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SCHOOL AS A PLACE OF INTERSUBJECTIVE EXCHANGE

1. The face of contemporary school

School has been treated as an institution commissioned by the country to educate young people and prepare them for future life tasks, set forward by social, cultural and political frameworks, for centuries. Nowadays we reflect upon allocation of school within a person's living space more often because the conditions, factors and areas of shaping a person implying a different model of education change. Due to the awareness that learning is a life-long process of shaping a person in relation to the world, other persons and oneself, the place and role of school as an authorized educational institution has to be created anew. The fact that we constantly learn, from the moment we are born to the last day of our life, indicates a permanent character of education which is set forward by a time axis. The scope of our experience is also vast and exceeds the premises of a school. We learn everywhere and at every occasion, in an intentional and unintentional way, by taking part in formal education, enjoying parallel offers provided by entities implementing the educational mission (extra-formal teaching) and participating in everyday life situations (non-formal teaching). Therefore, space is a yet another, horizontal dimension of education. Nevertheless, the most significant aspect of education is the way we study. All of us have personal experiences at their disposal, present a different style of learning and have different educational needs. This requires a highly individualized attitude towards the process of educating. On the other hand, one should be aware of the fact that learning is of social dimension as it takes place during interactions with other persons and is conditioned by the level of the said interactions. In conclusion, we learn constantly and in every place by entering into relations with the material and personal world. Learning is within a person's nature and is the basic attribute of human existence.

A contemporary school is obliged to educate based on four pillars: learn in order to live together, learn in order to know, learn in order to act, and learn in order to exist[1]. They can be described as long-term goals that constitute a beacon for educational actions. The final effect of formal education should be acquiring widely-understood competences exceeding the scope of subjects comprising, according to B. Śliwerski, as follows:

- competences indispensable in everyday life,

- ability to acquire information,

- ability to act,

- ability to cooperate in a group,

- creativity and ability to think globally[2].

In order to develop the above mentioned competences it is necessary to choose the right model of education that will be the basis for a development of independent, creative and responsible persons who will form a modern society. It is during everyday meetings with children that a teacher fills basic educational paradigms with content. His/her wordly wisdom, practical experience and pedagogical tact condition the quality of a child's education, including the quality of childhood.

At present one may observe a specific polymorphism of thinking about education in Polish schools which constitutes a visible discordance with respect to the archaic, in its form and content, organization of the process of education. Educational commonplaceness is still a transfer of knowledge. Development, examined mainly as far as intellectual sphere is concerned, is an effect of carefully planned and "methodologically" performed didactic actions as it is assumed that external activation leads to permanent changes in a person's behaviour. The direction and scope of actions is determined by a unified set of curriculum-related requirements. "Teachers, form tutors and especially headmasters worship the curriculum as a given, unquestionable structure of their world"[3]. A reflection of this is a non-reflective implementation of authoritatively imposed curriculum presented as categories of requirements. Phrases as: *knows*, *is aware of*, *can* used in curriculum-related documents exclude the possibility of treating a child as a unique entity that perceives and understands the world in its individual way. By using a predicate form one disposes a child of its right to decide about oneself as the child is, in a way, forced to pursue a verified, safe educational path that was followed by previous generations.

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[1] *Edukacja - jest w niej ukryty skarb*, Raport pod przew. J. Delorsa, Warszawa 1998.

[2] B. Śliwerski, *Przyszłość szkoły, szkoła przyszłości*, [in:] D. Waloszek (ed.), *Nowe stulecie dziecku*, Zielona Góra 2001, p.360.

[3] K. Konarzewski (ed.), *Sztuka nauczania. Szkoła*, Warszawa 2002, p.7.

