there are always two prizes awarded. The first one is the William Thierry Preyer Award for Excellence in Research on Human Development. William Thierry Preyer (1841–1897) was a developmental psychologist who conducted studies on child development which resulted in his main work 'The Mind of the Child'. This prize is given to a psychologist or group of psychologists who have had an important impact on promoting a better understanding of human development and its contexts. The Preyer Award Committee of the European Association of Developmental Psychology assess candidates on the basis of their internationally known works. This year the winner was Professor Peter Smith from the University of London. His works have made substantial scientific contributions in the field of bullying, especially cyberbullying. The second prize periodically awarded during European Conferences of Developmental Psychology is the George Butterworth Young Scientist Award. George Butterworth (1946–2000) was one of the fathers of the European Society for Developmental Psychology. His works were concentrated on infant development and the George Butterworth Young Scientist Award is dedicated to young scientists who have recently completed their Ph.D. studies and written excellent dissertations. This year this prize was given to Maja Schachner from the University of Postdam, for the thesis: 'From Equality and Inclusion to Cultural Pluralism – Realizing the Potential of Cultural Diversity in Education'.

The 17th European Conference on Developmental Psychology was a very important and fruitful scientific event, one of the most important in the area of human development studies. The 18th meeting will take place in Utrecht in 2017. Taking into consideration the innovative character of the research presented during the 17th edition of the conference and the various ideas of the effective use of the obtained results in practice, it will be extremely interesting to participate in the next meeting in Utrecht.

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Report from the Conference: the Meaning of Life and Values

Introduction

The search for the meaning of life is solely a human need and distinguishes humans from animals. Values and aspirations belong to the most important phenomena which give meaning to human life, driving our development and setting future directions of our actions.

The words *values* and *meaning of life*, functioning in colloquial speech, have a long history. The notions have been shaped over many centuries and have taken on many meanings. Their understanding has been influenced by various research perspectives, including of course the significant role of theology, but also of economics or humanities as well as the social sciences. In the academic world they have existed for centuries and are therefore perhaps extremely difficult to define.

Currently, meaning of life and values are among the phenomena studied mainly within positive psychology, as human resources and the 'strengths' of man. Historically, studies on the meaning of life and values are associated strongly with positive psychology, but interest in these topics predates the beginning of the positive psychology approach, and is present in different fields of psychology and other studies. The topic of values and meaning of life is also examined in different ways, including both quantitative and qualitative studies, among both clinical and non-clinical population.

The meaning of life and values constitute a kind of counterweight to focusing on the pragmatic side of human existence and to the loss of reflection on the events of everyday life. The problem is that while declaring

the importance of certain values, some people organize their lives according to their contents, while others live, so to say, next to them or in conflict with them.

Generally, man is guided by the aspiration to achieve and maximize benefits and success, and therefore it is assumed that the discrepancies between declarations and their realization have their origins in an insufficient discovery and recognition of already realized and respected values, other than the very resources of a given person (including the ability to experience and express emotional states), mental and executive performance, level of knowledge about oneself and the world.

In psychological literature, the notions of meaning of life, attitude towards the meaning of life, existential attitude, individual conception of life are neither unequivocal nor precisely defined, and therefore the scope of awareness and behavioral elements included in this class of phenomena is very wide. In recent years, we have witnessed a number of attempts to integrate values (e.g. Fromm, Scheller, Rokich, Shwartz and others) and meaning of life (Frankl, Beck, Längle, Wong, Steger and others) into the system of psychological notions, to analyse the role of these notions in the regulation of behavior and research into the development of values and the level of perceived meaning of life, in the course of an individual life. This notion is, first and foremost, to turn attention to the role that values play in regulating behavior and its related phenomena.

