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CONTENT

EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

You have got another issue of the English version of the e-Pedagogium journal. This issue is varied in topics just as much as the field of education can be. The articles prove a high specialist level of their authors. The wide range of fields offers new information for specialists as well as a very convenient aid for students. The articles can be used as study material but also as specialist text in English for development of communication competences.

I wish many contented readers to the last issue of year 2011.

Prof. PhDr. PaedDr. Miloň Potměšil, Ph.D.

"HUMANITATIS OFFICINAE"?[1]
RETHINKING COMENIUS' NOTION OF EDUCATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Jan Hábl

Abstract

This paper introduces the contours of Jan Amos Komenský's anthropology in context of his education. Komenský is internationally known as Comenius. He was a Czech 17th century Brethren bishop, philosopher and educator who is celebrated especially for his timeless didactic principles, which earned him the epithet "the teacher of nations". The goal of this paper is to present and analyse the anthropological assumptions of his educational project, which is to be *humanitatis officinae*, that is, a "forging-place of humanity". In the context of dehumanising tendencies of the present society, pedagogical *humanisation* seems to be an urgent issue in contemporary education. This paper attempts to contribute to the discussion concerning the pedagogical *humanisation*.

1 The problem of dehumanising humanisation

Humanity suffers a constant tendency to "became inhumane", observes Komenský[2] again and again in his works. If human being is to become truly humane, he or she needs to be led towards humanity, to be humanised. Hence the well known and often quoted Komenský's phrase "school as workshop

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[1] This term comes from the Komenský's Latin *Didactica magna (Great Didactic)*, in the Czech Didactic he uses "dílna lidskosti", which some English writing Czech comeniologists translate as "workshop of humanity". M. W. Keating (1896) translates it as "forging-place of humanity". Since Keating is a native English speaker, I will use his translation.

[2] Komenský is internationally known as Comenius. I will in this article use the Czech version, however, for I believe it will be closer to the assumed community of readers.

of humanity". But what it means to be human? What is human being? What he or she ought to be? Salt ought to be salty. River ought to be clear. Knife ought to be sharp. But what about human being? Who he or she ought to be? And how he or she ought to become what he or she ought to be?

This paper attempts to answer some of these questions and thus contribute to the contemporary discussion concerning pedagogical *humanisation*,[3] which is considered to be one of the key principles of transformation in the contemporary (not only) Czech educational system. The need for "humanisation" arises from the specific situation in which Czech pedagogy, and the school system in general, finds itself today. On one hand, the totalitarian heritage, which still exercises its influence, needs to be dealt with and overcome. The dehumanising tenets of communist totalitarianism have left deep traces upon Czech pedagogy. On the other hand, new social and cultural challenges, having dehumanising and depersonalising potentials, have emerged with the fall of totalitarianism. They are related to a specific ambivalent dichotomy within our contemporary western society. On one hand, we are witnesses to unprecedented advances in science and technology which have provided extraordinary possibilities and potentials for the progress of civilisation – even allowing overabundance. On the other hand, the newly-developed society faces gigantic ecological, economical, political, social and other problems; millions of people are living in poverty on the edge of society, starving and dying without any medical care. Relying on foreign sources as well as on her own observation Jarmila Skalková states: "The technocratic optimism of the 50s and 60s is being re-evaluated today. It appears that science and technology, as they have functioned in the resulting society, bring about a number of antihuman symptoms: objectification (*zvěcnění*) of human beings, one-sided development and neglect of spiritual needs. The key problematic motifs are the alienation of personality under the pressure of bureaucratic structures, a mass consumerist culture, and technocratic progress." (1993, p. 46–47) In

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[3]   See for example: Skalková, J. *Humanizace vzdělávání a výchovy jako soudobý pedagogický problém* (The Humanisation of Education as a Contemporary Pedagogical Problem), UJEP 1993; Walterová E. Humanizace vzdělávání jako prostředek kultivace člověka (Humanisation of Education as a Means of Cultivation of the Human Being). *Pedagogická revue*, 43, 1991, V, pp. 327–333; Harbo T. Humanizace vzdělání a současné teorie kurikula (Humanisation of Education and Contemporary Curricular Theories). *Pedagogika*, 41, 1991, III, pp. 247–255.

the same way, Zdenek Helus recalls socio-critical analysts who speak about our era as a "period of great disruption" in which we are disturbed by realities such as the conflict of civilisations, potentials for global self-destruction, uncontrolled demographic explosions, the decline of moral literacy, a dramatic decrease in social capital, political and religious extremism, etc. (comp. Helus 2009). Along the same lines, Jan Sokol speaks about human beings as an "endangered species", whose personality is endangered by the "uniformity of mass consumerism" which institutionalises and bureaucratises itself and thus "replaces personal relations with impersonal ones" (2002, p. 15–16).

As a response to this condition, there has emerged the so called "new humanism" in pedagogical circles, states J. Skalková, and continues, "the issue of humanism reappeared with new intensity in the last decade of the twentieth century" (1993, p. 41). Not surprisingly, Komenský's old motto describing school as the *"humanitatis officinae"*, (forging-place of humanity) has been resurrected and frequently quoted. Post-totalitarian Czech pedagogical literature abounds with various innovative plans and proposals, in which "the crystallising axis of transformation is the idea of humanisation" (Švec, 1994, p. 24). Along the same lines, Vladimíra Spilková makes a clear overall statement: "The idea of humanisation is one of the leading principles for the transformation of the contemporary Czech school system..." (2004, p. 25)

What is meant by humanisation? The actual wording may differ, but the common principle is "the significant strengthening of an anthropological orientation, increased attention to the child, to his or her needs, interests and potentials of development", in V. Spilková's words (2005, p. 33).[4] Likewise L. Holkovič defines the core of humanisation as an "adequate adjustment of the whole system of education and its particular parts to the demands of students". (2004, p. 311) K. Rýdl expresses it similarly when identifying humanisation as an "approximation to the needs and expectations of the individual, so that he or she participates in shaping the form of educational processes" (2004, p. 351).

However, it has been more than two decades since the fall of the totalitarian regime, but the desired "humanisation" has not arrived yet. It is true that the contemporary school succeeds relatively well in equipping learners with the various pieces of pragmatic information, skills and competencies

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[4] For more details on the question of humanisation see also Vališová, A. (Ed.) Historie a perspektivy didaktického myšlení. Praha: Karolinum, 2004.

necessary for their efficient self-assertion in life and more currently in the marketplace, but it fails to form an authentic humanity on either a personal or an inter-personal level, observes Pavel Floss, and continues, "such schools are reduced merely to the *functional* aspect of education, producing efficient employees or experts, but failing to cultivate the whole humanity of an individual". (2005, p. 26)

The failure of schools to achieve the humanising goals is commonly viewed as critical.[5] It is said that the problem is that school "has failed to fulfil its role in preparing human beings for living in our contemporary dynamically changing society, [changing] particularly its goals and values", asserts J. Skalková (1993, p. 52). The psycho-didactic principles of the past; such as, one-sided intellectualism, verbalism, formalism, encyclopedism, learners' passivity, manipulation, authoritativeness, etc. still dominate in the Czech school system. It also appears "that both the process of education and school management fail to provide adequate room for the cultivation of human potentials and talents, for development of moral, aesthetic and emotional aspects of character, for the development of inter-personal relations and for self-realisation of the individual", contends Skalková (1993, p. 52). Moreover, the problem is that humanisation is becoming a mere slogan, "in which might be covered almost anything", observes K. Rýdl, and continues, "providing convincing arguments are supplied, which is not at all a problem in the contemporary state of affairs concerning the quantum of knowledge and information" (2004, p. 351).

The critical question is why? Why is humanisation not arriving? Is it a lack of appropriate pedagogical methodology? Is it a lack of financial resources? Or is it a lack of human resources, i.e., teachers' motivation, skills or abilities? Briefly, are the problems structural, pedagogical, economic, political or other?

Without downplaying the importance of these aspects for effective education, my argument is that the main reason for the failure of the contemporary Czech educational system to achieve the desired "humanisation" is primarily philosophical. Specifically, the problem of modern understanding

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[5] However, it should be mentioned that the failure is still interpreted as temporary and provisional. Its achievement is expected as soon as some new technically better method is generated and implemented – whether political, economic, structural, curricular or other. Cf. Prázný, A. *Komenský – myslitel krize. Pedagogika* 3/2008, Univerzita Karlova v Praze – Pedagogická fakulta, pp. 236–240.

of humanity determining the definition of the humanisation. Ever since the Enlightenment, the modern anthropological paradigm has been determined by a self-imposed restriction on metaphysics, which deprived the humanity of the transcendent dimension. The emphasis on human autonomy, intrinsic goodness, rationality, epistemological objectivity, moral subjectivity and overall progress have constituted the key doctrines of the modern meta-narrative. Its fundamental crisis, which we experience today, calls for a new definition of humanity.

Hence arises the relevance of Komenský and his educational anthropology which I want to sketch in this paper. Despite an antiquated language and pre-modern philosophical apparatus, his notion of the human being, taking into account the transcendent dimension of humanity, brings very fresh insights to the contemporary de-humanising situation. In fact, since it is modernity which is in crisis today, Komenský's ideas are most insightful to us by the very fact they are non-modern. Or as Jan Patočka prophetically put it, perceiving the problems of modernity as early as 1941: "Komenský can render us service by those things which are foreign to us. For they disclose the limits of our spiritual universe." (1997, p. 21) My intention is to recover Komenský's "foreign things" and show their relevance to our postmodern situation.[6]

By revisiting Komenský, I do not suggest replacing modern education with that of Komenský, but rather complementing it. Instead of ignoring

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[6] In this work I will not deal with the specifics of modern and post-modern philosophy and culture, but rather rely on authors who studied this area in greater detail, such as: Eagleton, T. *The Illusions of Postmodernism*, Blackwell Publishers 1996; Erickson, M. J. *Truth or Consequences: The Promise and Perils of Postmodernism*, IVP, 2001; Geer, R. C. *Mapping Postmodernism*, IVP 2003; Grenz, S. J. *A Primer on Postmodernism*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1996; Greer, T.H.; Lewis, G. *A Brief History of the Western World*, 7th ed., Harcourt Brace & Comp., Florida 1997 (1st ed.1968); Harvey, D. *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Blackwell Publishers 1990; Lyotard, J. F. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984; Murphy, N. *Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism: How Modern and Postmodern Philosophy Set the Theological Agenda*, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1996; Murphy, N.; McClendon, J. W. Jr. "Distinguishing modern and postmodern theologies", in *Modern Theology* Vol. 5 No. 3, April 1989, 191–214; Murphy, N. *Anglo-American Postmoderniity: Philosophical Perspectives on Science, Religion, and Ethics*, Westview Press 1997; Wright, *Religion, Education and Post-modernity*, RoutledgeFlamer, 2004.

the transcendent dimension of humanity, my proposal intends to develop a constructive approach to educational philosophy which both draws on the experience of modern pedagogical science; and, at the same time, takes into account the natural transcendence of humanity which is, I believe, highly relevant to the contemporary discussion concerning pedagogical humanisation.