The direction of this journey is set forward by heterogeneous goals determined by civil servants and detailed by the executive body, i.e. teachers. Children are not asked what interests them, what they would like to know or what they would like do. Individual goals and personal needs were eliminated from the institutionalized education sphere which is figuratively described by N. Postman stating that "students start school as question marks and graduate as full stops"[4]. School effectively suppresses a child's natural cognitive curiosity and ignores its questions leaving the child with doubts that are gradually forced out by dogmatic truth. A child is expected to present a given scope of behaviour prescribed for a given age group. Progress in acquiring subsequent competences, which stands for implementation of a developmental program, is unimportant compared with the degree of mastery of information and skills segmented within individual developmental spheres. Education is oriented at a product in the form of a hypothetical graduate of early-school education, as described by curriculum-related documents.

A teacher/form-tutor, acting as a depositor of knowledge and socially acknowledged values, is an initiator, manager and supervisor of the teaching-learning process. Equipped in tests he/she evaluates the knowledge and skills of pupils and then compares the results with externally established standards in the form of population standards. Such perspective of perceiving the process of education is of instrumental character as it concentrates on the process of educating understood as a task that has to be performed through adequate "didactic tools". Attitudes, values and beliefs presented by a child in respect to itself and other persons as well as the material and spiritual world cannot be grasped by a typical procedure of didactic evaluation and they are difficult to be evaluated due to an inability to set forward explicit criteria. That is why they are moved to the periphery of didactic actions[5].

Consequently, one may openly state that mentally we are stuck in adaptation-related education as our schools are only concerned with preparing a child for further educational levels and, in longer perspective, functioning in a society as well as fulfilling externally determined social roles. Due to our concern over what will happen "there and then" we forget about what is taking place 'here and now'.

2. A teacher and a student in an educational interaction

School is a special place that has a significant influence on each person's life. This is where we meet other persons. It is not only a place where we present our individual

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[4] N. Postman, *The End of Education. Redefining the Value of School*, New York 1995, p.120.

[5] J. Nowak, *Między modalnościami, czyli sposób myślenia nauczyciela o edukacji małego dziecka*, [in:] J. Grzesiak (ed.), *Ewaluacja i innowacje w edukacji. Kompetencje i odpowiedzialność nauczyciela*, Kalisz – Konin 2010, p. 331 – 332.

knowledge and beliefs, but also a space where we open for other persons, a space that enables us to exchange thoughts, negotiate meanings, discover truth as well as generate creative ideals and solutions. "This takes place because a mind, characterised by natural activity, also seeks a dialogue and a discourse with other active minds. It is through the said dialogue- and discourse-related process that we get to know the Other as well as the Other's point of view and stories. Through discourse with Others we acquire a substantial part of our information, not only about the world, but also about ourselves"[6]. Learning is a continuous series of interactions with oneself and the world. Humans were gifted with a highly developed talent of inter-subjectivity that lets them understand other person's mind through language, gestures or other means of non-verbal communication. The said ability to 'read other minds' lets us receive information, on an intuitive level, about what others think or feel. According to J. Bruner, this skill lets us negotiate meanings and build common understanding during a discourse that takes into mutual consideration an understanding of a person's point of view[7].

There is clear correlation between social functioning and cognitive development of a person. L. Wygotski drew attention to this fact by stating that a child's mental development takes place during the process of social exchange with adults or a more competent partner as primarily the child experiences reality in a mediated way through mediation of those who have greater knowledge and can use cultural tools of cognition and thinking in a more efficient way. An assumption underlying the adopted thesis states that each and every mental function appears twice: within a social scope – as an inter-mental function regulated by others, and within an individual scope – as an inter-mental self-regulated function and internalization of thoughts. "By explaining what cooperation abilities a child has at its disposal we determine the sphere of developing mental functions which should profit in the nearest phase of development (…)"[8]. Entering a sphere of social development gives a child an opportunity to internalize, i.e. undergo developmental internal progress which is not mere imitation, but a qualitative transformation of a child's reasoning. Things that take place within the external sphere today, as far as relations with other persons are concerned, will take place inside the child tomorrow. Cultural thought-related tools provided by an adult/a teacher are an intermediary link regulating social behaviour and influencing reorganization of individual behaviour of a pupil. Such a symbolic set of tools lets one acquire access to the resources, technology and civilisation achievements of a given culture. Special attention should be paid

