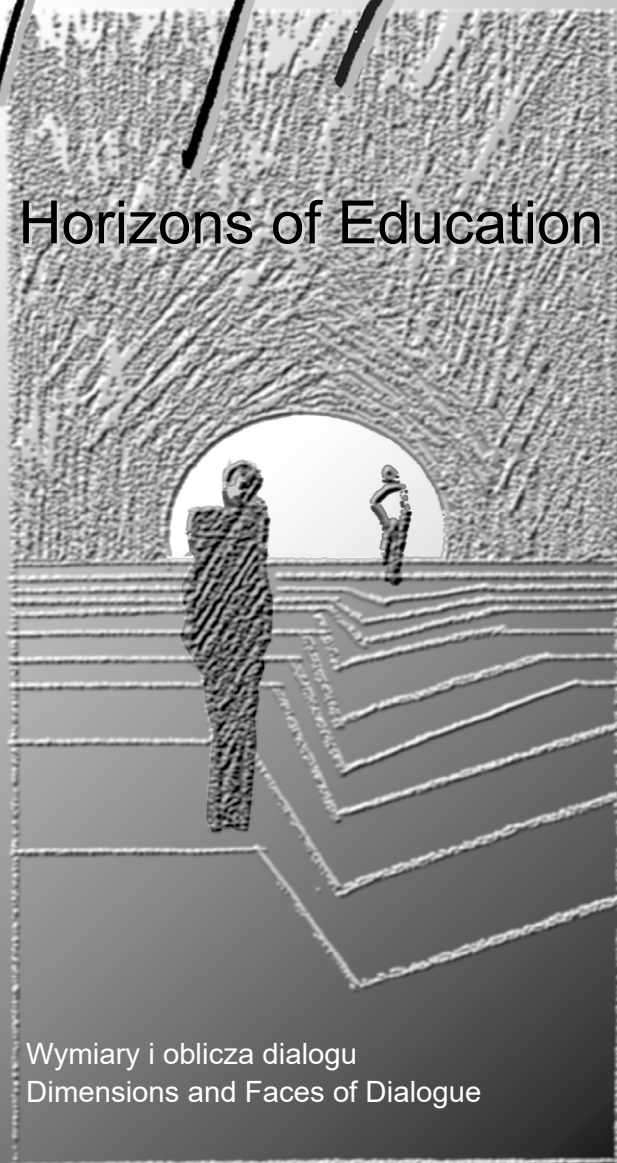


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*Horizonty Wychowania*

Horizons of Education



Wymiary i oblicza dialogu  
Dimensions and Faces of Dialogue

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### **Editorial:** **Dimensions and Faces of Dialogue**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The current issue of our journal is devoted to the widely recognized issue of dialogue.

According to Professor Marian Śnieżyński, “The sense of dialogue means discovering the truth. What is most valuable in dialogue, is what is most subjective. Its essence is free participation and tolerance of the other, stranger, and the need for attentive listening both to the words and their meaning, as well.”<sup>1</sup> The first and best school for dialogue should be the family. As Professor Stanisław Leszek Stadniczeńko emphasizes, “just in the family there are direct face-to-face relationships, filled with feelings and emotions, and the relations between the members are close, creating a specific laboratory of the educational situation,” which emerges as a result of the relationships of the people participating in it. “The family is the bridge between the individual person and society.”<sup>2</sup> In childhood our personality, our sensitivity, our perception of reality and other people are shaped most. Dialogue in the family transfers onto dialogue in a wider social context, defining its dimensions, its faces. Dialogue, defined, according to Martin Buber, as “essential relationship,” is the basis of humanity, it shapes a man.

In today’s world, in which many people tend to find themselves more and more difficult, an authentic dialogue, leading to understanding, reflection on the meaning of life and the essence of humanity, is needed.

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<sup>1</sup> Śnieżyński, M. (2001). *Od monologu do dialogu edukacyjnego*. In F. Adamski (Ed.), *Wychowanie na rozdrożu. Personalistyczna filozofia wychowania*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> Stadniczeńko, S.L. (2020). Wspólnotowa rzeczywistość rodziny w służbie dziecku. In A. Pawlak, B. Skwarek & J. Stadniczeńko (Eds.), *W trosce o rozwój i bezpieczeństwo dziecka. Aspekty społeczno-prawne*. Wydawnictwo AEH, p. 13.

*Horizons of Education*

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In the current issue of *Horizons of Education* you will find articles on the following issues: legal – comparative analysis of the scope of child's right to co-deciding and self-determination; family spaces of socializing dialogue in the times of digital revolution; images of the educational dialogue of meanings occurring in the portfolio of early education students; ideological determinants of the dialogical relationship between teacher and student in the Polish school of Stalinist period (1948-1956); implementation of autonomy in non-public schools after 1989 seen from the perspective of founders and principals; the role of academic online teacher as designer, creator, coach and mentor; dialogue in academic tutoring; positive discipline in the school classroom and the role of law in the development of parental culture (with particular emphasis on the director as an educational leader).

On behalf of the entire Editorial Board we wish you an enjoyable and beneficial read.

Helen Beckmann-Hamzei  
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### Edytorial:

## Wymiary i oblicza dialogu

Szanowni Państwo!

Bieżący numer „Horyzontów Wychowania” poświęcony został szeroko rozumianej problematyce dialogu.

Według profesora Mariana Śnieżyńskiego „Sens dialogu polega na odkrywaniu prawdy. W dialogu najcenniejsze jest to, co najbardziej subiektywne. Jego istotą jest wolny udział i tolerancja innego, obcego, a także konieczność uważnego słuchania nie tyle słów, co ich sensu”<sup>1</sup>. Pierwszą i najlepszą szkołą dialogu powinna być rodzina. To w niej bowiem – jak podkreśla profesor Stanisław Leszek Stadniczeńko – „występują bezpośrednie relacje twarzą w twarz, nasycone uczuciami i emocjami, a stosunki między członkami są bliskie, tworząc swoiste laboratorium sytuacji wychowawczej”, która powstaje jako rezultat relacji osób w niej uczestniczących. „Rodzina jest pomostem między jednostkową osobą a społeczeństwem”<sup>2</sup>. W dzieciństwie najmocniej kształtuje się nasza osobowość, nasza wrażliwość, nasze postrzeganie rzeczywistości i innych ludzi. Dialog w rodzinie przekłada się na dialog w szerszym kontekście społecznym, określając jego wymiar, jego oblicza. Dialog, będący według Martina Bubera „relacją istotową”, stanowi podstawę człowieczeństwa, kształtuje człowieka.

W dzisiejszym świecie, w którym wielu ludziom coraz trudniej się odnaleźć, potrzebny jest autentyczny dialog prowadzący do porozumienia, refleksji nad sensem życia i istotą człowieczeństwa.

<sup>1</sup> Śnieżyński, M. (2001). *Od monologu do dialogu edukacyjnego*. W: F. Adamski (red.), *Wychowanie na rozdrożu. Personalistyczna filozofia wychowania*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, s. 125.

<sup>2</sup> Stadniczeńko, S.L. (2020). Wspólnotowa rzeczywistość rodziny w służbie dziecku. W: A. Pawlak, B. Skwarek i J. Stadniczeńko (red.), *W trosce o rozwój i bezpieczeństwo dziecka. Aspekty społeczno-prawne*. Wydawnictwo AEH, s. 13.

W bieżącym numerze „Horyzontów Wychowania” znajdziecie Państwo artykuły dotyczące problematyki: analizy prawno-porównawczej zakresu prawa dziecka do współdecydowania i samostanowienia; rodzinnych przestrzeni socjalizacyjnego dialogu w czasach cyfrowej rewolucji; oblicza edukacyjnego dialogu znaczeń występującego w portfolio studentek wczesnej edukacji; ideologicznych uwarunkowań relacji dialogicznej nauczyciela i ucznia w szkole polskiej okresu stalinowskiego (1948-1956); implementacji autonomii w szkołach niepublicznych po roku 1989 z perspektywy założycieli i dyrektorów szkół; roli nauczyciela online jako projektanta, kreatora, trenera i mentora; dialogu w tutoringach akademickim; pozytywnej dyscypliny w klasie szkolnej oraz roli prawa w rozwoju kultury rodzicielskiej (ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem dyrektora jako edukacyjnego przywódcy).

W imieniu Redakcji i własnym życzymy Państwu przyjemnej i owocnej lektury.

Helen Beckmann-Hamzei  
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ARTYKUŁY TEMATYCZNE

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THEMATIC ARTICLES





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# ***The Child's Right to Co- and Self-Determination: A Comparative Legal Analysis Prawo dziecka do współdecydowania i samostanowienia – analiza prawnoporównawcza***

## ABSTRACT

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**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The aim of the article is to present a comparative analysis of selected European countries' legal regulations for issues concerning a child's right to co- and self-determination when those who care for them (under parental responsibility, custody, legal guardianship, etc.) make decisions about their personal life.

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**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The research problem concerns whether a child can co-decide or independently make decisions in matters concerning their person or property and, if so, what the scope of this right is. In investigating these questions, the authors used the theoretical and dogmatic legal method as well as the method of analysis (and synthesis) of relevant legal provisions of selected European countries.

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**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** In their analysis of the provisions in force in the internal legislation of selected European countries (Germany, Norway, Poland, Sweden and the Netherlands), the authors present the adopted legal solutions for regulating issues related to rights that a child is entitled to when making decisions about their personal life and the responsibilities of parents caring for a child.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** The legislation of each of the five selected countries gives a child under the care of parents the right to co-determination/self-determination when making decisions about their personal life, although there are noticeable differences between individual national systems.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Due to the editorial limitations on the length of the article, the authors have limited the analysis to the legislation of five selected European countries and to a general analysis of national laws regulating the research problem. In the longer term, a more in-depth analysis of such provisions seems justified. It also would be interesting to analyze the legal solutions in force in other countries, both European and non-European.

---

→ **KEYWORDS:** CHILDREN'S RIGHTS, THE CHILD'S RIGHT TO CO-DETERMINATION, THE CHILD'S RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION, HEARING THE CHILD, PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

## STRESZCZENIE

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**CEL NAUKOWY:** Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie analizy porównawczej unormowań prawnych wybranych krajów europejskich regulujących kwestie dotyczące prawa dziecka do współdecydowania/samostanowienia przy podejmowaniu decyzji dotyczących jego życia osobistego przez osoby sprawujące nad nim opiekę (w postaci władzy rodzicielskiej, odpowiedzialności rodzicielskiej, opieki prawnej itp.).

---

**PROBLEM I METODY BADAWCZE:** Przedstawiony problem badawczy dotyczy odpowiedzi na pytania: Czy dziecko może współdecydować/samodzielnie podejmować decyzje w sprawach dotyczących jego osoby lub majątku? A jeśli tak, jak kształtuje się zakres tego prawa? Poszukując odpowiedzi na powyższe pytania, autorzy zastosowali metodę teoretyczno- i dogmatyczno-prawną oraz metodę analizy (i syntezy) adekwatnych przepisów prawnych wybranych krajów europejskich.

---

**PROCES WYWODU:** Analizując przepisy obowiązujące w ustawodawstwie wewnętrznym wybranych państw europejskich (Niemcy, Norwegia, Polska, Szwecja, Holandia), autorzy przedstawili przyjęte rozwiązania prawne regulujące kwestie związane z zakresem uprawnień przysługujących dzieciom przy podejmowaniu decyzji dotyczących ich życia osobistego oraz zakresem obowiązków rodziców sprawujących opiekę nad dzieckiem.

---

**WYNIKI ANALIZY NAUKOWEJ:** Ustawodawstwo każdego z pięciu omówionych państw przyznaje dziecku pozostającemu pod opieką rodziców prawo do współdecydowania/samostanowienia przy podejmowaniu decyzji dotyczących jego życia osobistego, przy czym zauważalne są odrębności między poszczególnymi systemami krajowymi.

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**WNIOSKI, INNOWACJE, REKOMENDACJE:** Ze względu na wymogi redakcyjne dotyczące objętości artykułu autorzy ograniczyli analizę regulacji prawnych do ustawodawstw wybranych pięciu krajów europejskich oraz do ogólnej analizy przepisów krajowych regulujących omawiany problem badawczy. W dalszej perspektywie zasadna wydaje się wnikliwsza analiza przywołanych przepisów

prawnych. Interesująca wydaje się również analiza rozwiązań prawnych obowiązujących w innych krajach, tak europejskich, jak i tych spoza naszego kręgu kulturowego.

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→ **SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: PRAWA DZIECKA, PRAWO DZIECKA  
DO WSPÓLDECYDOWANIA, PRAWO DZIECKA  
DO SAMOSTANOWIENIA, WYŚLUCHANIE DZIECKA,  
ODPOWIEDZIALNOŚĆ RODZICIELSKA**

## INTRODUCTION

On November 20, 1989, the most common international agreement, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), was adopted. The Convention, called the constitution of children's rights, introduces a wide catalogue of children's rights that are recognized by almost all countries in the world. Among the rights set out in the Convention is the right of the child to freely express their views on all matters affecting them. According to Article 12 of the Convention, this right is granted to every child who is capable of forming their own views, in accordance with their age and maturity. The CRC expresses the minimum scope of a child's exercise of their right to co-decide about matters concerning them. The signatories of the Convention may extend this right in the their domestic legislation.

In analyzing the provisions in force in the internal legislation of selected European countries (Germany, Norway, Poland, Sweden and the Netherlands), the authors present the legal solutions for issues related to the scope of rights that a child is entitled to when making decisions about their personal life and the responsibilities of parents caring for a child (in the form of parental responsibility, custody, legal guardianship, etc.).

## GERMANY

Since the CRC came into force, one may undoubtedly argue that the legal protection of children has benefitted in many different ways. While the first focus was on the international legal protection of the substantive rights of children – such as the right to shelter, family life and education – the more recent empowerment of children under international law has shifted to their procedural empowerment, for example, the introduction of the individual complaint procedure under the CRC (Madríñán, 2019, p. 1). This international recognition of the legal status of the child might lead us to presume that the national legal status of the child in most developed countries has been fully established. Taking a closer look at the legal status of the child in relation to the right to self-determination under German law, one may come to a (partially) different conclusion.

The CR CRC has been applicable in Germany since 1992. Since then, almost 30 years have passed. Article 6 of the German constitution, the "*Grundgesetz*" does,

indeed mention children. The limitation, however, is vested in the fact that this child-specific provision only entails regulations about children in terms of parents' and legal guardian's rights. The general right of self-determination can be found in Article 1 of the German Constitution. Paragraph 1 states that "die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar." The German Constitutional Court (BVerfG, Judgement 15.02.2006 – BvR 357/05) unmistakably held that this provision entails the right to self-determination. No explicit mention of the child can be found at the constitutional level; instead, children are indirectly mentioned under the German Constitution. Children are thus not explicitly mentioned as active rightsholders. Considering this status quo, it thus seems rather logical that children's right to self-determination has thus far not been regulated at the constitutional level. There has, however, been an interesting initiative.

It was only at the beginning of 2021 that the federal cabinet (*Bundeskabinett*) introduced an initiative to include Article 6 Paragraph 2 into the German Constitution. The initiative reads as follows: "Die verfassungsmäßigen Rechte der Kinder einschließlich ihres Rechts auf Entwicklung zu eigenverantwortlichen Persönlichkeiten sind zu achten und zu schützen."<sup>1</sup> In other words, children's right to self-determination is to be respected and protected. While this initiative could have paved the way to introduce children's right to self-determination at the constitutional level in Germany, the necessary two-thirds majority could not have been reached in order to successfully introduce this novelty. Consequently, children have not thus far been empowered at the constitutional level as the bearer of rights enabling them to enforce their right to self-determination. What remains is the applicability of the CRC, as currently the only means for children to call upon the German state in case of a breach of their right to self-determination.

In family matters, by contrast, children are placed in a more active position. While Article 1631 Paragraph 1 of the German Civil Code states that parents are under an obligation to decide about a child's place of residence, from the age of 15 years onwards, in cases when it must be decided who the child is to live with, the children are to be asked about their preference – even if the child decides against its parents, the child's wish is decisive.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, Article 1626 (2) clarifies in this regard that parents should take into account the child's growing need for self-determination. Considering this regulation, case law has established that children are to be asked about their personal preference from the age of three onwards.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Deutscher Bundestag – 19. Wahlperiode, Drucksache 19/28138, 7.

<sup>2</sup> OLG Brandenburg, Beschl. v. 07.08.2015 – 9 UF 8/15.

<sup>3</sup> BVerfG, FamRZ 2007, 1078; BVerfG, FamRZ 2007, 105; BVerfG, FamRZ 2005, 1057.

## NORWAY

In Norway, issues relating to the child's right to participate in decisions concerning their personal life made by those with parental responsibility over them are regulated primarily in the provisions of Act No. 7 of 8 April 1981 relating to Children and Parents (*Lov om barn og foreldre* 1981 [*barnelova*]). The issue of the child's right to co- and self-determination is governed by the provisions of Chapter 5 of the Act on Children and Parents, entitled "Parental Responsibility and the Child's Place of Residence."

Pursuant to § 30 of the Act, a child has the right to care from persons who bear parental responsibility for them. Persons who are entitled to parental responsibility towards a child are obliged to properly raise and maintain the child. They have the right and duty to decide on personal matters relating to the child within the limits set out in §§ 31-33 of the Act.

The provision of § 31 of the Act grants the child the right to co-decide in personal matters that affect them. Parents and others who care for the child are obliged to take into account the child's opinion according to the child's age and degree of maturity. Under § 33 of the Act, parents are required to gradually extend the child's right to make their own decisions as they grow up until the age of 18.

Pursuant to § 31 of the Act, parents are required – before deciding on personal matters relating to the child – to listen to a child who is able to form their own point of view on the matters at hand. Children at least seven years of age and younger children who can form their own point of view should be informed and given the opportunity to express their views before deciding on the child's personal matters, including matters of parental responsibility, custody and the child's right to contact with their parents. The legislature emphasizes the necessity to attach great importance to the opinion of a child who has reached the age of 12.

Pursuant to § 30 of the Act, persons with parental responsibility towards a child are obliged to provide the child with education in accordance with their abilities and possibilities. Under § 32 of the Act, children who have reached the age of 15 have the right to decide for themselves which school to attend and to apply for membership or resignation from various associations.

## POLAND

In Poland, issues related to the child's right to participation in decisions concerning their personal life are regulated primarily in the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of April 2, 1997, the CRC of November 20, 1989 and the Family and Guardianship Code of February 25, 1964 (*Ustawa z dnia 25 lutego 1964 roku – Kodeks rodzinny i opiekuńczy*; hereinafter: KRO).

Article 72 Section 3 of the Polish Constitution creates the child's subjective right, comprised of the obligation to listen to the child and, if possible, to take into account

the child's opinion. This norm is addressed to public authorities and persons responsible for the child – above all, the parents and guardians of the child, both legal and factual.

As Witold Borysiak (2016) rightly points out,

the literal content of Article 72 (3) of the Polish Constitution suggests that only listening to the child is obligatory. [...] The obligation to be heard applies only to a child who is “capable of forming their own views.” [...] Referred to in Art. 72 (3), the right of the child “is somewhat in opposition to the subjects to which the final decisions belong.” These actors [...] help the child define their position in the world, guided by the child's good, respecting their opinion, beliefs and separateness, but also filtering them through their own experience and knowledge, which the child does not have for natural reasons.

Thus, according to Borysiak, Article 72 (3) assumes a limitation of children's rights.

The obligation to listen to a child and to take into account their opinion as far as possible is implemented in practice primarily in the parent–child relationship, and the most important provisions regulating the principles of implementing this right are in the Family and Guardianship Code.

Pursuant to Article 92 of the KRO, until the age of majority, a child remains under parental authority, which as a rule is vested in both parents (Article 93 § 1 of the KRO). According to Article 95 § 2 of the KRO, “a child under parental authority should obey their parents, and in matters in which they can independently make decisions and make declarations of will, they should listen to the opinions and recommendations of parents formulated for their good.”

As noted by Jerzy Słyk (2022), the child's obedience to their parents, as defined in Article 95 § 2 of the KRO, is an equivalent of the element of parental authority which enables parents to raise and direct their child, and is simultaneously a factor that brings the child security. The child's obligation of obedience was supplemented with the requirement to listen to the recommendations and opinions of parents formulated for the child's good in matters in which the child can independently make decisions and make declarations of will. These activities include submitting a declaration of marriage, submitting a declaration of paternity or confirmation of recognition, consent to change one's name and consent to adoption.

Pursuant to Article 95 § 4 of the KRO,

parents, before taking decisions on more important matters concerning the person or property of the child, should hear them out if the child's mental development, health status and degree of maturity allow it, and should take into account their reasonable wishes as far as possible.

The legislature did not define how to understand the notion of more important matters relating to the person or property of the child. As noted by Janusz Gajda (2021), it is not about everyday, current matters, but about matters of more importance, such as choosing a school for the child, going abroad or selling the child's property.



The parents' obligation to listen to the child, as specified in Article 95 § 4 of the KRO, does not depend on the child reaching a certain age. The only criteria for fulfilling this obligation are those of mental development, health and maturity, which are subjective in nature and may also refer to young children. As noted by Jerzy Słyk (2022), the obligation of parents to take into account the reasonable wishes of their child as far as possible is not absolute. Therefore, the parents' decision is ultimately dictated by the child's best interests and, above all, should be assessed in this respect.

Henryk Haak and Anna Haak-Trzuskawska (2019) write similarly about the fulfilment of this obligation. He emphasizes that parents are not obliged to take into account in every case each request made by a child, but only "as far as possible" and only such a wish that is reasonable – therefore, those that result from an accurate, factual assessment of the situation. According to him, "parents are therefore obliged to take into account a wish presented by a child when it is practically possible to fulfil under specific conditions, and the fulfilment of this wish does not prevent the parents from performing their activities as required by the child's best interests and social interest (arg. from Art. 95 § 3 KRO)."

## SWEDEN

In Sweden, the issue of the child's right to co-decide with caregivers in matters pertaining to their personal life is regulated primarily by the provisions of the Children and Parents Code of June 10, 1949 (Föräldrabalk [1949: 381]).

Swedish legislation does not make use of the concept of parental authority or parental responsibility. Instead, the terms custody (*vårdnad*) and guardianship (*förmynderskap*) are used. The combined content of both concepts is identical to the concept of parental responsibility that functions in the family legislation of most European countries. The concept of custody (*vårdnad*) that functions in Swedish law covers the entirety of a custodian's legal obligations towards the child in representing the child, determining their place of residence, meeting their needs for care and safety and providing proper upbringing, education and maintenance. Guardianship (*förmynderskap*) concerns the rights and obligations of a child's guardian in the context of managing the child's property and legally representing the child in financial matters.

Custody (*vårdnad*) and guardianship (*förmynderskap*) are generally granted to the child's parents. As noted by Marta Prucnal-Wójcik (2021, p. 17), if custody is entrusted to guardians other than the child's parents, they are also entitled to guardianship. Maarit Jäntherä-Jareborg, Anna Singer and Caroline Sörgjerd (n.d., p. 1) point out that as long as at least one of the parents is caring for the child, no other person can become a guardian of the child.

Issues related to the nature, scope and implementation of mutual rights and obligations of parents and children are found primarily in Chapter 6 of the Code on Children and Parents, which regulates the issues of care, place of residence and the right of a child

to contact with both parents. Pursuant to Article 1, Chapter 6 of the Code, children have the right to care, safety and well-being. Children must be treated with respect for their person and character and must not be subjected to corporal punishment or any other degrading treatment.

Pursuant to Article 2, Chapter 6 of the Code, the person caring for the child is responsible for the child's personal situation and is obliged to meet the child's needs. Pursuant to Article 2a, Chapter 6 of the Code, in all matters relating to the care of the child, the place of residence and social life of the child, the principle of ensuring the best interests of the child is of the utmost importance and decisions should be made according to it.

Maarit Jänterä-Jareborg, Anna Singer and Caroline Sörgjerd (n.d., p. 9) emphasize that the child's right to be heard is a fundamental principle of Swedish family law. In Sweden, it is assumed that the child is an expert in their own case. This competence is granted to them depending on their age and degree of maturity. On this basis, it is assumed that very young children cannot have clear opinions and thus cannot decide on their own matters. In turn, older children have considerable autonomy in their personal and property matters.

Pursuant to Article 2b, Chapter 6 of the Code, the wishes of the child should be taken into account when deciding on matters relating to care, place of residence and contact, taking into account the age and maturity of the child. Moreover, pursuant to Article 11, Chapter 6 of the Code, when making decisions about the child's personal affairs, the child's carer should, in line with the child's increasing age and maturity, increasingly take into account the child's views and wishes. Pursuant to Article 12, Chapter 7 of the Code, the guardian should listen to the child on matters relating to the child's property if the child is at least 16 years of age and if the matter is qualified as important.

## THE NETHERLANDS

A 2020 study by UNICEF among 41 wealthy states (Gromada et al., p. 9) ranked children in the Netherlands as the happiest. Although this is a great accomplishment, what is the legal status of the child's self-determination in the Netherlands? Has the country fully established the legal status of the child as recognized under the CRC? A close observation may lead us to interesting findings.

The Netherlands ratified the CRC in 1995. Even though nearly 30 years have passed, children are still not explicitly mentioned as legal subjects in the Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The right to self-determination is codified in several Articles in the Constitution.<sup>4</sup> The most prominent one is Article 11, which states that "everyone shall have the right to inviolability of his person, without prejudice to restrictions laid down by or pursuant to Act of Parliament." The term "everyone" used in Article 11 implicitly includes

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<sup>4</sup> Arts. 10, 11 and 15 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

children. Although the legal status of children in relation to the right to self-determination is not regulated at the constitutional level, it is reflected in several Dutch laws.

One should take a closer look at the “Medical Treatment Agreement” laid down in the Dutch Civil Code, which explicitly legislates self-determination in relation to children (Book 7, Title 7, Section 5). It contains three age categories, in which children have different levels to the right to self-determination regarding medical treatment (ECLI:NL:RBNHO: 2017:3955). The “Dutch Termination of Life on Request and Assisted Suicide Act” similarly reflects self-determination (with restrictions) in relation to children. From the age of 12 years, children have the right to request euthanasia (the consent of parents or guardians is compulsory until the age of 16) (Article 2). Although parents must be involved in the decision-making process, parental consent is not needed for 16- and 17-year-olds. Furthermore, the new transgender law in the making includes the self-determination of children as well. If the bill passes the House of Representatives, children under the age of 16 will be allowed to have the right to apply in court to have their gender designation changed on official documents such as passports and birth certificates. These developments show us that the right to self-determination for children is not explicitly laid down in the Constitution, but is reflected in various substantial laws in terms of Article 11.

