

## INTERCULTURAL PEDAGOGY AND EDUCATION – THEORIES, SOCIAL EXPERIENCES AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE<sup>1</sup>

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### **Pedagogika i edukacja międzykulturowa – teorie, doświadczenia społeczne i praktyka edukacyjna**

Pedagogika odpowiada na podstawowe pytania o sens życia, o funkcjonowanie i wspieranie człowieka w jakże skomplikowanym świecie. Sytuacja wielokulturowości jest dostrzegana w środowiskach oświatowych. Prowadzone są liczne badania pedagogiczne nad zróżnicowaniem kulturowym, nad kulturami pograniczy, edukacją grup mniejszościowych, procesami kształtowania się tożsamości kulturowej, problemami edukacji regionalnej, wielokulturowej i międzykulturowej. W praktyce oświatowej dostrzec można przejawy krystalizowania się nowego spojrzenia na sprawy edukacji w społeczeństwach wielokulturowych. Stopniowo postępuje krystalizacja pedagogiki międzykulturowej, która należy do ważniejszych nowych subdyscyplin pedagogiki współczesnej na świecie, a w ostatnim dziesięcioleciu prężnie rozwija się w Polsce. Znaczącymi impulsami do jej rozwoju są procesy integracji europejskiej i aktywność polskich pedagogów. W opracowaniu tym przywołam teorie i nurty w postrzeganiu i zajmowaniu się edukacją międzykulturową, wskażę doświadczenia społeczne i praktykę edukacyjną w tym zakresie.

**Słowa kluczowe:** pedagogika, edukacja międzykulturowa, pedagogika „spotkania i konfliktu kultur”

#### **Instead of introduction**

Pedagogy makes use of the whole knowledge of education and its contexts and it generates this knowledge itself - yet with the orientation towards explaining educational facts and creating conditions for triggering changes which are socially demanded and beneficial for individuals. Pedagogy comprises socially appreciated philosophy, psychology and sociology of education with biomedical, anthropological, ethnological, political and even technical knowledge of man and human development. By integrating the knowledge of other branches of science which focus on education only fragmentarily, it answers fundamental questions about the sense of life, about functioning and supporting man in the sophisticated world.

The aspect of multiculturalism is noticed in educational environments. Numerous studies are carried out on cultural differentiation<sup>2</sup>. The research into borderland cultures, education of minority groups, the processes of shaping

<sup>1</sup> The project has been financed by the National Science Centre.

<sup>2</sup> Under scientific supervision of Professor Tadeusz Lewowicki, since 1990 the Chair of General Pedagogy of the Institute of Education at the Faculty of Ethnology and Education in Cieszyn has carried out interdisciplinary studies on ‘Social, pedagogical and cultural conditions of the development and education of the young in the borderland’. The research has been done with participation of the representatives of other universities (Białystok, Gdańsk, Opole, Poznań, Warszawa, Zielona Góra), who in 1994-2004 were members of the Social Team for Research into Borderland Culture and Education and currently of the Team of Culture Pedagogy and Intercultural Education at the Committee of Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

cultural identity or the problems of regional, multi- and intercultural education has already had a rich tradition. What seems to be well-known are the reports of the studies conducted in 1992-2012 under the supervision of Tadeusz Lewowicki<sup>3</sup>, Jerzy Nikitorowicz<sup>4</sup> and Zenon Jasiński [1,2]. In 2001 the 4<sup>th</sup> National Pedagogical Convention of PTP (Polish Pedagogical Association) was held under the title *'Pedagogy and education in the face of new communities and differences in the uniting Europe'*, at which an attempt was made to indicate the developmental directions of intercultural education. In his introductory speech, Tadeusz Lewowicki emphasized that 'intercultural education is a constructive response to many important challenges for societies of the contemporary Europe – also for the Polish society. First of all, intercultural education, like education in general, aims at and should be a tool for bringing out the best sides of humanity' [3, s. 39]. The message addressed then to university pedagogues and teachers is still topical – and maybe even more significant than at that moment. All of us have to learn how to live in the postmodern world, among the variety of ethnic cultures, violent social changes and mass migration. An alternative peaceful solution simply does not exist.