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[6] J. Bruner, *Kultura edukacji*, Kraków 2006, p.133 – 134.
[7] Ibidem, p.38 – 39, p.87 – 88.
[8] L.S. Wygotski, *Problem wieku rozwojowego*, [in:] A. Brzezińska, M. Marchow (ed.), *Wybrane prace psychologiczne II: dzieciństwo i dorastanie*, Poznań 2002, p.84 – 85.

to language understood as a system of signs. At first its function is communication that enables a form of social cooperation, and gradually it transforms into a symbolic form of activity that regulates individual behaviour of a child. Therefore, cultural sharing, understanding and creating meanings may only be possible when confronting the world of other persons.

As far as the learning-teaching process is concerned, we observe such exchange of thoughts mainly within a group formed by a teacher and a pupil. A child's and adult's active participation in educational interaction forms a characteristic relation described by R. H. Schaffer as Joint Involvement Episodes where "participants jointly pay attention to some external topic and act together with respect to that"[9]. An adult is involved in extending a child's behavioural repertoire, while also taking into consideration its current abilities to acquire and process information. It generally concerns support that entails showing interest in actions undertaken by a child as well as providing a child with immediate and helpful support. Encouraging and motivating a child, directing its attention to new spheres of activity, enriching its knowledge and experiences as well as providing stimulation adequate for its needs and abilities is also of significant importance. The child, on the other hand, introduces a different, child-specific perspective of perceiving and understanding reality, fresh and non-standard thinking as well as a different level of sensitivity. As M. Mead notes, a change of roles, typical for the prefigurative culture, is becoming more common[10]. The pace of cultural and technological evolution lets the younger generation naturally assume the role of instructors-teachers who discover before adults the world of new media such as: the Internet, social media and media of a new generation: interactive boards, WebQuests, edutainment and online transmissions. IT and communication technologies become the new educational tools[11]. They become a part of the educational sphere and create a platform of mutual contact. A teacher has to be ready to meet a child, often within a culturally unknown sphere, and follow it, not guide it. R. Schaffer is of the opinion that the key to provoke cognitive changes in a child is "interchangeable participation (effort) of a child and participation (effort) of an adult"[12].

Unfortunately, as stems from observations of school commonplaceness, the sphere of mutual adult-child relations is considerably limited and one-way oriented. An adult usually

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[9] R.H. Schaffer, *Epizody wspólnego zaangażowania jako kontekst rozwoju poznawczego*, [in:] A. Brzezińska, G. Lutomski (ed.), *Dziecko w świecie ludzi i przedmiotów*, Poznań 1994, p.153.
[10] M. Mead, *Kultura i tożsamość. Studium dystansu międzypokoleniowego*, Warszawa 2000.
[11] J. Morbitzer, *Szkoła w pułapce Internetu*, [in:] J. Morbitzer (ed.), *Człowiek - Media - Edukacja*, Kraków 2010, p.192 – 193.
[12] R.H. Schaffer, *Epizody wspólnego zaangażowania*..., op.cit.,p.182.

acts as a mentor who puts these parts of academic knowledge that are important, according to his/her opinion, within a pupil's reach in order to prepare a pupil for future tasks. One can notice that personal interference between primary educational subjects is distorted. It is a teacher who is culturally authorised to ask questions and a pupil is obliged to answer them. This one-sided communication confirms mental domination and appropriation of the entire educational sphere by an entity that has greater knowledge and experience. One cannot speak of an educational dialogue within a democratic scope, but rather of an authoritarian dialogue that transforms itself into a teacher's monologue. A child, having less competences and experience, is left with a role of a supernumerary.