2   School as *humanitatis officinae*

Komenský kept repeating the idea of school as a "forging-place of humanity" in almost all of his writings dealing with education.[7] However, the concept was quite complete already in the thirties of the seventeenth century, when he begun to write his didactic works. I will therefore limit my study mainly on his *Didactics* (*Czech, Great* and *Analytical*).[8]

When opening Komenský's *Great Didactic*, one might be tempted to skip the Prologue as a 'mere' prologue, but it is important not to do so. In the title page of his *Great Didactic*, Komenský hints that the first part of the book is going to deal with the "foundations", as he puts it. A careful reading shows, indeed, that the Prologue deals very extensively with the foundational anthropological starting points of all his education. The opening words already reveal how broad and thorough Komenský's intentions are: "In the beginning God created human beings out of dust and placed him and her into paradise, the Garden of Eden, which he planted in the east for the purpose that man and woman would not just look after it, but also that it should be a paradise and pleasure to their God. Certainly as the Garden of Eden was the most

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[7]   See for example his introduction to *Schola pansophica* (*Pansophic School, Škola vševědná*), par. 3. In other works Komenský uses different terms, which, however, overlap in their content with the term "forging-place of humanity". In *Pampaedia* (I,1)*,* for example, he says that the goal of the pan-educational project is "*cultura universalis*", that is, *culturing* or *cultivating* of the whole humankind. In the *Informatorium školy mateřské* (*School of infancy*) Komenský speaks of "štípení, zavlažování, podpírání"(fostering, watering, shoring) of little trees or plants, which is a process that might be compared to the care of child's young soul. See *Informatorium*, chap. III.

[8]   Most quotations will come from these three sources, therefore I will not burden the reader with extensive footnote references, but rather I will use the following system of abbreviations (if possible): e.g.: Czech Didactic, chapter I, paragraph 2 (CD, I., 2); Great Didactic, chapter III, paragraph 4 (GD, III, 4); Analytical didactic, chapter V, paragraph 6 (AD, V, 6). As for the quotations, I will use mainly my own translation of the original text.

delightful part of the world, so the human being was the most delightful creature... created in the image of the one who arises from eternity."[9]

After an exposition of the Creator's wisdom and outlining the beauties of the original state of creation, Komenský continues: "But alas! We have lost the paradise of the physical pleasures which we inhabited, and likewise we have lost the paradise of the spiritual pleasures. To the wasteland of the earth we have been driven, and in our hearts we have become wastelands. We did not appreciate the paradisal arrangements, we coveted something more both for our bodies and for our minds, and thus we lack both, both our bodies and minds are burdened by the burden of wickedness..."[10]

This description is the traditional Brethren doctrine of the fall of human beings. With biblical texts, Komenský then continues to depict the far-reaching consequences of the fall. This depiction is particularly important, because it indicates how Komenský saw the human condition. He saw it as a condition which needed to be addressed. An extensive quotation is in order:

> For what is in relation to people as it ought to be? What stands in its proper place? Nothing. Everything is upside down, everything has gone wrong, for all the order, all the government, all the noble features are scattered. Instead of the wisdom by which we were to resemble angels, there is foolishness and dullness ... resembling dumb beasts. Instead of prudence, which leads one to prepare for eternity, for which we have been created, there is a forgetfulness of both the eternal nature and the mortality of man. ... Instead of mutual candidness and truthfulness, there is slyness, deceit, and falsity everywhere. Instead of grace, there is envy, instead of confidence, there is deception. ... Instead of unity, there are discords, quarrels, and rages, secret malice as well as open hostility, fights and wars. Instead of righteousness, there are injustice, robberies, thefts; everyone greedily amasses only for himself or herself. Instead of purity, there is lechery, both internal and external; there is adultery, infidelity, misconduct, and lewdness, both in the mind and in speech. Instead of truthfulness, there are lies and gossip everywhere. Instead of humbleness, there is arrogance and

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[9] Komenský, J. A. *Didaktika česká (Czech Didactic)*. Národní knihtiskárna I. L. Kober v Praze, 4. ed., 1926, p. 1.

[10] Komenský, *Didaktika česká*, p. 2.

pride, preening and boasting; one rising against the other. Woe to you, miserable generation, how deeply you have sunk into wretchedness![11]

Such a woeful condition of human affairs does not, however, lead Komenský to a renunciation of the world or his generation. He saw a way out — or rather a way toward — the world, toward a remedial engagement with the sick world. The solution was related to his eschatological hopes, which once again provided motivational power. Komenský knew two "joys" in the midst of all the above described miseries: 1. "That God prepares the paradise of eternity, where there will be everlasting perfection..." 2. "God has restored his paradise and his church in certain times and turned a wasteland into a delightful garden."[12] According to Komenský's reading of Scripture and history, God did such things a number of times in the past: after the flood, when bringing his people out of Egypt, and later out of Babylon; in King David's time; and, of course, when sending his Son, the Saviour.[13] And Komenský adds a conclusion which seems to be one of the key moments in his 'didactic turn': "It is highly important that we would understand well the foundation of God's glorious and joyful restoration and thus know how to contribute to the merciful work of God."[14] Notice Komenský was no longer determined to merely put up with the miseries of the world as he had been in his 'resignation' period, but he was ready to participate in the restoration of the world, which was indeed a significant shift in his thinking.

The idea of *didactic*, which plays the essential role in the process of restoration, needs to be explained to the readers, for the concept was new, especially for Czech readers.[15] Komenský presents didactic as an "art of arts"; that is, the "artful teaching" of youth (and people in general) in the arts. Komenský further explains that all the confusions and labyrinths of contemporary schools show the urgent need of such an art. He recognized and listed the didactic reformers who inspired him and in whose footsteps he wanted to follow, but he humbly suggested there was a need for far greater and more

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[11] Komenský, *Didaktika česká*, pp. 4–5.
[12] Komenský, *Didaktika česká*, p. 5.
[13] In the *Czech Didactic*, he also mentions Jan Hus and Martin Luther as the servants of restoration, for these figures were clearly familiar to the Czech readers.
[14] Komenský, *Didaktika česká*, p. 6.
[15] That is why the introduction is longer and more detailed in the *Czech Didactic*.

substantial reform. According to his judgment, his predecessors formulated their didactic handbooks "on the basis of an easy practice, a posterior",[16] and thus their advice covered merely external and partial aspects of education. But he dares: "to promise a great didactic, that is, a universal art of teaching all things to all people. And it shall proceed in a *reliable* way, so that the results cannot be avoided. Furthermore, *gently*, without problems and sorrows to either the teacher or the pupils, rather to the pleasure of both parts. And *thoroughly*, not superficially and for the sake of appearance, but by bringing [the pupils] toward true knowledge, pure morals, and honest godliness."[17]

In contrast to his precursors, this grand project is to be educed "a priori, that is, from the unchanging essence of the things themselves, as if we brought together brooks from a living spring". In the very next paragraph, Komenský recognizes the greatness of the things promised and invites all the readers to evaluate his project very carefully and encourages them to contribute to it. In the following paragraphs of the Prologue, Komenský further explains the importance of education in general, in particular, the education of youth, and then elaborates on the general benefits of a better educated society.

The Prologue is followed by several chapters dealing with general pedagogy. Here Komenský lays the teleological foundations of all pedagogy. The ultimate goal of all education is to bring human beings to the fulfilment of their purpose as given in the Scripture, which is, in Komenský's words, "to enjoy with God the most perfect glory and blessing by being united to him, who is the height of all perfection, glory, and delight". (GD, II, 1) To realize this goal, humans need to know themselves (CD, I, 1), that is, they need to know that:

1. They are "the greatest, strangest, and most glorious of all creation". (CD, I, 2–4)
    1.1. Human beings are the greatest, because only humans possess all the attributes of being: life, senses, and reason. E.g., a stone has being but does not possess life; plants and trees are given life, and even the ability to multiply, but do not sense things; all the animals, beasts, birds, fish, reptiles, etc. possess life and the senses but not reason. (CD, I, 2)

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[16] Komenský, *Didaktika velká*, p. 3.
[17] Komenský, *Didaktika velká*, pp. 3–4.

1.2. Human beings are the strangest of all creatures, for only in them "the heavenly with the earthly is merged; the visible with the invisible, the mortal with the immortal. To embed a rational, immortal, and eternal soul into a piece of clay and make it to be one personality, that is a mighty act of God's wisdom and artistry." (CD, I, 3) It was only the human being to whom God related personally (*nexus hypostaticus*) and thus united his nature with human nature. (GD, I, 3)

1.3. The greatest glory of human beings lies in the fact God himself in Jesus Christ became a human being in order to "recreate what has been corrupted". No other creature in the whole universe has been so gloriously honored by the Creator. (CD, I, 4)

2. The ultimate goal of human life is not in this life (CD, II). This is made known to people in the Scriptures, but also it is observable in human nature and life:

2.1. The composition of our nature shows that what we have in our lives is never sufficient. For human beings have a threefold life in themselves: vegetative, in common with plants; animal, in common with beasts; and spiritual or intellectual, which is specific for people. From the fact that we tend to grow and develop toward perfection on all these levels, though we reach perfection on none of these levels, Komenský concludes that "there must be something greater cherished for us". (CD, II, 2)

2.2. "Everything we do or suffer here shows that we do not reach the ultimate (*poslední*) goal here but that everything, as well as we ourselves, heads elsewhere." (GD, II, 5) "Everything that happens with us in this life happens on levels, on which we ascend higher and on which we always see yet higher levels. ... Similarly, our efforts are first smallish, thin, and feeble, but gradually they grow greater and reach further. But as long as we are alive... we always have something to do, something to desire, and something to strive for. Nevertheless, we can never fully satisfy or fulfil our efforts in this life." (CD, II, 3)

3. Earthly life is but a preparation for eternal life. Komenský sees the evidence of this in three things:

3.1. Human beings. "If we observe *ourselves* [emphasis his], we can see that all our being progresses on levels, so that every preceding level prepares the way for the following one. For instance, our first life is

in our mother's life. But what for? Is it for its own sake? No. There it is to be formed well as a dwelling of the soul, in order to live a good life under the sun. When that is finished we come to the light... So it is with earthly life." (GD, III, 2)

3.2. The world. "When we observe the world from any point of view, we can see it has been created for the purpose of the multiplication, edification, and education of humankind... This world is but a seed-bed, nourishment, and school, from which we are to proceed to the eternal academy." (GD, III, 3)

3.3. The Scripture. "Although reason shows it, the Holy Scripture affirms most powerfully, that God, having created the world and everything in it, made man and woman a steward of it and commanded him and her to multiply and to replenish the earth and subdue it. Hence the world is here for man and woman. God speaks about this clearly in Hosea, that the heavens are for the earth, the earth then for corn, wine, oil, etc., and those things are for people (Hos. 2:21,22). All things, therefore, are for humans, even time itself... After all, the Scripture speaks about this world almost always as about preparation and training, a way, a journey, a gate, an expectation; and we are called pilgrims, visitors, arrivers, and expectants." (CD, III, 7)[18]

4. The ultimate goal of every human being is "eternal bliss with God". (GD, IV, 1) To reach this, a human being needs to fulfil his or her human vocation, which Komenský derives from the Scriptures, specifically from the account of the creation of human beings (Gen. 1:26). There are, according to Komenský, three main tasks given to people as a life assignment:

4.1. To be a rational being, which means "to be an observer of all things, the one who names all things, and the one who learns all things. In other words, humans are to know, to call, and to understand all the known things of the world". (GD, IV, 3)