The conference: Values and the Meaning of Life

The Conference Values and the Meaning of Life was held on 21st and 22nd September 2015 in Poznan and was organized by the SWPS University. The Academic Committee included: prof. Paweł Boski (SWPS, Poznan), prof. Jan Ciecuch (Card. Stefan Wyszyński University), prof. Maria Straś-Romanowska (University of Wroclaw), prof. Anna Zalewska (SWPS University, Poznan) and Jarosław Piotrowski, PhD (SWPS University, Poznan). The Organising Committee was chaired by Mariusz Zięba, PhD.

The conference began at 10.00 am with prof. Ralph Piedmont's presentation on A Psychological Ontology for Spirituality. The aim of the presentation was to introduce a rational, existential model representing a set of psychological features and motivation which uniquely characterize the human experience, in terms accepted by the scientific approach.

Then prof. Dariusza Krok had a presentation on Psychology in Search of the Meaning of Life. Methodological Aspects of Research on the Meaning of Life and Quality of Life. An analysis of the research findings, according to Fr. Professor Krok, points to two important conclusions. Firstly, the meaning of life is a multidimensional construct, involving elements rooted in the internal mental processes and social relations of the individual. Secondly, the meaning of life has a function of a mediator in relations between psychosocial factors. The obtained results indicate that the meaning of life plays an important role in constructing the consistency of human behavior and enables man to achieve his objectives.

On the first day of the conference, 29 papers were delivered in seven thematic groups. The first session, chaired by Magdalena Kolańska, MA, concerned the challenges of modern times, the meaning of life and values. The second session, chaired by Agnieszka Bojanowska, PhD, concerned Conceptual and Methodological Aspects of the Themes of Values, the Meaning of Life and Well-being. Maciej Kościelniak, MA, chaired the third session entitled, Values and the Meaning of Life among Adolescents and Young Adults.

Debates in small groups lasted until the lunch break, after which began the plenary lecture by Professor Anna Zalewska on: Values and Quality of Life – Various Research Approaches. The aim of the lecture was to present the relationship between values and the quality of life in the concepts and research focusing on the objective approach to the quality of life (referring to the concepts defining arbitrarily when life has a high quality), and focused the subjective approach (assuming that the test takers are the best experts as far as the evaluate the quality of life is concerned).

After the coffee break, discussions in small groups continued. The fourth session, chaired by Janina Nowak, MA, concerned the Meaning of

Life and Values in the Conditions of Exclusion and Isolation. During the fifth session, the theme of Values and the Meaning of Life among Adolescents and Young Adults Continued. Dr Mariusz Zięba chaired the sixth session about the Values and Meaning of Life in the Context of Therapy and Trauma. Seventh session, under the chairmanship of Prof. Elżbieta Trzęsowska-Greszta, presented the issues: Family and Gender Roles and the Meaning of Life. A gala dinner finished the first day of the conference.

The second day of the conference was opened at 9.00 with a plenary lecture by prof. Paweł Boski on Humanism and Derived Axiological Constructs in Polish Culture. According to the presented research findings, the last 30 years have systematically produced data supporting the thesis that humanism is an indigenous psychological characteristic of our culture and that sometimes it is contrasted with materialism or efficiency.

Then, prof. Jan Ciecuch in his lecture entitled Specificity of Psychological Reflection on Values attempted at a reconstruction of the meanings that researchers tend to have in mind when, in psychology, they are talking about values, even if these meanings are not present *explicite* in the definition of values. The reconstruction was carried out from the point of view of the possibilities and limitations of psychological methodology.

On the second day of the conference, 18 papers were delivered in four thematic groups. Eighth session, chaired by Dr Andrzej Piotrowski concerned The Cultural and Social Determinants of Well-being and the Meaning of Life. Dr Agnieszka Czerw chaired the ninth session of the conference on Values in Work and Work as a Value. After the lunch break began the tenth session, chaired by Wioletta Małota, MA, on The Issue of the Meaning of Life and System of Values versus Work. The last session of the day, chaired by prof. Józef Maciuszka concerned The Meaning of Life and Values in the Face of Old Age and Death.