At this point one should ask oneself a question: Is it possible/necessary to introduce changes with respect to social interactions between a teacher and a pupil? The answer is short: Yes. A child's potential is asleep when it is dependant from others. Therefore, one should provide a child with space for unconstrained and independent exploration and gathering of experience. Let's create conditions appropriate for generating our own, child-like activity and freeing its potential, cognitive curiosity as well as eagerness to learn. It is important that the world of an adult and of a child coexist at equal rights and create a plane for joint actions undertaken during educational discourse. A teacher should be a partner for a student who accompanies him/her as far as performance of developmental tasks is concerned, provides him/her with support, presents necessities existing in the world and outlines horizons of possible choices. A teacher's role is to provoke a pupil to ask questions of existential, cognitive or ethical nature, provide support in finding answers to these questions as well as encourage a pupil to go beyond what is known and reach for the unknown. As D. Waloszek[13] suggests, the most desired type of dialogue, as far as education is concerned, would be personal dialogue aiming at uniting persons with respect to joint tasks; a real dialogue that provides help and support, but also respects the separate character of dialogue subjects; an existential dialogue that is expressed not only with words, but also with an entire person, being at one's partner disposal. Resigning from directive managing of an educational process in exchange for a dialogue-oriented approach lets a child build its own subjectivity and self-esteem as far as relations with the world are concerned. A pupil gradually frees himself/herself from his/her limitations as well as from limitations imposed by the surrounding reality, not only in a physical, but also in a social dimension. The pupil starts to look for new places of action that will provide cognitive inspiration, let one try out the

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[13] D. Waloszek, *Sytuacyjne wspieranie dzieci w doświadczaniu świata*, Kraków 2009, p.77.

instruments in the form of cultural thought-related tools and actions as well as enable checking one's skills, discovering strengths and weaknesses.

3. Peer relations as a significant dimension of education

An underestimated dimension of social interactions within a school comprises peer relations. According to J. Piaget[14] they significantly stimulate cognitive development and speed up the process of a child's socialization. Although he treated a child as the main constructor of knowledge, he noted that social interactions, as a source of intellectual conflict, can lead to qualitative changes within a person's mental sphere. The said exchange of thoughts is mainly used to form social knowledge comprising the scope of matters that does not have a reflection in the material world. He also drew attention to the fact that entering into interpersonal relations frequently causes an effect described by lack of balance. It is cauterised by formation of discrepancies between one's knowledge and new experience. Various points of view are presented during a discussion arising between persons of different opinions. A self-regulation mechanism activates. New experiences are assimilated into existing schemes. Alternatively, they are modified or new ones are formed through accommodation. Logical reasoning lets one reach a consensus and work out joint solutions. As a result, the system regains its mental balance and, simultaneously, experiences progress with respect to cognitive development. Facing a child with a different outlook on a given situation or phenomenon, different understanding, evaluation or interpretation intensifies the development of cognitive processes, and in many situations it activates thinking on a meta-cognitive level.

As D. Wood[15] highlights, creating 'educational opportunities' for peer social interactions that are advantageous for natural, spontaneous and non-formal teaching as frequently as possible should be treated complementarily with respect to planned, formal teaching. Depending on the level of entities' competences, H.R. Schaffer[16], similarly to W. W. Hartup, distinguishes two types of interpersonal relations: horizontal and vertical. The first type, which is based on mutuality, forms meetings of entities who have a similar scope of knowledge and skills at their disposal. Students jointly solve problem tasks by working in pairs or small groups. This situation naturally forces group members to undertake a discourse in order to understand and bring together various ways of defining a problem and working out procedures indispensable to solve it. Interpretations, beliefs as well as strategies of thinking

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[14] B.J. Wadsworth, *Teoria Piageta. Poznawczy i emocjonalny rozwój dziecka*, Warszawa 1998, p.30 – 43.
[15] D. Wood, *Społeczne interakcje jako tutoring*, [in:] A. Brzezińska, G. Lutomski, B. Smykowski (ed.), *Dziecko wśród rówieśników i dorosłych,* Poznań 1995, p.214.
[16] R.H. Schaffer, *Psychologia dziecka*, Warszawa 2005, p.136.