4.2. To be a master of all creation, which means "to treat all the creation with a lordly attitude, that is, soberly and virtuously ... and without allowing any creature, including one's own body, to enslave oneself". In other words, "to govern the creation means first of all to govern

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[18] To back his argument, Komenský gives the following biblical references: Gen. 47:9; Ps. 39:13; Job 7:1–2; Luke 12:34.

virtuously one's own acts and deeds, both externally and internally". (GD, IV, 4)

4.3. To be the image of God. That is, "to constantly turn one's heart, desires, and efforts toward God, both externally and internally... and thus reflect the perfection which lies in human origin". (CD, IV, 9)

In the following chapter, Komenský further explicates the three tasks in order to show they are rooted in human nature. Human nature has a "natural" tendency toward *learning* (4.1), *virtue* (4.2), and *piety* (4.3). In the explanation, Komenský makes clear that by nature he understands "not the corruption which resides in all people ever since the fall..., but the original and foundational state of ours, toward which we all need to be brought back". (GD, V, 1) To support his view, he quotes Ludwig Vives, a recognized authority of the time, along with Seneca. Vives says: "What else is a Christian, but a man or woman brought back to his or her own nature." This is remarkably similar to Seneca: "That is wisdom, to return to our nature from which we were driven away by general fault." (GD, V, 1) To strengthen his argument, Komenský relates naturalness with the doctrine of common grace (*universalis providentia Dei*, GD, V, 2).[19] The sign of God's wisdom, which secures the continual functioning of everything, is that:

> he does not do anything in vain, that is, without a specific goal, nor without the specific means needed for achieving the goal. Whatever is is for some purpose, and in order to reach the goal, it is furnished with the necessary instruments, even with some kind of impetus, that make things flow to their goals not against their nature, but rather spontaneously and gently. (GD, V, 2)

It is similar with human beings, according to Komenský, who "are born with the ability to know things, with the tendency toward harmony, and with the purpose to love God above all". (GD, V, 2) Komenský acknowledges several paragraphs later that the "natural desire for God has been damaged due to the fall into sin in a such a way that it cannot be restored by its own power", but God has his instruments of "word and spirit" by which he "en-

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[19] For the latest Latin edition, see also *Didactica magna* (Great Didactic). In DJAK, vol. XV, Praha: Academia, 1986, p. 60.

lightens his own". And, therefore, "let no one argue against us on the basis of human depravity when we begin to consult the means of restoration from this depravity, for God has already ordained his own means of restoration... Did not God sow soon after the fall the seeds of grace (by promise of the blessed seed) into our hearts? Did he not send his Son, so that the fallen could be raised up again?" (GD, V, 21–22) This 'raising up' or restoration of the original state of human beings given by the Creator then constitutes the overall goal of all Komenský's didactic.[20]

After defining the general goal(s) of education, Komenský turns to the actual subject of education. From all that has been said, it follows that education is (and is to be) general, or universal; that is, it concerns all people. Komenský first affirms that every human being is not only an educable being but also one in need of education, for "if a human being is to become a human being, he or she needs to be educated toward humanity",[21] for if he or she lacks proper education, he or she becomes "the most wild of all creatures" (GD, VI, 7). Therefore, it is necessary to educate all people, whether smart or dull, rich or poor, boys or girls, rulers or serfs (GD, VI, 7–9). This was a truly revolutionary proposal, and Komenský, being aware of it, anticipated his opponents' objections:

> Someone might say: For what [purpose] should workmen, peasants, porters, or even women be educated? My answer is: If this general education is properly instituted, everyone will have enough appropriate material for thinking, desiring, exertion, and acting. Secondly, everyone will know how to conduct all the behavior and longings of life without crossing the enclosures one has to pass through. Moreover, even in the midst of labor, all people will be lifted through meditation on the words and deeds of God... In brief, they will learn to see God everywhere, to praise him for everything, to embrace him always,

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[20] The paragraph explaining what is meant by *human nature* was added only in *Great Didactic*. Perhaps some of his colleagues or critics pointed out to Komenský that the concept of "natural tendency" needs such clarification. It seems that part of Komenský's argument attempts to respond to some implications of the Calvinist doctrine of *total depravity*, which is the first component of the TULIP (T stands for *total depravity*; U stands for *unconditional election*; L stands for *limited atonement*; I stands for *irresistible grace*; P stands for *perseverance of saints*).

[21] In the Latin version Komenský uses the term: *formatio hominis* (GD, VI, 1).

and thus live better in this life of sorrows. ... Could not this state of the church be paradise, the one possible under the sun? (GD, IX, 8).

Education should begin as soon as possible in early childhood, according to Komenský, for the young age is most suitable for learning (GD, VII). Educating children is the solemn task of all parents, but Komenský realistically recognizes that parents often do not know how to do that or do not have time for it, and therefore, it is helpful to have schools where children might be educated together. Besides these practical reasons, Komenský sees another advantage of school education, which could be classified as socio-psychological in today's terminology:

> It is better to educate the youth in greater numbers, for the result is greater, too; and also the work is more pleasant when they may take an example and impetus from each other. For to do what we see others doing, to go where they go, to follow those who are ahead, and to lead those who are behind – that is most natural. ... The children's age especially allows for leading through examples rather than rules. Commands meet with little response, but if we show that others are doing it, children will imitate it even without a command. (GD, VIII, 7).

In the subsequent chapter, Komenský further develops the generality of education from the content point of view. General education not only concerns all people but also refers to all things. Komenský puts it briefly and plainly: "All people ought to be taught all things." (GD, X, 1) By that he does not mean "a perfect knowledge of all sciences and arts, for such a thing is neither useful nor possible for any human being". (GD, X, 1) What Komenský has in mind is such an education as would "teach the foundations, reasons, and goals of all the important things, so that everyone would become not merely an observer of things, but also an actor... who knows how to use and enjoy all things for a good purpose". (GD, X, 1) In the *Czech Didactic*, Komenský elaborates this theme in greater detail and relates the content of education to the previously set goals: a) the goal of rationality refers to the knowledge of the created being (that which is); b) the goal of virtuousness refers to the knowledge of morality (that which ought to be); c) the goal of godliness refers to the knowledge of God's grace (that which is to be enjoyed).

These three areas of knowledge then constitute the content of education, which enables humans to understand why they were brought to life: to serve God, other creatures, and themselves. (CD, X)

Such schools, then, would be "a true forging place of humanity". This famous phrase has become a motto in modern Czech schools, but it should be stressed that behind the phrase lies: a) a theological definition of humanity which shapes the general goals of education: a being having a personal relationship with God, a rational being, a self-controlled master of creation, and a being reflecting the glory of God; b) specific reasons for the universality of education: all have fallen into sin and, therefore, all are in need of restoration through education; c) the specific content of education: foundational knowledge of all things necessary for properly serving God, others, and oneself.

Though there already exist a number of schools and academic institutions, such proper schools as proposed above have not yet been founded, Komenský laments in the next chapter. He anticipates this claim might upset many of his colleagues-educationalists again and therefore provides a comprehensive warrant for his claim: a) there is a very limited number of schools; b) the existing schools are neither intended nor designed for everyone but only for a few; c) the way of teaching resembles "torture", and children turn away from learning; d) the important things are not taught, as evidenced by the loose morals of the pupils, which exist in spite of harsh discipline; e) a verbal approach leading toward "parrot-like verbosity" predominates everywhere: pupils are given merely external shells, without an understanding of the core of things, and are forced to mindless repetition; f) this problem is best seen in the way Latin is taught. (GD, XI)

However, the effort of the schools is not completely lost, Komenský continues in the following chapter. The schools could be reformed, which is both necessary and possible. Komenský is convinced the reform will succeed if based on the *natural order of things*. He writes: "It is quite clear that that order which is the dominating principle in the art of teaching all things to all men and women can and should be borrowed from no other source than the operations of nature." (GD, XIV, 7) Therefore, if we observe nature carefully from the educational point of view, it tells us all the orders we need to know for proper teaching: a) the order of arrangement of the educational material; b) the order of speed and timing; c) the order of method (GD, XII, XIII, XIV). These orders or principles derived from nature constitute the core of

the actual didactic, which Komenský elaborates in the second part of the book. He arranges the principles into three sets of 29 didactic fundamentals, as he calls them (chapters XVI, XVII, XVIII). The first set is entitled: How to make education certain. The second: How to make education easy. And third: How to make education thorough.[22] Each fundamental is outlined according to the same pattern:

1. Komenský first sets out the principle of nature, that is, "Nature does not push anything out before it matures inside and wants to sprout on its own." (set III, fund. 7)
2. Then he demonstrates the principle by several examples from nature: "Nature does not push the baby bird out of its egg before the limbs are properly developed and strong, neither forces a nestling to fly before it has feathers, nor drives it out of the nest before it can fly. Similarly, a tree does not push the buds until the sap ascending from the roots feeds them."
3. Then Komenský exposes how the rule has been broken or neglected in the traditional schools: "In the same way, therefore, violence is done to the spirit of the young if they are forced to learn things i) which are ahead of their maturation and understanding; or ii) without sufficient preceding exposition, explanation, and guidance."
4. And finally, Komenský proposes an alternative derived from the first principle: "Therefore: a) let there be no work of the young but what the age and abilities not only allow but also desire; b) let there be no memorization of things which they have not understood properly; c) let there be no forced performance without proper demonstration and instruction of imitation." (GD, XVII, 38)

The three sets are further supplemented by eight principles of conciseness and rapidity in teaching, which are structured somewhat differently.[23] It

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[22] Instead of "thorough" Komenský uses, in the *Czech Didactic*, "powerful" (*mocné*) and "bringing abundant benefit" (*hojný prospěch neslo*).

[23] Komenský does not offer here fundamentals, but raises eight problems put into questions, to which responses are provided. The problems are, e.g., How can a single teacher teach a number of boys, no matter how great, at one time? How is it possible for all the scholars to be taught from the same book? How can many things be explained in a few words?

is both unnecessary and impossible to describe all the fundaments in detail, for they constitute about one-third of the book. All the fundaments are based on the same principle of natural analogy and embody three common characteristics: a) Consistency of correlation of things and their names – senses (as many as possible) must be involved in the process of learning; things themselves must be learned together with their names. b) Appropriateness of phasing and progression of teaching, which is determined by the individual aspects of a child's development. c) Suitability and pleasantness of the teaching method, which is determined not only by the proper choice of the learning matter, but also by the proper (nonviolent) methodological treatment of the matter. In Chapters XX, XXI, and XXII, Komenský then applies these general didactic principles to the specific methodology of teaching of sciences, arts, and languages.

3 Conclusion

In the conclusion of this paper, I want to highlight concept of *"nesamosvojnost"*, which is – to my judgement – essential for understanding Komenský's philosophy of education. Let me remind the concept: All the beings of this world, including human beings, are *"nesamosvojný"*, that is, they are not self-existing and self-sustaining, they do not belong to themselves and do not have their ultimate goal within themselves, but are related to God the Creator. In this very nature of the world lies, according to Komenský, its educative character. In the methodological part of his *Didactic* Komenský explains: "Whatever is, is for some purpose, and in order to reach the goal, it is furnished with the necessary instruments, even with some kind of impetus, that make things flow to their goals not against their nature, but rather spontaneously and gently..." (GD, 5, 2). In other words, "the world is not an accidental occurrence of something that follows an anonymous mechanism, emerging from dark meaninglessness and similarly heading towards empty indifference; on the contrary, the world is an intentional abidance of all beings, called to be 'well', beings called not merely 'to be', but 'to be in order to'", interprets Radim Palouš (1992, p. 18).