What takes place gradually is the crystallization of intercultural pedagogy, which is a major new subdiscipline of modern world pedagogy and which has been developing dynamically in Poland over the last decade. This development has been duly facilitated by the processes of European integration and the active involvement of Polish pedagogues. Thus, on Tadeusz Lewowicki's initiative, the Team of Culture Pedagogy and Intercultural Education was founded in 2004 at the Committee of Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences [4, s. 279-281] and in 2008 the Association for Supporting Intercultural Education (SWEM) was established<sup>5</sup>. The basic tasks of the Team of Culture Pedagogy and Intercultural Education at the Polish Academy of Sciences are: enhancing the development of this discipline nationwide, integrating academic centres and scientific environments, solving particular research problems. The Association for Supporting Intercultural Education aims at: supporting the development of the Polish scientific thought concerning intercultural pedagogy; carrying out studies on intercultural education; supporting educational initiatives involving multi- and intercultural issues; undertaking activities related to education in the culturally differentiated environment; integrating the environments which deal with intercultural education<sup>6</sup>. Within two years SWEM organized five scientific conferences, which was done in cooperation with the Chair of General Pedagogy of the Institute of Education at the Faculty of Ethnology and Education in Cieszyn (part of the University of Silesia in Katowice), the Teacher Training Academy of the Polish Teachers Union in Warsaw, the Chair of Intercultural Education at the

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<sup>3</sup> In the series 'Intercultural education' 45 works have been published so far.

<sup>4</sup> Publications edited by Jerzy Nikitorowicz, which have been issued since 1995 by the university publishing house 'Trans Humana'.

<sup>5</sup> The Association was registered on 30th November, 2008. Its first general meeting was held in 2009 in the Teacher Training Academy of the Polish Teachers Union in Warsaw, at which the Board was elected: Chairman – prof. Jerzy Nikitorowicz; vice-Chairperson – prof. UŚ Alina Szczurek-Boruta; Treasurer – prof. UwB Mirosław Sobiecki; Secretary – dr Jolanta Muszyńska; Board Member - prof. Tadeusz Pilch; Honorary Chairman SWEM – prof. Tadeusz Lewowicki. Currently, the Association has 44 members.

<http://www.swem.uwb.edu.pl>

<sup>6</sup> Quoted from: the Statute of SWEM.

University of Białystok, the Institute of Pedagogical Sciences of the University of Opole, the Podlasie branch of the 'Common Poland' Association in Białystok<sup>7</sup>. SWEM has made an attempt to present the current state of school education with Polish as the teaching language in European countries in the form of report which has taken into account almost all countries (excluding Austria) where there are large groups of Poles or people with Polish roots. The introduction to this study says that 'The genuine care for education and culture of particular communities is in fact the initial condition of intercultural education, of shaping identities enriched with elements of different cultures - more and more frequently multidimensional identities which combine the feeling of local or regional identity with national or European one' [5, s. 12].

Several perspectives can be distinguished in perceiving and dealing with intercultural education: anthropological current, philosophical-political one, sociologism, pedagogism.

In the anthropological perspective, intercultural education should aim at 'the mutual enrichment of cultures, closeness of people and shaping the commonly recognized worlds of values and attitudes of acceptance and tolerance for unlikeness' [6, s.161]. It should facilitate 'such development of man which makes one a fully conscious and creative member of the family, local, regional, religious, national, continental, cultural or global – planetary community and which makes one capable of active self-fulfillment of one's own unique and lasting identity and separateness' [7, s. 934].

Intercultural education in the perspective of cultural colonialism occurs in two orientations – the liberal and radical one [8, s. 415-423]. On one hand, it is related to shaping competences which enable the representatives of cultural minorities equal functioning in the society. On the other hand, intercultural education in this approach requires from the majority a distance to their own culture, which is first of all associated with ceasing to accept the system of values characteristic for their own culture as 'obvious' and unquestionable.

T. Lewowicki points at the orientation of reflection associated with sociology and sociological interpretations of life of multicultural communities, undertaken by pedagogy researchers exploring the issues of intercultural education. Besides, he draws attention to the research attitude and educational behaviour patterns called pedagogizm [9, s. 303-308].

### **Intercultural pedagogy as the pedagogy of 'meeting and conflict of cultures'**

The term 'intercultural pedagogy' started to appear in pedagogical literature in the German language in mid-eighties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The name stresses that the clients and addressees are not any more only minorities but also the majority. As a consequence, the subject matter broadened substantially and new aims and tasks emerged. In compliance with the new programme, deficiencies are not mentioned any longer and 'irreducible difference' is used instead as a basic category of postmodernism.