and acting that are formed during social interactions are internalized, which leads to a qualitative change of child-like thinking. The existing cooperation is a source of mutual inspiration; it stimulates to undertake intellectual challenges and activates new types of behaviour. Children undertake tasks faster and more willingly. When cooperating with each other they also generate new solutions faster than during individual work. "Therefore, learning is a matter of joint discoveries: two heads are better than one. The need to jointly work with a person whose point of view concerning a given problem is different makes children verify their own ideas"[17]. It also strengthens motivation to undertake joint action directed at achieving autogenous goals that are set forward by students, and not implied by a teacher. When solving problems peers can undertake separate, yet complementary social roles. According to E.A. Forman[18], whereas one of the partners can be an observer who guides and corrects, the other child performs actions stemming from an undertaken task. It is important that partners use the same language and a similar system of expressions. Experience in regulating a partner's actions through verbal communicates and decoding instructions in accordance with the speaker's intentions let one acquire competences that are indispensable not only during team work on solving problems, but also when undertaking an independent mental effort. They help us understand others and ourselves as well as teach us conscious and responsible planning, implementing and supervising actions, and increase the need for auto-reflection. It is confirmed by R.H. Schaffer who states that: "One thing is sure – a carefree discussion between children who are equally unaware of the problem facing them as well as the variety of solutions they can come up with generates new ways of perception and has a positive effect on the learning process of individual persons"[19].

However, a slightly different situation may be noticed with respect to a peer relation where children differ in the level of competences in some area. Depending on the level of knowledge and skills the partners have at their disposal, they can assume the functions of a novice and an expert. The child who acts as an expert helps the novice in acquiring information, directs its course of thinking, gives instructions and supports undertaking various forms of activity. In other words, the expert constructs scaffolding thanks to which he/she strengthens actions of a less experienced partner which lead to solving a problem and performance of a given task. Peer tutoring is perceived as non-formal teaching by peers,

[17] Ibidem, p.139.
[18] E.A. Forman, C.B. Cazden, *Myśl Wygotskiego a edukacja. Wartości poznawcze współpracy z rówieśnikami*, [in:]A. Brzezińska, G. Lutomski, B. Smykowski (ed.), *Dziecko wśród rówieśników i dorosłych*, Poznań 1995, p.173.
[19] R.H. Schaffer, *Psychologia ...*, op. cit., p.138 – 139.

where children have an opportunity to learn one form another and teach each other. It is something more than working is task-oriented groups. The final effect, i.e. a performed task, stays in the background. The most important aspect is the entire context of acting. Students learn how to assume various social roles. This concerns not only persons who need help (tutees), but also persons who provide help (tutors). As both E. A. Forman and C. B. Cazden point out, it is a situation involving peer interactions that "is the situation where children can reverse the roles during interaction with no need to change the contents, not only by giving instructions, but also through following them or by asking questions and answering them"[20]. This creates a number of situations to use language as a learning instrument. At the same time children learn how to think aloud and use speech in order to cope with new pieces of information as well as have a better understanding of new experiences. What is important is that children who are not so active during classes run in a conventional way open more easily and faster undertake attempts to join a discussion in smaller groups. Partner relations also contribute to increasing emotional sensitivity, empathy as well as acceptance and understanding different perception and interpretation of the world by peers. As D. Wood[21] highlights, an advantage of tutoring is providing experiences that let a student form an image of himself/herself as a person being taught or as a learner.