Every being in its true form has got the self-transcending designation. And its transcendence is educative. Patočka comments Cusanus' influence on Komenský: "From the world itself we are to learn transcendence, we are to learn that the goal of each thing lies beyond itself; thus the goal of things is

in human beings, and the goal of a human being is that which is beyond him/her." (1997, p. 182) Men and women enter the school of the world through birth and are immediately exposed to its education. The world narrates a narrative of its own transcendence and thus calls people to the same task, to fulfil their role in the drama, for after all, they are part of the same story. The failure to follow this calling (education) is the essence of human fallenness as expressed in the biblical narrative, and has caused all the human problems, miseries and wretchedness experienced in the world.

In other words, Komenský views human beings as complex beings of a *noble* and *fallen* nature. Human beings are very noble, because they were created to be the image of God. On the other hand, Komenský recognised the fallen side of human nature, which causes humans to miss the noble "telos" of their lives, and thus brings about all the darkness and evils observable within the human world. Jan Patočka interprets this disposition of human nature as the "twofold potential of humanity". That is, a human being is substantially an open being endowed with two potentials: he or she might be moved towards true humanity, which is characterised by love, openness and the commitment of one's self to the whole, to its unity, harmony and meaning. But a human being might also give way to the *"samosvojný"* tendency of human nature, that is, the tendency to a self-focused entangling into one's self which is indifferent to others; even hostile to everything that disturbs this self-concentrated closeness (cf. Patočka, 2003, pp. 485–489).

From this arises the relationship between Komenský's philosophical assumptions and his educational philosophy: the goal, content and method of his educational project arise from and respond to this specific condition of human affairs. Komenský's educational project is *educatio* in the authentic meaning of the word, that is, e-ducation, a *leading-out*; it is to lead humans out of everything counter-human (sins, darkness, delusions, violence, etc.) towards true humanity, that is, to light, truth, unity and harmony, dwelling ultimately in God (cf. Palouš, 1991, p. 63). However corrupted human nature is, the potential of true humanity is still there, and the restoration of humanity is both desirable and possible due to the redemptive act of Jesus Christ. This restoration of the so called *"nexus hypostaticus"*, the vertical and personal relationship to God, includes also the restoration of the horizontal relationship to other people (GD, I, 3). Such transformation of the human being into the image of God, is what constitutes, according to Komenský, the

ultimate humanity. School which transforms human beings in such a way is, according to Komenský, the proper "forging-place of humanity".

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Contact
PhDr. Jan Hábl, Ph.D.
Univerzita Hradec Králové
Pedagogická fakulta
Katedra pedagogiky a psychologie
jan.habl@uhk.cz

APPROACHES TO DETERMINATION OF THE PROFESSION AND APPLICATION OF A SOCIAL PEDAGOGUE SEEN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PEDAGOGICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND MANAGERIAL THEORIES OF COMPETENCES[1]

Štefan Chudý, Svatava Kašpárková, Helena Řeháčková

Abstract

Before we start dealing with the theme of approaches to competences, it is necessary to define the concept of competence itself. In spite of the fact that this concept is no novelty in our dictionaries, there is a range of its possible explanations. For example, Otto's Encyclopaedia explains this concept as follows: *"Competence is the entitlement and obligation of the authorities to handle issues which they are obliged to deal with in accordance with the law..."* (1903, p. 710). The same explanation appears in the Czech language as well. Competence is therefore a total of entitlements and obligations, determines powers and provinces, but the difference is that today competence is also transferred on individuals and it therefore is not connected merely with organisations. Mainly encyclopaedic dictionaries interpret this expression as a "capability", they further state such synonyms as ability, qualification, experience, skill, etc. The differences in the interpretation of the concept of competence arise primarily from the understanding of the source of competence (competences) (see Mlčák, 2005, p. 29, Furnham, 1992, p. 54). In the first place, it is an attribute which is given from the outside, i.e. by an authority, and it is arranged by the society (Murény, 1993, p. 54, Mansfield, 1990, p. 25). Whereas the second interpretation explains it as a capability, where the inner attribute is emphasised, i.e. the quality of the capability is not determined by external environment, but depends on the individuality of the subject. Naturally, this meaning is used in scholarly literature in the field of personnel management, social pedagogy, and human resources, and in our paper, we are going to build on it as well. Pedagogical literature draws on a similar definition. The Research Institute of Education in Prague (RVP, 2005, p. 4) describes the term of competence as *"a total of knowledge, skills,*

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capabilities, attitudes and value, which are important for personal development and utilisation of every member of the society".

Key words

Social pedagogy, competencies, theories of competencies, professional preparation of social pedagogue.

Definition of the concept of competence from the perspective of managerial and psychological theories and taxonomies

"Management by competencies (MbC) is an approach taken to company management, which is based on a harmonious development of both 'hard' and 'soft' aspects of enterprise. Two worlds – i.e. the world of goals and requirements connected with performance, and the world of human resources and other assumptions of performance giving – meet here in a synergistic relation." (Plamínek, 2002, p. 16)

The essence of MbC lies in the fact that, in companies, requirements and limits represent, often to a large extent, separated worlds. As a result, problems frequently arise from the fact that the requirements made on performance do not correspond with current abilities of the company.

"MbC interconnects these two worlds and develops both components of this duality. It demands that they should develop in mutual harmony and thus support one another synergistically. It was not by accident that competences got into the name of methodology. As a matter of fact, prosperity of a company is immediately measured by achieved results. Nevertheless, foundation of this prosperity is actually seen in the competences of people who work for the company. Competences of people are perceived as a total of given performance (i.e. human labour) and provided potential (i.e. human resources). Provided that one of these is missing, competence as a whole is missing as well." (Plamínek, 2005, p. 24) The concept of competence is, without exception, related merely to specific assignments people are obliged to accomplish. From scholarly management-oriented literature (see Coomb, 1996, p. 54, Mansfield, 1996, p. 87, Winterton, 1999, p. 87, Armstrong, 1999, p. 85) emerges the fact that competences are most frequently divided into two groups, namely:

- threshold competences,
- differentiating competences.

Threshold competences, which are defined as basic characteristics (knowledge, basic skills) and which are essential for performing assigned tasks, have no connection with excellent or above-average performance. Whereas differentiating competences are those that distinguish above-average performances from the average ones. By above-standard performance is usually understood each behaviour which exceeds average performance of the whole group at least by the value of one decisive variation. In this way, it is possible to differentiate between a competent and an incompetent individual.

In managerial literature (Kubeš et al., 2004, p. 28), there appears the well-known model of the so-called iceberg, which works with five basic components. These are:

- skills, which are acts that an individual is capable of and that help him or her to perform labour activities,
- knowledge, which represents what an individual knows about the subject in connection with the performed work,
- social role, by which an individual represents himself or herself towards the environment,
- self-image as a perspective from which an individual looks at himself or herself,
- traits are innate and permanent characteristics of an individual's personality,
- motives, i.e. incentives, which control an individual's behaviour.

When working with human resources, these components need to be differentiated. It seems to be appropriate to aim the attention not only to these competence determinants, but also to components which remain hidden (tacit, implicit knowledge, see Stuchlíková, 2005, p. 11). These components are very difficult to influence in a short period of time. However, they have to be taken into account because, on condition that the work lasts a long term, their development is possible. In his paper, Schröder (1989, p. 78) already specifically deals with competences which relate to the performance of a managerial office. The basic competences are then defined *"as the knowledge and skills needed for a manager's work performance itself"*. They relate to specific assignments and ensure personal efficiency of the given individual. Competences of high performance are characterised by Schröder as rela-

tively stable demonstrations of behaviour, owing to which whole teams led by a manager reach highly above-average results. Schröder actually defined the following eleven competences of high performance:

Cognitive competences	Motivational competences	Directional competences	Performance competences
Obtaining of information	Interaction management	Influence	Orientation to performance
Creation of concepts	Understanding of other people	Self-confidence	Orientation to the target
Conceptional flexibility	Orientation to development	Presentation of thoughts	

When dealing with classification of competences, it is imperative that we focus on another concept as well, namely emotional intelligence. By this concept, Goleman (1997) understands, apart from other things, the knowledge of emotions of one's self, the ability to control these emotions and motivate oneself. *"Competences of emotional intelligence work synergistically with cognitive competences; first-rate workers possess both of them. The more complex the character of the particular work is, the more important role emotional intelligence skills play."* (Goleman, 1997, p. 32) As a matter of fact, emotions have the power to intensify the effects of rational thought, or, on the contrary, to reduce them. By an analysis of more than 500 competence models, the author discovered that 80 to 90 % of competences which distinguish above-average workers from the average ones belong to the sphere of emotional intelligence.

The competence approach in auxiliary professions

In the previous part of the paper, we were dealing with the definition and description of competences in the way they are perceived by current practice. This part of the text, however, discusses approaches to human resource management which build on limits and particularities of competences. Such an approach will help us to understand the essence of determination and training of competences.

The competence approach (or selection of the best candidate, proper management of his or her work performance, remuneration and career progress of the worker on the basis of his or her competences, which serve for

reaching strategic objectives of the organisation) may be, in a modified form, applied also in the social sphere, which is not primarily focused on profit.

In the social sphere, it is very problematic to assess work performance (and thus also the competences of a social pedagogue). There are no uniform procedures and methods. This is caused partly by the fact that activities of a pedagogue are, for their complexity and creative character, in essence difficult to measure, partly by the fact that many meaningful and vocational work performances of a social pedagogue may lead to inefficient and unsuccessful performance.

In the Czech Republic, there are currently being applied two systems, which evaluate vocational competences of social workers. The first system was created on the basis of a recommendation made by the British National Council for Vocational Qualifications and compiled into the System of Practical Competences, which are determined as ... *"functional demonstration of a well-managed and respected vocational role of a social worker, which includes professional knowledge, the ability to adequately reflect the context and sensitively apply the values of the profession"* (Havrdová, 1999).

The second system was created by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) as an Internet professiographic database under the name of Integrated System of Type Positions (ISTP, KTP, etc.), where two possible work positions are distinguished:
1. a social worker in social services – a specialist,
2. a professional social worker in social services.

Nevertheless, let us go back to the competence approach. Its application in a company results in a more efficient division of work among employees of the organisation. This consequently results in savings of the company's financial resources. As a result, productivity of labour increases, and financial investments in education and development are targeted. Transparent terms for individuals' career management are formed and competences of outstanding workers are clearly defined. These workers then serve as a model for many processes in human resource management.

However, in spite of great advantages, most companies have not adopted this approach, which is, in our opinion, caused by the fact that it is demanding to implement the competence approach into the work with human resources.

Application of competences

To ensure a well application of the competence approach, it is necessary to satisfy several conditions:

- identification of competences which are essential for the particular position,
- compilation of a competence model,
- verification of the level of individuals' competences on work positions and ensurance of development in the required manner.

Identification of competences

Identification of competences is the most important measure in the competence approach. This should result in recognition of competences and behaviour which increases an individual's successfulness at the position he or she holds. These findings help us to compile an appropriate programme of development, to improve the successfulness of the choice, and set norms for performance. Naturally, it is important for us to be informed about plans and strategic objectives of the company and be able, by way of competences, to monitor the assigned target.