In relation to litigating independently, self-determination of the child differs from area to area. In labor law, for instance, children are entitled to start proceedings from the age of 16 (Art. 7: 612 sub 1 Dutch Civil Code). In administrative law, on the other hand, children are only able to start proceedings based on a capacity assessment regarding their interests (Art. 8:21 sub 2 General Administrative Law Act). Based on case law, we can cautiously assume that age plays a significant role in the capacity assessment.<sup>5</sup> In family law, meanwhile, the child does not have any legal standing to start legal procedures independently. It is therefore interesting to point out that the Netherlands is the only country which has made a reservation to Article 26 of the CRC, which makes it impossible for children to independently apply for social security, including social insurance. Finally, an interesting fact is that the Netherlands has not ratified the third Optional Protocol to the CRC, which means that Dutch children are not able to file individual complaints for violation of their rights to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. These facts regarding self-determination in terms of procedural rights – in particular independent participation in legal proceedings – show us that the procedural position of children in the Netherlands is not only unclear, but also differs based on the type of proceedings (Bruning & Bolscher, 2020, p. 63).

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<sup>5</sup> For instance, in case ECLI:NL:RBMID:2001:AD5479, the court decided that the applicant was admissible based on her age (17 years). On the other hand, in case ECLI:NL:CRVB:2012:BW6529, the court decided that the applicant was not admissible based on her age (15 years).

## SUMMARY

The legislation of each of the five countries discussed (Germany, Norway, Poland, Sweden and the Netherlands) gives the child under the care of the parents the right to co-decide and sometimes the right of self-determination in making decisions about their personal life. This right is closely related to the right and obligation of the parents who take care of the child and its scope results from compliance with the principle of the best interests of the child. This principle, expressed primarily in Article 3 of the CRC, determines the ultimate scope of the child's exercise of the right to co- and self-determination in matters relating to them.

In the selected countries, the exercise of a child's right to co- and self-determination increases with the child's age and maturity and concerns the child's personal matters, including matters of parental responsibility, custody, contact with their parents, place of residence, education and medical treatment. Only in the Netherlands does the law go further, granting children the right to decide about their life and gender matters.

Due to the editorial requirements regarding the length of the article, the authors have limited the analysis to the legislation of these five European countries and to a general analysis of national laws related to research problem. In the longer term, a more in-depth analysis of these legal provisions seems justified. It also would be interesting to analyze the legal solutions in force in other countries, both European and non-European.

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***Family Spaces of Socialisation Dialogue  
 in the Times of Digital Revolution  
 Rodzinne przestrzenie socjalizacyjnego dialogu  
 w czasach cyfrowej rewolucji***

**ABSTRACT**


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**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The aim of the article is a theoretical diagnosis of the influence of the pace of recent civilisation changes on a selected fragment of the socialisation process in the family. The course of analysis is the specificity of the relationship between parents and adolescent children (aged 15-18), including an attempt to explore the modifications occurring in these areas resulting from the development of information technology.

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**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The research problem of this paper is an attempt to answer the question: To what extent do new inter- and intra-generational divisions – appearing as a result of rapid civilisation changes generated by the development of information technologies – modify the socialising dialogue in relations between parents and adolescent children? The research method used was a selective analysis of theoretical works and research reports from sociology, psychology, psychiatry, neurobiology and information technology, combining it with the results of my research work.

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**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** The article presents selected elements of the conceptual model used to analyse the world of contemporary generations. It includes the new division into the world of the present past and the world of the present future, together with their new inhabitants – people of the past and people of the future. The new relationships that have emerged in recent years and the difficulties in constructing a socialising dialogue between parents and growing children are then analysed.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** As a consequence of the increasingly deepening division of the world of generations, constructing a socialisation dialogue in the relationship between parents and adolescent children has become more complicated. The confrontational-verifying influence of intra-familial socialisation concerning the areas of secondary socialisation (today transferred mainly to the parallel virtual reality) is noticeably losing its significance.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The modifications of intergenerational relations within the family, occurring as a result of rapid civilisation changes, result in an

“unfinished”, incomplete socialisation process of adolescent children, heading towards an unknown form of adulthood with this new cultural capital.

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→ **KEYWORDS:** **SOCIALISATION, INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS, FAMILY, CIVILISATION CHANGES, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES**

## **STRESZCZENIE**

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**CEL NAUKOWY:** Celem jest teoretyczna diagnoza wpływu tempa współczesnych przemian cywilizacyjnych na wybrany fragment przebiegu procesu socjalizacji w rodzinie. Tok analiz ukierunkowano na specyfikę relacji rodzice – dorastające dzieci (15-18 lat), w tym na próbę eksplanacji pojawiających się w tych obszarach modyfikacji stanowiących efekt rozwoju technologii informatycznych.

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**PROBLEM I METODY BADAWCZE:** Problem badawczy zawiera się w pytaniu: W jakich zakresach nowe między- i wewnątrzpokoleniowe podziały – pojawiające się na skutek szybkich przemian cywilizacyjnych generowanych rozwojem technologii informatycznych – modyfikują socjalizacyjny dialog w relacjach rodzice – dorastające dzieci? Jako metodę badawczą zastosowano selektywną analizę prac teoretycznych oraz raportów z badań z zakresu socjologii, psychologii, psychiatrii, neurobiologii i technologii informatycznych, łącząc ją z efektami własnych prac badawczych.

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**PROCES WYWODU:** W artykule zaprezentowano wybrane elementy modelu pojęciowego wykorzystanego do analiz świata współczesnych pokoleń, w tym nowy podział na świat teraźniejszej przeszłości i świat teraźniejszej przyszłości wraz z zamieszkującymi je nowymi mieszkańcami – ludźmi przeszłości i ludźmi przyszłości. Następnie analizie poddano kształtującą się w ostatnich latach nową jakość relacji i utrudnienia w konstruowaniu socjalizacyjnego dialogu pomiędzy rodzicami i dorastającymi dziećmi.

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**WYNIKI ANALIZY NAUKOWEJ:** W konsekwencji wciąż pogłębiającego się podziału świata pokoleń konstruowanie socjalizacyjnego dialogu w relacjach rodzice – dorastające dzieci staje się trudniejsze i coraz bardziej skomplikowane. Konfrontacyjno-weryfikujący wpływ socjalizacji wewnątrzrodzinnej wobec obszarów socjalizacji wtórnej (dziś w znacznej mierze przeniesionych do równoległej rzeczywistości wirtualnej) zauważalnie traci na znaczeniu.

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**WNIOSKI, INNOWACJE, REKOMENDACJE:** Pojawiające się w następstwie szybkich przemian cywilizacyjnych modyfikacje wewnątrzrodzinnych relacji międzypokoleniowych skutkują „niedokończonym”, niepełnym procesem socjalizacji dorastających dzieci, które z takim nowym kapitałem kulturowym zmierzają w stronę nieznaną nam formy dorosłości.

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→ **SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** **SOCJALIZACJA, RELACJE MIĘDZYPOKOLENIOWE, RODZINA, PRZEMIANY CYWILIZACYJNE, TECHNOLOGIE INFORMATYCZNE**



## Introduction

We are living in times of significant acceleration of civilisational change, primarily generated by the development of information technologies. Starting with the creation of a single telephone and Internet space at the beginning of the 21st century and the introduction of a set of capabilities known as Web 2.0, our everyday life has become divided, with most of us functioning simultaneously in two realities – the real and the virtual.

The Internet is not the only arena for change. Thanks to our increasingly complex online activities, we have become providers of vast amounts of information, and their complicated analyses (Big Data), facilitating the work on ever more perfect forms of artificial intelligence (*deep learning* in machine learning), have provided the impetus to set in motion the next stages of the technological and civilisational digital revolution unfolding before our eyes. Today, artificial intelligence technologies (AI) (Bostrom, 2016; Kaplan, 2019; Ito, 2019), algorithmic decision-making systems (ADM) (O'Neil, 2017), as well as new ideologies based on technological progress, such as technological singularity theory, dataism or algocracy (Vinge, 1993; Kurzweil, 2006; Tzezana, 2017; Ito, 2019, Bloom, 2000; Kelly, 2010; Hidalgo, 2015; DuBravac, 2015; Harari, 2018; Aneesh, 2009; Danaher, 2016), contribute to deep changes in the reality of our lives.

The acceleration of civilisational change is also accompanied by „a withdrawal of allegiance from conventional norms and weakening of these norms' guiding power on behavior" (Passas, 2000, p. 20), both on a macro and micro scale, and modernity is becoming not only fluid and fragmented, but moreover very fast, overflowing with content, images, information, and consequently chaotic, illusory and temporary (Bauman, 2006; Beck, 2002; Giddens, 2001).

In this new reality, a new division is becoming increasingly clear. Today's "new world" is divided into the world of the present future and the world of the present past, which is inhabited by its "new" residents. The above-mentioned trends lead to noticeable modifications of intra-family socialisation, including such socialisation in its late stage, which is of particular interest to me: in the relationships between parents and their adolescent children. This stage, first of all, is associated with the construction of the foundations of intergenerational socialisation dialogue between (soon) two equal adult interaction partners, and it constitutes the "final touch" before the children become independent adults. Its quality is of considerable importance for the shape and functioning of both modern and future societies.

## The world of people of the past and people of the future

The sub-worlds of the present past and the present future are spaces inscribed within various, surrounding us realities constructed in contemporary times, starting with the world of everyday life on a micro-structural scale and ending with the sub-worlds of politics or business on a global scale. On the one hand, they are specific "schemata" for perceiving the realities that surround us and are co-created by us; on the other, they

are specific perspectives that modify the course of action taken. The sub-world of the present past does not imply the dominance of a traditionalist or extremely conservative orientation, nor does the sub-world of the present future imply a pro-futurist orientation of actions taken. Instead, both spaces symbolise the positioning of individuals in the face of rapid civilisation change.

In this way, the shaping spaces of the “new world” today are increasingly inhabited by “new people” and, in essence, their ways of defining situations and taking action are being modified. I call them “people of the future” and “people of the past” and treat them in terms of ideal types (Weber, 2004). Both, despite living “in the same” present-day, live, as it were, side by side, in two parallel, albeit interpenetrating spheres: the present past and the present future.

The most significant differences between “people of the past” and “people of the future,” in the context of the intergenerational socialisation dialogue in the family that interests me, are marked in several areas.

What is typical of the “people of the future” is their constant participation in the internet and telephone space. Their world of everyday life is not divided into the real and virtual one. It is replaced by one real-virtual reality in which the fluidity of boundaries creates the appearance of their absence. For the “people of the future,” what they can experience through online activity is as important as experiences in the real world.

On the other hand, the attractiveness of virtual spaces isolates “people of the future” from the real world and causes them to increasingly lose the ability to experience it, without electronic gadgets (smartphones, tablets, laptops, etc.). As numerous studies indicate, the benefits of the rapid development of information technology can carry many risks. “People of the future,” due to their intensive involvement in virtual world spaces, are more vulnerable to them.

An important role is played here by the constant exposure to an unprecedented, intense, multi-source impact of external stimuli, resulting in changes in the functioning of the brain, which has never been exposed to such a large number of sensations. The brain’s adaptive mechanisms, which are activated as a remedy to the situation, clearly alter the realities of social life. Analytical and reflective thinking skills are weakened, the level of empathy lowers, and tolerance decreases. Distraction, problems with expressing emotions and interpersonal communication emerge. Reaction time increases. Efficient memorisation of even very large amounts of information is not matched by the ease of use in practice (Carr, 2012; Morańska & Jędrzejko, 2013; Klingberg, 2008; Heersmink, 2016; Sanbonmatsu et al., 2013).

Yielding to new addictions, among which internet and smartphone addiction come to the fore, is the second threat of modern times that may affect “people of the future.” Modern technology, which provides a constant flow of new stimuli, is an omnipresent necessity for “people of the future.” When it is missing (lost telephone, broken internet connection, etc.), irritability, restlessness, anxiety and panic attacks occur (Guerreschi, 2010; Weinschenk, 2012; Cash et al., 2012; Andreassen & Pallesen, 2014; Cheng & Li, 2014; Lopez-Fernandez, Kuss, 2019).

Due to a specific, constant immersion in the internet space, “people of the future” have poorer abilities for direct communication. They use the “internet language,” and its elements, which are transferred to speech, introduce into the communication styles in the real world. They prefer brief, simple messages; they like communicating through e-mails, SMS, social media communicators, chats, forums, etc. They replace words with acronyms, emoticons and likes with which they express their emotions, approval or disapproval.

“People of the future” are also characterised by a specific perception of “people of the past.” They treat “people of the past” as if they were unwanted guests or intruders in “their world.” The younger the “people of the future” are, the more strongly this tendency manifests itself.

“People of the past,” in turn, do not record and share everything in which they participate, and they do not care about the number of likes they get. This does not mean that they reject participation in the process of civilisation change. They also become active on social media, and use smartphones. However, they use the new opportunities provided by technological innovations to functionally enhance their quality of life, and they do not get too excited about them. This is why, in their case, the boundaries between the real and virtual spaces are not blurred.

“People of the past” find themselves better than “people of the future” in face-to-face communication spaces. Although they use email, social networks, texting, etc., face-to-face relationships (and phone calls) are still their preferred type of interaction.

The necessarily abbreviated division sketched above is another phase in the development of inter- and intra-generational relations in the Western world (of which I include Poland), previously diagnosed and explained by Margaret Mead (1970) and Marc Prensky (2001). The trends discussed above shape a new dimension of the process of generational differentiation, which, being part of the process of generational change, defines internal differentiations within broader generational communities. These differentiations transcend the boundaries of existing generations, adding a “third dimension” that is being shaped alongside the vertical and horizontal differentiations diagnosed so far (Wrzesień, 2003).

## Socialisation dialogue in the relationships between parents and adolescent children

In social sciences, socialisation is sometimes perceived and analysed in different manners. For this article, I assume that socialisation is a process “through which an individual implements themselves into the way of life of their group and wider society by learning the rules and ideas contained in culture” (Sztompka, 2002, p. 416), creates and develops a personality and becomes “a subject capable of social action” (Tillman, 2013, p. 6). If we look at socialisation from the perspective of the philosophy of dialogue (Baran, 1991; Buber, 1992; Żółkowska, 2013), adapting the considerations contained therein,

we can treat dialogue as one of the many mechanisms of socialisation. In this sense, it is a specific form of negotiating and shaping one's place in the world of everyday life, in its numerous realities, from primary groups to global systems.

The socialisation dialogue in relationships between parents and adolescent children (aged 15-18) is an important element of the late phase of the socialisation of children in the family. Its essence includes mutual confrontation and verification interactions in which the multitude of norms, values and patterns of behaviour internalised by children in the spaces of secondary socialisation are subjected to a kind of normative negotiation. At this stage, the knowledge and experiences accumulated by adolescent children are confronted with the knowledge and experiences of their parents. The emerging dialogue focuses on the elements of the same spaces of the present time, but perceived from different points of view. Consequently, on the one hand, the interaction partners strive for a common definition of negotiated situations and orientation towards recognised norms and values. On the other hand, adolescent children, while forming their own identities, pay more and more attention to the prospect of impending adulthood and their own adult place in the world.

The intra-family axiological and normative systems differ, and therefore the effects of the socialisation dialogue thus understood may also differ, but even so, its main goal has always remained the final shaping of adult characteristics under societal expectations. After all, the intra-family socialisation of children is first and foremost a process of socialisation to/for society – the preparation of the next fully-fledged adult members of it, capable of fulfilling the tasks that society expects of them.

Those specific "last adjustments" of the coming independent adulthood are nowadays faced with rather complex complications, which are the result of the ongoing process of rapid civilisation changes. Such complications result from the changes in the socialisation patterns implemented by parents, which were initiated in the decade of the active parent in the 1990s (see Wrzesień, 2014), as well as from the progressive global anomie (Passas, 2000), the dominance of the culture of consumer capitalism (Barber, 2009), the promotion of individualism and cultural modifications of the characteristics of adulthood (Wrzesień, 2017). They are also a consequence of the dynamic development of information technologies and the spaces they create.

Until relatively recently, the consequence of the socialisation dialogue in the relationship between parents and adolescent children was (carried out with variable success) the formation of a set of traits guaranteeing the constancy of cultural transmission and the smooth continuation of societies. The new adult entering adulthood possessed sufficient cultural capital to take on the responsibilities associated with the realisation of a variety of social roles – from family and professional to those associated with public life.

The contemporary distancing of 'people of the future' and 'people of the past' from each other introduces a new dividing line in the family, resulting in the disruption of the socialisation dialogue and, consequently, also in the 'incomplete' formation of the cultural capital responsible for the perception of adulthood and the realisation of the social roles associated with it.

The most important present-day features of adulthood are self-responsibility and the ability to perceive the consequences of one's actions; the ability to reflectively select and choose the most advantageous areas of reality for oneself and the actions taken within those areas; independent decision-making; the ability to rationally limit emotional decisions; and self-reliance in action (see, inter alia, Arnett, 2000; Koch, 2016; Winterhoff, 2017; Hagler et al., 2019; Grzywa, 2010; Firestone, 1988).

Today, the parties to the family socialisation dialogue of interest are most often the "people of the past" (parents) and the "people of the future" (children). In this case, the complications of conducting a socialisation dialogue are greatest. For the children – the "people of the future", their parents – the "people of the past", are unattractive interaction partners. When determining the relationships in which they participate, children prefer to choose similar ones – "people of the future" – mainly peers. As a result, they "close themselves off" in their world, and the realisation of the socialising function of the family in the relationship between parents and growing children is significantly weakened. The young not only acquire knowledge mainly from peers but often there is no confrontational verification of this knowledge with parents at all.

Parents' attempts to establish a socialisation dialogue encounter serious difficulties. This is where the limitations of the "people of the future" become apparent: weakened analytical and reflective thinking skills, reduced levels of empathy, lower tolerance, distractibility, and problems with expressing emotions and communicating in interpersonal relationships. For children growing up addicted to virtual lands and the quasi-relationships experienced there (mainly with peers), parents – "people of the past" with their "incompatible" views of the present – are intruders to be kept at a distance. The foundations are therefore not being laid for the formation of mutual parent-child (soon adult-adult) relationships on a full partnership basis, a relationship of two equal actors.

This is the first imperfection of socialisation in the shaping of the characteristics of adulthood, which entails further ones. The weakening of the basis for building partnership relations with parents is at the root of the difficulties in socialising support for the formation of self-responsibility or the perception of the consequences of one's actions. Up to now, the socialisation dialogue between parents and adolescent children has constituted a kind of "buffer," a symbolic barrier against crossing boundaries that socially accepted norms ordered not to be crossed. When it is missing or its effectiveness is reduced, the self-correction of potential deviations from existing norms (internal control) may lose its regulatory power.

In turn, the weakening of analytical and reflective thinking skills of "people of the future" may result in problems in independent decision-making and, consequently, in young people's increased susceptibility to manipulation, especially originating in the virtual world, which may contribute to a deepening of the divide between parents and their growing children. The constant immersion in online spaces also creates the illusion that all questions can be answered on the Internet, and the increasing penetration of artificial intelligence systems into our lives in the form of personal assistants such as Siri, Cortana or Alexa, for example, is likely to reinforce this illusion soon, with the

effect of further undermining the authority of parents and weakening the effectiveness of dialogue.

The socialising dialogue between parents and growing children can also take place between “people of the future” (parents) and “people of the future” (children), and the number of such relations will increase in the coming years. In such a case, parents and adolescent children will be situated in one space – the world of the present future, nevertheless, due to the characteristics of the “people of the future” (now of both parties), the construction of effective courses of socialising dialogue may also encounter difficulties.

## Conclusion

Apart from introducing undeniably positive innovations that improve the quality of our lives, the rapid development of modern information technologies has its darker side. In the context of the often alarming findings of neuroscientists, psychiatrists and psychologists carried out in recent years, it seems that the civilisation revolution reached the point where the need to reflect on where we are going is becoming ever more pronounced. Today, it seems that the failure of socialisation in shaping socially desirable characteristics of adulthood in adolescent children mainly results from the distance which is being created along the dividing line: “people of the past” (parents) vs. “people of the future” (adolescent children). Well-known developmental processes have been overlaid with the recent effects of the process of civilisation changes, which has led to the collision of two new, significantly different sub-worlds.

Nevertheless, the pace and direction of the changes taking place suggest that soon, the “people of the future” will constitute the vast majority of Western societies. The observations made suggest that to save the effectiveness of dialogue, it is advisable, I believe, for parents (especially “people of the past”) to be more open to the world of their growing children, to get to know it better and to shorten the distance between them. This is an area where professional psychological and pedagogical counselling can become active. In light of the considerations presented in this text (which should be treated as hypotheses requiring further empirical verification), training in the ability to conduct dialogue despite differences is highly advisable nowadays, both for parents and adolescent children.

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***Images of the Educational Dialogue  
of Meanings Occurring in the Portfolio  
of Early Education Students  
Oblicza edukacyjnego dialogu znaczeń  
występującego w portfolio  
studentek wczesnej edukacji***

**ABSTRACT**


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**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The aim of this paper is to identify and characterise the specifics of the dialogue of meanings occurring in the portfolio of early education students, considered in the context of the possibilities of educating teachers.

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**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The considerations focus on two research problems: What content of the portfolio of early education students demonstrates that they engage the dialogue of meanings with educational issues and their own school experience? What shape does the knowledge about the world as reconstructed by teacher entrants take? To analyse the portfolio, which I treat as legacy data, I use the method of qualitative analysis of text.

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**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** In the first part, I reconstruct the relationship between the dialogue of meanings as a component of learning strategies, and the educational portfolio as a tool for monitoring achievements. In the empirical part, I characterise the categories that emerged in the content analysis and show their interconnections with the dialogic assignment of meanings to educational reality.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** The results of the analysis show that the learning strategy which makes use of the dialogue of meanings and the portfolio enables students to discover the possibility of assigning individual sense to educational reality, not excluding the existence of different perspectives and respecting them. By undertaking a dialogue with personal knowledge and their own experiences, the students gradually went beyond the framework of obviousness and expanded their perspective of thinking about the world of school.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS:** Thinking about teacher professionalism is changing, with the presented analysis providing a view on this matter. It shows the premises

and effects of a certain possibility of educating teachers who are open to the complexity of educational reality and to the dialogue preventing its reduction.

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→ **KEYWORDS:** **DIALOGUE OF MEANINGS, EDUCATIONAL PORTFOLIO, PARADIGMS OF DIDACTICS, TEACHER EDUCATION, EARLY EDUCATION STUDENTS**

## **STRESZCZENIE**

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**CEL NAUKOWY:** Celem artykułu jest zidentyfikowanie obszarów i scharakteryzowanie specyfiki dialogu znaczeń występującego w portfolio studentek wczesnej edukacji, rozpatrywane w kontekście możliwości kształcenia nauczycieli.

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**PROBLEM I METODY BADAWCZE:** Rozważaniami kierują dwa problemy badawcze: Jakie treści portfolio studentek pedagogiki wczesnoszkolnej wskazują na podjęcie przez nie dialogu znaczeń z zagadnieniami edukacyjnymi i własnymi doświadczeniami szkolnymi? Jaki kształt przybiera zrekonstruowana przez adeptyki zawodu nauczyciela wiedza o świecie szkoły? Do analizy portfolio, które traktują jak dane zastane, wykorzystuję metodę jakościowej analizy tekstu.

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**PROCES WYWODU:** W pierwszej części rekonstruję relacje między dialogiem znaczeń, jako składnikiem strategii uczenia się, a portfolio edukacyjnym jako narzędziem monitorowania osiągnięć. W części empirycznej charakteryzuję kategorie wyłonione w analizie treści i wykazuję ich powiązania z dialogicznym nadawaniem znaczeń rzeczywistości edukacyjnej.

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**WYNIKI ANALIZY NAUKOWEJ:** Wyniki analiz wskazują, że strategia uczenia się, wykorzystująca dialog znaczeń i portfolio, pozwala na odkrywanie przez studentki możliwości nadawania rzeczywistości edukacyjnej indywidualnych sensów niewykluczających istnienia odmiennych perspektyw i ich poszanowania. Podejmując dialog z wiedzą osobistą i własnymi doświadczeniami, studentki stopniowo wykraczały poza ramy oczywistości i poszerzały perspektywę myślenia o świecie szkoły.

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**WNIOSKI, INNOWACJE, REKOMENDACJE:** Zmienia się myślenie o profesjonalizmie nauczyciela, a przedstawiona analiza jest głosem w tej kwestii. Pokazują założenia i efekty pewnej możliwości kształcenia nauczycieli otwartych na złożoność realiów edukacyjnych i na dialog zapobiegający ich redukowaniu.

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→ **SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** **DIALOG ZNACZEŃ, PORTFOLIO EDUKACYJNE, PARADYGMATY DYDAKTYKI, KSZTAŁCENIE NAUCZYCIELI, STUDENCI WCZESNEJ EDUKACJI**

## Introduction

Dialogue is a category that is as important to education as it is ambiguous. It eludes being enclosed in a clear definitional framework, although there have been numerous in-depth analyses of it and attempts to organize its semantic field (e.g. Rutkowiak, 1992; Kwaśnica, 1995; Gadacz, 2015; Śliwerski, 2019). The educational portfolio is similarly flexible in terms of definition. Although it has been evolving since the 1980s, a one-size-fits-all concept of it has not yet been formulated, and its role in learning and assessment is defined in different ways (e.g., Koretz, 1998; Brown, 2001; Davis & Ponnampuruma, 2005; Frey, 2014; Gołębniak, 2019).

Reconstructing the considerations of both of these categories is beyond the scope of this article, which seeks to identify areas and to characterize the specifics of the dialogue of meanings that occurs in the portfolios of female students early childhood education. This issue is part of the new understanding of teacher professionalism (Gołębniak and Zamorska, 2014; Gołębniak 2020). It takes the view that 'becoming a teacher is a constant re-/de-/construction of the micro-processes of culture, the subjects of which, most importantly each student and teacher, define themselves' (Gołębniak, 2020, p. 39). Preparing to adopt such an attitude requires embedding the learning of future teachers in a socio-cultural context, i.e. it involves a shift from knowledge acquisition to knowledge construction and meta-knowledge building, and 'forces the grounding of educational content in the local conditions of individual growth' (Gołębniak, 2020, p. 39). On the other hand, the adoption of a dialogic attitude which leads to a new understanding of oneself and the world is an integral part of such learning.

The research problems that surround this issue are as follows: What content of the portfolios of female students of early childhood pedagogy indicates that they have entered into a dialogue of meanings with educational issues and their own school experiences? What is the shape of the knowledge about the world of school as reconstructed by female students of the teaching profession?

I have not found studies on the occurrence of the dialogue of meanings in portfolios in the available literature. Researchers mostly deal with the relationship of portfolios with learning strategies and student self-assessment (McDonald, 2012), as well as the holistic development of students' professional competencies (Brown, 2001; Davis & Ponnampuruma, 2005; Wach-Kąkolewicz & Kąkolewicz, 2015), including the personalistic view of teachers' professional identity construction (Szymańska, 2019).

## Research methods

My research is a qualitative study that can be located in the interpretative paradigm, which recognises the social nature of constructing reality and the possibility of arriving at what meanings people assign to the world around them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009, p. 23).

I regard the student portfolios under study as foundational data (Rapley, 2013). In examining these texts, I use the method of qualitative text analysis, which includes coding, sense condensation and categorization (Flick, 2010).

The data I used in the research comes from classes in the theoretical foundations of education, taught to students of preschool and early childhood pedagogy. The is used in this course of the concept of a paradigmatic view of educational theory (Klus-Stańska, 2018), which creates the possibility of a multifaceted view of the same educational situations and opens up a dialogue of meanings.