The second day of the conference ended with a plenary lecture by Professor Maria Straś-Romanowska, entitled The Place of Axiological Sensitivity in the Personal Structure of Man. The leading idea was the assumption that axiological sensitivity, which is a specific form of cognitive openness, is a constitutive feature of man as a personal subject.

Conclusion

The conference was summarised by the Academic Committee of the conference. Active participants in the conference could also publish selected papers in the current issue of *Personality Psychology* entitled: *The Meaning of Life and Values – Different Perspectives and Research Approaches*.

Research findings in humanities and social sciences show a considerable diversity in terms of the durability and changeability of values and the meaning of life in various social groups and categories. The dynamics of this process could be easily determined in a repeated or panel research. An approximate determination of the dynamics is achieved in inter-generational studies among young and old people. Psychological research, especially that which is mass in character, penetrates quite deeply into the motivational sphere of the sense of life, but is limited mostly to gathering feedback on the perceived meaning, or meaninglessness, the frequency of these feelings, the factors influencing the attitude towards life, and finally to the relations between values and the meaning of life. All participants agreed that the difficulty begins already at the level of defining the studied variables as well as the research methods and tools applied.

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Cooperation of Home and School: Evaluation of Premises of Educational Reform in Poland

Review of book: M. Banasiak, *Współpraca rodziców ze szkołą w kontekście reformy edukacji w Polsce (Cooperation of Parents and Schools in the Context of Educational Reform in Poland)*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2013.

Throughout the years, the relations between teachers and parents have been subject to constant modifications related to challenges and tendencies that have been appearing in the modern world. However, especially intense transformations in the area of cooperation between the family and the school can be observed since 1999, when the premises of educational reform started to be introduced in Polish educational units. These premises impose an obligation of intensifying contacts between at least two social groups, teachers and parents, on every headteacher of an educational unit, for the purpose of specifying the principles of cooperation in such a degree that makes it satisfactory for all entities interested in the child's welfare. A positive aspect of the premises of educational reform is the absence of a determination of a rigid framework of conduct within the scope of cooperation with parents. Such conditions offer a series of possibilities in terms of contact for teachers with the child's guardians that contributes to greater freedom in terms of forms and standards of conduct, which could answer the needs of both parents and teachers. A number of studies conducted around the world indicate that tightening the bond between the family and the school has a positive

impact on learning results and the process of a child's upbringing. These tendencies were also noticed in Poland and a first step has been made to improve the parent – teacher relation by relevant provisions in documents issued by the Ministry of National Education.

Several years have passed since the initiation in 1999 of thorough changes in the Polish educational system. The time has come to verify theoretical assumptions of the reform and to ascertain whether it is implemented in a practical dimension. To what extent are the headmasters and the teachers aware of their rights and obligations within the scope of cooperation with parents? Do parents know their rights and obligations with respect to the school? What is the reality in the Polish school within the scope of the parent – teacher relations? Has the educational reform resulted in any changes in this area, or is it only an empty provision which has no actual impact on the functioning of schools? The reviewed publication provides answers to the questions posed above, along with other questions of a narrower range, but referring to the issue of cooperation between teachers and parents.

Information concerning the teacher – parent relations is presented by the author in a comprehensive manner; their complexity is shown, along with the number of factors that characterise them. The described publication consists of six chapters; however, it is possible to determine two parts – a theoretical and empirical one. The first one shows the concept of the school as a learning organisation according to the premises formulated by Peter Senge. A number of criteria have been presented which a “learning organisation” should meet; at the same time, they were confronted with the Polish school. This confrontation does not allow for considering Polish schools to be learning organisations, something which is emphatically argued by M. Banasiak. The author also specifies a number of guidelines whose implementation contributes to the efficient functioning of the school. In a further part of the publication, the author focuses on a presentation of the premises of the educational reform system in Poland. However, this is done from the perspective of the rights and obligations of headteachers and teachers towards the parents, as well as rights and obligations of parents towards the school.