Competences may be identified by way of techniques of an analysis of work and the work position. Below in the text are described techniques and parameters of data, which are mutually complemented and combined (Spencer in Kubeš et al., 2004, pp. 48–55):

- A panel discussion of experts who work with success in leading positions – which results in quickly generated data and demonstrations of behaviour essential for the desired work performance. However, such characteristics do not always necessarily correspond with reality. Participants in the panel discussion may, for example, fall into thought stereotype in dealing with particular situations.
- Observation – serves to establish a broader context and detects also manners that a worker is not aware of. On the other hand, however, it is necessary to take into account distortion on the side of the observer.
- Interview – is focused on behaviour in crucial situations, in dealing with difficult moments.
- Research – results in quick obtaining of data from a wide circle of respondents. The limit may be directly asked questions, their potential misunderstanding, and not reflecting hidden behaviour and behaviour which is specific to, for example, the particular organisation.

- Analysis of a work position – a description and an analysis of a work position enables specification of the position and thus clarification of its duties and functions.
- Database of competence models – represents a quick and inexpensive solution. Many consulting agencies create their own databases. However, the disadvantage of this technique appears to be the fact that thus created database cannot reflect specific conditions in the organisation, which has to be taken into consideration when choosing it, i.e. it is imperative to search for as many similar parameters as possible.

Compilation of competence models

"Competence models describe an enumeration of personality characteristics that are necessary for the accomplishment of assignments which are arranged into particular competences. In principle, the type of the model corresponds to the type of included competences. The model may be either specific or generic, furthermore a model of key competences of the organisation, or it is possible to build on competences which are essential for a successful worker in the given position. The selection of a particular model type is determined by the aim of its application." (Kubeš et al., 2004, p. 59) When creating a model, it is naturally possible to apply more approaches. A range of factors depend on their selection. Among the most important factors belong time and financial resources.

Rothwell and Lindholm (in Kubeš et al., 2004, p. 63) state three basic approaches: *"Provided that a company does not create its own innovative model but makes use of a model which is already available on the market, we talk about a perspective (borrowed) approach. The advantage of promptness and relatively low expenses is counterbalanced by the fact that the model does not make an exact copy of the organisation's environment. Another possibility is the creation of a model which will adapt to the organisation's particularities. This model is called a combined model. The last alternative is to tailor the model to the needs of the organisation. It is necessary to re-identify and re-define the competences. This is clearly the most challenging approach, which, nevertheless, gives the most reliable foundations for personnel decisions."*

Verification of the level of competences

To be able to effectively take advantage of the competence approach, it is important that we manage to determine the level of competences of particular workers. This means that the competence model describes the desired state

of competences and the measurement itself then examines to what extent are certain competences of particular workers developed. The collected information will consequently help us to eliminate or reduce detected differences and it has a supportive impact on an individual's development. The measurement itself is very complicated, which is caused by the fact that interpretation of the competences themselves is not uniform.

The level of competences may be evaluated by data acquired mainly from three sources, i.e. on the basis of:
- self-evaluation,
- evaluation of subordinates,
- evaluation of superiors.

There is a wide range of methods that may be used for measurement. These methods differ in accuracy, in the time they consume and in appropriateness of their application. The decisive criterion for their selection should be, of course, reliability.

The above-mentioned methods may be primarily divided into those which originate in direct observation and the rest of them, such as analogue methods, various group exercises, playing roles, and case studies, on condition that the displayed behaviour is assessed directly, in the way it was provoked by the stimulus.

Among analytical methods are ranged tests of mental abilities and questionnaires, which examine temperament and motivation. These are largely psychometric means.

The most frequently used method, which applies direct observation, is an interview. *"For the purpose of appraisal of the level of competences, an interview is used under the name of Competency Based Interview (CBI). CBI aims to direct the person who is being assessed at identification and analysis of preceding events and assignments, in which he or she played an important part. The person gives an account of how he or she behaved, what induced this behaviour, and what was the result. The evaluator subsequently examines the answers, searches for the occurrence of competences, and evaluates their levels. Selection of the task which is the object of the interview is crucial. The substance of the task has to be such a behaviour which gives evidence of the studied competences."* (Kubeš et al., 2004, p. 80)

Another alternative designated for obtaining of data is investigation via a questionnaire, which is not without imperfection because we obtain only the data we ask for in the questionnaire. The questions already cannot be either specified or clarified any further. Moreover, as far as closed questions are concerned, we have to take into account the fact that the answers will be limited by the selected option. Another drawback is seen in a low rate of return. On the other hand, the advantage of this method seems to be quick obtaining of data and the opportunity to address a large circle of people. The result may have either a qualitative or a quantitative form.

The sphere of application

The competence approach may be applied in the whole field of human resource management. Competences unite for us the perspective on future needs and manners of behaviour, which we support and reward.

The picture below shows us the possibilities of application of competences in the processes of an organisation (see picture No. 1).

Picture No. 1: Application of competences in the processes of human resource management (Kubeš et al., 2004, p. 149)
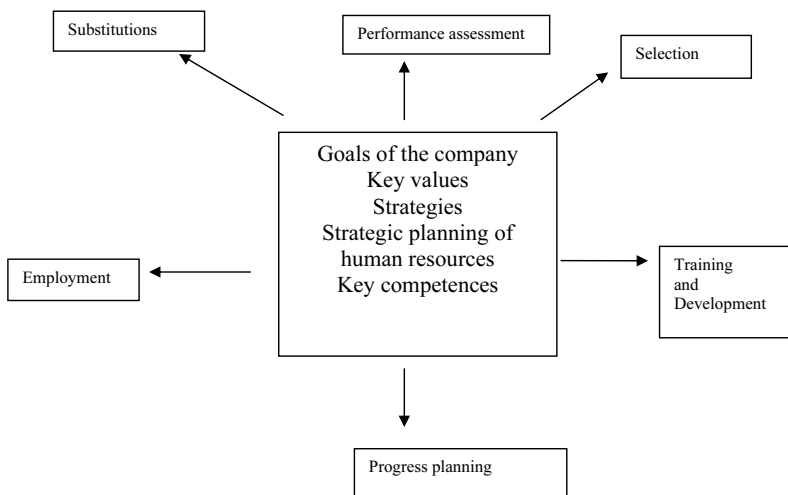
It is suitable to describe the interconnection of the processes and competences in detail. Provided that we select workers with the help of the competence model, we work with both the current and future requirements for the work position. As an appropriate situation for the application of competences in selection is stated, for example, a position with high turnover. If we specify the selection, the turnover will decrease. Such an approach is also favourable on condition that we search for workers from currently available human resources. In this way, we may better identify an individual's potential for the particular position and his or her further development.

Provided that we clearly define the competences, our work with the system of assessment and reward is thus facilitated. This is also favourable for the worker as he or she knows exactly what are the requirements he or she should meet. Assessment, which is found upon competences, helps to build the company's culture and refines relations within the organisation. What is of importance is continuous training of reserve forces in human resources of the organisation. Regular evaluation of the level of competences is compared with the requirements that current or future positions are expected to satisfy.

Career management is closely connected with workers' development. Provided that the development is based on competences, it is possible to approach it more compactly and, at the same time, this allows us to continuously develop the worker's readiness in connection with his or her current or future performance. A clear definition of competences ensures that the worker is conscious of the behaviour he or she should achieve, and thus also of the target of his or her development. Development of workers and competences is dealt with in next chapters.

Definition of the concept of competence from the perspective of the social--pedagogical theory

Competences as a key concept are characterised by representatives of Czech and Slovak pedagogy as a collection of vocational skills (Průcha, 2001), the readiness to perform the demands of one's profession (Slavík, 1993), vocational qualities of a teacher (Vašutová, 2001), a complex ability or capability for successful performance of the profession (Spilková, 2004), and a total of capabilities for effective teaching and education and for the refinement of the pedagogical occupation (Švec, 1999). Content over-abundance and unclearness of the concept of competence is referred to by Janík (2005,

p. 14): *"While competences of a teacher are clearly defined, competences of a social pedagogue are difficult to determine accurately, to put into specific normative categories."* For comparison, we present two characterisations of a teacher's competences as stated by V. Švec and Walterová. The model of abilities was elaborated by V. Švec (2000), who described the teacher's profession in the following three competence circles:

– competences designated for teaching and education,
– personal competences,
– developing competences.

These competences are further internally structured by abilities and skills. Follows the model of key competences as stated by Walterová (2001, p. 31):

– subject-area competences,
– didactic and psycho-didactic competences,
– general pedagogical competences,
– diagnostic and intervention competences,
– social, psycho-social and communication competences,
– managerial and normative competences,
– vocational and personality-cultivating competences.

The basic and, with regard to content, the most apt definition of key competences in social pedagogy is considered to be the interpretation by Bakošová (2005, p. 15), who perceives them in connection with activities, abilities, knowledge and specific skills of a social pedagogue. Bakošová interprets competences in a broader conception which includes also legal terminology (authority), which has hitherto implied professional authority in accordance with the level of education. She divides competences in the following way:

• educational competences,
• re-educational competences,
• consulting competences,
• prevention competences,
• managerial competences.

When defining competences, similar procedure was also used by Chudý (2006, p. 39), who, nevertheless, builds rather on the role and applicability

of a social pedagogue in practice and on functions that the social pedagogue holds while practising his or her profession:

– a labour manager in social and educational institutions,
– a recogniser of educational and social problems,
– an adviser on issues of the application of social policy,
– a consultant on learning difficulties,
– an educator,
– an animator of children and young people's free time,
– an innovator of pedagogical-educational methods,
– a creative type in various social-educational institutions,
– a reflective professional (Chudý, 2005, p. 40, Kraus, 2001, p. 33).

In this conception of professional authority, the level of education and applicability in practice, general competences of a social pedagogue are specified as an intersection of competences:

- **Educational competences**

The social pedagogue as a co-author of the theory and practice of social pedagogy is, in the broadest sense of the word, an educator. He or she creates his or her own basis of educational strategies and subject matters, he or she makes use of the theoretical knowledge and reflects the practical knowledge. He or she is a solver of "educational reality" and works on the development of human personality. He or she makes plans, organises and assesses his or her educational activities on the basis of subjective criteria and criteria of state policy in the province in which his or her profession is practised.

- **Social-educational competences**

These competences include the knowledge and qualification to prepare, manage and evaluate programmes of pedagogical and social sort, and to strengthen the social basis of personality. This is grounded in the preparation of environment and implementation of given programmes for the purpose of building of human personality, capable of being an experienced member of the society, as well as of communicating. An important part of these competences is also the knowledge of personality, educational strategies and the influence of processes of pedagogical and educational transformation on human personality (self-education and self-instruction – compare e.g. Selická, 2010, p. 2).

- **Prevention competences**

These competences embrace the skill of the social pedagogue to recognise deviations from the norms and to apply strategies to at-risk individuals and groups. The prevention may be divided as follows: primary (universal), secondary (selective), and tertiary (Matula in Bakošová, 2005, p. 18). Universal prevention focuses on organisation of activities which aim to create an atmosphere of reception of problems of various types. The competences include the knowledge of formation of instructional and educational programmes, as well as creation of short-term activities (workshops, etc.). Secondary prevention focuses on tracing people and directing them at rejection of undesirable elements in inappropriate environment. The knowledge basis is accomplished by activities connected with practising techniques and strategies, as well as building a web of relations.