1. I selected the passages containing reconstructions of the students' personal knowledge from the portfolios and replaced the data of the authors of the essays with symbols.
2. I excluded general statements, which were devoid of argumentation from the selected data. The validity of this step is confirmed by the results of portfolio studies (Davis & Ponnampereuma, 2005; Frey, 2014).

## Theoretical background of the analysis

The dialogue of meanings is a type of educational dialogue. D. Klus-Stańska (2005) derived this concept from the theory of dialogue, and embedded it in constructivist didactics. This paradigm is also referred to in other didactic texts (e.g. Sajdak, 2013; Klus-Stańska, 2018; Gołębniak, 2019), although dialogue itself is sometimes defined in them according to the context.

In the approach proposed by D. Klus-Stańska (2005), similarly to R. Kwaśnica, the dialogue of meanings grows out of 'respect for difference, out of curiosity about otherness and readiness to contemplate it' (Kwaśnica, 1995, p. 82). The prerequisite for it to occur is admitting different points of view and ways of understanding the world, so the sense of meanings should be linked to one's personal knowledge and experience of reality. In this sense, dialogue becomes an integral part of a specific learning strategy, and its purpose is to activate the individual's cognitive independence and involve him or her in the negotiation of meanings.

D. Klus-Stańska (2005) points out that the dialogue of meanings is encouraged by borderlines, ambivalence or conscious experimentation with interpretations. This corresponds with L. Witkowski's (2013) belief that educators should accept ambivalence as a permanent feature of the culture in which education is immersed. Such an attitude requires openness to dialogue and a refusal to impose a ready-made blueprint for understanding the world on others. The goal is to prevent the complexity of thinking about people and society from being reduced to what is conventionally valid (Witkowski, 2013, p. 58). In this context, L. Witkowski references Bakhtin's dialogue, which involves creating an opportunity to 'explore the ambivalence of the world by discovering the multifacetedness of its view' (Witkowski, 2007, p. 107). As a result, as B.D. Gołębniak points out, in such a dialogue one does not seek to reach an agreement and obtain cognitive

certainty, but 'develops new ways of understanding the world and oneself' (Gołębniak and Zamorska, 2014, p. 69).

Together with L.S. Vygotsky's concepts and American pragmatism, Bakhtin's dialogism makes up the foundations of dialogic pedagogy. Among its defining features is the assumption that 'interactions between people and artifacts are critical to an individual's learning' (Gołębniak and Zamorska, 2014, p. 23). This confirms once again that dialogue does not just boil down to communication, but also includes the exchange of meanings with the products of the human mind and activity, thus creating opportunities for the individual to go beyond his or her singular view of reality.

The condition for a dialogue of meanings to occur is creating educational situations in which the teacher gives up guiding students' reasoning, and instead:

- uses such a language of description of educational reality as to show its internal diversity (see Witkowski, 2007);
- opens the space for students to make a conscious choice from a multiplicity of concepts (see Bruner, 2006);
- maintains intellectual discipline, which is 'determined by the structure of the problem, the competition of theories, and openness to counter-argumentation' (Klus-Stańska, 2005, p. 120).

The course and effects of such lessons are difficult to clearly define *a priori* and must be treated in terms of pedagogical intentions. This is because they can be achieved only in the process of construction of knowledge by individuals, which is possible only if learners:

- maintain cognitive activity, defined as an openness to a dialogue of meanings, and demonstrate a willingness to accept differences as a substitute for agreements that guarantee a lasting order (Rutkowiak, 1995, p. 24);
- recognise the risk of error as a part of learning, take responsibility for their own actions, and make an effort to formulate hypotheses and verify them (Klus-Stańska, 2005, pp. 122-126).

The concept of classes that are governed by the logic of the dialogue of meanings requires the use of a certain type of assessment and an appropriate tool for monitoring the achievements of learners (Szyling, 2015). For the purposes of this discussion, I assume that this role can be played by the sort of portfolio that is referred to by constructivist and transformative didactics (Brown, 2001; Filipiak, 2012; Sajdak, 2013; Klus-Stańska 2018; Gołębniak, 2019), as well as by neurodidactics (Jensen, 2008) and by the concept of understanding by design (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005). Academics stress that the portfolio promotes the integration of assessment into the learning process and supports the development of an individual's cognitive structures. However, they do not pay attention to the issues of its objectification (cf. Koretz, 1998) on the assumption that it is not subject to standardisation because it focuses on the individual and his or her learning. They also recognise that the subjectivity of such an assessment is limited by the arrangements made between the teacher and the student, in which student self-assessment plays a considerable role (Frey, 2014, p. 165).

The portfolio is connected to the educational curriculum through actual work in class, including collaborative work, which constitutes a kind of 'input' (Gołębniak, 2019, p. 920), that is, it provides material and inspiration for further thinking on a particular issue. Thanks to this, the student can go beyond official interpretations of syllabus topics in the portfolio, connect new knowledge with his/her pre-knowledge and educational experiences, or undertake reflection on his/her own cognitive development.

In stimulating these processes, the questions to which the student independently seeks answers in the portfolio are important. They can focus learners' attention on the multidimensional self-evaluation of their own performance (Filipiak, 2012) or on the way they interpret their own experiences and their accompanying contexts, which helps to follow the processes of personal understanding and how it differs from other interpretations (Krzychała & Zamorska, 2008), and thus opens up the dialogue of meanings.

## Results of the analysis

By analysing the data, I identified several categories, which organize the area of meanings discovered or assigned by female students to educational issues through the dialogue they undertook with the familiar meanings of their own experiences and the well-known reality of schooling. In this article, I will present only a selection of these categories, which were formed by data from most of the analysed portfolios, and which partially recur. We can tell that these categories are saturated because subsequent data no longer enriched the senses that emerged (see Glaser & Strauss, 2009, p. 53).

### 1. School known 'since childhood'

This category is crucial as it provides a starting point for the dialogue that the female students enter into with the realities they are familiar with. In their statements, they view school as a kind of generalised educational experience, which they try to understand and incorporate into the world of their own values. The studies and the knowledge which the students acquire in college play a major role in initiating this dialogue and defining its direction.

#### 1.1. 'Until now, I thought it was simply the way it was'

As remembered by the students, the school appears in the portfolio mainly as a world made up of teachers and students and the formal relationships that occur between them and that are founded on the hierarchical principles of objectivist education:

Until now, it was perfectly natural for me that the teacher steers where the conversation will go in the classroom. The teacher asks questions, the student answers them. Students' questions were often troublesome, so they also sometimes got suppressed by teachers (1.22).

What the students consider a distinctive feature of this world is its universality and permanence, which reinforced their conviction that the only right and sensible thing to do was to have adopted an attitude of acceptance of the universally binding school rules

[...] the way the teacher conducted the lesson was something as obvious to me as the fact that  $2 + 2 = 4$ . I thought that this was the most effective way of learning, that you had to be a well-behaved student and do the tasks you were told to do, and you would become smart (2.30).

What draws our attention in the statements included in this subcategory is the past time narrative, which suggests that the image of school and the only known concept of learning, reproduced from memory, has already lost some of its self-evident character for the respondents. The students associate the first cracks in the monolith of meanings with learning about alternatives during their university courses, whereby they also discover some of the mechanisms that govern the educational system and obstruct change within it:

I realised something that I hadn't even paid attention to before. Namely, in order for a given system to continue to work, you need people who are 'trained' in it. That way they will pass it on to the next generation [...]. This creates a vicious circle, because if we don't experience something different, we will be like fish that swim in water without even being aware that they are in that water (1.3).

The effects of these individual discoveries and surprised reactions form another subcategory, the core of which is seeing personal school experiences from a new perspective.

## 1.2. 'These two types of thinking are still at war with each other in my head'

Statements in this subcategory are deeply emotional. One student writes bluntly, 'I have always felt that school is bad (2.29).' However, not all comments are so extreme, although many of them reveal some bitterness:

On the other hand, it wasn't until college that I realised that learning could be fun, that it wasn't necessary to repeat the same thing over and over again, [...] and that group work wasn't about one person doing all the work for the rest (2.4).

I felt that this was unfair, and in retrospect, I think it may have inhibited my creative thinking and motivation to explore and learn new things. This experience influenced how I wanted to do the assignment in the first class (1.45).

The subject of students feeling emotionally and cognitively 'burdened' by their school experiences comes up repeatedly in this subcategory

[...] this kind of attitude, unfortunately, has stayed with me until now, it's hard for me to overcome it and talk about my insights, because 'somewhere, in the back of my head' I still have the belief that it will simply be frowned upon (1.9).

Only occasionally does a kind of ambivalence emerge in the statements. Female students recognise the cognitive limitations of the learning strategies that they acquired at school, but also believe that the experiences of that period are not only a burden thanks to the teachers who were able to trust the students :

You could say that I was 'lucky' [...], because I remember from my experience that for many teachers it was important what we already knew what we could share during the lesson, even though the teacher was in charge of the whole process (1.22).

The contrast between the students' own experiences and the recently discovered non-objectivist paradigms of didactics (see Klus-Stańska, 2018) or some aspects of university education prompts them to reevaluate the meanings they assign to school learning. J. Bruner (2006, p. 205) associates the awakening of cognitive alertness and the opening to a fuller reading of the meaning of one's own actions with such a strategy of thinking. An example of this kind of dialogue of meanings can be found in the following statements:

I'm afraid that a constructivist lesson, which seems to be the most attractive one, could be out of my depth, because I'm used to receiving instruction and help from the teacher. [...] even if I think the interpretive-constructivist paradigm speaks more to me when it comes to education, I myself would prefer to be given an example, a ready-made model (1.40).

My university studies have helped me see that school can be a place you like, where you go to gain knowledge and that you don't have to be afraid of. However, these two types of thinking are still 'at war with each other in my head,' and I have the feeling that no matter how much I learn in college, some part of me will always think about my school experience (2.1).

The tone of these statements is far from naïve optimism, not least because they reveal an awareness of the tensions between values that students find to be important and those that exclude each other at the same time. This dialogue with the world of their own educational expectations is difficult and does not lead to consensus. It rather heralds an opening to an axiologically ambivalent reality in which students of education will have to manoeuvre between Scylla and Charybdis (Witkowski, 2007).

## 2. We need to look more broadly

This category consists of statements in which students focus on the meanings of phenomena and experiences that are limited semantically or spatially, but considered in diverse contexts. The impulses to engage in a dialogue of meanings came from the texts



analysed in class, but the decisions to select personally important elements from them were made on an individual basis.

## 2.1. Discovering the sources of familiar problems

A question that students asked about the source of the problems in distance education was the starting point for a dialogue with the meanings that are socially assigned to remote learning. The search for answers led to the discovery of the role that is commonly attributed to teacher control in instruction:

I had not connected the problems of distance learning with the tenets of the objectivist paradigm. Now it is obvious to me that if the lessons [...] take place over the Internet, then the teacher has no way of controlling the students, thoroughly checking their knowledge, influencing their systematic learning, self-discipline or willingness to learn (2.9).

When looking at the realities of online teaching through the lens of educational theory, the students also commented on the attitudes of students freed from direct teacher control. In their statements, however, they were unable to fully distance themselves from their personal experiences:

When we study only to get good grades, if you can get them easily, namely without teacher control, by cheating, then the 'why learn' approach is somehow understandable to me (2.7).

This lack of distance made it difficult to engage in a dialogue of meanings with an ethically reprehensible, though often socially acceptable, situation. However, it did not obscure a much broader problem, which the students framed as questions about why students are unable to learn on their own, doesn't subjecting a student to external discipline make 'self-discipline seem extremely difficult (1.41)', 'does learning have to involve a desire to receive a good grade (1.9)?' The very verbalisation of these doubts indicates that the students are ready to re-evaluate their thinking about the role of motivation in learning, and are beginning to understand more fully the limiting nature of external stimulation, based on the behavioural mechanism of rewards and punishments and teacher domination.

This broadening of perspective, or rather deepening of insight, leads some students to identify the apparent reason paralyzing remote learning:

Remote learning was a massive change for students and teachers. So why hasn't anything changed in their approach? Why do they 'pretend', as it were, that they are still in the school classroom? Of course, it's not only the role of teachers, but also of a mandated curriculum, or final exams (2.9)

The quote shows that the students discover another dimension of ambivalence in the valuation of educational phenomena, which M. Dudzikowa (2013) locates in the

alternation of perpetrators and victims of pretend actions that hinders a dualistic view of the social world, so that it opens us to its ambiguity.

## 2.2. Beyond the mirror image

In many parts of the portfolio, the respondents point out that the meanings given to educational realities are linked to their anchoring in particular theoretical concepts, and therefore should not be absolutised. The students recognised this property of the dialogue of meanings especially when they were analysing the advertisements and anti-advertisements they had previously written for the same school:

The biggest surprise was how radically different ways of looking at the same issue can be. It seems to me that this assignment allowed me to somehow understand 'how paradigms work': one text [...] and, additionally, completely different interpretations and perceptions of what was written (1.29).

The juxtaposition of the obverse and reverse of the same situation turned out to be a kind of empirical validation that engaging in a dialogue with one's own beliefs and ingrained judgments about education can be a valuable, cognitively enriching experience:

one can find and flesh out both pluses and minuses in everything (school, school system, didactics). I also learned to point out advantages, positives in something I don't fully agree with (2.3).

The portfolio also includes opinions that the mirror image 'strips away first impressions (1.4),' protects against 'falling for the lure of appearances (1.45),' and makes one 'challenge accepted undisputed beliefs (2.1.),' but at the same time is not easily reduced to simple oppositions. This is most evident in the dialogue of meanings with the perennial issue of homework. The reactions to one group's opinion that absence of homework is not educationally beneficial were marked by unpleasant surprise. However, they were also accompanied by thoughts on the well-established and potential meanings of homework:

My rather unpleasant school experience made me automatically view any homework as something unnecessary or sometimes even harmful, and I was not able to notice its beneficial qualities at all. [...] Now I think I need to reflect on my preferences or beliefs, because a lot of them come only from my school experience, and I still think little about theory or other aspects (2.3).

J. Bruner (2006, p. 206) links the view of the social world through the prism of theory that the student mentions to metacognition and regards it as one of the conditions for broadening one's horizon of perception of reality and self-knowledge. The following statement is an example of such openness to the dialogue of meanings:

Most of us considered the absence of homework to be a positive aspect of this school, failing to notice that it stems from the assumption that learning should not take place where there is no teacher control. And here I had some questions for myself: why do we think homework is a good or bad thing? Why are we happy that there is homework or not? First, I think it's about our bad experiences at school [...]. Secondly, I know that it depends on the didactic paradigm what its role is and what it concerns, and whether it is compulsory and whether there will be consequences for it (2.19).

What also draws attention in this quote is the logic – already mentioned, and characteristic of the dialogue of meanings – of posing questions that open up thinking to new tropes and new interpretations of the world of education and of ourselves.

## Conclusions

One of the statements that I want to use as a summary of the findings is a fitting conclusion to the analysis:

It has occurred to me that the point here is not to judge whether a particular paradigm is bad or good, but to learn about it and find out what it is, and to decide whether it suits me and whether I want to put it into practice in the future (2.39).

This student indicates an important value of a learning strategy that uses the dialogue of meanings and the portfolio as a tool for monitoring performance. It is the discovery that the educational reality can be assigned individual meanings, which do not exclude the existence of different perspectives or respect for them.

The analysis of the data reveals a clear connection between the issues discussed in class and the educational issues with whose meanings the students entered into dialogue, which is largely due to the specifics of the portfolio. What is more significant for the results we obtained, however, is that this relationship – initially linear – became spiral and in-depth, while the dialogue itself became more and more multidimensional. The mirroring strategy, which can lead to the absolutisation of selected educational meanings, was used less frequently (Rutkowiak, 1995; Bruner, 2006).

When engaging in a dialogue with personal knowledge and their own experiences, the students not only gradually went beyond the obvious and natural world of the school they were familiar with, but also broadened their perspective of thinking about it. Consequently, they gave it new meanings, by discovering the cognitive ballast that school learning habits proved to be; the tensions between personally important values and those that guaranteed a sense of comfort; the invisible laws that govern the education system and perpetuate certain learning mechanisms; the areas of educational illusions and their ambivalence. They also learned to ask themselves questions in order to understand not only school and learning, but also the world of their own, tamed meanings and beliefs, using a paradigmatically structured theory of education (Klus-Stańska, 2018).

This dialogue of meanings present in the portfolio revealed great potential for the students to build their identity and their vision of what it means to be a teacher, which is close to thinking about creating a new professionalism for teachers (Gołębniak, 2020).

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***Ideological Determinants of the Dialogical Relationship  
Between Teacher and Student in Polish Schools  
of the Stalinist Period (1948-1956)***  
***Ideologiczne uwarunkowania relacji dialogicznej  
nauczyciela i ucznia w szkole polskiej  
okresu stalinowskiego (1948-1956)***

**ABSTRACT**

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The aim of this study is to analyze the ideological determinants of the dialogical relationship between teacher and student in the Polish school of the Stalinist period (1948-1956).

**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The main research problem is to answer the question: what were the ideological conditions of the dialogical relationship in the schools of the Stalinist period? The method used was the analysis of selected source materials in accordance with the historical research procedure and the method of analysis and synthesis of the literature on the subject.

**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** The starting point for the discussion was to present the definition of dialogue, its boundary conditions as well as its basic functions. Subsequently, the political, social and educational conditions of dialogical relations in the Polish schools of the Stalinist period were discussed.

**RESEARCH RESULTS:** The ideological priorities of the Polish school during the Stalinist period stood in fundamental contradiction to the essence of pedagogical dialogue. By definition, this made it difficult or even impossible to realize the dialogical relationship and fulfil the basic functions of dialogue in the official school space.

**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The analysis proved that the idea of pedagogical dialogue and its function were in opposition to the ideological premises of the Stalinist school. The presented discussion can serve as an inspiration to broaden research on education to include the educational practice of the historical period in question. It can be assumed

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with a high degree of probability that such a dialogue existed unofficially and was part of a strategy of survival and/or resistance to the school system.

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→ **KEYWORDS:** DIALOGUE, TEACHER, STUDENT, SCHOOL, IDEOLOGY

## STRESZCZENIE

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**CEL NAUKOWY:** Celem naukowym opracowania jest analiza uwarunkowań ideologicznych relacji dialogicznej nauczyciela i ucznia w szkole polskiej okresu stalinowskiego (1948-1956).

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**PROBLEM I METODY BADAWCZE:** Główny problem badawczy dotyczy odpowiedzi na pytanie: jakie były uwarunkowania ideologiczne relacji dialogicznej w szkole okresu stalinowskiego? Zastosowano metodę analizy wybranych materiałów źródłowych zgodnie z procedurą badań historycznych oraz metodę analizy i syntezy literatury przedmiotu.

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**PROCES WYWODU:** Punktem wyjścia do zasadniczych rozważań było przedstawienie istoty dialogu, jego warunków brzegowych i podstawowych funkcji. Następnie omówiono ideologiczne uwarunkowania relacji dialogicznej w szkole polskiej okresu stalinowskiego.

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**WYNIKI ANALIZY BADAWCZEJ:** Priorytety ideologiczne szkoły polskiej w okresie stalinowskim stały w zasadniczej sprzeczności z istotą dialogu pedagogicznego. Z założenia utrudniało to lub wręcz uniemożliwiało realizację relacji dialogicznej i spełnienia podstawowych funkcji dialogu w oficjalnej przestrzeni szkolnej.

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**WNIOSKI, INNOWACJE, REKOMENDACJE:** Przeprowadzone analizy dowiodły zarówno opozycyjności idei dialogu pedagogicznego, jak i jego funkcji wobec założeń ideologicznych szkoły stalinowskiej. Przedstawiony wywód może stanowić inspirację do poszerzenia poszukiwań badawczych o praktykę edukacyjną omawianego okresu historycznego. Z dużą dozą prawdopodobieństwa można przyjąć, że nieoficjalnie taki dialog istniał i wpisywał się w strategię przetrwania i/lub oporu wobec systemu szkolnego.

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→ **SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** DIALOG, NAUCZYCIEL, UCZEŃ, SZKOŁA, IDEOLOGIA

## Introduction

Dialogue is one of the key categories in the humanities and social sciences. The importance of dialogue, its meanings, conditions and barriers to it and, finally, its significance for personal development are discussed mainly in the fields of philosophy, anthropology, pedagogy, psychology and sociology. Indeed, dialogue is "a vital phenomenon at all levels of human life: social, cultural, cognitive, subjective" (Koć-Sieniuch, 2003, p. 692).



Over time, the definition of dialogue has broadened, and depending on the theoretical and pedagogical approach, there is a diversity of views on what dialogue is. Without going into detailed analysis, I can mention those theories that are most common in the field of pedagogical work, namely those by Joanna Rutkowiak (1992, pp. 28-44), Andrea Folkierska (1995, p. 164) and Janusz Tarnowski (1992, pp. 149-150). The definition of dialogue by the creator of personal-existential pedagogy, namely Father Professor J. Tarnowski, seems to be particularly relevant for this discussion. He considered dialogue as a method, process and social attitude, which are organized by four basic values: truth, freedom, good and love (Tarnowski, 1992, p. 149-150).

Depending on the educational-social space and the anthropological-educational concepts associated with it, the dialogue will be different, and sometimes there will be no dialogue at all, or it will take the form of para- or anti-dialogue.

## Research methods

The purpose of this article is to analyze the ideological conditions of the dialogical relationship between teacher and student in the Polish school of the Stalinist period (1948-1956). The main research problem is the answer to the question: what were the ideological determinants of the dialogical relationship in the school of the Stalinist period? The research method was the analysis of selected source materials, including external and internal criticism. The analysis of sources was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the historical research procedure of establishing facts, classifying them, explaining them, discovering relationships between them, and generalizing them. Printed sources were used as the main sources, which were regarded chiefly as illustration for the conclusions formulated in the text. A supplementary research procedure was the method of analysis and synthesis of the literature on the subject. The findings which the literature contained provide a background for the argumentation. I want to point out that I do not analyze the issue of dialogical relationship in school practice, as this exceeds the scope of the article. This problem will be analyzed in a separate publication.

## Structural and symbolic Sovietization of the Polish school between 1948 and 1956

After 1944, Poland found itself in the sphere of influence of the USSR, which meant a fundamental reconstruction of state and social structures. In fact, this meant the structural and symbolic Sovietization of Poland, which in effect led to the construction of a monocentric order with a single center of power and control and the subordination of all social processes to immediate political goals (Ossowski, 1983, pp. 81-83). The communist state's education priorities of favoring worker-peasant communities and strengthening vocational training soon translated into a structural change in the education system,

i.e. the introduction of an 11-year comprehensive school (Dz. Urz. Min. Ośw., 1948). In a formal sense, the reduction in the number of years of schooling was a departure from the resolutions of the Educational Convention in Lodz in 1945 (Ministerstwo Oświaty, 1945, pp. 246-247), and in symbolic terms it meant a reduction in educational standards. The Stalinist period was, in essence, a domination of symbolic Sovietization, which was of particular importance in terms of the interests of the communist government, since its goal was to fundamentally change social consciousness. This process went down in history under the name "ideological offensive" (Hejnicka-Bezwińska, 1996, p. 49). The turning point was the meeting of the PPR Central Committee's Political Bureau in April 1947 and Stanisław Skrzyszewski's announcement of a draft educational reform. This document, although never published, carried enormous importance, as it actually defined the future trends of the state's educational policy. Indeed, it announced the transition "from the previous defensive position to a decisive and broad ideological offensive" (*Projekt rezolucji w sprawie szkolnictwa*, 1948, p. 27). The main target of the ideological offensive was culture in its broadest sense, including school education. The process of unifying knowledge, beliefs and views was intended to lead to the creation of a "new man" equipped with a scientific worldview and ready to fully realize the idea of socialist Poland.

## Realization of the "new man" project as the focus of didactic and educational work

The creation of the new man soon became the fundamental goal of the communist authorities, and thus the principle organizing the didactic and educational work of Stalinist schools. This was postulated by Minister of Education Skrzyszewski:

[...] we must educate students in an atmosphere of a new morality based on socialist foundations, develop in them an ideological attitude, people's patriotism, and boundless love for people's [...] Poland [...] We must educate youth in an atmosphere of international solidarity of the working masses fighting for peace, democracy and progress; in an atmosphere of faithful friendship towards the USSR, the country of victorious socialism. We will mold in our students the people's will and character [...] conscious discipline [...] We will bring up Polish children in respect for work and social good (Skrzyszewski, 1948, pp. 34-38).

The basic qualities of the new man (Kairow, 1950, pp. 7-45; Radziwiłł, 1981, pp. 4-9, 22-24; Mazur, 2009, pp. 325-458) soon became the goals as well as the content of the new school curricula and textbooks. The rationale for this was a document that should be regarded as groundbreaking, namely the Ministry of Education's Guidelines for Authors of Curricula (*Wytyczne Ministerstwa Oświaty...*, 1948). This document, in fact, contained the notable and far-reaching words that Marxism-Leninism, as a victorious ideology, should be the philosophical, cognitive and methodological basis for curricula (*Wytyczne Ministerstwa Oświaty...*, 1948). This statement was soon repeated by Joseph Barbag at a convention of school inspectors in May 1949 (Barbag, 1949, p. 3).

According to him, the new educational content and textbooks should primarily serve to instill in students a materialist view of the world, a conviction of the superiority of socialism as a mature form of social system, an awareness of the division of the world into the progressive camp and the reactionary camp, and an active attitude in the struggle for a superior culture and morality (Barbag, 1949, p. 3).

Thus, education was reduced to two high-priority goals: the formation of a scientific worldview and the formation of socialist morality (Hejnicka-Bezwińska, 2015, p. 259). The authorities attached great importance to both of these issues, as only conscientious and fully effective fulfillment of those goals could guarantee the success of symbolic Sovietization.

### Teacher and student as senders/receivers of the ideologization process: Implications for the dialogic relationship

With this in mind, the magnitude of the efforts that party policymakers made to properly prepare and guide the teaching staff is not surprising. It is significant that as early as 1947, then Minister of Education Stanisław Skrzyszewski announced “a battle for the soul of the teaching profession” (Kryńska & Mauersberg, 2003, p. 156). And this was not just a matter of adjusting their beliefs, but of a total reconstruction of the social consciousness of teachers, so that they would successfully act as an extension of the Party’s power in the school. Eustachy Kuroczko mentioned in 1947 that “the problem of raising the new man... is the most important task for us [...] it requires a mental reconstruction of the teacher, diverting him or her to a new track of thought and work” (Kuroczko, 1947, pp. 42-43).

Without going into detailed analysis at this point, it can be argued that the highest priority goals of personnel policy with regard to teachers during the Stalinist period included constant screening of the staff according to the criterion of social origin, political views and social attitudes; an extensive system of rewards and punishments that rewarded politically and socially active teachers and persecuted those who resisted or were insufficiently involved in building the new order (Dz. Urz. Min. Ośw., 1949d; *Zarządzenie z 4.V.1950...*, 1950; *Zadania nadzoru pedagogicznego...*, 1953, p. 3).