In the second empirical part of the book, the author presents the results of her own studies which were conducted in randomly selected public and non-public schools of the commune of Toruń and the city of Toruń. They were implemented with the use of a questionnaire and grade scale (addressed to teachers and parents) and interview questionnaires (addressed to headteachers). The data obtained in the course of the study is very interesting. On the one hand, it is possible to draw a unanimous conclusion that headmasters and teachers are still not prepared for working with the family environment. On the other hand, it is surprising to learn that both groups are aware that the educational reform increased the rights and obligations of parents at schools and also imposes a task of closer contacts between home and school. The existing situation results in the fact that with respect to the issue of cooperation with school, parents also feel at loss. They are not fully aware of their rights and obligations, they evaluate support offered by teachers critically and they also claim to have had quite limited forms of contact with the teachers of their children. Basic forms of communication between a teacher and a parent are limited to school meetings and consultations. This pessimistic vision of cooperation between headmasters and teachers with parents is shown by M. Banasiak in the perspective of the various factors that comprise it. The author makes an effort to show the causes of selected unfavourable phenomena occurring in relations between teachers and parents. In the final part of the publication, she details the postulates which might condition broader knowledge of parents and could also allow for the implementation of the premises of the reform within the scope of cooperation between the family and the school. The author makes an attempt to show that the Polish school may function as a learning organisation, which is going to offer benefits to all entities making up its structure.

The publication is written in simple and understandable language. However, it does not lack a scientific approach, which may become an impulse for commencement of own studies in the area of the discussed issue. It is addressed to a broad group of recipients; mainly teachers and students of early childhood education but also parents whose children attend educational units will find useful information in the book. Knowledge

in the area of rights and obligations that should be fulfilled by headmasters and teachers towards the parents may help noticing not only a bureaucratic institution in a school, but also an entity filled with people who are really interested in understanding the child's situation. Furthermore, after the reform commenced in 1999, parents have greater rights than before with respect to co-deciding about, e.g., modifications in the teaching programme. It is expected that they are going to be active partners in discussion; persons involved in the life of the school community and that they will provide information in order to solve children's problems together with teachers. The vision of the parent who passively listens to opinions voiced by the teacher is slowly disappearing and parents should be particularly aware of it.

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Report from The Third International Conference “Thinking Symbols” Held at The Academy of Humanities in Pułtusk from 30th of June to 2nd of July 2015.

The Third International Conference *Thinking symbols* took place at the Academy of Humanities in Pułtusk from 30th June to 2nd of July. The Conference was organized by the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology Pułtusk Academy of Humanities. The Organizing Committee included: J. Popielska-Grzybowska (A. H. in Pułtusk), B. Józefów-Czerwińska (A. H. in Pułtusk), W. Duczko (A. H. in Pułtusk) and M. Szymańska (Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow).

The Scientific Committee comprised: M. H. Trindade Lopes, J. Candeias Montes Sales, J. Cogswell, T. Dobrzyńska, W. Duczko, Á. Egilsdóttir, E. KaGlazer, J. Iwaszczuk, B. Józefów-Czerwińska, J. Karbownicz, D. Kulczycka, A. Łukaszewicz, J. Popielska-Grzybowska, I. Shved, M. Szymańska.

The Conference was opened by His Magnificence the Rector of the Pułtusk Academy of Humanities, Professor A. Koseski, Professor W. Duczko, Dr J. Popielska-Grzybowska, Dr B. Józefów-Czerwińska, Dr M. Szymańska.

Structure of the Conference: Conference Inauguration, Opening Session, two parallel sessions on 30th of June; five sessions with sections altogether – on 1st of July; four sessions on 2nd July with Concluding Discussions.

The specific feature of the Conference was that there was an open, short discussion after each talk.

There were about 80 participants from 16 countries all over the world.