Entering into relations with peers who know more and have a wider range of skills is an ideal source and an imperative for developing one's intellectual and motivation sphere. Colleagues become intermediaries between a student-novice's sphere of personal experiences and the external world which forms a sphere of his/her further development. They help in noticing, understanding, interpreting and giving meaning while being sensitive to partner's effort. Joint activity as well as observing other person's behaviour motivates to undertake actions an entity would have otherwise not undertaken or which often exceed the entity's current competences. Learners gladly avail themselves of help provided by their peers, simply because there is mental intimacy, easiness of contact, similar experiences as well as greater availability in terms of time, as compared with adults. The asymmetry of roles does not limit the teaching-learning process to a one-sided exchange. Acting as an expert develops patience and persistence as well as teaches a child to acquire resistance to situations that are difficult in an emotional and intellectual way. Children's spontaneity and impulsiveness give in to control and reflecting upon one's thinking and partner's thinking. An awareness of learning techniques and strategies in the context of another person emerges. Among advantages

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[20] E.A. Forman, C.B. Cazden, *Myśl Wygotskiego …*, op. cit., p.177.
[21] D. Wood, *Społeczne interakcje …*, op. cit., p.242.

stemming from teaching other, less competent persons one may note extending and reorganizing heretofore acquired structures of knowledge. Additionally, students see that their personal commitment with respect to the process of learning, personal experiences and reflections has a certain value. It is a synergistic scheme in which effects of interaction intensify.

4. Arrangement of space for educational dialogue

Although advantages of peer interaction are undisputed, its use in the educational process is very limited. What is clearly missing is the opportunity for mutual contact, exchange of resources and reciprocal peer interaction. The scope of social relations within the classroom is unambiguously reflected by the expressions used by the teacher such as "do not talk", "do not turn around", "do not walk in the class". What dominates is the "unvaried work" with pair or group tasks proposed only sporadically. The arrangement of the classroom itself is also far from fostering educational dialogue. Children do not work with each other but aside each other[22]. Moreover, age homogeneity in group members prevents pro-social behaviour, restricts space for intersubjective exchange and encourages the teacher to unify requirements and introduce the same pace of work for everyone.

Therefore, the question to be answered is how we can reorganise the process of education so that conditions for intersubjective thought exchange and educational dialogue can be created. First of all, we need to reorient the way we think about education. We should reject our personal experiences resulting from participation in the traditional educational system and begin to perceive educational reality from the point of view of emancipation rationality. In this way, we can create a space for the child's autonomy in learning and understanding the world and initiate processes related to conscious development of children's own identity. Liberty-labelled education releases natural potential of the child which assumes the form of self-determining education. On the one hand, as noted by H. K. Berg[23], it is process-oriented, which can be seen in the independent organisation of work, at one's own discretion, and responsibility for decisions and actions. On the other hand, it is directed towards the subject constituting a key to understanding the world, i.e. methods, ways of learning and structures which enable students to perceive independently and process information. The departure from the mere transfer of content and learning ways of thinking

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[22] J. Nowak, *Tutoring rówieśniczy jako wsparcie rozwoju poznawczego dziecka*, [in:]B. Surma (ed.), *Dziecko i dorosły w koncepcji pedagogicznej Marii Montessori – teoria i praktyka*, Łódź – Kraków 2009, p.121.
[23] H.K. Berg, *Maria Montessori – poszukiwanie życia razem z dziećmi. Odpowiedzi na aktualne pytania pedagogiczne*, Kielce 2007, p.129 – 130.

and order structures instead translates into an increase in control of one's own intellectual activity, provides the sense of independence and strengthens faith in one's own abilities.

Articulating basic principles behind the arrangement of the teaching-learning process occurring within the classroom, it is useful to refer to Bruner's "culture of mutual learning" which is best descried by the principles of interaction, externalisation, constructivism as well as identity and the sense of self-worth[24]. The first of them indicates that learning occurs in the socio-cultural context and is accomplished for the most part through interaction with other persons, i.e. the teacher or child. Peer group creates a 'community of mutual learning' wherein it is possible to become involved in cooperative interactions in order to acquire mutually developed thinking, new in terms of form and content, facilitate perception and actions while accepting individuality of the partner in educational dialogue. Such arrangement of the learning space results in the teacher giving up the role of an 'omniscient narrator' and becoming a carer and advisor directing the course of educational debate. The class gradually changes from a selection of atomized individuals towards a community of participants in the learning process which constitutes a source of stimuli for development of intellectual predispositions and the context for creating social identity of its respective members. The learners assist each other in learning thus creating a support group.