These measures were accompanied by a system of educating and training teachers which was based on the paradigm of so-called “socialist pedagogy”. The goals, content, methods as well as forms of education in teacher training institutions were subordinated to this paradigm (Kryńska & Mauersberg, 2003, pp. 155-175; Grzybowski, 2013, pp. 141-151, 177-254; Kahl, 2008, pp. 49-78; Chmielewski, 2006, pp. 82-126, 161-178, 183-221). The process of reorienting or building a new social consciousness was further supported by ideological training and self-education. Obligatory ideological training was introduced in 1949 (*Instrukcja Ministra Oświaty...*, 1949), which in practice meant not only compulsory participation, but also taking exams (Dz. Urz. Min. Ośw., 1950c). In order to accelerate the “crystallization of the teacher’s scientific worldview”

(Dz. Urz. Min. Ośw., 1950c), it was even proposed that the outcomes of self-education be taken into account in the process of promoting teachers and of distributing privileges, such as free holidays or special bonuses (Kuroczko, 1952, p. 2).

Since the teacher was treated as both the recipient of ideological content and its sender, he or she was supervised in carrying out all his/her duties (Kryńska & Mauersberg, 2003, pp. 159, 165-168; Kahl, 2008, pp. 65-73; Grzybowski, 2013, pp. 218-227). In a Ministry's document from 1949, for example, we can read that "one of the most important tasks of the headmaster [...] of a school is the constant and planned supervision of work" and this includes "ensuring that the work of teachers is carried out according to the correct ideological and educational policy" (Dz. Urz. Min. Ośw., 1949d).

Requirements for a proper ideological stance were also formulated for the other party in the educational process, the students. Minister Skrzyszewski made it clear in 1948 that the main goal of the school's activities was to raise "a man prepared to build and defend socialism" (Skrzyszewski, 1948, p. 32). Translated into practice, this was to mean conscientious absorption and internalization of educational content, participation in propaganda campaigns, vigilance against the class enemy, and activity in ideological organizations that operated on school grounds (Dz. Urz. Min. Ośw., 1949b; Dz. Urz. Min. Ośw., 1950a; Dz. Urz. Min. Ośw., 1950b; Dz. Urz. Min. Ośw., 1950c; Dz. Urz. Min. Ośw., 1951a; *Uzasadnienie polityczne...*, 1954; *O wychowaniu uczniów...*, 1954).

Given these ideological premises, the question of a dialogical relationship in education is irrelevant. Following the statement of A. Folkierska, "Real dialogue is the opening of both parties to the conversation to a new experience. New experience is possible only when we ask" (Folkierska, 1995, p.164). Asking questions that can shatter the status quo always requires courage, independent judgment and, perhaps most importantly, the conviction that the other side of the dialogue is ready and open to being asked the question.

The essence of dialogue as well as its boundary conditions could therefore not be actualized during the Stalinist period. Freedom, authenticity and transgression of generally accepted beliefs, in other words, the constitutive features of dialogue, were a threat to the Party, as they would make a breach in the Center's monolith. One might also wonder about the side of the dialogue between teacher and student. Was it possible to speak of an unrestricted relationship, openness and mutual trust in a situation where the teacher, as the "right hand of the party," was intended to become a transmitter of ideological content, and the student a passive recipient of it? Locking the teacher into an ideological worldview, without permission for critical judgment condemned him or her to function in a social role that Robert Fudali described as heteronomous (2007, p. 109). From the point of view of the authorities, the teacher was like human material that could be molded and shaped to carry out the instructions and directives in the most effective way. The student, in turn, was also such a fully malleable material in the hands of the teacher. Both sides of a potential dialogue were thus inscribed in the axiom that was fundamental to the monocentric order, which was the belief in the full malleability of human nature.

The possibilities of building a dialogic relationship during the Stalinist period can also be viewed from the perspective of the function that this dialogue usually has to fulfill (Koć-Sieniuch, 2003, pp. 690-691; Winiarski, 2003, p. 695). I would just like to make the caveat that such a strict distinction of functions has been made for the purpose of this article, since it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between them in educational practice.

## The basic functions of dialogue and their implementation in the Stalinist school

- **socialization function**

Socialization is generally understood as the introduction of a person into the world of social life: its norms, customs, symbols as well as the process of acquiring social roles. The function of dialogue in the fulfillment of the socialization function is to help both parties learn about and experience the diversity of life in the community and point out the possibilities of individual and social existence.

During the Stalinist period, there were only partial or caricatured forms of the socialization function. Although the student was introduced or even forced into social life, this world was deformed by propaganda. In the course of education, the student was given a ready-made vision of society and of him/herself in that society, and his/her only task was to conform. The primary intention of the political-educational authorities was "to mold the extrinsically steered (external) man, according to the simple principles of 'stimulus-reaction-reinforcement'" (Kozielecki, 1998, pp. 85-86).

- **cognitive function**

The precondition of pedagogical dialogue is mutual openness to knowledge, expansion of one's cognitive horizons as well as readiness to revise one's judgments. The process of forming knowledge in Stalinist Poland fundamentally contradicted the above possibility. With school curricula and textbooks being based on a Marxist-Leninist foundation, the students found themselves in the sphere of influence of depraved knowledge (Tyrowicz, 1970). The content of school curricula and recommended textbooks proves this. For example, one of the topics covered in the Polish language in grade 7 was to be "The struggle against superstition, obscurantism and backwardness, as well as criticism of the narrow-mindedness and conservatism of the nobility in the Stanislawski period" (Ministerstwo Oświaty, 1951); in history, "The Great Socialist October Revolution of 1917 and its watershed significance for the historical fate of the Polish nation" (Dz. Urz. Min. Ośw., 1951b) and in the course on Poland and the modern world, "The working class as the leading force of the nation" (Dz. Urz. Min. Ośw., 1951b). Textbooks and school readings, dominated by Soviet paperbacks or the works of so-called progressive authors, were used to teach these ideas (Dz. Urz. Min. Ośw., 1949c; Ministerstwo Oświaty, 1951; Dz. Urz. Min. Ośw., 1951b).

It should also be emphasized that Marxism-Leninism offered a total vision of the world. Therefore, it excluded the possibility of asking questions and raising doubts since Marxism-Leninism, along with historical materialism, was considered “the only truly scientific theory of knowing, explaining and transforming the world” (Mauersberg & Walczak, 2005, p. 204).

- integrative and developmental function

An important function of dialogue is the integration of personality and concern for the comprehensive development of the student’s education. According to the texts disseminated at the time, the goal of all educational interactions was to form a well-rounded and harmonious personality. However, when we recall the previously mentioned qualities of the new man, it becomes clear that this was to be a personality strongly tailored for political purposes. There could be no question of a dialogical relationship with a view to the development of the student in a situation where the very principle of education was based on the rules of extreme behaviorism with an emphasis on the use of negative reinforcement (Kozielecki, 1998, p. 87). When we take into account one of the conditions for dialogue, which is to view each other holistically, it becomes obvious that it was simply impossible to fulfill this function.

- communication function

Communication is the essence and meaning of dialogue. Clarity of message, understanding, ability and readiness to listen largely determines the success or failure of a dialogic relationship. The same qualities should guide teacher-student communication. From the point of view of the 1948-1956 political-educational authorities, the quality of communication was equally important, since words were the basic means of the ideological offensive. And this very fact precluded the possibility of fulfilling the communication function in advance. In order to intensify the ideological message, the existing system of senses and meanings was abandoned, and replaced by the so-called “newspeak” (Głowiński, 1993, pp. 163-164). It was, inherently anti-communication, anti-communicative and value-laden. Language was used to organize the world, but according to the principle of opposition, i.e. us vs. them, enemy vs. friend, progressive vs. backwards. S. Skrzyszewski advised that “We must arouse vigilance in students against the enemy of the people’s state. We must demonstrate in a tangible way the superiority of socialist morality over capitalist morality” (Skrzyszewski, 1948, pp. 34-35). Newspeak, moreover, was ubiquitous, as it was used in the official space by all participants in the educational process. For example, to quote the words that the headmaster of one high school addressed to teachers: “Teachers as a group of educators must increase the political and social awareness of the area in which they work” (Protokół..., 1948). Students of another school were warned by the teachers “about the moral wretchedness and degeneracy of the imperialist oppressors and the enemies of the working people and of people fighting for world peace” (*Zarządzenie nr 30/1953...*, 1953).

The teacher, who according to the authorities played the role of a transmitter of ideological content, was expected to communicate it precisely in the language of newspeak thus closing off (in a theoretical sense) to himself and the student the chance for an open and constructive dialogical relationship.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The above analysis of the ideological tenets of the Polish school during the Stalinist period leads to the conclusion that the nature of school education was anti-dialogical. The essence of the political changes after 1944 that intensified after 1948 was to create a fully ideologized individual, equipped with a scientific worldview and socialist morality. From the perspective of ideological premises, a potential dialogue between teacher and student was impossible, since socialist pedagogy did not provide for autonomy of judgment and freedom of expression. This also translated into the extent to which the functions of dialogue were realized. It was not possible to carry out the roles that could be fulfilled by pedagogical dialogue, and if there was any attempts to do so, it happened in a deformed form and was tailored to immediate political interests.

However, the discussion above refers to ideological presuppositions. With a high degree of probability, it can be said that pedagogical dialogue did occur in the practice of school life, which is confirmed by memoir materials. Knowledge of the realities of the years 1948-1956 suggests that the initiation of authentic dialogue may have resulted from the need for survival and/or resistance to the educational system, which is well-known phenomenon in the pedagogical literature (Bilińska-Suchanek, 2013).

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***Implementation of Autonomy  
in Non-Public Schools after 1989.  
The Perspective of Founders and Directors  
Implementacja autonomii  
w szkołach niepublicznych po roku 1989.  
Perspektywa założycieli i dyrektorów***

**ABSTRACT**


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**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The aims of the article are of three types: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. The exploratory aim includes striving to identify the basic facts related to the implementation of autonomy in non-public schools after 1989; the descriptive purpose includes an attempt to document the process of autonomy in non-public schools, and the explanatory objective includes developing and enriching theoretical explanations.

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**RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** In relation to the subject matter, the research question is: how did the process of implementing autonomy in non-public schools develop? The research used a qualitative strategy, and the tool used during the research was an interview with the founders and principals of Polish non-public schools.

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**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** Non-public schools were being established in Poland after 1989 as a result of the political transformation. They were perceived as modern grassroots forms of education based on humanistic, democratic values. Autonomy was to be a tool and help in the fulfilment of those values and ideas.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** In non-public schools, autonomy was a gradual process. To a large extent, the scope of autonomy and participation in decision-making processes first of all depended on the management units, such as the principal and the governing authority.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** For the founders and principals of schools, autonomy in Polish non-public schools was an important element in building the school community, although it was carried out by trial and error because there were no available models for implementing autonomy. In future, it would be worthwhile to undertake empirical research of

Polish public schools in the field of exercising autonomy, and then to carry out comparative research in this area.

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→ **KEYWORDS:**     **MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION, AUTONOMY, SCHOOLS,  
NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS, CHANGES**

## **STRESZCZENIE**

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**CEL NAUKOWY:** Cele artykułu są trojakiemu rodzaju: eksploracyjny, opisowy oraz wyjaśniający. Eksploracyjny – dążenie do rozpoznania podstawowych faktów związanych z implementacją autonomii w szkołach niepublicznych po roku 1989, cel opisowy – próba udokumentowania procesu autonomii w szkołach niepublicznych oraz wyjaśniający – wypracowanie i wzbogacanie wyjaśnień teoretycznych.

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**PROBLEM I METODY BADAWCZE:** W związku z podjętą tematyką pytanie badawcze brzmi: Jak przebiegał proces wdrażania autonomii w szkołach niepublicznych? W badaniach zastosowano strategię jakościową, a narzędziem wykorzystanym podczas badań był wywiad przeprowadzony z założycielami i dyrektorami polskich szkół niepublicznych.

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**PROCES WYWODU:** Niepubliczne szkoły dynamicznie powstawały w Polsce po 1989 r. za przyczyną transformacji ustrojowej. Były one postrzegane jako nowoczesne formy tworzone oddolnie przez obywateli, oparte na humanistycznych, demokratycznych wartościach. Autonomia miała być narzędziem i pomocą w realizacji tych wartości, urzeczywistnieniem tych idei.

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**WYNIKI ANALIZY NAUKOWEJ:** Autonomia w szkołach niepublicznych była stopniowym procesem. W dużej mierze zakres autonomii, partycypacja w procesach decyzyjnych zależały w pierwszej kolejności od organów zarządzających: dyrekcji oraz organu prowadzącego.

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**WNIOSKI, INNOWACJE, REKOMENDACJE:** Autonomia w polskich szkołach niepublicznych była dla założycieli i dyrektorów szkół istotnym elementem budowania wspólnoty szkolnej, choć realizowano ją metodą prób i błędów, ponieważ nie było dostępnych wzorców implementacji autonomii. Warto byłoby podjąć w przyszłości badania empiryczne w odniesieniu do polskich szkół publicznych w zakresie realizowania autonomii, a w dalszej kolejności przeprowadzić badania komparatystyczne w tym zakresie.

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→ **SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:**     **AUTONOMIA, ZARZĄDZANIE W EDUKACJI, SZKOŁY,  
SZKOŁY NIEPUBLICZNE, ZMIANY**

## Introduction

The aim of this article is to explore the organisational development of non-public schools after 1989 in terms of autonomy, from the perspective of their creators and principals. The specific objectives include an exploratory, descriptive and explanatory objective. The

exploratory objective aims at identifying the basic facts related to the implementation of autonomy in non-public schools after 1989. The descriptive objective includes the attempt to document the process of autonomy in non-public schools, and the explanatory objective includes developing and enriching theoretical explanations. Hence, the question arises: how did the process of implementing autonomy in non-public schools develop? There are studies on teacher autonomy in literature, but there has been a lack of research on autonomy from the perspective of school founders and principals on whom its scope largely depended. This article fills this cognitive gap in relation to the undoubtedly complex phenomenon of autonomy fulfilled in educational organisations.

## Research methods and tools

A qualitative approach was used in the research. The data collection method included a partially categorised interview. It was conducted with founders and/or co-founders of non-public schools, and with their principals. The purpose of using this tool was to obtain data on autonomy in the early days of non-public schools. The questions were related to all in-school educational entities. The research tool consisted of three parts. The first part dealt with the autonomy of the actions taken by the educational entities; the second part referred to the participation of those entities in decision-making processes; and the third one dealt with the distribution of management competences. The qualitative research was conducted in schools which were purposively selected. Thirty interviews were collected in 10 primary and secondary schools, which were located in Kraków and established from 1989 to 2005. The entities setting up and running the schools were non-governmental organisations, such as associations, foundations and partnerships.

## The main part

Education in the People's Republic of Poland was subject to politics and ideology. An example of the servility of education to ideology and the political party was the introduction, in 1950, of the school curricula based on the following assumptions:

[...] to base all teaching contents on the Leninist-Marxist method in an atmosphere of total devotion to the cause of socialism [...]; to link the contents taught at schools with political life; to introduce the subject of the Soviet Union [...] as an example and model for our [Polish] nation; to show, based on scientific material, the class basis for the division of the world into the camp of imperialism, backwardness and war, versus the camp of socialism, progress and peace (Fik, 1989, p. 143).

In 1972, the *Report on the Status of Education in the People's Republic of Poland* assessed the school system negatively. The authors of the report emphasized, inter

alia: the lack of a uniform school policy resulting from the subordination of education to a number of ministries and central offices; the fact that the management style of the school system was characterised by excessive authoritarianism, as well as the overload of regulations and their high variability; the unclear division of competences between central and local authorities; the employment of persons with inadequate qualifications as directors, inspectors and supervisors; the infrastructure which resembled that of factories and was unsuitable for schools; the lack of staff with higher education; inadequate curricula, as well as the inadequacy and one-sidedness of didactic means, methods and forms of work (*Raport o stanie oświaty w PRL*, 1973). The instructional and prescriptive style of school management in the communist Poland, which was based on centralisation, the lack of autonomy of school entities and poor socialisation of schools reinforced the social structure in which one-way transmission constituted a monologic space. This was exemplified by the teacher-student relationship and the educational process determined by it: the teacher teaches and the students are taught; the teacher knows everything and is there to think, while the students do not know and have no right to think; the teacher speaks and the students humbly listen; the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined; the teacher makes a choice and the students are expected to respect that choice; the teacher acts and the student has the illusion of acting; the teacher is the subject and the student is the object of the process of education (Freire, 2005).

The opportunity to change the way schools were managed appeared with the political transformation and the introduction of the democratic order. The opportunity to establish non-public schools after 1989 made it possible to build organisations open to dialogue from scratch. Such organisations were to give the members of the school community the opportunity to use their own voice, express their own vision of the world, pursue truths, and create meeting places for dialogue. A tool that helped people build schools based on a dialogue was autonomy.

The term autonomy comes from the Greek *autónomos* (*autós* – self, *nomós* – law, principle, custom), i.e. self-governed or independent. Depending on the scientific discipline, researchers define the concept of autonomy in different ways. In philosophy, autonomy refers to morality (Didier, 1992, p. 27). In psychology it means self-control, independence and being inner-directed (Reber & Reber, 2006, p. 68). In pedagogy, autonomy is independence in educational activity and the condition of the students' maturity (Kupisiewicz & Kupisiewicz, 2009, p. 15). Representatives of legal sciences, such as L. Sohn (1980, p. 180-190) and F. Harhoff (1986, p. 31), define autonomy as something between the independent state and the subject or subordinated unit.

According to K. Kiciński (1992), autonomy of an individual is manifested in several forms:

- mental autonomy – respecting individual beliefs on what is good for him/her;
- legal autonomy – respecting others' right to their own beliefs and views,
- social autonomy – deciding about oneself, taking into account the behaviour and life in different scopes of one's competences.

It is widely accepted that autonomy is a condition in which the subject can decide independently on the articulation and implementation of concepts, ideas and actions (Motloba, 2018, p. 418).

The above-mentioned definitions indicate the complexity of the concept of autonomy. Nevertheless, the autonomy of a person, along with consciousness and freedom, "is not given to a man in a ready-made and immutable form, but it is rather provided to him as a task, and thus, to the same extent as the totality of human being, bears the mark of potentiality; it is shaped and specified in action" (Krapiec, 1991, p. 301). Autonomy is a feature of an individual, but it must be seen as a value and in a relational, process aspect (Nedelsky, 1989; Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000). Therefore, regardless of the form, dimension and way of defining autonomy, one has to work on its existence and fulfilment. Depending on the external conditions, autonomy is something one has to work out.

In turn, the model suggested by R. Lapidoth divides definitions of autonomy into four categories. The first group refers to autonomy as the right to act freely to some extent. The second one is related to independence. The third one identifies autonomy with decentralisation. The fourth group refers to the autonomous community's possession of legislative, administrative and judicial rights (Lapidoth, 1997, p. 33). Autonomy refers both to a person and to an organisation. This is reflected in the school models identified by R. Otręba (2012, p. 132):

- administered school in which the only decision-maker is the state;
- partially autonomous school: the state determines the tasks, and the school principal has strictly specified authorities given by the state government;
- partially autonomous school directed in a collegial manner: the state specifies the school's frame of actions, and the staff are the decision-makers;
- partially autonomous school directed in a democratic manner: educational authorities specify the school's frame of actions, and the teachers are the decision-makers.

Thus, schools can be completely centralised, relatively centralised or completely autonomous, which hardly ever occurs.

Autonomy can apply to all areas constituting the school organisation: the pedagogical area (teaching contents, forms, means, working methods, ways of assessing pupils); the personal area (people in the organisation, staff); the financial area (resources and means of the organisation); the organisational area (processes improving school management, organisation of work); and the evaluative area (Smolański, 1987).

In a school organisation there are several educational entities: the principal, teachers, children, parents, and the governing body. M. Frostenson (2015), an economist, points out the three-dimensionality of autonomy in relation to education. The first dimension is the professional one, and it is characteristic of the group of teachers as a professional group. The second dimension refers to the autonomy of the school organisation: the principal and the teaching staff. The third dimension is the individual dimension that includes the individual teacher. Also, Frostenson sees school as a complex social system in which the autonomy of the individual and/or the group influences the autonomy of others. The educational subject who plays one of the key roles at school is the teacher. The teacher's

autonomy means self-reliance in thinking and independence in taking actions, provided that the freedom of other individuals is not violated (Śliwerski, 1998, p. 112). The teacher has the right to make innovative educational decisions, to independently plan, organise, control and evaluate his work with the students (Radzewicz, 1993, p. 1-2). Moreover, the teacher's autonomy is two-dimensional. The first dimension is related to the professional role and concerns involvement in the process of changes, i. e. the creation of an educational environment that meets the children's needs. The second dimension is personal, and in this dimension autonomy enables personal development, professional improvement and subjectivity; and it requires critical thinking, reflectiveness, creativity, dialogue and cooperation (Popławska, 2021). In the parallel manner, we can define the autonomy of the principal, the supervisory body or the parents. H. Holec (1981, p. 3, as cited in Dislen, 2011) defines the student's autonomy as the ability to take control of one's own learning, adding that students have the ability to make all decisions related to learning. At this point, it is worth mentioning the factors that limit autonomy. They can be divided into external and personal-internal ones. External factors include: regulations of governmental authorities, regulations of a given school (Wysocka, 2008, p. 16-17), the school principal's management style, as well as factors of a historical and cultural nature. Personal-internal factors include the teachers' attitudes and beliefs.

## Results of the academic analysis

The qualitative research was conducted in schools, two of which were run by limited liability companies, three by school foundations, four by associations, and one by a church authority. Autonomy processes in the organisations studied proceeded in different ways, depending on the adopted school management style: autocratic, democratic and mixed.

Internal autonomy depends, to a large extent, on the school managers who constitute such autonomy. Autonomy makes it possible for school entities to participate directly in the life of the school. In the interviews that were carried out, the founders and principals of non-public schools talked about taking autonomous action by educational entities, about the division of competences in management, and about the participation of school entities in decision-making processes in the first years of existence of the non-public schools.

The overarching aim of the founders of most non-public schools was to build a school community and to foster in individuals a sense of being full members of it. Accordingly, educational entities were given autonomy, albeit uneven. An important, though secondary, objective set by the founders and principals of non-public schools, were didactic and educational outcomes, and the promotion of creative initiatives. School management was the most marginalized among the goals set in non-public schools.

Educational entities made use of the possibility to implement autonomous activities to a different extent and in different areas. In the first years of the existence of non-public schools, independent activities were most often undertaken by the principal and the



governing body. Although both of these entities carried out autonomous activities in each of the areas of the school (administrative and organisational issues, didactic-educational area, financial issues, cooperation with the environment), there was a clear division. The principal acted autonomously mainly in the administrative/organisational field and in the cooperation with the external environment, while the governing body was responsible for finances. In the case of teachers, autonomous activities included the didactic and educational area, as well as the cooperation with various institutions and organisations. It is worth emphasizing that independent activities of the teaching staff rarely concerned the administrative or organisational sphere. Also, teachers never ever initiated activities related to finances. Among the educational entities, parents were a group that quite often initiated actions related to the local environment and also to the education of children. In turn, the occasional use of autonomy by the students concerned the didactic and educational area.

A manifestation of intra-organisational autonomy is the distribution of management competences among different entities. In the early years of non-public schools it was the principal (in other school organisations – the principal together with the governing body) who had the greatest management authority. The principal was followed by the teachers, and then by the parents. According to the majority of the respondents, the distribution of management powers was appropriate. Few respondents would extend the catalogue of powers given to the principal, or to the governing body and the principal.

The founders and principals of non-public schools indicated some of the reasons why there is no need to increase the management powers for students, parents or administration. As one of the respondents stated: *“I, as the principal, bear a one-person responsibility, including the legal one, for the school, which is why I cannot share my power”* [S3-2012]. There was also a response critical of the parents: *“The parents had too much influence, while they had no idea about management”* [P1-2013]. Some respondents oppose the delegation of power because they believe that the experience of other schools in this regard has not been successful.

Participation in the decision-making process contributes to making a person the subject, and it calls employees to feel responsible for the organisation’s actions. At the same time, it can enable the employee’s self-fulfilment. The employee can personally, independently, and to varying degrees, influence the organisational world, and he/she can create this world. In the research undertaken, a number of management-relevant issues were detailed, namely planning the school’s development directions, determining the school’s financial arrangements, organising and controlling the school’s activities, selecting educational methods, selecting teaching resources, as well as selecting educational content and ways of controlling and assessing students.

In most of the non-public schools, the principal and the governing authority decided about planning the directions of the schools’ development. Teachers and parents could also participate in the decision-making process. Pupils were excluded from this process in some schools, but in other organisations they participated in it through consultations or co-deciding.

In the early years of the existence of non-public schools, the governing body usually made all the decisions related to financial matters, while the principal participated in the decision-making process. Teachers were informed, asked about their opinions, or not involved in the process. In some schools, other entities were excluded from this decision-making process, while in a few schools parents were informed about financial issues or asked about their opinion on them.

Organising the activities of non-public schools mainly involved the principal, the governing body, teachers and parents. They were involved in co-deciding on these matters. The students were usually not involved in such decisions. The students hardly ever played the role of consultants or co-decision-makers, or received information on organisational matters.

In most schools, the decisions on supervisory activities were made by the principal and the governing body. There were exceptions when the principal was consulted and the governing body made the decision, or the principal made the decision and the governing body was not involved in the process. Parents or teachers hardly ever co-determined the supervision in schools. It was more common for parents to receive information about the inspection activities to which the school was to be subjected. The students were not involved in such decisions.

In all schools, people who decided or co-decided about the teaching methods were the teachers and the principal. Usually, the choice of educational methods was not determined by the governing body. The students were not involved in making such decisions. In some schools educational methods were consulted with the parents, while in other schools the parents were not involved in the process.

The decisions on teaching resources were made by the principal and the teachers. The governing body co-decided, decided or consulted the schools on the selection of teaching resources. The parents and students were generally not involved in the selection of teaching resources.

In almost all schools, the educational contents were selected or co-selected by the teachers and the principal. The governing body was mostly only consulted or not involved in such decisions. The students were mostly not involved in such decision-making processes. According to the interviewees, the schools hardly ever provided them with information on the subject or allowed them to co-determine the educational contents. Depending on the school, the parents were either informed and/or consulted, or did not participate in the decision-making process, with the exception of the school run by a faith-based organisation in which the parents were co-decision makers on the educational contents.

The assessment of students in all schools was decided by the teachers. The principals also participated in making such decisions. Only in one of the schools the principals did not participate in the decision-making process. The governing body usually did not participate in such decisions, and it was rarely asked for the opinion or informed about these matters. The students and the parents were either informed or excluded from the decision-making process.

## Conclusions

A key change for the founders of non-public schools was autonomy. The starting point was to create the proper organisational culture. It was to be built, in the first instance, by creating a school community based on subjectivity and equality. The management style adopted in non-public schools allowed for the implementation of autonomous activities. Initially, autonomy expressed through independent actions mainly concerned the school authorities; then, it also concerned the teachers and the students. Autonomous actions were mainly taken up in the typical areas of activity of particular educational entities.

The concept of exercising power was based on the participation of school entities in certain decision-making processes. Decisions on the organisation management, and on financial and supervisory matters, were mainly made by the principal and the governing body. These two entities, with the participation of the teachers and the parents, co-determined the planning and organisation of school activities. The students were generally not involved in decisions concerning the management of the organisation.