The Conference themes had an interdisciplinary character covering the domains of creativity in art in light of the neurobiological aspect to be

transferred into the process of constructive, critical thinking, something which was reflected in a historical analyses of Ramesses II and the art of narrating history (M. H. Trindale Lopes – Lisbon); the symbolism and functions of Egyptian temples (J. C. Montes Sales – Lisbon); cosmogenic tattoos addressed to epistemic limits and the will to adorn (J. Cogswell – Michigan, USA).

It is worth mentioning what J. Cogswell stated – “As an artist I am fascinated by how a pattern works in accord with the human mind, mind in its most expansive sense, not just as the brain, or even the bounded body, but working through and in concert with the material world that we are part of. I question the lowly role that pattern has been afforded in our own culture, these acts of marking that are as archaic as the first human artifacts, commonly understood as frame or background to figuration and meaning, at best granted the role of establishing a sense of order in the world”. A different notion of the symbol was revealed in terms of symbols of communication (S. Szymanski – Poland). The composer claimed “Music belongs to the art of a special kind of communication. It embraces all people all over the world. It makes many traces in hearts, minds and provokes acts of doing in the light of symbolic signs that appear to be described from different angles and perspectives. Music joins people, inspires for dreams that can come true one day. Music helps people solve problems without words, seems to be an underground water stream which brings live to the death, and joy to the sad, enhances spirituality in our souls”. The art analyses also comprised the meaning of colour symbolism in ceremonial dresses based on Matejko’s and Baccio’s paintings of Polish kings by A. Skwirut (Pułtusk/Warsaw, Poland) who explained the symbolism of the most common three primary colours in the images of the costumes in paintings by Matejko and Bacciarelli.

These presentations depicted the very important aspect of individuality which is strongly engaged in the mental processes of each human being in a unique and unpredictable way. The symbolic images are varied as they are rooted in particular cultural, social and “spiritual” circumstances. This was shown, for example, in the lecture on the symbolism of the loaf in the Belarusian wedding ceremony (I. Shved – Belarus); serpents and drag-

ons (Á. Egilsdóttir – Reykjavik Iceland), where the author said: "The theme of a confrontation with a dragon or other monstrous beast is common in the folklore and mythology of numerous ancient cultures. Combat with a dragon is the most common myth in heroic tales and is its most important theme. The dragon/serpent-combat myth is a creation-myth with the monster symbolising chaos, the formless and desolate. In Old Norse mythology, the serpent Miðgarðsormr (Midgard Serpent, World Serpent) surrounded the earth and kept its forces together by biting his tail. When he lets it go, the world will end. Well-known and popular myths tell of the god Þórr's battle with Miðgarðsormr. When the world ends at Ragnarök, Þórr kills Miðgarðsormr and then walks nine paces before falling dead, having been poisoned by the serpent's venom. The role of the Miðgarðsormr is both positive, by tying the world together, and negative, by being one of the gods' most dangerous enemies. In Christian culture, dragons and serpents represent evil". The topic on Christian symbols in a pagan context also featured: from the Milvian bridge to the tomb of Memnon (KV 9) was presented by A. Łukaszewicz (Warsaw, Poland). Other themes covered the following: on Coffin Texts versus Coffin Images, where world of symbols on the ancient Egyptian Middle Kingdom Coffins are described within the case of the so-called Book of Two Ways by W. Sherbiny (Belgium).

Another way of using symbols as a way of turning the situation into a positive aspect of it was presented within the topic on the Head of State as a Political Icon during the Dictatorial Regime in Togo, 1967–2005 (J. J. Pawlik, Olsztyn, Poland). Mental symbols also included the aspect of the body of the pharaoh in the Pyramid Texts (J. Popielska-Grzybowska – Pultusk, Poland; F. Manfredi – Rome, Italy). What is more, these are strictly referred to intelligence, as emphasized in the stimulation and multi-intelligent principle of a student's functioning in the educational process – exemplification in practice (J. Karbowniczek, Krakow – Poland). Practice needs to be reflected and thus treating the word as a storage of meanings in building communicative thinking (M. Szymańska – Krakow, Poland) takes a crucial place.