- **Re-socialisational and re-educational competences**

Re-educational and re-socialisational competences enable the social pedagogue to respond to social and educational situation, which occurred and resulted in the emergence of social-pathological phenomena. Intervention (the concept is perceived as a collection of measures) is based on formation and evaluation of programmes aimed at an individual and groups.

- **Advisory competences**

Advisory work as a professional activity requires people to let themselves guide to better self-knowledge, to become aware of both weaknesses and strengths of personality, and to realise one's life goals. Not only resolution of problems, but also searching for causalities is of importance. Within miscellaneous psychological trends and movements may be encountered various advisory approaches (e.g. humanistic, psychoanalytic, cognitive-behavioural approach, etc.). For the purposes of the social-pedagogical practice, it is necessary to define basic assignments (e.g. Bakošová, 2005).

- **Diagnostic competences**

Diagnostic competences aid the social pedagogue in discovering the causes of states that emerged (social-pathological phenomena, etc.). This sort of competences necessitates not only terminological specification, but also a detailed description of the fields of focus. Our conception of fundamental

fields of focus includes diagnostics of social aspects of education, diagnostics of the environment, diagnostics of particularities, and evaluation of employed diagnostic methods.

- **Methodological competences**

    Methodological competences work on readiness and implementation of the social pedagogue's activities in the theoretical and practical sphere, and in the field of scientific research. The theoretical sphere embraces comprehension, description, reflection, interpretation, conception and orientation of the scientific discipline, and aims to adjust and elaborate the terminological definition of basic concepts and relations, as well as to specify internal scientific structures, which is based on theoretical research that is supported with practical reflection and interpretation of educational and social systems. The social pedagogue should be able to reflect reality and continuously put it to theoretical and empirical research.

- **Decision competences**

    Decision competences are neither perceived from the technical and economic perspective, nor from the perspective of social policy, but from the perspective of key competence, which is the bearing competence and, at the same time, embraces dimensions of other competences and mingles particular competences in various extent and various content.

    The specificity of these competences follows in particular from the impossibility of divorcing particular dimensions and targets of these competences from the other and describing them, and thus also particular activities of formation and development of decisive competences. The bearing activity is the arrangement of qualified orientation in the management of relations and activities of all the participants in the social-pedagogical process of education and instruction in particular environment. The social pedagogue is the co-author of the environment in which children, young people and adults feel safe and welcome. He or she aims at a climate which necessitates involvement in further personal development, and employs methods of solidarity and co-operation. In family participation, he or she makes use of strategies of life organisation in a particular environment, which is interconnected with life of the village or the town. An important element is considered to be taking responsibility for the development of capabilities of clients (wards,

inmates, etc.) within the particular institution. No less important sphere of the development of decisive competences is the artistry to pre-consider, allow play and evaluate upcoming situations with claimed responsibility for their creation and consequences for all the participants. A particular individual's gradual assumption of his or her own responsibility is part of the development of decisive competences not only over the whole period of his or her studies (preparation for professional practice), but frequently also over the period of whole life.

Definition of the profession of a social pedagogue from the perspective of legislation in the Czech Republic

The occupation, activities and work content of a social pedagogue are defined by the laws of the Czech Republic, in particular by Acts No. 108/2006, 563/2004, and 257/2000. Nevertheless, the content of his or her profession may be much more complex and demanding than it might seem. What we intend to touch here is precisely the interconnection between output competences and particular branches of professional practice, for which the social pedagogue should be prepared. Moreover, he or she often has to participate in complex running of the organisation in which he or she is employed. Most of the below-stated professions are mainly concerned with prevention in the social field. The summary stated below builds on scholarly publications of authors who specialise in particular spheres of activity of the social pedagogue.

Social pedagogue as a social worker

Application of the social pedagogue which focuses on social services is defined by the law as an occupation of a social worker (§ 110, Section 4, Act No. 108/2006 Coll., on Social Services, as amended). Further are defined principles of pedagogical support: dialogue (interaction), self-organisation (activity), sensomotorics (game), construction (creation), symbolism (illustration), balance (divergence). In institutions ensuring social services, the social pedagogue performs pedagogical activities in accord with Act No. 563/2004 Coll., on Pedagogical Workers, as amended. Within the field work in a family, the social pedagogue encourages, for example, a senior citizen to engage in a collective activity with a child, which enables them to enrich one another by, for example, a collective activity, reading a book aloud, or creating tiny articles, etc.

Social pedagogue as an educator

The social pedagogue may implement educational activities as an educator in educational institutions (§ 16, Section 1, Act No. 563/2004 Coll., on Pedagogical Workers, as amended). Particular educational institutions ensuring free-time activities with requisite professional qualification are specified by Hájek et al. (2008). These are namely educational institutions which specialise in institutional education (diagnostic institution, children's home, school and children's home, and educational institution), drop-in centres, non-governmental and non-profit organisations, including civic associations. The educator participates in organisation of free-time activities of the service users, he or she should be equipped with the knowledge from the field of developmental psychology because every age group of children placed in his or her charge may have different requirements and needs. What is considered to be crucial are his or her personal interest and individial approach, acquaintance with the technique of active listening, and familiarity with effects of the therapy. Children who, for social reasons, find themselves in children's homes and the above-mentioned institutions, experience a complicated and demanding period when, apart from pedagogical and direct educational influence of the educator, they first and foremost need an illustrative example of good and appropriate behaviour. When communicating with children, it is necessary to be prepared for their frequent inquiries. The educator therefore becomes their adult model, which they will not forget, they may follow his or her behaviour and perspectives on life. As a result, the qualities that the social pedagogue may apply include in particular positive encouraging and the knowledge of both the fields of psychology and family law. Children who live in children's homes create a very emotional bond with the educator, and he or she then has to consider what approaches or social relations he or she will choose to retain appropriate emotional relations and detached pedagogical perspective.

Social pedagogue as a free-time pedagogue

The profession of a free-time pedagogue is a very interesting and creative activity that works with children and young people (§ 17, Act No. 563/2004 Coll., on Pedagogical Workers, as amended). Social direction leading towards integration of children into collective activities of group spending of free time is organised by the social pedagogue in accordance with a pre-prepared conception, which embraces acquaintance with users of the activities, the knowledge

of the given locality, and familiarity with individual desires and limits of the children. To strengthen the family relations, the social pedagogue should also involve the users' parents or even the whole broad family of the child into organisation of young people' free time. As Průcha (2006) puts it, free-time pedagogy functions as a preventive measure to minimise aggression, delinquency, and other unwelcome phenomena which occur in the behaviour of children and young people. He mentions the concept of animation, the method of non-directive encouragement of activities and self-realisation of young people. Furthermore, he states institutions in the Czech Republic which are part of the system of educational institutions concerning free-time education: elementary art schools, language schools, after-school care centres and schools clubs, centres, and children and youth centres. He speaks of insufficient research, which might produce much more information even on the effect of media on young people and relations within groups. An important factor of the social pedagogue's activities is communication with young people and children, where the essential consideration is detecting in what type of activities are they particularly interested. In our opinion, a child should choose his or her free-time activity especially from the sphere in which he or she is interested and which he or she enjoys and is thus able to develop his or her talent or endowment. As a matter of fact, it is infelicitous to urge the child to an activity which would annoy him or her, or which would be a burden for him or her. Free time of young people is especially about becoming less worried about school duties, and the social pedagogue's task is running of friendly relations within youth groups while spending their free time by joint activities.

The social pedagogue is therefore a methodist, and he or she checks retrospectively whether the selected activity fulfils the children's interest, and thus, at the same time, accomplishes a preventive function of the activity. Among his or her aptitudes hence belong a set of proposals of free-time interest activities, their elaboration, and diversity, but also pedagogical supervision, which, in most cases, lacks any marking of the results of the children's activities. Especially little children require much attention and creativity. On the market, there are nowadays many books which contain inspiration for hand-making of various tiny articles, also many children's games as well as drawing tools, or varied sporting activities. The social pedagogue guides and encourages children in selected activities, and, at the same time, he or she is able to provide them with psychological and positive support. He or she

shows them how to solve and proceed with their problems. Pedagogical social management also includes the method of a dialogue, by which the pedagogue influences desirable proceeding in dealing with a problem or conflict the child meets with either in the family or at school. He or she must not belittle the significance of the child's account and has to consult the situation with other professional workers. The mass media interfere in the life of children and young people more and more intensively owing to the Internet, radio, television, and advertising propaganda. The social pedagogue makes a change in the child's daily routine and affects its arrangement, which enables him or her to prevent the child from being lonely and becoming integrated into groups which spend their free time by using addictive substances. Timetabling of the child's daily activities is important, and it strengthens family relations or relationships with one's peers.

Social pedagogue in practice of a pedagogue's assistant

A challenging role of the social pedagogue, particularly in the competence of special pedagogical occupation, is working in the office of a pedagogue's assistant (§ 20, Act No. 563/2004 Coll., on Pedagogical Workers, as amended). According to Valenta et al. (2003), a pedagogue's assistant is at elementary schools largely perceived as the most important element of special pedagogical assistance, designated especially for children with physical or mental handicaps. The pedagogue's assistant provides the integrated pupil with support within the given individual scope.

Integration of a health disadvantaged pupil into the group of his or her classmates, dealing with communication problems within the class by the role a pedagogue's assistant, and allowance of a pupil's individual studying plan is within the education itself a great progress and success, both in practical schooling and in legal embedding in the legal code. Considering the above-described work content, the role of a pedagogue's assistant is a very demanding function because it embraces aptitudes of special pedagogy competences, and the knowledge of medical problems and psychology.

Within the institutions providing pedagogical activities, the work content of pedagogues also includes administrative work containing management and filing of documents. The pedagogue's assistant participates in recording in accordance with relevant organisational procedures and rules of the given institution.

As Hájek et al. (2008) argue, by documentation are meant statistical reports, attendance book, a survey of pedagogical-educational work, personal documents, daybooks of interest units, daily records, school register, and daybooks of educational groups according to the particular educational institution. Furthermore, this includes specific documents concerning children's register, school educational program, class register, injury register, minutes of inspections, and other required documents and archive materials.

Social pedagogue as a clerk or an assistant Probation and mediation services

An interesting sphere of the social pedagogue's activity may be working in criminal-law field of probation and mediation, including preventive measures of criminal activities (§ 6, Act No. 257/2000 Coll., on Probation and Mediation Service, as amended). As Fischer (2006) puts it, of crucial importance are activities of pedagogical workers in ensuring optimal regime of custody performance in accordance with the requirements of the European Prison Rules, which demand preservation of human health and his or her natural dignity. As far as underage persons are concerned, the rules ensure an offer of educational activities, appealing to spiritual needs, recommendation of literature, support of the principle of humanisation, and lowering the intensity of stressful situations of the prison environment. The social pedagogue may also provide, within the sphere of activity of a commissioned person, social-law child protection.

Conclusion

The development of social pedagogy as a modern pedagogical discipline may be nowadays considered one of the important factors of improvement of the quality of human life in the society. Much attention should be paid to the preparation for the profession of a social pedagogue, especially considering the wide scope of practical application of this profession.