From the very beginning of the existence of non-public schools, it was obvious to their founders that decisions concerning the education of students were to be made by the teachers and the principal. The governing body did not play a significant role in making decisions related to the management of the education process. Parents usually played the role of consultants, or were informed about such issues.

Autonomy in non-public schools was a gradual process, and its extent depended on the type of the educational entity. It was also regulated by the school authorities, for example by allowing the participation of some educational entities in particular areas of the school's activity or in certain decision-making processes, which confirms that it mainly depended on the principal and the governing authority. On the other hand, the commitment and attitude of teachers and students in exercising their autonomy was also important. Autonomy in non-public schools was progressive, especially in case of teachers and students. It was a tool used by the school authorities to fulfil the task they had established themselves, i. e. building the school community

It should be emphasized that different models of school management appeared in non-public schools. The typical model, which was the most popular in the schools surveyed, was the autonomous school with a leader open to the initiatives of the school community (mixed management style) and two extreme models: 1) an autonomous school with strong centralised leadership (authoritarian management style), and 2) a democratically managed school with leadership dispersed throughout the school community (democratic management style). It is worth mentioning that non-public schools introduced their process of autonomy by trial and error, as no suggestions for its implementation were available at that time.

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***Designer, Creator, Trainer and Mentor...  
or an Academic Teacher Online  
Projektant, kreator, trener i mentor...  
czyli nauczyciel akademicki online***

**ABSTRACT**


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**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The objective of the reflections undertaken is to present the competences of academic teachers necessary for online teaching and the necessary changes of attitudes in this professional group.

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**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** In the context of the specific objective, the research problem is included in the questions: What competences should an academic teacher have in order to teach online effectively? How should universities support academic teachers in acquiring those competences in their teaching work? The method used was literature analysis and interviews with academic teachers at the University of Łódź collected during online training within the project: "Scientific excellence as the key to excellence in education". Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development".<sup>1</sup>

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**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** The introduction presents the development of academic e-learning in Poland within the last twenty years. This is followed by the discussion of the competences of academic teachers conducting online classes and the necessary changes in their attitudes. The participation of universities in this process is also shown.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** The presented reflections indicate that not all teachers were prepared for e-learning before the pandemic and that some universities failed to support them sufficiently in their teaching work. The pandemic showed that the preparation for remote teaching should be one of the goals of teacher and university development.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS:** Online teaching requires changes and systemic preparation of teachers for conducting classes in the digital reality.

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→ **KEYWORDS:** **E-LEARNING, ACADEMIC EDUCATION, TEACHER, UNIVERSITY TEACHER, COMPETENCES OF A UNIVERSITY TEACHER**

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<sup>1</sup> The training sessions were carried out between 4.11.2019 and 16.06.2020, and they included 156 teachers of the University of Łódź. Focused interviews were carried out with them concerning: the teachers' self-assessment of didactic, methodical and digital competences; their experience in online work; problems and difficulties in e-learning. For the purpose of this text, references to the interviews were marked as (a.r.) which is the abbreviation for "the author's research."

## STRESZCZENIE

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**CEL NAUKOWY:** Celem podjętych rozważań jest prezentacja kompetencji nauczycieli akademickich niezbędnych w nauczaniu online oraz koniecznych zmian postaw w tej grupie.

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**PROBLEM I METODY BADAWCZE:** W kontekście określonego celu problem badawczy zawarto w pytaniach: Jakie kompetencje powinien posiadać nauczyciel akademicki, by efektywnie nauczać online? W jaki sposób uczelnie powinny wspomagać w pracy dydaktycznej nauczycieli akademickich w ich zdobywaniu? Wykorzystano metodę analizy literatury oraz wywiady z nauczycielami akademickimi Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego zgromadzone podczas szkoleń online w ramach projektu „Doskonałość naukowa kluczem do doskonałości kształcenia” Program Operacyjny Wiedza Edukacja Rozwój<sup>2</sup>.

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**PROCES WYWODU:** Wprowadzenie prezentuje rozwój e-learningu akademickiego w Polsce w ostatnich 20 latach. Następnie omówione są kompetencje nauczycieli akademickich uczących online i konieczne zmiany postaw. Ukazany jest także udział uczelni w tym procesie.

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**WYNIKI ANALIZY NAUKOWEJ:** Z przedstawionych rozważań wynika, że nie wszyscy nauczyciele byli przygotowani do e-learningu przed pandemią, a część uczelni niewystarczająco wspierała ich w pracy dydaktycznej. Pandemia pokazała, że przygotowanie do dydaktyki zdalnej powinno być jednym z celów rozwoju nauczycieli i uczelni.

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**WNIOSKI, INNOWACJE, REKOMENDACJE:** Nauczanie online wymaga zmian i systemowego przygotowania nauczycieli do dydaktyki w cyfrowej rzeczywistości.

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→ **SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** **E-LEARNING, KSZTAŁCENIE AKADEMICKIE, NAUCZYCIEL, NAUCZYCIEL AKADEMICKI, KOMPETENCJE NAUCZYCIELA AKADEMICKIEGO**

## Introduction

Since the beginning of the 21st century, discussion has been carried out in Poland on the place and systemic way of conducting online education in various specializations and at different universities. At first, irrespective of the lack of proper legal regulations, only a few people were interested in e-learning (the first legal act which introduced e-learning regulations was the Act “Law on Higher Education” of 27 July 2005 (Ustawa z dnia 27 lipca..., 2005), and another act issued in the form of the regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 25 September 2007 (Rozporządzenie..., 2007)). At

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<sup>2</sup> Szkolenia odbyły się między 4.11.2019 a 16.06.2020 r. i objęły 156 nauczycieli akademickich UŁ. W ich ramach przeprowadzono wywiady zogniskowane dotyczące: samooceny kompetencji dydaktycznych i metodycznych oraz cyfrowych nauczycieli; doświadczenia w pracy online nauczycieli; problemów i trudności występujących w e-learningu. Na potrzeby niniejszego tekstu odwołania do wywiadów oznaczone zostały skrótem (a.r.) od słów „the author’s research” (badania własne).

the beginning, this form of education was accompanied by the lack of interest of university authorities, reluctance of ministerial authorities towards online studies, and great distance of a significant part of the academic community. The value of online learning and competences obtained in this process were negated, as noted, among others, by M. Dąbrowski (2005, pp. 63-70) and J. Mischke (2009, pp. 19-24). Later, however, when it was noticed that this form of studies is popular and e-learning is effectively used at universities all over the world, the discussion on online university education began to spread. More and more people started to emphasize that, at the current stage of development of the information society, universities cannot afford to give up or undermine the role of the use of technology which is used in other areas of social or economic life (cf. Bednarek & Lubina, 2008, pp. 23-29; Dąbrowicz-Tłałka, 2008, pp. 21-23). Following the discussion, various individual projects of e-learning classes have emerged, as well as offers of full remote studies.

Online classes should, by definition, be different from traditional university classes. And it is not only about changing the space of the didactic process, i.e. (as we have seen during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic), rapidly “moving” from the lecture room to the virtual space, and conducting classes in the synchronous time. In the case of a large e-learning project (and the launch of online education in any field of study certainly is a large project), it is necessary to learn about and adjust the learning environment to education (and here the choice is increasingly larger: from educational platforms to videoconferencing applications), to consider the selection of appropriate communication tools (Wierzbicka, 2021, pp. 51-55), and to select the tools for transferring, activating and verifying knowledge and competences. It should be remembered that any choice of tools/applications recommended by the ministerial authorities (see *Rekomendacje MNiSW...*, 2020 [*Recommendations of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education on E-learning*]) or the university authorities should take into account the didactics and teaching methodology of very different fields (from education of students of humanities to education in scientific or artistic specializations). This is because the technological solutions chosen by universities are to support the educational process and increase its effectiveness, and not just to satisfy the student’s need for the contact with the university.

Also, it should not be forgotten that the selection and application of the best technological solutions will not solve the problem of preparing academic teachers to use them effectively in e-learning. The pandemic situation showed that it is not difficult to find a remote learning environment, while it is difficult to conduct online classes, especially for those who have never taught in such a way and are not familiar with remote teaching tools (which was indicated by 56% of teachers in the interviews – a.r.). And that is why, during the first wave of the pandemic, it was difficult to speak about e-learning understood as a well-thought-out and prepared learning process (cf. Wierzbicka, 2019, pp. 16-17). It should be noted that, since the outbreak of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, e-learning has often been conducted using accidental tools, uncoordinated by university authorities, organised in a hurry and often by people who were not prepared didactically and technically for such a process (Klimowicz, 2020, pp. 2-3).

In this context, remote education at the beginning of the pandemic should be described as *emergency remote teaching* (see Hodges et al., 2020), which was only focused on ensuring the students' contact with the teachers (through any electronic channel). Such emergency education often resulted in the students' passive participation in online activities (they were usually hidden behind avatars in the MS Teams application). Despite numerous failures in remote learning at the beginning of the pandemic, this situation contributed to the evolution of the approach to remote teaching and made many people (including university authorities) realise that it is necessary to implement systemic changes regarding the improvement of academic teachers' competences and the place of such skills in the online teaching process (a.r.). New technologies, as well as a different learning environment and new teaching methods used in e-education have become the impulse for changes in universities and made university teachers face new challenges.

## Competences of an academic teacher who conducts online classes

The quality of university education depends on many factors, but one of its key aspects is the competence of the university teacher (cf. Sajdak, 2015, pp. 25-26). The current Act on Higher Education of 20 July 2018 lists three groups of academic teachers: those who teach, those who carry out research, and those who both teach and research. However, despite this distinction, the Act does not require any of these groups to complete postgraduate pedagogical courses or studies or to have a teaching specialisation. An academic teacher does not need to have certified knowledge of the basic pedagogy, psychology or didactics of the academic discipline he or she represents, and the same is true for digital skills. Interestingly, in the same legislative act, in article 201, it is stated that students of doctoral schools functioning at universities should undergo professional practice: "The curriculum may include professional practice in the form of teaching or participation in teaching, and the time spent for such practice should not exceed 60 lessons per year" (Ustawa..., 2018), while such curriculum is determined by the senate or the scientific council of the university at which the doctoral school functions. In practice, it means that, in addition to the obligatory teaching practice, a university may (but is not obliged to) include classes in didactics, pedagogy or psychology in the doctoral curriculum. The above-mentioned provisions show that almost all the effort related to shaping didactic and digital competences is to be made by the academic staff themselves. And this is one of the main reasons for the current status of academic didactics, including digital didactics, which, in practice, is mainly giving way to research work.

The experiences of teachers who conducted online classes before the pandemic, and of those who only came into contact with such didactics during the pandemic, show that the participation of a university academic teacher in remote teaching is more active than in the situation of classroom teaching (see Romaniuk et al., 2020, p. 16; a.r.). The lecturer fulfils not only the role of the person who is teaching and examining, but he/she also selects appropriate technologies facilitating learning, prepares e-materials, as well



as motivates and activates students who sometimes “disappear” in the virtual space of applications such as MS Teams, Zoom or other educational platforms (e.g. Moodle). That is why, the teacher must not only be excellently prepared in terms of content and didactics, but also proficient in the use of various applications in order to be able to effectively convey relevant information, to verify the students’ understanding, and to develop certain competences in the students (cf. Wierzbicka, 2019, pp. 31-65). Above all, it is the academic teacher who bears the greatest responsibility for the course of online classes. Without his/her involvement in the process of creating the materials (lesson content, instructions, exercises, etc.) and in conducting and evaluating the course after its completion, and without his/her support and motivation, the student may have problems with completing the course or passing the exams.

This situation necessitates a change of existing habits not only in the organization of the place and time of work, but also in the existing teaching work, which has to be redefined not only because of the need to use technology. As interviews with teachers at the University of Łódź have shown, undergoing a short training course or reaching for tutorials prepared by the university enables teachers to quickly become proficient in using applications such as MS Teams or an educational platform (e.g. Moodle). A greater difficulty, however, is the preparation of such activities during online classes that will ensure the students’ active work and real assessment of their knowledge. It is also important to develop electronic classroom materials, which is extremely time-consuming (cf. Romaniuk et al., 2020, p. 16; Klimowicz, 2020, p. 22). Teachers indicated that the time to prepare e-courses increased at least 2 times (51% participants), 3 times (32%), 4 times and more 17% (a.r.). It is equally important to develop effective forms of electronic communication through chat rooms, forums or videoconferencing systems, and to learn how to moderate discussions in asynchronous time (cf. Wierzbicka, 2021, p. 55). Therefore, it becomes necessary to redefine one’s competences and approach to education. E-education and the pandemic make many academics realize that the existing model of education needs to be modified, and changes have to be implemented, including in didactics and in the teaching methods that have been used so far (see Wierzbicka, 2019, pp. 24, 27). It is hard to resist the impression that the “widespread sluggishness of the introduction of e-learning today”, as described by J. Mischke (2009, p. 23), “should be treated as tangible evidence of pushing didactics in all its aspects to the periphery of the activity of universities, and, at the same time, it should be treated as a measuring instrument.” Although the article was published 13 years ago, the above-mentioned words are still relevant, which certainly is alarming. Pushing didactic issues to the background, or an insufficient offer of courses or training sessions which improve didactic and digital competences, were confirmed by the academic teachers themselves who, during the pandemic, were often left on their own by the university authorities and had “no daily, continuous support, e. g. in the form of training sessions or consultations” (Klimowicz, 2020, pp. 15-16). Many of those teachers also complained about “the lack of university’s interest in e-learning” (a.r.), or “the inability to get help from the university” (a.r.). In the interviews the teachers also spoke about their needs. Just before the pandemic

(the training started in October 2019) and during the pandemic, up to 69% of teachers indicated that they needed to complete additional training in order to improve their own teaching competences necessary to conduct e-classes. The majority of them emphasized that they mainly needed to acquire didactic and methodological competences (55%), followed by digital skills (27%). Only 18% specified that didactic and methodological competences were as important for them as digital skills. A significant group of teachers (44%) were also interested in innovative educational methods that work well in e-learning (a.r.). This certainly indicates university teachers' growing awareness and the need to introduce institutional support for its development.

The dynamically changing world, knowledge-based economy, new demands from employers, pandemic-induced changes, as well as expectations of students themselves result in the fact that teaching should be practical, authentic, meaningful and adjusted to the modern world. It is important to emphasize that students are no longer the "consumers" of knowledge and that teachers ceased to be the only people who can provide this knowledge to them. Students should be involved in co-creating the process of education according to the principles of Peer to Peer Learning, Problem/Project Based Learning, Process Design Thinking, Research-Based Education, or "gamification" (cf. Wycisk, Matysik, 2021, pp. 13-28), and their failures and mistakes should be a part of the education process, teaching them new behaviour and inspiring them for creative activities. In this context, redefining the competences of academic teachers should be a response to the changing reality: it is necessary to consciously use technology, which involves the use of active teaching methods; it is necessary to follow the changes in applications and to choose solutions that support the teaching process and make it more effective, also in the sphere of new forms of communication with students (not only, as before, via e-mails, but primarily through video-conferencing applications and discussion forums on educational platforms). Also, we have to remember about the need to develop a new time management system in the teaching process. It is because online learning is not only about videoconferencing via MS Teams, but it also includes constant online monitoring of students' activity after the classes and their work, e.g. on the learning platform. Moreover, online learning means motivating students to work via forums or private messages, reacting appropriately to typical e-education problems (e.g. decrease in activity or technical problems), and showing students possible paths to acquire necessary competences taking into account different needs and learning styles.

Changing teaching attitudes and habits is a challenge for teachers, and they often have to deal with it themselves. How they do this is aptly described by P.R. Ostolski:

The methodological competences and changing conditions of the implementation of the didactic process can result in the qualification of university teachers into four different groups. The first group includes those who take no action with regard to the changing situation due to their habits of adaptation and total confusion in the new reality full of challenges, opportunities and threats. The second group includes teachers characterized by apparent and external formal adaptation, who repeat old patterns while using new and fashionable slogans. The third group of teachers includes the critics of everything and everyone, who are

void even of the reflection on their own actions, and uncritically accept new, yet different solutions. The fourth group includes academic teachers characterized by creativity, who are always imaginative in carrying out their tasks inside and outside the university, and who are sincere and spontaneous in what they do (2021, pp. 297-298).

So, what do you need to pay special attention to when you want to go beyond the current didactic model, being a university teacher implementing e-learning? How to be creative and imaginative? How to teach online effectively? A summary of changing attitudes and necessary competences is presented in the following Table 1:

Table 1. Change of attitudes and competences of university teachers in *e-learning*

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>E-teacher</b>
from knowledge provider (lecturer)	into a tutor, coach, guide, consultant, leader
from answer provider	to answer interpreter
from the provider of materials	into the designer of various educational experiences of the student
from the one who shows others one educational path	to the one who shows students different solutions and encourages them to find solutions on their own
from the one who shows students one interpretation of the problem	to the one who emphasizes various approaches and shows interpretation doubts
from the one who is used to working alone	to the one who works in a team and with a team of students, as well as teachers
from a person used to total control over the scientific environment	to the one who cooperates with the students on building that environment and gives its members freedom of choosing the tools
from the one who is used to independence	to a person open to discussion with the students and other teachers
from a person who is not guided by learning styles when constructing their classes	into a person who takes into account various learning styles and students' needs (including the needs of the disabled*)
from a person who uses traditional teaching methods	into a person who searches for innovative methods of work and is not afraid of experimenting
from a person who does not know the methodology of online education	into a person who is constantly improving their knowledge of digital education methods
from a person who negates the value of online education	into a person who knows the advantages and disadvantages of this form of education
from a person who knows and uses one or two applications for online learning	into a person who constantly learns about new tools and uses them according to their didactic needs and students' abilities

\* In this situation, the process of online education carried out in the Internet requires the application of the guidelines of WCAG 2.1 related to the availability of the Internet contents (see *Dostępność cyfrowa*, 2021 [*Digital availability*, Service of the Republic of Poland]), to which all public entities are obliged by the law (see *Ustawa z dnia 4 kwietnia...*, 2019; *Ustawa z dnia 19 lipca...*, 2019).

Source: the author's own work

Taking into account the above, it is particularly important for an academic teacher to feel well in the role of:

- a designer of new didactic experiences and digital teaching aids – it is because the teacher prepares his/her own programme of activities based on the actual didactic needs, with the use of changing digital technologies;
- a creator of many possible ways of acquiring knowledge by the student – where the latter, in a conscious manner (preceded by reflection), makes his/her own decisions on the basis of previously acquired information, and these should produce adequate effects in the form of changes;
- a tutor and trainer – the students will be seen and supported by the academic teacher; they will have a high degree of freedom of action and choice, and they will be provided with social support due to which it will be possible to reduce the negative effects of distance resulting from remote learning; in this situation, the academic teacher becomes an e-moderator whose role in the teaching process increases with the advancement of the technologies used (Miśniakiewicz & Krnáčová, 2021, pp. 47-66);
- a mentor – an academic authority who not only shapes the digital learning process and the development of the student's potential based on partnership, but influences the student's personality.

## University systems of supporting academic teachers

The preparation of academic teachers for e-learning should not only be their own responsibility. The pandemic *emergency remote teaching* has shown that without systemic solutions, both in the sphere of existing legislation and direct support from university authorities, academic teachers will not be able to cope with the new requirements, and they will not immediately become great online teachers (cf. Romaniuk et al., 2020, p. 26).

Although online classes have been known in Poland for more than 20 years, only a few Polish universities have organized and dedicated e-education units. The reasons for this may be found, among others, in the low awareness of the academic community, which was highlighted during the recent pandemic (a.r.). Moreover, university authorities are not always interested in introducing systemic e-learning solutions and appointing teams of specialists, because this entails considerable costs, both in terms of staff (employees) and equipment (servers, software). E-learning requires many organisational and legal changes (e.g. how to organise a unit dealing with remote learning; what authority/responsibilities should be given to it; how to train academic teachers and encourage them to participate in such training if not everyone is interested in them). These problems result in the fact that digital didactics at Polish universities is developing slowly, and the existing units supporting the process of remote education are not present in all public high education institutions. Examples of units that are functioning include: the Digital Competence Centre at the Warsaw University; the Centre for Development of

Non-stationary Education at the Warsaw School of Economics; the E-Learning Team in Kraków; the E-Learning Centre of the University of Science and Technology in Kraków; the Team in charge of Remote Learning of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń; the Remote Education Office at Marie Skłodowska-Curie University in Lublin; the Centre for Online Education at the University of Szczecin; the Centre for Online Education at the Jagiellonian University; and the E-Learning Centre of the Łódź University of Technology. The main tasks of such units include: promoting e-learning solutions, preparing teachers for e-education, and assisting them during the creation of materials and maintaining the IT infrastructure needed for e-learning. Such units offer teachers training related to:

- e-learning methodology;
- developing didactic competences typical of an e-teacher;
- standards and specific features of working/studying online;
- using tools necessary for e-learning;
- communication in the synchronous and asynchronous mode;
- solving problems connected with online learning;
- activating and motivating students who are studying online;
- evaluation of the online education process;
- management of the teaching process with the use of various tools.

Participation in such training session prepares a teacher for conducting e-classes and makes it possible for him/her to:

- develop their own style of teaching, i.e. effective forms of communication, motivation, assessment, and evaluation;
- respond to didactic and technical problems typical of e-education;
- avoid mistakes and unnecessary work;
- maintain the hygiene of remote work and avoid overwork.

As it has already been mentioned, a university, when implementing remote teaching systems, must not only be prepared in terms of organisation, but it must also consciously work on teacher training curricula, taking into account the specific features of individual fields of science. General university regulations, which impose particular forms of classes and remote work, cannot always be reconciled with specific classes as the didactics of humanities is different than that of exact, experimental or artistic sciences. For this reason, it is also important for individual faculties to be able to make autonomous decisions on the forms and course of online classes.

## Conclusions

Digital didactics continues to be a challenge for university teachers, even those who had previous, pre-pandemic exposure to it. It requires the creation of a methodological and didactic setting adapted to the digital learning environment, and such a setting should be grounded in pedagogical paradigms, take into account the individual potential of learners, and it should be relevant to the world in which we function on a daily basis

(cf. Smyrnova-Trybulska, 2018, pp. 300-301; Turula, 2018, pp. 125-128). This is a difficult task, especially in a situation in which academic teachers do not have to meet any formal requirements related to the improvement of their teaching competences (including digital ones), they are not sufficiently supported and, at the same time, everyone expects that they will prepare themselves for e-learning spontaneously, when, for example, a pandemic unexpectedly appears. The results of the analysis carried out show that, along with the changing world, the teacher has to change, too, redefining learning objectives and outcomes and, above all, working on developing new competences and self-image as an instructor, tutor, trainer, creator, and mentor. Once again, it should be emphasized that e-learning at the university is not only about changing the place of academic classes, the teaching process, the teaching methods and resources, but, above all, it is about redefining the work with students, who, in the online space, do not need to be guided. What they need is to be shown different possibilities, different solutions, and different perspectives in their pursuit of knowledge. This change should take place at the level of the individual and the entire academic community, with the support of the university authorities. The latter should also care about both a high level of didactics and further scientific achievements, as the hitherto university's decisions related to the implementation of online education have proved insufficient (cf. Klimowicz, 2020, pp. 2-3; Romaniuk et al., 2020, pp. 16, 24).

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## ***Mosaic Nature of Dialogue in Academic Tutoring*** ***Mozaikowość dialogu w tutoringgu akademickim***

### **ABSTRACT**

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**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The aim of the article is to problematize and present the mosaic approach to the dimensions of dialogue in academic tutoring.

**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The considerations carried out in the article are aimed at solving the following research problem: “what are the structure and specific features of the mosaic approach to dialogue in academic tutoring?”. The method used in the process of constructing the scientific argumentation is problematization of issues, based on literature and the author’s experience gained during the “Masters of Didactics” project.

**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** In order to answer the research question, first, tutoring was characterised as an exemplification of personalised education (learning), and then the author focused on the problematization of three dimensions of dialogue in academic tutoring.

**RESEARCH RESULTS:** In the process of scientific analysis, three dimensions of dialogue were described (as a way of communication between the tutor and the tutee, a personal dialogue, and a motivational interviewing), showing the mosaic nature of dialogue in academic tutoring and the contribution of this process to the achievement of goals that complement one another.

**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS:** In the mosaic approach to dialogue, each of its dimensions is important, and saturation of individual tutoring processes with them is conditioned by the factors corresponding to the personalization of education. Such an approach seems not only to legitimize and make varied tutoring practices more reflective, but it also inspires empirical research on the dimensions of dialogue at universities.

→ **KEYWORDS:** **PERSONALIZED EDUCATION, TUTORING, ACADEMIC TUTORING, DIALOGUE, ACADEMIC TEACHING**

## STRESZCZENIE

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**CEL NAUKOWY:** Celem artykułu jest sproblematyzowanie i przedstawienie mozaikowego ujęcia wymiarów dialogu w tutoringach akademickim.

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**PROBLEM I METODY BADAWCZE:** Rozważania prowadzone w artykule ukierunkowane są na rozwiązanie następującego problemu badawczego: „jaka jest struktura oraz specyfika mozaikowego ujęcia dialogu w tutoringach akademickim”. Zastosowana w procesie konstruowania naukowego wywodu metoda to problematyzacja zagadnień oparta na literaturze przedmiotu oraz doświadczeniach autorki pozyskanych w trakcie programu „Mistrzowie Dydaktyki”.

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**PROCES WYWODU:** Dążąc do udzielania odpowiedzi na sformułowane pytanie badawcze, najpierw dokonano charakterystyki tutoringów jako egzemplifikacji edukacji spersonalizowanej, a następnie skoncentrowano się na problematyzacji 3 wymiarów dialogu w tutoringach akademickim.

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**WYNIKI ANALIZY NAUKOWEJ:** W procesie analizy naukowej scharakteryzowano 3 wymiary dialogu (jako sposób komunikacji pomiędzy tutorem a tutorantem, dialog personalny oraz dialog motywujący), pokazując mozaikową naturę dialogu w tutoringach akademickim oraz przyczynianie się tego procesu do realizacji wzajemnie uzupełniających się celów.

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**WNIOSKI, INNOWACJE, REKOMENDACJE:** W mozaikowym ujęciu dialogu każdy z jego wymiarów jest istotny, a nasycenie pojedynczych procesów tutoringowych nimi uwarunkowane jest czynnikami korespondujących z personalizacją edukacji. Takie podejście wydaje się nie tylko uprawomocnić i czynić zróżnicowane praktyki tutorskie bardziej refleksyjnymi, ale również inspirować badania empiryczne dotyczące wymiarów dialogu w uczelniach wyższych.

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→ **SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** **EDUKACJA SPERSONALIZOWANA, TUTORING, TUTORING AKADEMICKI, DIALOG, DYDAKTYKA AKADEMICKA**

## Introduction

Irrespective of the transformations of the contemporary university expressed, among other things, in the marketization and commercialisation of its activities, and in the formalization and instrumentalization of the educational process (cf. e.g. Denek, 2013; Krajewska, 2012), this article reflects the idea that a university is still a place of real education. In such an approach, university education is not only a process aimed at the acquisition of knowledge, skills and social competences useful in professional work and resulting from the curriculum of studies, but is seen as “the totality of influences that foster the full development of an individual and his/her acquisition of competences for autonomy and full humanity throughout life” (Kwieciński, 2019, p. 43).