The Conference topics touched many vital areas and forced us to stop and consider topics such as *Representations of Symbolic Immortality*

in The Book Thief Novel by Adriana Teodorescu (Târgu-Mureş Romania), or Symbolism of African Funeral Rituals (Case of the Mbomou Zande People from the Central African Republic) by E. Łubińska (Poland).

In conclusion, the Conference "Thinking Symbols" turned out to be a scientific interdisciplinary success, facilitating fruitful communication between the representatives of different academic centres all over the world.

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Review of the Publication: *Diagnoza w socjoterapii* [Diagnosis in Sociotherapy]

Reviewed publication: Maciej Wilk, *Diagnoza w socjoterapii* [Diagnosis in Sociotherapy], GWP, Sopot 2014, p. 152, ISBN 978-83-7489-571-2.

Sociotherapy is one of the methods used in psychological counselling offered to children and teenagers. However, many authors do not always understand the term *sociotherapy* in the same way, which results in differing content in sociotherapeutic trainings or courses organized by various institutions which might be misleading. The author of *Diagnoza w socjoterapii* (*Diagnosis in Sociotherapy*) advocates assuming one definition of this term based on the psychodynamic paradigm, within which he operates in his professional career, as he is a co-founder of Krakowskie Centrum Psychodynamiczne (Cracow Psychodynamic Center). Moreover, he postulates viewing sociotherapy as a kind of psychological counselling connected with psychoeducation. He points to frequent confusions connected with definitions of terms from the area of education, psychological counselling, and psychotherapy. His goal is to present sociotherapy, the process of diagnosis and eligibility for sociotherapy from the perspective of psychodynamic psychology.

In the first part the author addresses the question of terminology. First, he focuses on the meaning of the term *sociotherapy*. He analyses several definitions provided by such authors as K. Sawicka or J. Jagieła, and opts for the one developed by B. Jankowiak, who describes sociotherapy as “the form of psychological counselling in the area of education and caring institutions, directed at children and teenagers from

high-risk groups and/or those displaying disorders in their psycho-social functioning, which is based on intentional initiation of factors supporting group processes in order to compensate for potential deficits in psycho-social development of the group members" (p. 22).

While Wilk describes the tasks and goals of sociotherapy, he also argues with K. Sawicka, who states that the goal of sociotherapy is treatment. M. Wilk believes that the main objective of sociotherapy is to teach certain skills, and not to trigger a considerable personality change, which is the ultimate goal of psychotherapy. Thus, for him the main aims of sociotherapy are developmental and psychoeducational ones rather than therapeutic ones.

In the next chapter the author presents the definition of psychotherapy as treatment. He makes reference to L. Grzesiuk, who views psychotherapy as treatment using psychological means and for whom the main goals and tasks of psychotherapy include getting rid of symptoms or their weakening, activating blocked forms of activity and making way for a more adequate adaptation, which leads to realizing one's developmental tasks.

New skills, more thorough knowledge of oneself or a higher level of assertiveness can only be additional benefits of psychotherapy. The key element of psychotherapy is a therapeutic relation, and therapeutic aims are achieved through the modification of defence mechanisms or the reduction of developmental deficits.

M. Wilk also highlights the difference between the psychotherapy of adults and psychotherapy of children and teenagers, who need a more flexible approach, often in the form of play. The author emphasises the fact that the people connected with the psychodynamic paradigm believe that a healthy person should not be subjected to psychotherapy, but only exposed to the processes of psychoeducation, personal development or personality analysis, which are not connected with changes in personality structure.