On the other hand, the rule of externalisation encourages mutual planning and actions aimed at implementation of a group project. Producing ideas, formulating problems, agreeing on task schedules and their consistent performance builds a community and gives the sense of joint responsibility for the outcome of an effort. Creation of a product in the course of cooperative activities develops a base for thought exchange, negotiation and mutualisation of meanings; it helps in learning and appreciating the value of respective members of a group or team as a whole. It means that not everyone has to know everything but each one should have the opportunity to enter cooperative interactions which enabling maximisation of resources with the aim to accomplish individual and joint objectives. Social experiences, forming an inherent part of the project, help the child to learn how to communicate efficiently, establish correct relationships with others and take cooperative actions as well as shaping self-consciousness and creating autocreation possibilities. It is accompanied by substantial emotional involvement. The child becomes involved in the project to a full extent which arises from the child's natural curiosity about the world. Vast resources of energy are released and the energy itself takes various forms of activity undertaken by the child. The choice itself,

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[24] J. Bruner, *Kultura ...*, op. cit., p.29 – 68.

on the other hand, gives the child, as a team member, faith in its own abilities. It constitutes material reflection of the mental effort taken by the community–participants in the learning process–thus opening the space for further deeper reflection.

An important task for schools as institutions assuming educational responsibility is to create conditions for releasing the individual's potential, support them in performance of individual development-related tasks by establishing a stimulating environment and leading them in educational situations being a source of valuable experiences forming a base for developing personal structures of knowledge. This is what the constructiveness rule is about. Therefore, we should create an inspiring educational microenvironment, rich in stimuli and meeting the child's needs and expectations, which will provide material for multidirectional activity, feed the senses and stimulate the mind to intellectual effort. In this way, the child, as an active searcher, driven by the natural need to learn about the surrounding reality, will become an author of an individual learning programme. The content and structure of such programme will be determined by an individual potential, development abilities and personal choices resulting from individual preferences. Thus, education should be perceived as a facilitator in learning how to use culturally developed tools intended for creation of meanings, their interpretation, construction of one's own understanding of the world and adaptation to the changing social, environmental and cultural reality.

The aim of actions taken by the teacher should be to ensure that children have the sense of security and leave some space for autocreation, self-determination in taking conscious choices, assuming responsibility for actions and resultant consequences. Education promoting respect for freedom constitutes a foundation for creating identity and the sense of one's own worth. It is important that a school provide the child with opportunities to experience freedom in educational interactions: freedom of thought and action, freedom from external confines and freedom of expressing its individuality and self-determination. This involves a departure from the instructional management of the child's activity. Confrontation with an adult or child partner, while following the principle of educational dialogue, helps to become more aware of one's strong points and development areas. Owing to feedback, the student becomes aware of his/her progress and what he/she should work on. It is an inseparable part of each learning process. Participation in a community of learners enables an individual to experience thoughts and emotions of other participants and realize one's own internal states. One of the determinants of the interactive exchange is a group's cohesion based on respect, mutual assistance and the sense of belonging to a given community.

So that such independent initiation and interactive learning can occur within the school class, an appropriate atmosphere must be created. The atmosphere is co-created by teachers and students through establishing interpersonal relations based on a facilitating attitude[25]. This includes, among others, the acceptance of a young man as an autonomous individual having identity and having trust in such person and his/her abilities both in intellectual as well as physical and social dimension. Equally important is to understand other person without making any judgments, perceive reality from a point of view of such person, support him/her in achieving independence, faith in his/her abilities and the sense of achievement. One has to bear in mind that learning is always emotionally marked and therefore it is very important to be respectful towards the idea of subjectivity in education. The child has the right to be himself/herself, to be respected, to create his/her own competences and follow his/her own educational path. This involves consent for undertaking independent initiatives, making personal choices, independence and freedom of thought and autonomy of action. Moreover, it is relative to accepting democratic negotiation of rights, obligations or rules of functioning within the school space–and all this in agreement with other participants of the educational process.