Both in order to fulfill the contemporary pragmatic tasks set for higher education institutions and to improve the actual education taking place there, the subject of efforts made

at various levels is the improvement of the quality of the educational process. One of the aspects of such efforts is the improvement of didactics, e.g. through the implementation of tutoring, which, according to the authors of the "Tutoring Model" (2019) prepared by the Ministry of Education, is not an end in itself, but is intended to generate greater added value for students. The foundation of tutoring, like that of academic education, is dialogue. As a concept, it occurs in many contexts and is understood in different ways depending on the assumptions made. In this context, the aim of the article is to problematize and present the author's mosaic approach to the dimensions of dialogue in academic tutoring. The research problem concerning the structure and specific features of the mosaic approach to dialogue in academic tutoring corresponds with this aim. The analyses carried out are based on the literature on the subject and on the author's tutoring experience gained during her participation in the project "Masters of Didactics."

### Academic tutoring as an example of personalised education

Referring to the distinction into three types of education by P. Czekierda (2015, p. 18): mass, individualized and personalized education, tutoring fits into the third approach (cf. also Dziedziczak-Foltyn et al., 2020). Personalized education is defined as "tailoring education to the learner's current situation, his/her traits and needs, in order to help the learner achieve the best possible progress and learning outcomes" (Graf & Kinshuk, 2012, p. 2592). In a systematic way, its components are discussed by D. Miliband (2006). The first of them refers to knowing, communicating and taking into account the student's strengths, weaknesses and educational needs in the educational process. Another component is developing the learner's competence and confidence by providing them with adequate support and using strategies that match their individual needs, pace and style of learning and that give them the opportunity for involvement. This is followed by advocating that students should be able to choose a curriculum adjusted to their individual interests and needs, which would make it possible for them to learn in a comprehensive manner. The fourth component is the idea that the starting point for the functioning of schools/universities is the intention to create proper conditions for the progress of learners. The final dimension of personalized education is the support of schools by local communities and institutions in order to create the best possible educational opportunities. The above components are worth supplementing with the assumptions inspired by personalistic pedagogy. Thus, in personalized education, a person is perceived holistically, taking into account different dimensions of his or her development (cf. Fingas, 2015). A person is to be seen as someone who can make decisions concerning himself/herself, and who has his/her own potential and is ready to fulfil it (cf. Żur, 2016), which means that the main goal of educational activities is making the subject able to "take charge of his or her own development process" (Nowak, 2019, p. 504).

The above-mentioned components of personalized education correspond to the idea of academic tutoring. In addition, however, it is characterised by specific assumptions

that are its particularisation or extension. Tutoring most often takes place in a dyad (tutor-tutee<sup>1</sup> – cf. e.g. Czekierda, 2015; Dziedziczak-Foltyn et al., 2020), but, in the updated version of the publication (2021, p. 10) prepared by the experts of MEiN (Ministry of Education and Science) in cooperation with foreign partners, it is indicated that small and large groups can also participate in tutoring. As noted by Thomas and Hixenbaugh (2006, after Fernandes and Flores, 2013), the pluralism of tutoring is also expressed in organising it for all students or just those reporting problems or needs in this area, in proactivity or reactivity, in its integration into educational curricula, or in its inclusion as a form of additional support. Regardless of the personalized nature of tutoring, it involves the completion of 4 stages: (1) the tutor and tutee(s) get to know each other, build a relationship, understand the objectives of tutoring and construct a contract; (2) the goals of the process are formulated and indicators for their achievement are defined; (3) regular, methodical tutoring work is carried out, based on meetings (tutorials) and the tutee(s)' own activity in between; (4) the process is evaluated (Czekierda, 2015, p. 24). Detailing the issue of objectives, two types of tutoring, often intertwined, should be pointed out, i.e. scientific and developmental one. In the former, the goals are directed towards the search for knowledge and the improvement of scientific, critical and specialist skills adequate to a given field of science, while in the latter the key focus is on the development of personal interests and potential, as well as the tutee's achievement of coherence in terms of his/her own identity and plans (cf. Dziedziczak-Foltyn et al., 2020; Karpińska-Musiał, 2018).

Tutoring is based on a master-student relationship. A tutor, as a master, is a guide or a person who is proficient in a given field and has a greater knowledge and experience than the tutee. A tutor is permanently focused on self-improvement and able, through the application of appropriate tools and developmental tasks, to create the opportunity for the student to develop holistically, to achieve goals in accordance with his/her needs, as well as to reach his/her potential and build his/her own identity (cf. Brzezińska & Rycielska, 2009; Czekierda, 2015; Fingas, 2015; Marzec, 2012; Prońko, 2018). The tutor-tutee relationship is based on the student's subjectivity and treating him/her as a partner in the relationship, and the real dimension and effects of the relationship depend on the meeting of individuals and the multidimensionality of their personalities and experiences (cf. Karpińska-Musiał, 2015; Marzec, 2012; Szala, 2015). In this context, the task of the tutor as a master is not to transmit strictly defined knowledge or truth identified with a certain pool of theories in a given field, but to create a space for the tutee to think independently, gain experience and creatively use that possessed by the tutor (Doda, 2002). Therefore, education is not transmissive, but it includes deep involvement of the tutee in the learning process and the development of his/her competences concerning analysis, interpretation, reflexivity, criticism, self-education and planning, as well as fulfilling and taking responsibility for the effects of learning (cf. Szczurkowska, 2012).

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<sup>1</sup> The term tutee describes a student who takes part in tutoring.

## Mosaic image of a dialogue in academic tutoring

Theses concerning the fundamental role of dialogue in education (cf. e.g. Brzozowski, 2013) and the possibility of conceptualising it in various ways are present in the academic discourse (cf. e.g. Gadacz, 2015; Garlacz-Sobczyk, 2010). When these are complemented by the above-mentioned assumptions about the complexity and personalization of tutoring, they become the inspiration for the construction of the author's mosaic, three-component model of dialogue in academic tutoring. Such mosaic nature of dialogue is expressed in the interweaving of the three dimensions of dialogue in the tutoring practice.

The first component of the model which is presented here refers to dialogue as the basic communication structure defined as a specific way of communication between subjects assuming the roles of a sender and a receiver interchangeably, based on shared meanings (cf. e.g. Fąka, 2007; Garlacz-Sobczyk, 2010; Jaeger, 2019). In listing the features of such a dialogue, one should start with the reflection made by J. Tarnowski (2019, p. 518) and indicate the pursuit of mutual closeness, understanding and cooperation. Irrespective of the fact that the category of pursuit defines the method of dialogue – according to the distinction made by the aforementioned author (Tarnowski, 2019, p. 518) – the process of dialogue (which occurs, since at least one of the components of the method was taken into account), as well as the attitude (involving the readiness to open up to the above-mentioned components) are also present in tutoring. It is important to emphasize that the presence of the method and attitude of dialogue in tutoring is its precondition, while the process of dialogue is being fulfilled during the time in which it lasts. Another feature of the first dimension of dialogue is its purposefulness corresponding to the assumptions of its successive stages. In the course of building the tutoring relationship, setting tutorial dates, exploring developmental needs and formulating process goals, discussing books or topics interesting to the tutee, conceptualising the idea of the essay, as well as giving and receiving feedback, elements occur that allow for the identification of goals attributed to the factual dialogue (learning about the reality, reaching the truth – Frejusz, 2020), information dialogue (gaining knowledge – Jankowska, 2018), technical dialogue (communication – Glinkowski, 2020), or conversation (pleasure – Kita, 1999, after: Garlacz-Sobczyk, 2010). However, this is not a defect, but rather a consequence of its recognition as a basic communicative structure implemented in the academic reality which is oriented at the fulfilment of specific assumptions. Also, dialogue includes the space for being different, for involvement, criticism, individualisation of approaches and views, active listening, self-correction, creativity, reflexivity and subjectivity of its participants. All these elements influence the shape and content of personally significant goals. This dimension of dialogue seems to be close to the experience of both subjects of the process, who, knowing the assumptions of tutoring, decided to participate in it and see it as a method leading to the fulfilment of goals, both personal (scientific and developmental) and those included in the academic didactics.

The axial category for another component of the constructed dialogue model is the relationship between the tutor and tutee having the features of the "I-You" relationship

(cf. Buber, 1992). This relationship is based on the assumption that a person is someone who has the capacity for dialogue and is constituted by dialogue (cf. e.g. Glinkowski, 2011). M. Buber (1992) notes that this type of a relationship is open, direct, verbal, and authentic, and that it does not objectify a partner in the relationship (You). The implementation of academic tutoring is situated in a higher education institution where subjects are assigned specific roles that determine the shape and boundary conditions of the relationships among them. In this context, the thesis reflected in tutoring is that of W.P. Glinkowski (2011, p. 227) according to which “the relationship between the tutor and the tutee never achieve full reciprocity which is inherent in the dialogic relationship.” Also, we have to agree with the justification of this thesis according to which full reciprocity would deprive the tutor of the function of stimulating the educational process. In this context, the above-mentioned author (2011, pp. 228-229) points out that, in a relationship understood in this way, it is advisable to combine two levels of interaction – the superior dialogical-subjective level allowing for the total fulfilment of the “I-You” relationship, and the subordinate monologic-utilitarian one focused on techniques and procedures enabling the fulfilment of goals.

This statement is fully reflected in tutoring, in which the foundation for the fulfilment of any objectives is an authentic, subjective, developing relationship between two subjects. In the light of the above considerations, dialogue occurring in tutoring is not an existential dialogue, but it is undoubtedly a personal dialogue, which is based on trust, authentic presence in the relationship, freedom, and topics related to personal experiences and feelings that are important for the subjects (Frejusz, 2020). In this sense, tutoring is compliant with the approach typical of the ontological pedagogy of dialogue (cf. Matusov & Miyazaki, 2014). Justifying this thesis and referring to the assumptions of the above-mentioned approach, it should be noted that this dimension of dialogue is a value in itself, a pleasure, an (intellectual) challenge, a shared journey towards values, a profound experience leading to dialogical, initially undefined effects that occur alongside those defined and constituting the essence of the first dimension of dialogue. These effects may refer to holistic development, reaching the essence and fulfilling the subjectively interpreted humanity of all the subjects of the relationship, being in a relationship with significant others, seeing the real meaning of academic education, or to pedagogical action.

An element that complements the constructed mosaic model of dialogue in academic tutoring is motivational interviewing. Irrespective of the fact that its origins are related to psychotherapy oriented towards helping patients to change undesirable health-related behaviours by increasing the patients’ inner motivation and overcoming their resistance to changes, it is also possible to apply it within the educational context (cf. e.g. Wells & Jones, 2016). W. Miller and S. Rollnick (2014, p. 524) define it as “a person-oriented way of helping with reference to the common problem of ambivalence towards change”, and indicate four intersecting aspects of its “spirit” that permeate one another: partnership, acceptance, evocation, and compassion. In this sense, dialogue leading to change is based on collaboration; putting the client’s needs first; seeing the client

as an expert on “himself,” his desired change and motivation; appreciating his potential and worth; believing in the deep layers of wisdom inherent in the person and respecting his autonomy; empathy; seeking, affirming and valuing his/her strengths and developmental efforts; and enhancing his/her sense of self-efficacy (cf. Miller & Rollnick, 2014; Wells & Jones, 2016; Widder-Prewett et al., 2017). Regardless of the fact that tutoring is not a therapy, the above assumptions of motivational interviewing comply, in many aspects, with the postulates related to tutoring. Moreover, they inspire tutoring work in many ways – both with students experiencing learning problems and those with clearly defined goals. Taking into account the close link between learning and change, and ambivalent emotions connected with change, the implementation of this dimension of dialogue seems to be inalienable and inscribed in the tutoring relationship, emphasizing, at the same time, the subjectivity of the tutee in this process. In such an approach to dialogue, a tutor is someone who is able to guide the tutee through the process of changes oriented towards the achievement of goals that are important for him/her, as well as to arouse in him/her the motivation for taking responsibility for their own development and the effects of their decisions and actions.

## Conclusion – results of the scientific analysis, conclusions and recommendations

The author of the text characterised her approach to dialogue in academic tutoring in which its mosaic nature is emphasized. Within the framework of the suggested model, in tutoring there are three different and, at the same time, complementary ways of approaching dialogue:

- as a way of communication between the tutor and the tutee, oriented at the fulfilment of established goals;
- as a personal dialogue leading to developmental results exceeding those defined at the stage of constructing the process goals;
- as a motivational interviewing based on the allied interactions of the tutor and the tutee due to which the tutee may discover his/her motivation for changes and overcome ambivalent emotions connected with changes.

The research question also requires reflection on the significance of the dimensions of dialogue and the proportions in which they should occur in the tutoring process. To answer this question by pointing to any of the variants of dialogue would contradict both the assumptions of personalized education and tutoring as its exemplification. Rather, it is reasonable to conclude that each dimension is important, and that the saturation of the tutoring dialogue with them is determined by factors related to the tutee (e.g. his/her needs, personality, goals, motivation, problems), but it can also change over time. In this context, it is necessary to emphasize the potential of the mosaic approach that enables the fulfilment of the assumptions of real education. Such potential results from the diversity and complementarity of its components. Also, it is worth emphasizing the

inalienable role of the tutor as a person who, in an active, reflective and attentive manner, constructs the shape of the dialogue while including in this process the tutee as a partner and not just a participant in the dialogue. It also seems that such an approach is one of the factors preventing the occurrence of the mutual blockade in tutoring, as described by A. Doda (2002). Such a blockade includes the lack of resistance to the assertions formulated by the tutor as a master.

Thus, while formulating recommendations, I find it important to postulate that training agendas should include issues related to the assumptions of personalized education, the mosaic image of dialogue in tutoring, the importance of reflexivity of a tutor as a co-creator of dialogue, as well as the avoidance of routinization, schematization and standardization of this process. It seems, moreover, that the mosaic approach to dialogue in academic tutoring presented in the text inspires research on the subject, not only in terms of the category of dialogue, but also in terms of the importance of tutoring for the development of the tutees' competences, both those having an instrumental dimension and those that are part of the idea of education empowering people to take responsibility for their own development.

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***Being Right or Builing Relationships?  
– Positive Discipline in the School Classroom  
Racja czy relacja?  
– pozytywna dyscyplina w klasie szkolnej***

**ABSTRACT**


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**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The goal is to point out the importance of establishing relationships between teachers and students in view of selected research, to outline the tenets of J. Nelsen's Positive Discipline and to signal the ways of establishing relationships in the school classroom according to this method.

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**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The main problem was formulated as follows: What is the importance of building relationships between students and teachers, and what are the possibilities of applying Positive Discipline in the school classroom? The research is based on the analytical-synthetic method, which was used to analyze the literature on psychology and pedagogy.

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**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** The article refers to research conducted in Poland and other countries that shows the importance of relationships in the educational process, and also indicates the theoretical premises of Positive Discipline as an educational method. I also discuss the implications of this method for school practice.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** Research done in many countries shows that good relationships at school translate into educational success for students. Children and adolescents are more willing to learn when they have a sense of belonging and importance, and when they feel that the teacher likes them. Therefore, Positive Discipline, which is based on the premise that teachers should develop children's social competencies in addition to their academic knowledge and skills is worth implementing in schools to build a good atmosphere between students and teachers.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS:** Positive discipline is a method that is worth implementing in educational institutions when working with students of all ages. Recognizing the importance of interpersonal relations in the educational process, we should organize the space at school in such a way that it becomes a place where everyone satisfies the need for belonging and meaning, and where everyone has the right to make mistakes. It is also worth conducting empirical research to diagnose relationship-building in schools.

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→ **KEYWORDS:** **STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP, POSITIVE DISCIPLINE, SCHOOL, EDUCATION, EDUCATION PROCESS**

## STRESZCZENIE

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**CEL NAUKOWY:** Celem naukowym jest wskazanie na znaczenie nawiązywania relacji między nauczycielami a uczniami w świetle wybranych badań naukowych, przedstawienie założeń pozytywnej dyscypliny J. Nelsen oraz zasygnalizowanie na podstawie tej metody sposobów nawiązywania relacji w klasie szkolnej.

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**PROBLEM I METODY BADAWCZE:** Problem główny został sformułowany następująco: Jakie jest znaczenie budowania relacji między uczniami a nauczycielami oraz jakie są możliwości zastosowania pozytywnej dyscypliny w klasie szkolnej? W badaniach zastosowano metodę analityczno-syntetyczną, która posłużyła do analizy literatury przedmiotu z zakresu psychologii i pedagogiki.

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**PROCES WYWODU:** W artykule odwołano się do wyników przeprowadzonych w Polsce i innych krajach badań ukazujących znaczenie relacji w procesie kształcenia, a także wskazano założenia teoretyczne pozytywnej dyscypliny jako metody wychowawczej. Wskazano także implikacje dla praktyki szkolnej z wykorzystaniem wspomnianej metody.

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**WYNIKI ANALIZY NAUKOWEJ:** Wyniki badań przeprowadzonych w wielu krajach ukazują, że dobre relacje panujące w szkole przekładają się na sukcesy edukacyjne uczniów. Dzieci i młodzież chętniej uczą się, gdy mają poczucie przynależności i znaczenia, a także gdy czują, że nauczyciel ich lubi. W związku z tym pozytywna dyscyplina – opierająca się na założeniu, że oprócz wiedzy i umiejętności akademickich należy rozwijać kompetencje społeczne – jest metodą, którą warto wdrażać w szkołach i wykorzystywać jej narzędzia w celu budowania dobrego klimatu między uczniami i nauczycielami.

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**WNIOSKI, INNOWACJE, REKOMENDACJE:** Pozytywna dyscyplina to metoda, którą warto wdrażać w placówkach oświatowych w pracy z uczniami w każdym wieku. Uznając wagę relacji interpersonalnych w procesie kształcenia, należy tak organizować przestrzeń w szkole, by była miejscem, gdzie każdy zaspokaja potrzebę przynależności i znaczenia, a także w której ma prawo popełniać błędy. Warto również przeprowadzić badania empiryczne w celu zdiagnozowania stanu budowania relacji w szkołach.

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→ **SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:**      **RELACJA UCZEŃ–NAUCZYCIEL, POZYTYWNA  
DYSCYPLINA, SZKOŁA, EDUKACJA, PROCES  
KSZTAŁCENIA**

## Introduction

Recently, when students began to return to school after a long period of isolation caused by the pandemic, there has been a lot of talk about the need to build relationships at school, and to replace classes that test knowledge with integrative classes that develop social skills. Some schools have pledged to abandon tests by the end of the school year. One may ask the question: why would they? After all, school is there to teach and test

knowledge. The outcome of the educational process is supposed to be an educated, creative person. But is this really the point of education? Is this the only point?

D. Goleman (1997) has showed that high intelligence and very good academic performance are not a guarantee of later success: whether private or professional. He writes that

[...] theoretical intelligence, manifested as excellent grades in school, hardly prepares one to fend off adversity or to take advantage of the opportunities that the vicissitudes of fate bring. And yet, even though a high IQ guarantees neither prosperity, prestige, nor happiness in life, our schools and our culture focus on academic ability, while ignoring emotional intelligence, a set of traits [...] that also has great bearing on our individual destinies (Goleman, 1997, p. 36).

The golden mean, as suggested by N. Boszczyk (2020), is to develop three qualities: knowledge, skills and attitudes; in other words, competencies. In order for this process to be effective, one should take care of good relationships at school, as this is largely what motivates people to act. J. Bauer explains that isolation and social exclusion lead to deactivation of the reward area of the brain. To keep this area stimulated, we must provide the student with acceptance and recognition, which are the basis for generating intrinsic motivation (Bauer, 2015).

Researchers have found that students with a stronger sense of belonging to their school, group and teacher are more motivated to attend school and succeed in it (Osterman, 2000). Unfortunately, as the report of the study *Atmosphere at School and Its Importance for Student Performance* indicates, Poland ranks last among the OECD countries surveyed when it comes to teacher-student relations (Przewłocka, 2015). The same study reveals that some students in Poland do not feel a sense of belonging at school. According to the findings, 76% of Polish 15-year-olds feel that they are part of the school, but in most OECD countries this value exceeded 80%. Consequently, Poland was ranked 31st out of 34 (Przewłocka, 2015). This is disturbing data. Therefore, this article seeks to highlight the importance of maintaining, developing, and improving relationships and ensuring that students feel a sense of belonging and importance in their school, all in the spirit of Positive Discipline, a method that was created by J. Nelsen, based on the work of A. Adler and R. Dreikurs.

## 1. The importance of relationships in education

In our discussion of relationships, it is worth asking ourselves the title question of the article, which is more important: being right or building relationships? Which do I – as a teacher – care about more? Do I want to be right more than anything, or do I want to let students learn to solve problems, pursue knowledge and find out, in an atmosphere of respect and safety, that indeed the teacher was right. Or was he or she not after all?

Research by C. Murray and K. Malmgren (2005) shows that the relationship between teachers and students is closely related to how children function in school. J. Hattie (2015) points out that students who like their teacher and feel that he or she likes them acquire knowledge faster and more effectively. In turn, E. Babad (1993), E.A. Davis (2006), H.A. Davis (2003, 2006) and B. Hamre and R. Pianta (2005) make the interesting claim that a friendly, sincerely interested teacher who is responsive to the student's needs is much more effective in the educational process than the very methods he uses. D. Sterna (2016) adds that without a relationship it is difficult to give feedback, which is based on communication, and pointing out the student's strengths and weaknesses. In a space where they feel safer, children can make mistakes and learn from them.

If we feel very uncomfortable, even demotivated as adults, when someone at work holds resentment towards us, assumes in advance that we are reluctant to perform our duties, and questions our competence, what does a student feel in such a situation? Especially that school is the place where he or she spends some of the longest time during the week? Students also want to be needed, noticed, understood, and liked. N. Boszczyk points out that

[...] good relations are the basis for every group that is connected with education: for the students, who are happy to go to school thanks to positive relations, for the parents, who feel that they are noticed and listened to, for the teachers, who can successfully work together and support each other thanks to good relations, for the principal, who finds it easier to manage a happy team of employees, and for other school employees, who also influence the atmosphere at the school (Boszczyk, 2020, pp. 31-32).

W. Welskop (2013) notes that good student-teacher relationships support students in developing social competences and building a cohesive identity. These relationships are especially important for students who are in a disadvantaged emotional, socio-economic or educational situation. It is often the school that can support such children, and equip them with social and life competencies. One method that can help us achieve these goals is Positive Discipline, which will be discussed below.

## 2. Positive discipline as an educational method

Positive discipline has its roots in the 1970s; it originated in the United States and is based on the teachings of A. Adler and R. Dreikurs (Nelsen, 2015). They believed that one of the basic human needs is the need for belonging and meaning. They also argued that parents and teachers should treat children with respect, but also without leniency (Sankowska, n.d.). J. Nelsen, a certified family therapist, contributed to developing the method and naming it (Nelsen, 2015). Although the name itself may have some negative connotations, it derives from the Latin *disciplina* or "learning" (Okoń, 2001). This means that children are in the phase of learning, i.e. assimilating the rules accepted by

all, and this process should take place in an atmosphere of respect for oneself, others and the requirements of the situation in which we find ourselves.

Positive discipline includes five basic criteria:

- firmness and politeness; in other words, respect for the child, ourselves and the situation we are in.
- the need for belonging and meaning: it is this need, according to Positive Discipline, that guides the child's behavior. If it is not satisfied, the child seeks it by following the wrong strategies, such as attention, power, revenge or lack of self-confidence.
- long-term effectiveness: Positive discipline starts from the idea that we should be able to see the goal of parenting, to ask ourselves the questions: what kind of person do we want to raise? What should he or she be like in 20 or 30 years? How can I help him or her now to become that way? Just because we don't see results at the moment doesn't mean that our actions don't have an effect. In order for us to shape a good, happy person with self-confidence, Positive Discipline advocates giving up rewards and punishments, and instead proposes focusing on natural and ultimately logical consequences.
- shaping life and social competencies: Positive discipline focuses on developing in the child the competencies he or she needs to function properly in society, including respect for self and others, problem-solving skills; the ability to recognize one's own emotions and show them appropriately.
- the idea that children are capable: this means supporting children in discovering their potential, abilities and encouraging them to use them properly (Positive Discipline, n.d.).

In conclusion, Positive Discipline focuses on recognizing the beliefs that guide the child. Any difficult behavior of the child is the result of him or her adopting the wrong strategy to satisfy the need for belonging and meaning. The method relies on mutual respect: respect for the child's needs, emotions, and also respect of the adult, of his or her boundaries. In this regard, it calls for giving up rewards and punishments. The cornerstone of the method is effective communication and problem-solving skills, focusing on finding a solution rather than punishing the guilty party. Instead of praise, it recommends using encouragement, which puts the main emphasis on the process, the effort put into action. It is not the successes and the final stage that is most important, but the path one has traveled.

### 3. Ways of building good relationships at school based on Positive Discipline

K. Baryś, a deputy director of one of the schools, said that "a student comes to school with two backpacks. One holds his books and notebooks, while the other holds their whole world: their loneliness, their parents' divorce, their dream of success in sport or their grandfather's illness. The teacher should always keep these two kinds of baggage

in mind” (Redakcja MamaDu, 2018). Many people think that school is about learning what the curriculum prescribes and that discipline programs should support success in this, but imagine a train that travels to its destination on one rail: that’s not feasible. The train needs two rails as do our schools. One rail is school subjects, and the other is social and emotional development. Therefore, we need to make sure that students have a chance to develop cognitively, intellectually, but also socially and emotionally. Thus, the first point from which to start building a good atmosphere and relationship in the classroom is to remember the two backpacks that students bring to our classroom every day and the rails on which the school train travels.

We should remember that a child’s difficult behavior is only the tip of the iceberg. Beneath the surface, it hides unmet needs that are the cause of what we see. J. Nelsen reiterates that misbehaving children are discouraged children (Nelsen, 2015). A student behaves badly when he or she feels bad. In other words, when children lack a sense of belonging and meaning, they behave “badly:” they choose the wrong behavioral strategies for meeting this need. Positive Discipline mentions the following misguided strategies:

- attention – the belief that conditions a student’s behavior is that I only count when I’m noticed or given special treatment. If you take care of me, it means I am needed;
- power – the belief that I can achieve the need to belong and matter when I prove to others that they can’t force me to do anything, I am the one with the power;
- revenge – I feel hurt, so I will make others feel this way. I don’t feel like I belong, so I hurt others because I feel hurt myself;
- lack of faith – I’m not perfect, so I can’t belong, so I’ll convince others not to demand anything from me.

R. Dreikurs stressed the importance of encouragement. He said that without it, children – just like plants without water – will not survive (after: Nelsen 2015). With these strategies in mind, it is worth building relationships in the classroom by looking at the child like at an iceberg: not focusing on his or her behavior, but on what he or she is hiding inside. Each misguided strategy is a different form of message that we send to the student.