Another term defined by the author is *diagnosis* understood as recognition and differentiation. The author makes reference to N. McWilliams's advantages of good diagnosis. The result of diagnostic sessions in psy-

chotherapy is the possibility of naming the patient's disorder using the language of the paradigm within which the therapist works. M. Wilk discusses definitions of diagnosis in sociotherapy provided by K. Sawicka and J. Strzemienny and stresses that emotional trauma does not have to be the cause of a disorder which requires sociotherapy or psychotherapy. The author states that not every child reacts to a pathological situation at home in a pathological way, as it depends on numerous other factors, so it is worth applying an intrapsychical approach here, and not only behavioral-cognitive and phenomenal ones. The psychodynamic theory offers such perspective, as it takes into account processes taking place inside a person's mind, thanks to which it is easier to understand why, under the same conditions, one child suffers from trauma, while another is able to successfully cope with the same situation. When M. Wilk writes about diagnosis in sociotherapy based on the psychodynamic theory, he indicates that "it requires the person's readiness for changing his way of thinking, openness to the unexpected, readiness for accepting uncertainty and receiving these states with humility and a belief that the right time for solving his problems will come" (p. 58). This very sentence proves the value of diagnosis in the psychodynamic paradigm, as diagnosis here is not treated as labelling, but as an open and real search for the psychological truth about man. In such a diagnosis it is important to determine the degree of the child's disorder and the factors which are decisive in looking for counsel.

In the second part of the book the author describes the process of diagnosing children, and in the third part – diagnosing teenagers. The structure of these parts is very important. They include the description (written in the language of the psychodynamic approach) of the developmental stages and psychopathologies characteristic for these periods. Childhood problems include depressive states and social maladjustment, which are described in a way which enriches traditional descriptions. Social maladjustment is presented from the perspective of psychodynamic psychology and explained in terms of suppression of love towards an object during early stages of a child's life. Wilk shows ways in which this problem can lead to the lack of development of adequate social attitudes

among children. The third part presents the psychodynamic perspective of adolescence and its typical psychopathological problems, such as: personality disorders, teenage depression, eating disorders, social maladjustments, behavioral disorders, emotional traumas and addictions. In the chapter devoted to personality disorders the author comments on a current discussion among psychologists on how legitimate it is to talk about personality disorders, such as e.g. a borderline disorder, among teenagers undergoing maturity crisis whose personalities are not yet fully shaped. According to the author, the solution to this dilemma can be found by considering it on a continuum running from a personality crisis, natural in adolescence, to a pathological type of personality.

In the part devoted to psychopathologies typical for adolescents, the chapter on emotional trauma is especially interesting. The author lists features helping to diagnose such traumas. These features include particular emotions, somatic problems and emotional reactions which take place inside the teenager's mind. This means that it is not the traumatic situation itself that leads to the emotional trauma, but the person's reaction to such a situation. Another of Wilk's observation seems especially valuable: persons (not only children) who have experienced violence frequently display an unconscious tendency to repeat the role of a victim in their contact with carers. It is a transference reaction in which the people coming into contact with such a person are unconsciously encouraged to play the role of a persecutor. This remark can prove extremely useful for carers and educators.

The last part of the book focuses on diagnosis in the sociotherapeutic relation. Chapter 9 presents the rules operating within a sociotherapy group as well as the norms and frames which should be implemented by the group leader. In chapter 10, M. Wilk describes the rules governing group work using psychodynamic language, which include transference, setting and the need for and the value of supervision of a sociotherapist.

Overall, M. Wilk's book is an extremely valuable publication for several reasons. First of all, the novelty of the book lies in its consistent use of the language of psychodynamic psychology, which substantially enriches sociotherapeutic theory and practice. Moreover, in a clear and lucid

way, the book shows the subtleties connected with definitions, which are often blurred in the subject literature. It is definitely a must for those sociotherapists who identify themselves with psychodynamic theory, as it offers them invaluable help in understanding complicated issues from the area of the developmental psychology of children and adolescents. People who are not interested in psychodynamic psychology may find this book helpful in broadening their horizons. However, it is a pity that it does not contain the descriptions of particular cases studies, which could be useful in understanding the theoretical intricacies of this complicated psychodynamic psychological paradigm.

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