In this particular text, we have tried to summarise the already discovered theoretical information on the competences, profession, and mostly used definition of the occupation of a social pedagogue. At the same time, we are aware of the fact that these definitions are not able to completely express the fundamental basis of the theory of social pedagogy and its professionalisation in the system of pedagogical sciences.

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Contact
Štefan Chudý
Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci
Pedagogická fakulta, ÚPSS
Žižkovo nám. 5
771 40 Olomouc

Svatava Kašpárková, Helena Řeháčková
Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně
Fakulta humanitních studií
Nám. TGM 5139
760 01 Zlín

LEVEL OF PRE-MATHEMATICAL IMAGINATIONS OF CHILDREN WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT OF PRE-SCHOOL AGE

Andrea Kovácsová, Eliška Třečková, Jitka Vítová

Abstract

The study acquires readers with results of research investigation in the area of arithmetical and geometrical imaginations of children with visual impairment. It compares reached level by them in the area of pre-mathematical imaginations with the level of intact population.

Key words

Child with visual impairment, child in preschool age, pre-mathematical imaginations, arithmetic, geometry.

The world of numbers and shapes[1] is connected by some of us with the world of plays and amusement, by the others with anxiety, which will recall memory on the time spent over the tasks from mathematics. In real life most of the adults use mathematics quite currently during everyday activities. We can claim that each individual has in greater or smaller measure acquired so called *mathematical literacy*, under which Blažková (2010) arranges:

- ability to comprehend abstract mathematical concepts,
- ability to comprehend relations among mathematical objects,
- ability to work with mathematical objects,
- ability of mathematisation of real situation,
- ability to exploit the obtained mathematical knowledge in other, new situations,
- application of mathematical knowledge in practical tasks.

An opinion rules among public in general that the above introduced abilities the child acquires as late as at the entry to primary (elementary) school. Maybe that the words of Hejný (2009, p. 23) will attribute to the change of the view of the reader on the given problem: ***"mathematics does not start by counting, just as acquirement of the language does not start with grammar"***.

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[1] The term used Hejný and Stehlíková in the book *Numerical concept of children*.

If we search the factors, which take part in unsuccessfulness of child in school mathematics, we find several of them Michálková (2001) mentions necessity of *a certain level of maturity of the central nerve system*, which is an important condition for the acceptance and elaboration of the stimulation from external and even internal environment. As imperfectly equipped and deployment brain or the brain centres could be the cause of a certain deceleration of the development of mathematical abilities.

Reality that *the degree of language competences* could have influence on the development of difficulties in mathematics, is confirmed by Blažková (2008, p. 38), who informs that *ninety percent of problems in mathematics is caused by problems in communication between a child and world around".

Ginsburg, Klein and Starkey (1998) consider mathematical knowledge of children as a result of formal and informal experience. While *informal knowledge of mathematics* forms outside the school environment and represents problematic solving of the situation with concrete objects, which the child acquires through the interaction with physical and social world already in the period of pre-school age of the child;[2] *formal mathematics* represents arithmetic skills (manipulation with systems of written symbols) and concept of children learning at school.

Development of mathematical imaginations on the theoretical level, could be caught with the help of so called models of mathematical thinking, e.g. Gelman and Galliestela (1978) distinguished following stages of development of prenumerical imaginations, which characterized by help of basic principles:

- **principle of correspondence one to one** is mastered by the most of five years old children, when in counting the sets of elements, the children will incorporate each element just once;
- **principle of permanent sequence** represents knowledge of numeric sequence, when the child has acquired verbal counting. This ability develops within age of pre-school child from knowledge one, two, three till knowledge one, two, three up to twenty;

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[2] Hejný (1989) similar to Gelman and Gallistela (1978) indicates that the seeds of numerical concepts in the consciousness of the child has already started to appear around the second year of life, perhaps even earlier and are the result of everyday life experiences of the child.

- **cardinal principle** – is mastered by children at the entrance to school. This principle develops later than the principle of correspondence and permanent sequence. In this stage the child realizes at the end of elements counting that the last named number represents total figure of the elements of the set;
- **principle of abstractness** – the child sums up beside same objects even objects of different shape and size;
- **principle of sequence – irreverence** – the child, on the base of experience, appreciates invariability of final sum of the objects at the change of sequence.

It is necessary to be aware that the separate stages can overlap in different ways and with regard to individual development of the child they could differ by the course and even time length.

Gruszczyk-Kolezyňská (Zelinková, 2001) mention in the context of school matters so called *school readiness for mathematics* with which, beside prenumeric imaginations, is closely connected the level of emotional maturity of the child. As another factor, which could not be omitted, influencing successfulness of development of mathematical abilities of the child, we consider the child's effort itself.

Quite another aspect seems to be undervaluation of mathematical knowledge of the children at entry of elementary (primary school). Results of international research revealed fundamentally deeper knowledge of children than their teachers, specialists and even parents supposed. Therefore the authors (Tichá, Hošpesová and Kuřima, 1995) recommend submitting entry didactic test to children and carry out diagnostic interview. The obtained data could become a starting point for individual adjustment of learning plan for individual pupils in the first year of school. The teacher gets possibility of optimal expansion of till now obtained child's mathematical skill and also to develop in natural form child's discovery of the world of mathematics.

Aim of the research

We were interested, in connection with the framework of educational programme for pre-school and basic education and all the time more frequent trend of school integration, which level of pre-mathematical imagination reach the children with visual impairment in comparison with their intact contemporaries.

Research sample

   We addressed for cooperation several current nurseries, 3 nurseries for children with visual impairment and teachers of nurseries, who have an integrated child with visual impairment in the class. A total number of 47 children of pre-school age participated in the investigation, who took part in enrolment to the first class of elementary (primary) school this year. The mean age of the intact children was 6.31 years and the mean age of children with visual impairment, from which only four children were integrated to current nursery, was 6.35 (see Table 1 and 2). Eleven children had different level and combination of refractive defect together with amblyopia, two children were after operation of inborn cataract and simultaneously amblyopia was diagnosed in them and two children had diagnosis of refractive defect together with squint. None of the followed children was blind. Five children had beside visual impairment also language deficiency and visited speech therapist, one child had beside visual impairment also ADHD diagnosis and one from the children went during the followed period through diagnostic process, as there was, beside visual impairment, also suspicion on other impairments

Tab. 1: Mean evaluation of all respondents

children	number	mean age	total mean number of points	total number of points in arithmetic	total number of points in geometry
intact	23	6.31	6.95	3.7	3.26
with visual impairment	24	6.35	8	3.79	4.21

Tab. 2: Mean evaluation of children with visual impairment

| children	number	mean age	total mean number of points	total number of points in arithmetic	total number of points in geometry
from nursery for children with visual impairment	20	6.24	8	3.95	4.05
integrated	4	6.6	8	3	5

Methods of research

We used modified test material (Tichá, Hošpesová and Kuřima, 1994), which we adjusted with regard to visual affliction of some children (see enclosure A and B). Standard size of the card with separate tasks was B5. The children with visual impairment had possibility of the choice between the size of paper pictures B5 and A4. Only 3 children from the followed children chose the size of the format A4. Two of them were after operation of inborn cataract. We worked individually with children, always after the submission of the picture, the given task was read to them.

Analysis and interpretation of the results

Results of the children in the test of mathematics and geometry are demonstrated in the graph No. 1 and 2. While the results in the area of mathematic are comparable in both followed groups (the mean number of points in children with visual impairment was 3.79 and in the intact population 3.7), in the area of geometry were surprisingly more successful children with visual impairment (mean number of points in children with visual impairment was 4.21, in the intact population 3.26) (see Tab. 1, 2). Nevertheless from statistical data elaboration, with utilization of Mann and Whitney U-test it follows that among the followed group of the intact children and children with visual impairment are not significant differences in both the tests of mathematics and geometry. In both cases we were forced to accept null hypothesis. It is $H1_0$ *between reached results in the test from mathematics of children with*

Graph No. 1: Histogram of frequency in the test of arithmetic
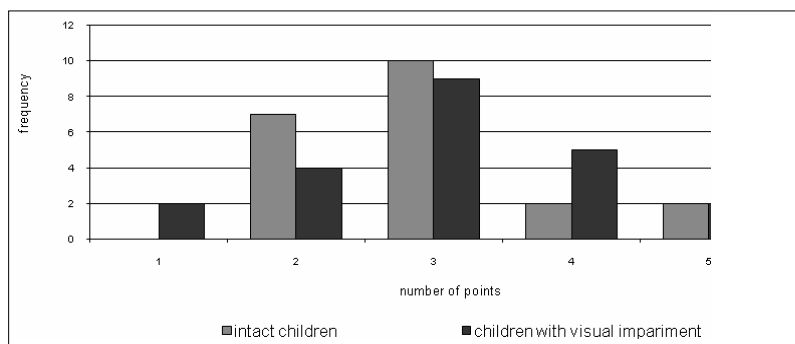
visual impairment and their intact contemporaries are not statistically significant differences and H2$_0$ *between reached results in the test from geometry of children with visual impairment and their intact peers are not statistically significant differences.* Results in the separate tests influence the total evaluation of the respondents, how it is demonstrated in the graph No. 3. We can state *that the level of pre mathematical imaginations of children with visual impairment in pre-school age is in comparison with their intact contemporaries comparable.*

Graph No. 2: Histogram of frequency in the test of geometry
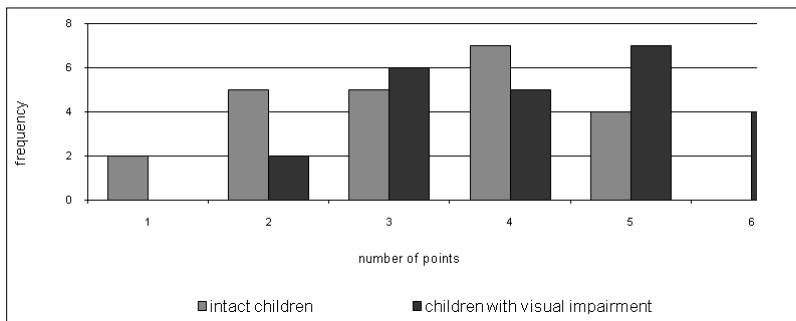
Graph No. 3: Total histogram of frequency in the testss
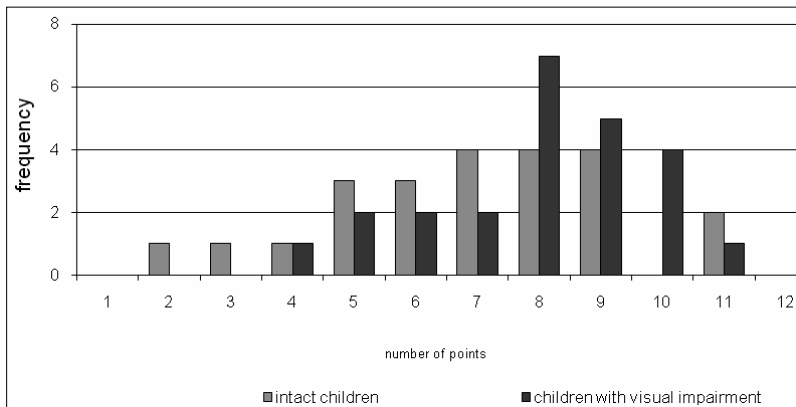
From didactic view it is not possible to follow only successfulness of the children in the tests, but more detailed analysis will be necessary. Therefore we were interested in difficultness of the submitted tasks and their comparison in the followed groups of respondents. In the test of arithmetic the tasks No. 1, 2 and 4 showed to be easy, the tasks No. 3 and 5 were of medium difficulty and the task No. 6 revealed as a difficult one (see Tab. 3) in both groups of respondents. The easy tasks correspond to current ones, to which the child in nursery in the area of mathematics is exposed. The task No. 3 presumes knowledge of numeric row backwards, which is a demanding task for a child of pre-school age. In most cases he/she meets with it in current situations, the task given in words in written form could be demanding on imagination. The task No. 5 presumes acquiring of adding. Some children during solving exchanged (substituted) number of points (3 + 4 = 7) with the number of throws (1 + 1 = 2). Simultaneously some children had tendency to use fingers for solving the tasks. The task No. 6 finds out the skill of deducting to ten, according to our opinion it demands certain imagination from children. In another words, the child is able to solve the task in general life (he/she has certain experience, it means informal knowledge of mathematics) but has not yet acquire formal knowledge of deducting.