A safe classroom atmosphere is essential in building relationships. In such a space, a student can flourish, make mistakes, and take responsibility. When children feel safe, when they feel that they mean something in the classroom, that they are a part of it, they become brave people, who are capable and willing to express their opinions, with the confidence that the teacher will not judge them. Positive Discipline postulates several techniques that help in effective communication, and in creating a safe space for children. The first of these is “Establish a relationship before you fix the situation.” Where there is a relationship, it is easier to deal with problems. Until I am able to look at the other person with respect, I should not fix the situation. Building a relationship is the foundation for building a positive atmosphere in the classroom. Convincing students that teachers genuinely care about them is fundamental to their sense of connection, belonging and meaning.



Be firm and kind at the same time – this is another principle of Positive Discipline. J. Nelsen points out that being firm is a sign of respect for yourself and for the demands of the situation, while politeness is respect for yourself and for the child (Nelsen, 2015). What does being both firm and polite mean in practice? For example, it means wording messages properly. Imagine a student who constantly interrupts a lesson: when the teacher is explaining a difficult task, he or she is constantly talking. According to Positive Discipline, this is a misguided attention strategy, and an appropriately worded message will be “I can hear you and will only be able to respond to you during the break.” There is an element of politeness (“I hear you, I notice you”) and firmness (“I will only be able to respond during the break.”) Being firm and polite at the same time involves setting your boundaries while respecting the child’s boundaries.

Focusing on solutions means that pointing the blame, and making the student feel worse will not improve his or her behavior, nor will it solve the problem. J. Nelsen asks: Do we have to feel worse to start doing something better? Is this logical? Where did this crazy idea even come from, that in order for people to start acting better, we first have to make them feel worse? She suggests that people perform better when they feel better (Nelsen, 2015). Similar conclusions can be drawn from research by K. Ostrowska and J. Surzykiewicz on aggression in children and adolescents. The analysis revealed that how students perceive the school, and how they feel in it, has an impact on their level of displaying aggressive behavior. According to the study, important predictors include the student’s well-being at school, atmosphere of the classroom (how much conflict there is), as well as student-teacher relations (see Ostrowska & Surzykiewicz, 2005). Therefore, instead of punishing students and expecting them to improve, it is better to teach them to look for a solution that will help them choose a better strategy next time. It is also better to make the classroom atmosphere conducive to well-being and to admitting mistakes. Positive discipline uses several techniques in teaching solution-seeking:

- the wheel of choice – each part of the wheel is a way of solving a problem that the child can use when needed. There are ideas from students on how problems can be handled, such as count to 10 to cool down, ask for help, ignore it, say what you need. The wheel of choice can be used in many different ways: each student can have his or her own copy on the desk, or you can place a large copy on the wall in the classroom;
- the peace table – this is a place in the room where students who are in conflict can sit down and calmly, respectfully come to a solution to the problem;
- class meeting agenda – a class meeting is a gathering of students once a week or more often depending on the needs and arrangements, where students have a chance to appreciate everyone, solve problems together, and plan activities for the next week, etc.

Another suggestion that helps build relationships in the classroom is a place for relaxation and the positive break technique. Everyone has moments when they don’t feel their best and need time alone. The same is true for young people: when a student feels down, behaves badly, but needs help to calm difficult emotions, learn to control them and find strategies to solve problems. The positive break is different from punitive isolation.

Punitive isolation is what we deal with when a child is sent to a time-out chair and is usually instructed to “think about their behavior.” Isolating a child from the group comes with a sense of blame, shame and punishment. This is absent in positive break time, when teachers engage students in creating a space that allows them to calm down and feel better, while also teaching them to self-regulate. Students have a say in what the space looks like: there can be pillows, headphones with music, coloring books, plasticine, squishies, etc. Children are not sent there as punishment, but are instead encouraged to use this space if they feel it will help them calm down and feel more comfortable. One rule for a positive break could be to let the student go to the place of relaxation whenever they feel the need. Another option is to offer choices: “What would be helpful for you right now: adding this to the agenda for a class meeting, or going to the place of relaxation?”. Creating, naming and deciding when to use it puts control of the entire process in the hands of students.

Students often want to be in charge of things, to make their own decisions. This is not always in line with the needs and capabilities of schools. This is where the limited choice technique comes in handy. Thanks to it, the student has a sense of agency, a sense that his or her opinion counts, while, on the other hand, the choice remains within the boundaries set by the teacher. The possibility of choice should focus on the fact that whichever path is chosen, it is accepted by the teacher. When part of the responsibility for the educational process is transferred to the student, he or she has a sense of empowerment and importance.

These techniques and principles of building relationships in the classroom are not the only ones. Positive discipline offers a number of specific ways to work with students, which are worth tapping into.

## Conclusion

Building close relationships in the classroom is a process that requires a lot of time. The effects may not be visible immediately, but it is worth keeping in mind the image of the person we want to see in the future and doing everything we can to equip him or her with both life and social competencies. As demonstrated in this article, a positive relationship between the teacher and the student is a prerequisite for an effective educational process, for stimulating the motivation to learn, and the desire to come to school. Relationships create a good school atmosphere, in which students are not afraid to make mistakes or be evaluated. A. Cichocki notes that “a friendly atmosphere has a profound impact on students’ motivation and attitudes in the learning process. The more the teacher’s strategy is oriented towards the student and his/her development, the more the atmosphere in the classroom is conducive to learning” (Cichocki, 2009, p. 366). Positive discipline is a method of education that offers practical guidance on how to build such an atmosphere, and how to nurture relationships. It is therefore worth exploring to discover that relationships are more important than being right.

Let's conclude this discussion with the words of W.J. Crocker, which are meant to inspire the reader to reflect on these issues. They point out the importance of the school in the process of forming the competencies of students, and in building the beliefs of children and young people about themselves:

If this is not a place where tears are understood,  
Where do I go to cry?  
If this is not a place where my spirits can take wing,  
Where do I go to fly?  
If this is not a place where my questions can be asked,  
Where do I go to seek?  
If this is not a place where my feelings can be heard,  
Where do I go to speak?  
If this is not a place where you'll accept me as I am,  
Where can I go to be?  
If this is not a place where I can try to learn and grow,  
Where can I be just me?

(Crocker, n.d.)

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***The Role of Law in the Development of Parental Culture (with Particular Emphasis on the Principle as an Educational Leader)***  
***Rola prawa w rozwoju kultury rodzicielskiej (ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem dyrektora jako edukacyjnego przywódcy)***

**ABSTRACT**

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**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** To show the role of law in shaping parental culture.

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**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The influence of law on the formation on parental culture based on the analysis and synthesis of the output of pedagogical, legal and management sciences.

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**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** The starting point for the discussion is the claim that the main educational actors must work together as partners. I argue that, based on the idea of partnership, parental culture is an important element of building relationships between school and home. I also examine the legal, social and political conditions for the functioning of a public school and the dual model of education management that is currently implemented in Poland. Legal solutions are seen as factors that can interfere with the process of community involvement. For this reason, I look at a solution that has been proposed in the science of law (pedagogy of law): the use of the educational impact of law through legal education among parents. The final part indicates the areas in which the school principle as an educational leader can exert influence.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** To determine the possibility of applying the pedagogical approach of community involvement in schools. This solution is based on the findings of legal sciences on the development of civil and responsible society, represented by parents of students.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The recommendation emphasizes the importance of the legal context of community involvement.

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→ **KEYWORDS:** **COMMUNITY, EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP, PARENTAL CULTURE, LEGAL AWARENESS, EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

## STRESZCZENIE

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**CEL NAUKOWY:** Ukazanie roli prawa w kształtowaniu kultury rodzicielskiej.

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**PROBLEM I METODY BADAWCZE:** Wpływ prawa na kształtowanie się kultury rodzicielskiej na podstawie analizy i syntezy systemowej literatury.

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**PROCES WYWODU:** Punktem wyjścia do rozważań jest teza o konieczności współdziałania podstawowych środowisk wychowawczych. Następnie przywołana zostaje kategoria kultury rodzicielskiej jako istotnego elementu budowania opartych na idei partnerstwa relacji na linii szkoła – dom. Równoległe skonfrontowana ona zostaje z krajowymi prawno-ustrojowymi uwarunkowaniami funkcjonowania szkoły publicznej i realizowanym obecnie dualnym modelem zarządzania oświatą. Jako propozycję neutralizacji hamującego proces uspołecznienia wpływu rozwiązań normatywnych wskazano rozwiązanie proponowane w nauce prawa (pedagogika prawa) – wykorzystania wychowawczego wpływu prawa poprzez rozwijanie edukacji prawnej wśród rodziców. W końcowej części wskazano obszary, w których dyrektor jako edukacyjny przywódca może tego typu oddziaływania podejmować.

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**WYNIKI ANALIZY NAUKOWEJ:** Ustalenie możliwości realizacji pedagogicznej ścieżki uspołecznienia w warunkach oświatowych z wykorzystaniem dorobku nauk prawnych dotyczącego rozwoju obywatelskiego i odpowiedzialnego społeczeństwa, reprezentowanego przez rodziców uczniów.

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**WNIOSKI, INNOWACJE, REKOMENDACJE:** Sformułowano rekomendację dotyczącą wagi formalnego kontekstu uspołecznienia.

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→ **SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** **USPOŁECZNIE NIE, PARTNERSTWO EDUKACYJNE, KULTURA RODZIELSKA, ŚWIADOMOŚĆ PRAWNA, PRZYWÓDZTWO EDUKACYJNE**

## Introduction

The concept of parental culture originates in pedagogy and is defined in terms of education studies. However, it should be noted that it also has formal and legal determinants. These can have a supportive effect, by creating a favorable context for parental activation; or they can have a suppressive effect. When it comes to these issues, the assessment of the legal regulations that govern the Polish educational system is not conclusive. There is no doubt that the current legal acts provide for an education model based on the ideal of community involvement in school. Its implementation, however, faces a number of obstacles, both in terms of how the law is created and of its quality; and in terms of the mentality of Polish people who are convinced of their lack of agency and who display their dominant attitudes of passivity and entitlement.

The law can provide a strong basis for changing reality towards building relationships based on educational partnership and making parents allies of the school, provided

there is legal awareness among the potential parties to this relationship. For even the best written letter of the law cannot influence actual social relations if the citizens do not know the law, internalize it or apply it to their daily life situations. In other words, legal consciousness is fundamental to this process.

## Parental participation

The starting point for this discussion is the issue of the relationship between the basic educational settings (home and school). Fundamentally, these are shaped differently and operate under different principles, but have the common goal of the child's development and educational and personal success. To make this goal plausible, we need a consistent educational message, i.e. a situation in which teachers (school) and parents (home) work together. Where there is cooperation, there is a legitimization of the efforts of each party to shape a positive attitude towards learning, but more importantly to create optimal conditions for self-realization in accordance with one's internalized values (Epstein, 1992, after Mendel, 2009, p. 19). Today, parent-school cooperation seems to be the basis for thinking about valuable education for children, as well as a beneficial solution for the broader community, the family and the local government (Mendel, 2009, p. 185). The discussion on this subject is part of the trend in pedagogical debates on community involvement in the school.

When analyzing community involvement in the educational context, it is necessary to situate this concept as a frontier for such fields as pedagogy, sociology of education and educational policy. This means reducing the influence of the state or administration on school in favor of subordinating it to the influence of self-government authorities, broadening the access of various social groups to education, and satisfying some social needs through education (Gozdowska & Uryga, 2014). In this view, socialization is associated with the principles of democratization of education, because these efforts are addressed at citizens who exercise control over educational institutions at the level of local communities, participate in their management and influence the educational process (Hernik, 2018, p. 6).

The literature on the issue of community involvement in schools falls into two categories: the first includes concepts that relate to the entire system (the macro-scale perspective); whereas the second includes model proposals that relate to elements of the system (the micro-scale perspective) (Mendel, 2009, p. 201). In all concepts, the relationship between teachers (school) and parents (home) is a defining characteristic as well as an indicator of the degree of community involvement. Another important aspect of these concepts is the school's relations with the local community and the local space. A special role is given to parents and teachers as the actors who are most responsible for the successful development and education of young people (Winiarski, 2013, p. 39).

The relationships between the subjects of education (the student, the educator and the parents) are fundamental to the success of the micro-socialization process. They

should forge relations of educational partnership, which are characterized by working together towards a common goal that is accepted by all parties, a positive emotional attitude towards each other, mutual respect, cooperation and shared responsibility (Miler-ski & Śliwerski, 2000, p. 144). The concept of educational partnership is based on the theory of Joyce L. Epstein (the theory of overlapping spheres of influence). According to this notion, educational partnership is a kind of alliance between the family, school and their closest community, which is forged in order for the child to realize the maximum of his or her potential (Epstein, 1987, 1995, cited in Mendel, 2009, p. 122). This idea has found advocates in Poland, as it fit into the framework of educational reform during the period of political transformation (Mendel, 1998). As a result of legislative changes in the area of running and managing public educational institutions (decentralization of education) and the establishment of parents' councils as an obligatory body in each school, community involvement became a normative goal with formal and legal conditions. For this reason, a comprehensive analysis of this process requires framing it in terms of macro-politics. As for the factors that determine community involvement in a particular institution, parental culture should be considered an important element in building school-home relations in the spirit of educational partnership.

It is one of the three (along with teacher and student culture) components which co-exist in the school space for building an alliance based on mutual recognition of each other's rights and obligations to the child; getting to know each other; effective communication; jointly building relationships based on respect, understanding and trust; and parental participation in decision-making about the child and the school (Mendel, 2007, p. 7). Both pedagogical and psychological studies on the developmental or learning patterns of children (Więckowski, 1993) argue for the legitimacy of this approach. It is one of the most current and important tasks, both in terms of educational activity and implementation of social policy (Mendel, 2007, p. 73). As it is a new approach, it needs to be nurtured and developed, because the success of community involvement in the school cannot occur without it (Mendel, 2009, p. 221; Mendel, 2020, pp. 92-99).

## The principal as an educational leader

It is the factors that make up educational policy that determine the extent to which the idea of community involvement is applied in school education. At the most basic level (micro-policy), it is formed by elements that strengthen intra-school self-regulatory mechanisms for the development of procedures which are based on interaction and team and individual decision-making. This decision-making, in turn, is connected with the competencies of those who work in the school. The existence of these elements is associated with the distribution and enforcement of power, and depends mainly on the principal who is responsible for creating educational micro-policies in the institution he or she manages (Nowosad, 2014, p. 209; Rosalska, 2016, p. 16). The formation of parental culture and increasing this group's legal awareness within a specific institution is a task



that falls within the principal's sphere of activity and within the philosophy of his or her internal policy. This is due to several reasons.

First of all, it should be emphasized that the principal, as a mandatory body of an educational institution, is an element of the system that cannot be ignored. Because of his or her status, it becomes difficult to activate interaction, which is the central focus of educational partnerships, when the circumstances do not favor voluntary participation and full egalitarianism of the actors or the partnership (Winiarski, 2013, p. 27). This raises the question of the role of the school leadership in shaping the parental culture in the spirit of educational partnership.

In defining this role, it is important to keep in mind the phenomenon of dual subordination: the principal must meet both the requirements of educational supervision and, if the institution is run by the local government, the expectations of the municipal authorities. The complex nature of these conditions and dependencies, occurring despite the legislative changes in educational law that were initiated in the post-1989 period, still persists and has a major impact on the management of the institution and the degree of its openness to social expectations and needs.

Another thing that determines the way in which the school is managed and run is the open catalog of powers (and also duties) of the school principal (Ustawa z dnia 14.12.2016 r. Prawo oświatowe, 2016, Article 68(1)). The tasks of the principal are diverse and entrenched in laws that govern relations other than administrative (including labor, financial or civil relations). This translates into a complex legal situation of the person in charge of an educational institution, whose role is not limited to the management of pedagogical and educational affairs, but also includes efficient management of the institution with further consequences (especially in the area of legal liability).

The principle's position, which combines the traditional and the managerial model, is unique as demonstrated by the nature of their dependencies, and the range of their competencies (but also other factors, such as the method of their election and dismissal). He or she is both a manager and a leader, that is, he or she functions in a dichotomy of roles. In a school based on the idea of social participation and the principles of educational partnership, the role of the leader is crucial. He or she launches and develops activities geared towards community involvement in general and community involvement in the school leadership process in particular.

The idea of modern leadership in education is associated with the concept of educational leadership. This means adapting the vision of effective management to the specific conditions of the educational system. The ongoing discussion of this concept is part of a broader trend of changes and reforms intended to improve the quality of schools and entire educational systems (Mazurkiewicz, 2015, p. 23). Examples of this interest include studies on the importance of educational leadership that have been carried out on a European and global scale. They argue, for instance, that effective school leadership is one of the most important factors shaping the general conditions for teaching and learning, stimulating the aspirations of students, parents and staff and providing them with support, and thus contributing to better educational outcomes. If we are to defend

a publicly funded education system, we need to focus on educational leadership that responds to the expectations of a democratic society. Democracy requires people's participation in governance; respect for the input of participants is a core value and means prioritizing equality and participation over control (Collinson & Cook, 2007, p. 137). Progressive qualitative change in the sphere of education towards democratization and the formation of civil society depends on the functioning of such institutions.

To properly define educational leadership at the national level, one must take into account the aforementioned formal-legal context and social-political considerations, including those related to the dichotomy of the principal's roles. Something that is particularly symptomatic of the school director's power is special institutional authority. It is defined as the sum of the powers of the institution's bodies and employees over the users. It is the ability, inherent in administrative law, for an institution to apply, within the limits of applicable law, orders and coercion towards the users. Special institutional authority is a form of state authority (Homplewicz, 1984, p. 170). As noted in the literature, this power does not derive from the discretion of the school authorities, but from the provisions of school law that regulate the operation of the school. These regulations are binding on school bodies and legally demarcate the institutional authority vested in them, including assessments of the legality of each act of this authority (Homplewicz, 1984, p. 170). The powers of the principal as a school authority are one of the domains of this authority. The existence of this power – which the principal is formally obliged to exercise – means that it becomes necessary to modify the concept of educational leadership to incorporate the top-down, official asymmetry in the relationships between the actors who are involved in the child's education process.

In order to meet these needs, we can apply the approach of leadership that is useful for a particular organization or community (Mazurkiewicz, 2011, p. 28). According to this approach, all model proposals should be treated as a framework for constructing leadership that responds to the needs of a particular organization and takes into account its specific characteristics; in other words, leadership that is developed in context (Fullan, 2006, p. 15). This may refer not only to a cultural, geographic, or temporal context, but also to a legal one. It is the latter that makes it necessary to further analyze and define the two basic forms of interaction, parenting and co-management, which, according to the theory of intersecting influences, are the cornerstones of educational partnership.

## The role of the principal in shaping parenting culture

In theoretical terms, parenting includes activities that lead to a mutual understanding of the roles (of the student in the family, and of the son, daughter in the classroom) (Mendel, 2009, p. 198). The school, when working together under this model, should demonstrate an effort to gain the deepest possible understanding of parents (including their rights and responsibilities) and the family, its uniqueness, strengths and weaknesses,

etc. In turn, the family is expected to show concern for the fullest possible support and satisfying the needs of the child who is a student.

Scholars who deal with this form of interaction put forward a suggestion to categorize potential opportunities aimed at joint action. The idea is to provide and develop knowledge: 1/ about each other's rights and responsibilities; this knowledge allows for mutual respect of each other's autonomy and enables more effective cooperation in all areas of school life; 2/ about the child at home and school; the exchange of information about the child, his or her current situation, school and home learning, and health and safety allows mutual understanding and brings us closer to a common goal. Awareness of one's legal status, both in teachers and parents, is fundamental at this level of building partner relationships (Mendel, 2002, pp. 191-193). As the literature stresses, "If we are to understand each other, we should know our legal status."

Co-management, on the other hand, means the participation of parents in decision-making about students and the school. It is a direct consequence of "type one" interaction (parenting), i.e. the realization of parents' rights and responsibilities, which takes place at the level of organization. In addition, co-management provides opportunities for each of the other types of interaction (parenting, communication, volunteering, home learning, working with the community) to develop. If the school implements this form of co-management, it means mainly involving parents in school decision-making and activities focused on choosing leaders and representatives among the parents (Mendel, 2002, pp. 199-200).

In both forms of interaction, the principal can engage in various forms of activity. One of them is raising legal awareness in this group. The key concept here is law, the educational functions of which have been widely discussed in the literature on the sociology of law and legal pedagogy. The statement that:

[...] law generates an invaluable educational potential, capable of steering many people towards constructive, creative and responsible actions and attitudes [...] Positive law is, of course, not a sufficient normative base for the organization of social life, as it remains secondary and relative to morality, religion, culture and philosophy, but even law that is somewhat imperfect is a necessary element of social life (Zamelski, 2019, p. 126).

Law has another function, which is fundamental from the perspective of partner relations in education, and of shaping social relations. In view of the above, both the legal norm and the attitudes represented towards it are determinants of community involvement in education.

When we consider different attitudes to the law, we should pay special attention to indifference to the law in the context of parental culture. It is often viewed as a result of ignorance, or "the eternal enemy of the rule of law" (Nieborak, 2021, p. 268). One of its causes, which affects the quality of democracy in the state, may be negligence in the shaping of the legal consciousness of society, which is a variety of social consciousness, formed by different attitudes, beliefs, ideas, views or values. We can raise this type of awareness through legal education, involving all sorts of projects addressed to various

social groups, which aim to increase their knowledge and understanding of the law. It is an element of civic education (Nieborak, 2021, p. 269) and a factor that contributes to the development of a responsible society.

Research on legal awareness in Poland mostly focuses on general knowledge,<sup>1</sup> while studies among educational subjects are incidental and fragmentary. Research carried out locally (Poznań) among teachers in the late 1990s provided interesting findings in this area. It revealed that teachers exhibited legal nihilism. "This nihilism [...] was one of the most salient features of the totalitarian regime. Despite 10 years of political transformation, the legal awareness of the respondents remains very low, and perpetuates the state of things from the previous era. The benefits of knowledge about the law are still not very well understood, and, in view of the above, there is no habit of ordering school life according to rules that are established together beforehand in order to obey them later" (Dąbrowska-Bąk, 1992, p. 179). Having identified this problem in the parent community, we should diagnose the needs for legal education that would raise their legal awareness, and, consequently, shape institutional order and good governance in the school. These attitudes promote the development of parental culture, and, just as importantly, limit the repressive aspects of the institution and the arbitrariness of the administration's decisions (Dąbrowska-Bąk, 1999, p. 179).

The principal, on the other hand, should fulfill his or her role in the legal education of parents by following the paths that educators have charted of increasing community involvement in the school and in the school management process. One of the suggestions is to concentrate on forms of interaction between the two educational settings (home and school), which enable building partnerships, especially in the area of parenting and co-managing of the institution within the limits of the law.

Through internal policies, the principal can shape parental culture and contribute to increasing the level of informed participation in the child's school education. Efforts focusing on legal education can bring tangible results such as increased interest among parents in basic forms of interaction. From a theoretical point of view, this proposal is an attempt to build on the achievements of educators (family pedagogy, social pedagogy), specialists in the field of organization and management sciences (educational management) and lawyers (educational law, legal pedagogy), as part of an interdisciplinary discussion on the essence, legitimacy and ways of democratizing social life and empowering individuals in different spheres of life. At the same time, it still takes into account the existing legal and constitutional conditions, including the nexus of regulations that define the complex status of the principal of a Polish school.

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<sup>1</sup> In the period before the political transformation on the state, the following authors wrote about legal awareness among Polish citizens: Koralewicz, J., & Ziółkowski, M. (1990a, 1990b). Today, the studies of the Supreme Audit Office (NIK) on the conditions of providing free legal aid provide the most current data: Najwyższa Izba Kontroli (2018).

## Conclusion

Building a culture in the school space that is based on parental participation requires not only teacher activism (something that M. Mendel, for example, has written extensively about), but also an institution managing the school that is oriented towards cooperation and dialogue. This point of view extends the formula that has been used in the pedagogical literature for interpreting educational partnerships from the perspective of the three-actor community of teachers-parents-students. Because of the position of the principal in a school, it is impossible to overlook him or her in the process of developing the institution towards better community involvement. In particular, the powers of the principal, which often have an authoritative and decision-making character, are a legal obstacle. The principal, in most relations with other educational entities, acts in the role of the dominant party, and has a whole arsenal of legal means to enforce employee compliance. With these legal realities in mind, instead of overlooking (which is symptomatic in the pedagogical discourse on educational partnership) the presence and authoritative position of this mandatory body, it is necessary to follow the lead of experts in educational management by underlining the importance of the concept of educational leadership. From this point of view, it is possible to make the postulates of developing the various forms of cooperation of educational subjects more realistic, while forming legal consciousness through activities advocated by e.g. the pedagogy of law.

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# *Pursuit Eye Movements in the Context of Speech Development in Children with ASD Ruchy śledzące oczu w kontekście rozwoju mowy dziecka z zaburzeniami ze spektrum autyzmu*

## ABSTRACT

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**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The main goal of the presented research was to assess the pursuit eye movement of five- and six-year-old children with ASD in the context of speech development.

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**RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The research concerns the oculomotor activity of children with ASD in the situation of tracking slowly moving objects. The research questions refers to the relationships between the tracking movements and the dynamics of the speech development of the research participants, and to their current abilities in this area. The eye tracking method was used in the research.

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**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** We presented the basic information about the vision process, with particular emphasis on the role of the pursuit eye movement. We also described the research on the importance of eye movement in the process of acquiring communication skills, building social relationships and effective functioning.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** The obtained results indicate the correlation between the independent variable (the pattern of smooth pursuit presented by the children taking part in the research), and the dynamics of disorder development and the level of speech development in the children with reference to the analyses of other authors.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The conducted analyses revealed strong and moderate correlations between the variables and made it possible for the author to confirm the main hypothesis that the eye movements while tracking slow-moving objects in all directions are characterized by variability related to the dynamics of speech development in early childhood and the current abnormalities in this area among the research participants. The obtained results indicate the necessity to start vision training in children with ASD as early as possible.

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→ **KEYWORDS:** **AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER, EYE TRACKING, SMOOTH PURSUIT, LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION, EARLY INTERVENTION**

## **STRESZCZENIE**

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**CEL NAUKOWY:** Celem prezentowanych badań była ocena wolnych ruchów śledzenia dzieci pięcioletnich i sześciolletnich z ASD w kontekście rozwoju mowy.

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**PROBLEM I METODY BADAWCZE:** Problematyka badawcza dotyczy aktywności okoruchowej badanych dzieci z ASD w sytuacji śledzenia obiektów wolno poruszających się w polu widzenia. Sformułowane pytania badawcze odnoszą się do związków pomiędzy ruchami śledzącymi a dynamiką rozwoju mowy badanych, jak również aktualnymi umiejętnościami badanych w tej sferze. W badaniach zastosowano technikę eye trackingu.

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**PROCES WYWODU:** Zaprezentowane zostały podstawowe informacje dotyczące procesu widzenia, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem roli ruchu śledzącego. Dokonano prezentacji badań na temat znaczenia ruchu gałek ocznych w procesie nabywania umiejętności komunikacyjnych, budowania relacji społecznych i skutecznego działania.