The teacher, as a reflective practitioner, should diagnose students on a regular basis. This helps to develop tasks that provoke cognitive conflict resulting from the discrepancy between the cognitive structure of the child and the structure of the external world. The child should be at liberty to choose tasks as well as place, time and form of their performance. It teaches how to make decisions and perform actions consciously and requires that the child assume responsibility for its conduct.

Such education centres on the child and treats him/her as a psychophysical whole that needs to be supported by creating optimal conditions for development in an intentionally created environment. The child cannot be a background for teachers' actions but an authentic real creator of his/her development in dialogue with others and himself/herself. School should evolve from a socially and culturally authorised knowledge-transferring institution into an agency which will be a community of life and work. Capable of changing, dynamic in its structure and form, close to life and day-to-day matters, meeting social expectations and requirements imposed by new civilisation challenges, not only should it be a place of work but, more importantly, a meeting place for people originating from different backgrounds whose individual biographies create a unique atmosphere. The mutually developed culture of

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[25] M. Kościelniak, *Zrozumieć Rogersa. Studium koncepcji pedagogicznych Carla R. Rogersa*, Kraków 2004, p.33 – 35.

education and work based on the principles of democracy will provide conditions facilitating satisfaction of individual needs of children while taking into account the wide context of social and cultural determinants and expectations.

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Abstrakt

Dzisiaj, coraz częściej, zastanawiamy się nad alokacją szkoły w przestrzeni życiowej człowieka. Zmieniają się bowiem warunki, czynniki oraz obszary formacji człowieka, które implikują odmienny model kształcenia. Nowoczesna edukacja powinna być ukierunkowana na dziecko, jego indywidualne potrzeby i możliwości. Natomiast szkoła jako ważny obszar oddziaływań społeczno-kulturowych winna stanowić źródło impulsów dla rozwoju dyspozycji intelektualnych oraz społeczno-emocjonalnych dziecka. Przedmiotem rozważań uczyniono analizę interakcji nauczyciel – uczeń oraz relacji rówieśniczych, które mogą przybrać formę wspólnego uczenia się lub tutoringu. Idea społeczności wzajemnie uczącej się, która funkcjonuje w odmiennym kontekście uwarunkowań osobowych, strukturalno-dynamicznych i materialnych stwarza całe spektrum możliwości dla wspierania potencjału tkwiącego w każdej jednostce. Wejście w obszar społecznej wymiany pozwala dziecku na wymianę myśli, daje wielość perspektyw postrzegania rzeczywistości wynikającą z odmienności percepcyjnej innych osób, wzmacnia motywację do podejmowania wspólnych działań, co w konsekwencji prowadzi do jakościowej przemiany dziecięcego rozumowania.

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja wczesnoszkolna, relacje nauczyciel – uczeń, interakcje rówieśnicze

Abstract

Nowadays we reflect upon allocation of school within a person's living space more often because the conditions, factors and areas of shaping a person implying a different model

of education change. Modern education stands for education oriented to the child and his/her individual needs and abilities. School, being an important area of social-cultural influences, is the source of stimuli for the development of mental and social-emotional dispositions of a child. The matter of consideration is an analysis of relations between peers that can take the form of learning together or tutoring. The idea of a learning community, functioning in a different context of personal, structural-dynamic and material conditions, creates an entire spectrum of ways to support the potential that is in every individual. Entering the social sphere of exchange allows a child to exchange thoughts, gives a plethora of perspectives of perceiving the reality stemming from the diversity of perception of different persons, and strengthens motivation to undertake common activities which, as a result, leads to a quality change of a child's reasoning.

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