The objects of pedagogical interest, thought and activity are children, youth

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<sup>7</sup> Conferences organized with participation of SWEM: *Spoleczne, kulturowe i edukacyjne konteksty pedagogiki międzykulturowej* (Cieszyn-Ustroń-Jaszowiec, 2009); *Nauczyciele – Europejczycy w przestrzeni międzykulturowej* (Kamień Śląski, 2009); *Edukacja międzykulturowa – dokonania i perspektywy* (Olecko-Sejny, 2010); *Pedagogika międzykulturowa wobec wykluczenia społecznego i edukacyjnego* (Cieszyn-Ustroń, 2010); *Polonistyka za granicą. Tradycje i perspektywy* (Białystok, 2010). Quoted from: SWEM Annual Report 2009/2010.

and adults – not only school education but also non-school teaching or permanent education. As M. S. Szymański [10, s. 101-102] writes, intercultural pedagogy ‘is in a considerable fraction atheoretical on principle, oriented towards concrete practical action; though, it is the furthest from viewing itself as a practical science providing only efficient tools for implementing politically imposed aims’.

‘Pedagogy of the conflict of cultures’ is associated with the British and Dutch concepts of anti-racist education, the so called cultural studies and critical pedagogy. It has been developing mainly in the United States, where the term ‘intercultural pedagogy’ is not used, giving way to ‘multicultural education’ [11, s. 31-40].

The essence of pedagogy based on the meeting of cultures, which came into being in the Federal Republic of Germany, is aptly reflected in the maxim ‘what I can learn from other cultures and what the representatives of other cultures can learn from me’. What is called for is that direct personal contacts and particular experiences acquired in daily life should be the starting point and the most important source of such learning [10, s. 101-102].

The search for solutions to the problems occurring in multicultural societies is directed towards intercultural education or pedagogy, which is viewed as the hope for preparation for life in multicultural community and for shaping the feeling of multidimensional identity that harmoniously comprises the regional, national, European and global identity.

In the European dimension, education should focus on four aspects which will constitute life-long pillars of each individual’s knowledge: to learn in order to know (to acquire the tools for understanding); to learn in order to act (to have influence on the environment); to learn in order to live together (to participate and cooperate with others in various dimensions of human activity); and to learn in order to exist [12, s. 85-97].

Undoubtedly, learning in order to live together is one of key challenges to be undertaken by modern education. The world today often becomes the world of violence and conflict. So far, education has not done much to change this. It seems that this task can be fulfilled by intercultural education as its significant feature is the trans-cultural nature of the processes of mutual familiarization, getting closer and ‘being together’ – integration [13, 14, s. 25-31].

Education should fulfill two goals which seem mutually exclusive – to broaden the autonomy and identity of the individual and to promote the openness to ‘Others’ and their cultures [15, s. 193-205]. The contradictory character of these aims seems to be noticed by intercultural pedagogy. However, their apparently contradictory nature is emphasized because, as Jerzy Nikitorowicz writes, ‘culture shapes certain horizons which can close in a particular spiritual canon and the consciousness of separateness, or they may also open to Unlikeness and can develop owing to borrowings. This is the education which helps to go beyond that canon, to cross cultural borders’ [16, s.17].

By creating conditions for the acquisition of cultural, social or personal identity, intercultural education does not juxtapose the processes of individualism and collectivism [17, s. 214-225]. The superior value is respect and cooperation and a conflict solved through negotiation might sometimes become a means [14, s. 25-31].

The general task of intercultural education consists in building the intercultural society by providing knowledge and perfecting skills which are helpful or indispensable in solving problems triggered by cultural differentiation of the society. As T. Lewowicki [13,s. 27-33] notices, intercultural education may become a chance for the birth of democratic education which would ensure

successful development of all groups in spite of social stratification and conflicts of interests. Intercultural education can be considered in the categories of practice in the situation of the meeting (dialogue) of cultures, or also – in particular conditions of the environment in which it is implemented – in the categories of educational practice in the situation of the conflict of cultures [6, s. 21-35]. Therefore paradoxically, intercultural education may be perceived as preparing for facing conflicts, antinomies or ambivalence which exist in social space. Conscious experiencing of individualism and commonwealth gives rise to the dialogue which will become the base for agreement and compromise [18, s. 71-79].