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**WYNIKI ANALIZY NAUKOWEJ:** Przedstawiono wyniki dotyczące korelacji pomiędzy zmienną niezależną (wzorzec wolnego ruchu śledzenia prezentowany przez badanych) a dynamiką rozwoju zaburzenia oraz poziomem rozwoju mowy badanych w odniesieniu do analiz innych autorów.

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**WNIOSKI, INNOWACJE, REKOMENDACJE:** Przeprowadzone analizy ujawniły silne i umiarkowane korelacje pomiędzy zmiennymi i pozwoliły na potwierdzenie hipotezy głównej, zakładającej, że zapisy ruchu oka podczas śledzenia wolno poruszających się obiektów we wszystkich płaszczyznach odznaczają się zmiennością związaną z dynamiką rozwoju mowy we wczesnym dzieciństwie oraz prezentowanymi obecnie przez badanych nieprawidłowościami w tym obszarze. Uzyskane wyniki wskazują na konieczność jak najwcześniejszego podjęcia treningu widzenia u dzieci z ASD.

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→ **SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** **ZABURZENIA ZE SPEKTRUM AUTYZMU (ASD), AKTYWNOŚĆ OKORUCHOWA, OKULOGRAFIA, KOMUNIKACJA JĘZYKOWA, WCZESNE WSPOMAGANIE ROZWOJU DZIECKA**

## Introduction

Current classifications identify clinically significant and consistent abnormalities in social communication and interaction in children with autism spectrum disorders as one of two basic diagnostic criteria for the disorder (DSM-5, 2013). The analysis of literature on the subject indicates that communication-related abnormalities in children with ASD are varied and may involve language and speech development, as well as non-verbal communication (Winczura, 2013, 2018). The results of the research using the eye-tracking method are certainly important for understanding the nature of variability and differentiation in the difficulties presented (Bleszyński et al., 2019). Measuring eye movement and assessing its quality in situations related to social interaction provides information that is important not only for explaining the reason for the difficulties experienced by children, but also for pedagogical practice, as it may enable the proper selection of goals, methods and therapeutic aids to work with a given child.

The aim of the research presented in this article was to assess the patterns of oculomotor activity of five- and six-year-old boys with ASD when tracking slow-moving objects in the context of speech development, as well as to make recommendations for the practice of early development support for children with autism spectrum disorders.

The research problem was formulated in the form of the following question:

What patterns of slow tracking movements in the horizontal, vertical and oblique planes are exhibited by the children with ASD studied, and what is the relationship between the identified patterns and speech development?

The main hypothesis:

Eye-movement records when tracking slow-moving objects in all planes are characterised by the variability related to the dynamics of speech development in early childhood and the current abnormalities of the research participants in this area.

Also, the following specific problems were determined:

1. Is there a relationship/what is the relationship between the children's current level of functioning and the dynamics of development of disorder-specific abnormalities in the area of speech in early childhood?

Hypothesis 1. – open.

2. Is there a relationship/what is the relationship between the tracking movement patterns exhibited by the children and the developmental dynamics of disorder-specific abnormalities in the area of speech in early childhood?

Hypothesis 2. – open.

The present study assesses the children's oculomotor activity with two primary independent variables:

- the disorder dynamics marked by the time of the occurrence of the first symptoms (Jaklewicz, 1993),
- the current level of the participants' speech development.

## Method and tools

The study involved 43 five- and six-year-old boys with autism spectrum disorders, whose intellectual development was determined as normal on the basis of psychometric tests. Due to the changes taking place in the development of visual skills with age, and the level of the severity of symptoms of the autism spectrum, according to the DSM-5 classification, the children were divided into two groups (Table 1).

Table 1. Structure of the analysed group according to the age

Group	Age (months of life)	The number of the research participants (n)
I	48-59	19
II	60-71	24

Source: The author's own research

The boys were also divided according to the severity of their current symptoms, according to the DSM-5 classification, and according to the time of the occurrence of the first abnormalities in the area of speech development (Jaklewicz, 1993) (Table 2).

The information about the participants' functioning was obtained using the child version of the Autism Quotient Questionnaire (Auyeung et al., 2008), which was completed by the children's teachers. In addition, we carried out the analysis of the documentation describing the child's development in terms of the occurrence of the first symptoms of abnormalities in speech and communication development, as well as the participants' current skills in this area. Such analysis was supplemented by the interview with the teachers in order to clarify the data in this area.

Table 2. Structure of the analysed group of children by the level of functioning and the time of the occurrence of the symptoms of the disorder, with the division into age groups

Time of the occurrence of the symptoms \ Level of functioning	Early development of autism		Late development of autism	
	I group	II group	I group	II group
	n	n	n	n
I	–	–	–	3
II	7	11	1	1
III	11	9	–	–

Legend:

Level 1. Requiring support

Level 2. Requiring substantial support

Level 3. Requiring very substantial support

Source: the author's own research

The method of testing was applied in the research (Rubacha, 2008).

The empirical material was collected using the myGaze eyetracker, which is a device that enables real-time tracking and recording of eye activity. The device is equipped with training software.

The task included in the “Attention and looking” training module, which involved tracking objects moving across the screen in the vertical, horizontal and oblique planes, taking into account the rising and falling movements of the eye, was used to assess slow tracking movements. The children taking part in the research were given the opportunity to choose the figure and the character they wanted to watch. In the case of figures, they also chose their colours. The test task not only identifies eye movement patterns, but it is also related to visual attention and discrimination of visual stimuli.

## The main part

According to modern scientific knowledge, the process of vision is related to the formation of representations of reality in the mind and, at the same time, to effective action (Milner & Goodale, 2008). All the visual perception, including eye movements, which are responsible for the formation and maintenance of the image representation on the retina, is essential for the process to work properly.

One of the basic movements of the eye are slow tracking movements: smooth, associated (synchronous) eye movements whose primary function is to stabilize the moving image on the retina. Slow tracking movements are responsible for changing the direction of gaze. During the initiation of a tracking movement, all the available information about the movement is averaged, and the cognitive factors, including attention, anticipation and learning, can influence the performance of the tracking movement (Leigh & Zee, 2006).

The ability to follow moving objects with one’s eyes develops between the second and fourth months of life and undergoes intensive development during the first three years of life, making it possible to freely explore the dynamically changing environment and to direct attention to those elements of it that will be subjected to cognitive analysis. Already in the first weeks of life, a child is able to follow with their eyes slowly moving objects located at a short distance from their eyes, observing the movement first horizontally and then vertically. Between the second and third months of age, a child begins to look at the objects and persons moving within his or her field of vision (Oleszczyńska-Prost, 2011). It is worth mentioning that one of the abilities that is particularly important from the perspective of the development of social interaction and communication skills is following others with one’s gaze (Białecka-Pikul et al., 2014).

The results of the eye-tracking studies among people with autism spectrum disorders demonstrate a relationship between the participants’ speech development and eye movement patterns (Stagg et al., 2014). The differences in information processing, revealed through scientific analysis, can significantly affect the daily communication and functioning of people with ASD. The data from the eye-tracking analyses conducted in the areas of social interaction and speech and language development are consistent and

indicate, among other things, the inability of the children with ASD to detect important social cues, such as words or phrases that condition proper understanding of a situation or a task (Howard et al., 2019).

In the typical course of development, the child uses innate mechanisms of preference for faces and human voices to allow for the maturation of the social brain and development of the language system and speech acquisition. Patterns of development of social deficits suggest that early, limited exposure to social stimuli, which may result not only from environmental conditions but also, as is the case with ASD, from the child's inability to recognize social cues, leads to delayed or atypical development of the area related to social adaptation, as well as communication and language skills (Klin et al., 2002). This fact was reflected in the research of H. Jaklewicz (2000) indicating the relationship between the image of speech and communication disorders in children with ASD and the dynamics of the disorder development. The author distinguished two groups of children depending on the period in which the abnormalities characteristic of the disorder are manifested:

- I. children with early development of autism (before the 12th month of life),
- II. children with late development of autism (after 12th month of life).

In case of the children belonging to the first group, poor eye contact with their significant caregiver, the lack of emotional compliance, impoverished vocalisation, stereotypical behaviour and atypical exploration of objects, as well as the lack of understanding of socially meaningful gestures, are observed in the first year of life. What is typical of them is the inability to follow a person or an object with their eyes, as well as (at the end of the first year of life) the lack of imitation plays. The lack of the correct response to one's own name and the lack of interest in other people were considered the most diagnostic. Speech does not usually develop naturally in these children, or if it does, it is significantly delayed.

Late autism, on the other hand, develops before the age of three, but, after a period of the child's normal functioning, it goes through subsequent phases of speech development. However, after a time of proper development we can notice a significant regression and withdrawal from social contacts (usually between 15 and 24 months of age). Non-verbal communication also becomes impoverished (Winczura, 2013).

Taking into account those characteristics, as well as the assumptions of the social deficit development pattern, it can be assumed that there is a relationship between the patterns of tracking movements and the speech development of the children. The course of such development is also influenced by the time in which the first symptoms of the autism spectrum disorder appear.

In the literature on the subject, the research related to slow tracking movements in the discussed group of children is not broadly represented. Scharre and Creedon (1992) found that most children with ASD are unable to perform the task of following slow moving objects. Y. Takarae and colleagues (2004), on the other hand, noted that in case of slow tracking movements there were no differences in the latencies between people with ASD and those from the control group.

However, abnormalities are revealed in the second phase of the movement (the so-called closed loop). The research participants with ASD have difficulty performing the first saccade towards grasping the target in a precise manner and following it, both in the right-to-left movement and in the opposite direction. The obtained results indicate that the movement efficiency was related to praxis. It was also found that the difficulties associated with the performance of this movement were related to the inability to predict the trajectory of the movement based on the data gathered during the performance of the tracking movement (Park et al., 2021).

## Research results

The author's own research revealed varied patterns of oculomotor activity among the children tested when following slowly moving objects on the screen with their eyes. Considering the age of the children, one could have expected that the tasks given to them were quite easy. However, none of the children, despite their great interest in the activity and the positive emotions revealed during the test, performed the tracking movement correctly. For both horizontal and vertical movement, the revealed patterns did not differ regardless of the direction of movement. For the majority of the participants, the tasks involving tracking along oblique lines proved to be the most difficult, especially in the case of the rising motion (23 people did not attempt to track the object). In all the task series, the most attention-activating stimulus was the movement of the object itself, especially when it was associated with a sound (e.g. a dragon breathing fire and making a murmur). It turned out that the children did not achieve the age-appropriate skill of free gaze movement in all planes of motion, which, taking into account the normative development, is already revealed in the first months of life and then improved during the first three years of life (Oleszczyńska-Prost, 2011).

Based on the analysis of the heat maps, the most common difficulties revealed during the survey were identified:

- the lack of the fluency of movement,
- fixations appearing in different points of the screen, unrelated to the object or around the object,
- maintaining the gaze at the point in which the object appears and failure to make the tracking movement,
- maintaining the gaze at the point where the object has made an additional movement.

It was also found that, instead of the tracking movement, the saccades ending with random fixation points usually located at the edges of the monitor appeared (cf. Bleszyński et al., 2019).

This data may confirm the importance of cognitive factors such as attention, anticipation, and learning for the course of movement (Uwe, 2002). Also, they may reflect the research participants' problems related to praxis.

In order to answer the research questions, the relationships between the quality of object-tracking task performance and the developmental dynamics of the disorder, as well as the children's current level of speech, were analysed. Spearman's non-parametric R test was used to assess the correlations between variables.

Table 3 shows the results regarding the correlation between the quality of slow tracking movements and the developmental dynamics of autism spectrum disorders.

Table 3. The Spearman's rank correlations between the quality of movement and the dynamics of the development disorder

Tracking movement	Dynamics of the disorder development
	<i>rho</i>
Eye movement in the horizontal plane	0.5936
Eye movement in the vertical plane	0.39413
Eye movement in the oblique plane, falling	0.49750
Eye movement in the oblique plane, rising	0.34555

$p < 0.05$

Source: the author's own research

Table 4. includes the results of the correlation for the dependent variable and the current level of the children's speech development.

Table 4. Coefficients of the Spearman's rank correlations between the quality of movement and the current level of the children's speech development

Tracking movement	Level of speech development
	<i>rho</i>
Eye movement in the horizontal plane	0.727
Eye movement in the vertical plane	0.683
Eye movement in the oblique plane, falling	0.675
Eye movement in the oblique plane, rising	0.854

$p < 0.05$

Source: the author's own research

The results indicate a positive correlation between the variables studied. In the case of the correlation between the quality of movement and the developmental dynamics of the disorder, the highest correlation concerns movement in the horizontal plane, which is the first to be revealed in development, influencing, among other things, the ability to trace the movements of people within the child's field of vision. In turn, the data presented in Table 4. reveals a strong positive correlation between the research participants' current level of speech development for all types of tracking movements. The analysis of



the available materials on the child development shows that as many as 19 of the children who took part in the research do not communicate verbally; 21 boys use speech to a limited extent (14 use only single words, while 7 were found to have direct and/or deferred echolalia); and 2 children communicate verbally through sentences, but, in both cases, according to the kindergarten teachers, there are deficits in the use of non-verbal messages and in initiating contact.

The analysis of the collected empirical material also made it possible to establish a positive correlation between the child's current level of speech development and the time of the occurrence of the first symptoms of the disorder.

## Research conclusions

The children's construction of adequate representations of the surrounding world is limited both by the difficulties associated with the intentional control of the environment through the eyes (the sensory level) and the categorization of data which takes place on the level of perception and association. In most cases, the eye-movement records indicate the predominance of bottom-up information processing, so the information about the features of the stimulus, rather than about the object as a whole in a specific context, was primarily received.

The analyses indicate a positive relationship between the children's level of functioning characterised by the quality of social communication and language skills, and the patterns of tracking movement. Based on the presented analyses, we may confirm the main hypothesis assuming that the quality of the tracking movement is connected with both the current level of speech development and the course of the disorder itself, the dynamics of which is determined by the time of occurrence and intensity of the first symptoms related to speech and communication development (Jaklewicz, 1993; Winczura, 2013). The existence of a link between speech development and oculomotor activity in people with autism spectrum disorders is also indicated by the reports from eye-tracking studies (Stagg *in.*, 2014; Howard *et al.*, 2019), but these focus primarily on saccade and fixation movements.

Revealing the strong correlation between the pattern of tracking movements and the dynamics of speech development of the research participants in their first three years of life (hypothesis 2), confirms the importance of fluent tracking movements in the child's acquisition of skills related to communication, especially language, and to social-emotional functioning in the surrounding reality. In the case of children whose first symptoms of the disorder appear early, *i.e.* before the age of 12 months, there is an impoverishment of social interactions, which, as indicated by researchers, leads to further development of social and communication deficits (Klin *et al.*, 2002; Cierpiatowska & Lubińska-Kościółek, 2017). This fact confirms the existence of a positive correlation between the current level of speech development of the children and the time when the first symptoms of the disorder occur (hypothesis 1).

The research was aimed not only at identifying and describing the patterns of tracking movements as relevant to the speech development of children with autism spectrum disorders, but also at formulating recommendations for pedagogical practice that are important from the perspective of the process of supporting the child's development.

Taking into account the significance, in the first months of life, of the oculomotor activity for both cognitive and socio-emotional development, it would be appropriate to consider extending the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders to include the study of visual activity. Early visual training, including eye-tracking exercises introduced into the daily interactions between the child and the significant caregiver, can be extremely important for the child's further functioning when there is a risk of autism spectrum disorders or when the first alarming symptoms occur. While formulating the recommendations for the process of supporting visual development in the home environment, particular attention should be paid to the selection of toys compliant with the correctness of the visual process, as well as the organisation of the child's environment in a way that ensures the optimum level of sensory information.

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***A Marriage of Happiness  
and Religious Beliefs in a Nutshell  
Relacyjna bliskość szczęścia  
i przekonań religijnych w zarysie***

**ABSTRACT**

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**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The aim of this article is to examine the relationship between happiness and religious beliefs.

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**THE RESEARCH PROBLEMS AND METHODS:** The research problem is contained in the question: What is the relationship between happiness and religious beliefs in the light of the theoretical-cognitive analysis? The literature on the subject was analyzed.

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**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** The analysis of the literature relevant to the subject began with selected approaches to happiness, among others in relation to positive psychology. Next, the researcher referred to category – religious beliefs, and finally, the relationship between two the analyzed categories was examined. The process concluded with forensic attention that was focused on the conclusions resulting from this analysis.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** Happiness, determined by many factors, including essentially a person's personality and the events that occur in his /her life, is linked to the religious beliefs. Religious people tend to be happy more than those without beliefs. Thus, it can be implied that there is a correlation between the categories: religious beliefs and happiness.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The conducted analysis of the research subject, eliciting aspects of positive psychology such as happiness, the sense of meaning in life, indicated an important factor shaping positive attitudes towards the life trajectory, which are religious beliefs. This issue should be dealt with in the future in the context of shaping a mature human personality, which is undoubtedly influenced by religious beliefs and their quality considered in the category of the quality of spiritual life, and the quality of life, in general.

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→ **KEYWORDS:** **HAPPINESS, RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, RELIGION, POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY, QUALITY OF LIFE**

## STRESZCZENIE

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**CEL NAUKOWY:** Celem artykułu jest zbadanie rozumienia związku szczęścia z przekonaniami religijnymi.

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**PROBLEM I METODY BADAWCZE:** Problem badawczy zawiera się w pytaniu: Jak przedstawia się związek szczęścia z przekonaniami religijnymi w świetle przeprowadzonej analizy teorio-poznawczej? Przeprowadzono analizę literatury przedmiotu.

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**PROCES WYWODU:** Analizę literatury przedmiotu zapoczątkowało dokonanie wybranych ujęć szczęścia, między innymi w odniesieniu do psychologii pozytywnej. Następnie odniesiono się do kategorii „przekonania religijne”, wreszcie do zbadania związku pomiędzy analizowanymi kategoriami. Wreszcie uwaga została skupiona wokół wniosków wypływających z tejże analizy.

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**WYNIKI ANALIZY NAUKOWEJ:** Szczęście, uwarunkowane wieloma czynnikami, w tym zasadniczo osobowością człowieka i wydarzeniami, które pojawiają się w jego życiu, jest powiązane z przekonaniami religijnymi. Osoby religijne wykazują większą tendencję do bycia szczęśliwymi. Zachodzi zatem korelacja pomiędzy przekonaniami religijnymi a szczęściem.

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**WNIOSKI, INNOWACJE, REKOMENDACJE:** Przeprowadzona analiza przedmiotu badań wydobytła aspekty psychologii pozytywnej, takie jak między innymi szczęście, poczucie sensu życia, wskazała na ważny czynnik kształtujący postawy pozytywne wobec trajektorii życiowej, jakim są przekonania religijne. Tymże zagadnieniem warto zająć się w przyszłości w kontekście kształtowania dojrzałej osobowości człowieka, na którą niewątpliwie mają wpływ przekonania religijne, ich jakość rozpatrywana w kategorii jakości życia duchowego, jakości życia w ogólności.

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→ **SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:**      **SZCZĘŚCIE, PRZEKONANIA RELIGIJNE, RELIGIA,  
PSYCHOLOGIA POZYTYWNA, JAKOŚĆ ŻYCIA**

## Introduction

This article examines the relationship between happiness and religious beliefs based on different religious traditions such as Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam to mention a few. Various writers have long claimed that happiness and personal beliefs are linked. But a notion that happiness and religious beliefs are not linked is predominantly a more modern assumption based on the recent works of psychologists (Czapiński, 2022). In the current study the basic supposition that happiness and different religious traditions are linked is examined through a number of viewpoints that coincide with such an assumption. Various studies on different religious beliefs across cultures tend to confirm that people who have religious beliefs are happier than those who are less likely to indicate any association with practiced religion. It also appears that belonging to a particular religious tradition influences people's lifestyle which in turn influences their level of happiness. It is also claimed that people who do not identify themselves with any

religious beliefs would seem to follow lifestyle that might include the use of excessive alcohol, soft, or hard-drugs and a preponderance to overindulgence. This article generalizes that there is a positive relationship between religious beliefs and happiness since these beliefs influence happier and healthier lifestyle among religious people.

## Happiness in Relation to Religious Beliefs. In brief

The notion of happiness needs explanation in terms of emotional and mental states that brings the widely understood sense of well-being. The first aspect of happiness elicits the positive emotions that enable the person experience fulfilment accompanied by feeling the high pleasure reflected in the attitude of joy and contentment (Ferguson, 2002). The second one is connected with such mental state which often influences a person who immerses into own self in order to better understand what happens inside and who can make the true judgement about own overall well-being. It is a need to mention here that building attitude of well-being in the perspective of achieving happiness, needs to make effort on reinforcing the will and choosing an appropriate way (metho) to be happier (Lyubomirsky at al., 2011). These aspects of happiness should be seen in the context of determiners influencing it. Sonja Lyubomirsky, Rene Dickerhoof, Julia K. Boehm, Kennon M. Sheldon see the meaning of genes, personal qualities, and particularly, mental activities oriented towards increasing the state of happiness, among which there is the positive -optimistic thinking (Lyubomirsky at al., 2011).

Considering the issues enlightened above, we can see that obtaining the state of happiness is complicated and requires multifaced perception. There are many approaches towards happiness; religious, biological, philosophical, economic and psychological that impose applying a diverse scope of scientific methods in attempts to find answers to questions about happiness and ways it happiness can be achieved.

According to the aim posed in this paper, the main reflection has to be put on the correlation between happiness and religion, or religious attitude to life that can be named the happy life aligned with well-being. Daniela Villani, Angela Sorgente, Paola Ianello, and Alessandro Antonietti claim that "Spirituality and religiosity have been found to be positive predictors of subjective wellbeing, even if results are not altogether consistent across studies" (Villani al et., 2019). Thus, we can imply that deep spiritual inner life tailored tightly with religious beliefs perform a great role in achieving the mature state of happiness that there is nothing with hedonistic experience. Religious thinkers from various belief traditions and philosophers consider happiness to be more than just simple emotions like joy; these thinkers see happiness reflected in the quality of life and/or health of the individual. Happiness is a complex term that can mean very many things to different people (Brülde, 2010).

Religion and happiness have been central to pursuing research studies over time; religious structures seeks to address the components contributing to happiness (Chittister, 2011). The relationship between religion, religious beliefs, and happiness gains a new

perspective from social point of view that reveals the deeper sense of prayer taking place in religious community Prayer understood as developmental spiritual activity may facilitate obtaining the state of happiness. Hence, religion can positively influence people's happiness and positive thinking by their participation in social – communities' events and by the support that individuals may receive from varied religious affiliations (Lafitte & Ribush, 2002). People who profess religious beliefs may better understand psychological factors that have an impact on happiness, and this helps them deal with stress effectively (Lewis & Cruise, 2006). Religious beliefs may have an influence on people's behaviour and lifestyle; according to some scholars religious people try to avoid habits that may have an adverse affect on their lives like substance abuse (More & Gwatkin, 1796). Such beliefs tend to have a positive impact on the emotional and mental state of the majority of religious people as substance abuse has often been associated with depression and overall poor health (Levin, 2013). In *Handbook of Religion and Health* Koenig explores the state of happiness in Americans who had given up their religious beliefs; however, based on his survey, the writer concluded that there was little relationship between unhappiness and the giving up of religious beliefs (Koenig et al., 2001). Koenig's results published in his book were cited by Lachman and Kosmin in their survey. They concluded that in general terms people without religious affiliations are more likely to suffer from depression than those with religious beliefs (Kosmin & Lachman, 1993). The results of Koenig and of Kosmin and Lachman can be disputed but in traditional psychology researchers tend to agree that people who are more religious are likely to be happier than those who are not associated with any religious beliefs (Popova, 2010).

Lagatum Prosperity Index has had published research results that confirm that there is a positive link between people's wellbeing, religious beliefs and their affiliations; people who confess that God plays an important role in their lives are on average more satisfied and content with their lives (Legatum Institute, 2015) in spite of their income or age; the acceptance of positive influence of their religious beliefs seems to play an important role in their happiness (Ridington & Ridington, 2013). This index can support the thesis that religious people appear to feel happier than those who do not admit themselves to any religious beliefs and do not affiliate to any religious community. This thesis relates with some research mentioned already, although, there are arguments that the ties between religious beliefs and religion seem to be weak, as many believers who rely on scripture (Sharpe, 2005), often do not deploy the mature understanding of the religious principles into the religious life, even within the religious community. However, in numerous peer reviewed journals researchers tend to agree, that in general that there is a strong relationship between religious beliefs and commitment including such signs as happiness, positive self-esteem and sense of wellbeing (Snow & Trivigno, 2016). They also indicate that religious commitment fosters lowering the levels of delinquency, hypertension, and depression (Sung-Gun, 2010). Analysis by NEC of the topic across many journals, resulted in the conclusion that psychological well-being (happiness, morale, and satisfaction) was associated with a positive commitment to religious beliefs and activities with less substance abuse or depression (*History*, n.d.).



Different religions have different beliefs about happiness. In Buddhism, for example a major teaching's theme is happiness. Happiness is closely associated with meditation. Buddhists who go through different stages of suffering learn how to achieve a high state of peace through meditation. It helps them to achieve peace and happiness. According to Buddhism, happiness can only be achieved by avoiding all forms of human desires (Wangu, 1993). An everyday form of happiness like peaceful relations with others are recognised as worthy means of achieving happiness (Toussaint & Friedman, 2008). Buddhists beliefs proclaim compassion and empathy towards others which in turn leads them to loving other beings. In Judaism happiness reflected in serving God. The Bible states that people should be joyful and happy when serving Him (De Lange, 1986). This belief gives Jewish people 'motivation to achieve happiness in their daily activities and when serving God; this in turn might help them to better manage depression. In Catholicism the main reason and goal of existence is happiness; it is believed that God's plan for humanity is for people to be resurrected not in the mundane life but after death (Veenhoven, 2009); and we are to experience ultimate happiness not in this world but after (Pegis, 1950). Believers tend to experience feelings of well-being thinking about the goodness of the Divine.

## Conclusion and implications

In conclusion, the recent research in understanding the relationship between happiness and religious beliefs has revealed many factors and components of happiness that have a great impact on the state of well-being. What is more, the thesis that religious beliefs tend to be the main reason in achieving happiness (Diener & Seligman, 2002) has appeared significant for promoting the spiritual activities in human development that can be fostered in the process of creative-transformative formation (Szymańska, 2017). The true and valuable correlation between happiness and religious practice can lead to build a new quality of life perceived in personal and social dimension. Therefore, while happiness has an effect on the quality of life that one lives, it seems that people with positive-optimistic attitudes usually tend to achieve a higher level of happiness than pessimists. In the light of article contents, it is necessary to add that religious beliefs occur to be very important for achieving the level of happiness (Pursuit of Happiness, n.d.) and their well-being expressed in self-esteem, life satisfaction and optimism connected with the hope. Nevertheless, despite the fact the people do have the choice not to have any religious affiliations, it is important to underline the negative implications of not possessing or belonging to any religious affiliations. Though happiness can be viewed in different contexts, people from different religions experience the same value of happiness. Finally, positive psychology, a dynamic and constantly evolving area of traditional psychology stresses a holistic approach to the understanding of happiness of the human being. It includes the elements shaping positive psychology, as well as its internal processes of change (Czapiński, 2022).

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