It seems useful to have a deeper insight into intercultural education as an educational theory – a particular strategy of teaching/learning how to go beyond one's own culture [19, s. 44-68]. This strategy, as the general philosophy of teaching, comprises not only the values on which the educational system is based but also its own concept, the assumptions of the pedagogical school of thought. By referring to, for instance, social constructivism, it might enhance the development of strategic activeness<sup>8</sup> of both learners or their parents and teachers. Among other things, the constructivist approach applied into intercultural education involves: situational learning (learning depends on the context); the social context of knowledge (learners create and verify their constructs in the dialogue with other individuals and the society); cooperation (sine qua non for discussion which fixes the consensus and verification of knowledge). Despite their different appeals, cognitive constructivism and social constructivism indicate some common areas in describing the process of teaching and learning. The world is recognized of authentic artifacts rooted (set) in authentic situations. While analyzing various contents, learners construct final interpretations of their observations, which in a particular way reflect their personality. Applying the standpoint of social constructivism allows for viewing intercultural education as a dynamic, transcultural strategy of teaching/learning. People learn in interactions with the surroundings, they construct their own knowledge and make use of the already acquired knowledge. From this perspective, learning is a self-controlling process of handling the conflict between the existing personal models of the world and the outside information.

The constructivist way of thinking about learning and teaching how to learn to go beyond one's own culture is not free of significant and topical problems, neither does it protect from numerous doubts. On the contrary, constructivism is a set of concepts and statements dealing with the limitations of human cognition, with its subjectivism, with the difficulties in reaching the ultimate truth and with changeability. In the contemporary world filled with cultural conflicts, opposing paradigms of knowledge, global flow of people and information, ideological differences and potential ways to dialogue, what should be developed is both the skill of accepting contradictions (which are an essential feature of life) and the omnipresent ecology (people constitute the homeostasis which is equally important as the liberal opening to others).

### **Ending**

The survival of mankind depends on the shape which the modern society will apply. At the international arena, the need for opening of each contemporary culture

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<sup>8</sup> This refers to cognitive strategies concerning activities performed on the material which constitutes the learning content and finally leads to its acquisition, as well as to meta-cognitive strategies which aim at controlling, monitoring and regulation of cognitive and affective strategies.

to all other cultures is well-recognized (The General Conference of UNESCO in Nairobi, Kenya, 1976; simultaneously – the conference of the General Assembly of the United Nations). The significance of intercultural education for maintaining and developing the unity and variety of the European communities is also acknowledged. The issue is highlighted in the documents of the Council of Europe, e.g. *Declaration by the European Ministers of Education on intercultural education in the new European context*, Athens, Greece, 10-12 November, 2003, session 21; *the Permanent Conference of the European Ministers of Education. Intercultural education: managing diversity, strengthening democracy* [20, s. 87-88].

In the face of numerous challenges of modern times, apart from the indispensable adjustment to changes resulting from the transforming professional life, education constitutes a chance for the implementation of the ideas of peace, liberty, social justice, and it plays a leading role in the permanent development of the individual and the society [12, s. 16].

In the context of my earlier considerations, the needs and expectations of multicultural societies directed to teachers and intercultural education can be indicated. These are: educational support for the process of identity shaping; appropriate preparation of teachers of all school types and levels and of non-school educational institutions which will make them more sensitive to the pedagogy of mutual recognition and engagement, to learning the neighbour culture, to enhancing mutual understanding and preparing for better use of the common heritage; undertaking appropriate actions on the level of curriculum design, school management and teacher training in intercultural education; the description of dysfunctions and crises in the field of migration and undertaking social work in the culturally differentiated environment.

Intercultural education as a care for commonwealth-based development of societies offers a paradigm of coexistence, dialogue, agreement, negotiation and cooperation. It requires openness to other communities and their culture. This openness ought to be manifested in mutual providing and accepting values characteristic for different cultures. The tasks of intercultural education are always present in human life as they result from everyday situations and social contacts. However, it seems that in the popular understanding these issues are not comprehended and fulfilled concordantly with the leading ideas of intercultural education.

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**ТВОРЧЕСКОЕ РАЗВИТИЕ ЯЗЫКОВОЙ ЛИЧНОСТИ  
СПЕЦИАЛИСТА ВОЕННОГО ПРОФИЛЯ В УСЛОВИЯХ  
МОДЕРНИЗАЦИИ СОДЕРЖАНИЯ ИНОЯЗЫЧНОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ**

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