In geometry test only the first task showed to be easy for both followed groups, in which the child should have determined, which pencil is longer. The task No. 3 was easy for children with visual impairment, in which they should have determined the shorter way. Other tasks were of medium difficulty for both the groups (see Tab. 4).

Tab. 3: Difficultness of the task in the test of arithmetics

	intact contemporaries	children with visual impairment
question No.1 (house)	Q = 0	Q = 0
question No. 2 (girls)	Q = 8.7	Q = 12.5
question No. 3 (space ship)	Q = 43.48	Q = 50
question No. 4 (circles)	Q = 8.7	Q = 12.5
question No. 5 (automat)	Q = 78.26	Q = 62.5
question No. 6 (glasses)	Q = 91.30	Q = 83.,3

Tab. 4: Difficultness of the task in the test of geometry

	intact contemporaries	children with visual impairment
question No.1 (pencil)	Q = 0	Q = 0
question No. 2 (square)	Q = 52.17	Q = 29.2
question No. 3 (way)	Q = 26.09	Q = 12.5
question No. 4 (juice)	Q = 60.87	Q = 25
question No. 5 (construction)	Q = 60.87	Q = 45.83
question No. 6 (cars)	Q = 73.91	Q = 66.66

About possible causes of higher successfulness of the children with visual impairment in geometry we can only speculate in this moment. With regard to the fact that number of children in both groups is comparable and the same as their age, it is necessary to seek causes somewhere else. We can find possible explanation in the system and content of education in nurseries for children with visual impairment, where is, beside other, decreased number of children in class compared with current nurseries. It enables to teachers to approach a child individually and respect his/her topical needs. The aim of special education care is to reduce or eliminate the consequences of visual impairment, to secure optimal development of these children and prepare them for entry to elementary (primary) school.

It seems that children with binocular sight used in solving of geometry tasks their experience obtained in nurseries during the exercises for sight stimulation and pleoptico-orthoptic exercises (connection of points in space, cutting along the line, string of beads, maze, recognize ten differences). Most of the pupils spared a thought during geometry tasks, carefully examined the picture and only then answered.

The results of submitted research investigation in the area of mathematical education of children with visual impairment invites us to further research activities, to creation of work sheets and methodical materials utilizable by teachers in nurseries.

Enclosure A test from mathematic
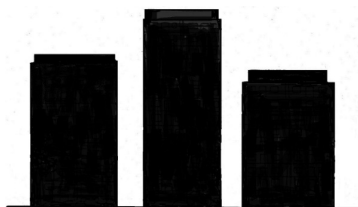
1. There is a row of houses in the picture.
   Which house is the highest?

2. There are children in the picture.
   Where is the girl with number 5?

3. A space ship starts in the picture.
   The start is counted down backwards:
   10, 9, 8.
   Which is the next number?

4. Colour 9 circles.

5. Tom got a new toy, an automatic one.
   He shot and obtained 3 and 4 points.
   How many points he has together?
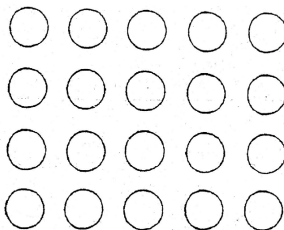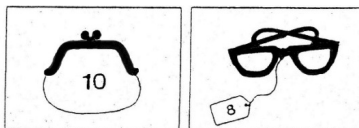
6. Eve has 10 crowns.
   She bought paper glasses for carnival
   for 8 crowns.
   How much crowns remained to her?

Enclosure A test from geometry
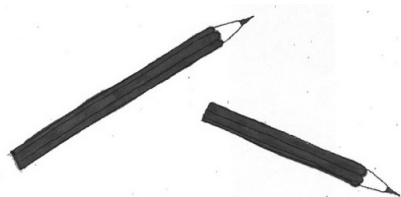
1. Which pencil is shorter?
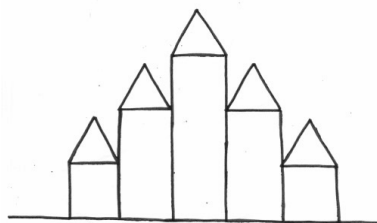
2. Show me a square in the picture
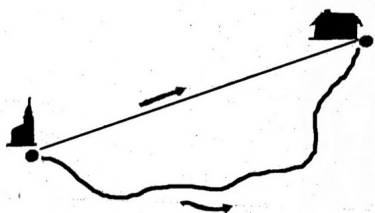
3. Which way is shorter?
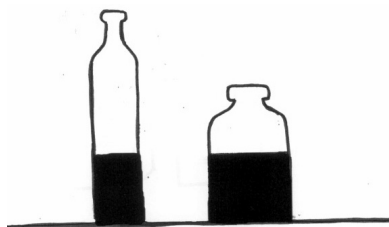
4. In which bottle is more juice?
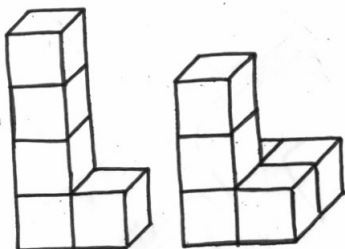
5. The boys constructed two towers.
   Where is more cubes?
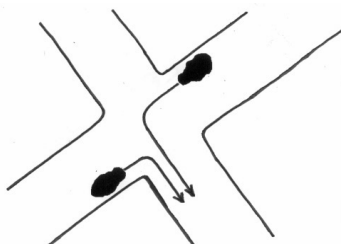
6. Which car turns to right?

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Contact
Mgr. Jitka Vítová, Ph.D.
Institute of Primary and Pre-primary Education
Faculty of Education, University Hradec Králové
Rokitanského 62

500 03 Hradec Králové
jitka.vitova@uhk.cz

Andrea Kovácsová
Institute of Primary And Pre-primary Education
Faculty of Education, University Hradec Králové
Rokitanského 62
500 03 Hradec Králové
andrea.kovacsova@uhk.cz

Eliška Třečková
Institute of Primary And Pre-primary Education
Faculty of Education, University Hradec Králové
Rokitanského 62
500 03 Hradec Králové
eliska.treckova@uhk.cz

AN EVALUATION OF GEOGRAPHY TEACHERS' COMPETENCES VERSUS TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Wiktor Osuch

Abstract

Changes which took place in the last years within the European higher educational system, necessitated special attention to the effects of the Bologna Declaration influence on the process of training of future teachers in Poland. The author of this paper believes that the acquisition of the appropriate competences by geography students – candidates for teachers constitutes the most important element in professional training of the future teacher including a geography teacher. The aim of the performed research was: a comprehensive assessment of the acquisition of competences by geography teachers – mentors of vocational teacher trainings, a multifaceted analysis of factors influencing the process of developing students' competences – candidates for geography teachers and also working out a model of the assessment of teachers' competences by geography students. The presented research is an attempt to find the relationship between the received points given for the development of competences and the assessment performed both in points and marks given by geography students who did vocational teaching training with geography teachers as their mentors at school. Students assessed the observed lessons which were carried out by geography teachers – their mentors.

Key words

Polish geography teacher, subject and didactical competences, questionnaire survey and correlations of assessments, teaching experience.

Introduction

After many attempts to reform Polish educational system, beginning with the change of types of schools, levels of education, syllabuses for each subject, curricula, textbooks, aims and content of subject teaching, very little has been done to shape a contemporary teacher, the teacher of the 21st century.

In the process of training of future teachers, including geography teachers, competences acquired mainly during geography studies and vocational

training at school play the vital role. This report presents research results and a discussion concerning subject and teaching competences of geography teachers and candidates for this profession described in monograph (Osuch 2010). In the quoted monograph the author focuses on the assessment of the acquisition of specific competences by teachers (teachers' self-assessment of their competences) and the assessment of these competences by students. The analysis and assessment of the process of geography teachers' training in Poland constitute the considerable part of monograph.

The presented article discusses, first of all, the results of the research on the correlation between geography teachers' work experience and the extent to which they acquired various competences

The aim of the performed research was the self-assessment of the acquired subject and teaching competences by geography teachers in gimnazjum[1] and liceum[2], and bachelor (BA) and master (MA) students of geography. The obtained results in this part of the research are shown in Figure 1.

Another aim of the research was the assessment of the selected teaching competences by geography teachers. BA and MA students of geography assessed teaching competences of their mentors during observations during their teaching training. The obtained results of the assessed competences were compared with work experience of those mentors. The results of this part of research are shown in the chapter discussing research results – the correlation between the acquired competences and work experience of a teacher.

Having obtained interesting results of the research, the author of this paper made an attempt to examine the relationship between the number of the received points in the scope of the development of competences and the marks both in points and grades given by geography students who did the teacher training with those teachers as their mentors. Students assessed lessons which they observed. In addition, teaching experience of teachers was taken into account and it was correlated with both the assessment performed by teachers who were the mentors as well as their trainee geography teachers.

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[1] Gimnazjum – a three-year obligatory, comprehensive school, attended by students from 13 to 16 years of age (lower secondary school).

[2] Liceum – a three-year comprehensive school with classes with specialisation, attended by students from 16 to 19 years of age. Students finish school with so called 'matura' exam, the equivalent of A-level exams which is required to enter a university (upper secondary school).

Methods of research

Method of diagnostic survey, known also as a questionnaire method was used to examine the teaching competences. The questionnaire form which included closed single and multiple choice questions was used as the research tool. Survey was carried out among both geography teachers – mentors and geography students. The survey was conducted among 96 geography teachers (in years 2008 and 2009), graduates in teaching faculty of geography studies department at Pedagogical University of Cracow (previously known as Pedagogical Academy), Jagiellonian University and also, in individual cases, graduates from University of Silesia in Katowice, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń and Maria Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin. In addition, for comparative purposes, 136 geography students from three different faculties of studies at Pedagogical University of Cracow took part in the survey.

Distribution t of a Student with n – 2 degrees of freedom was used to calculate the correlation between the examined variables and also the observed value of the coefficient of the linear correlation r was compared with the critical value r_α calculated by means of a formula. Free computer program Mathematica 5.2 (for student) Wolframa was used to calculate the correlation.

The linear correlation was calculated from the following formula:

$$r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i - \bar{x})^2 \sum_{i=1}^{n}(y_i - \bar{y})^2}} .$$

Conclusion was inferred by means of the following statistic

$$t = \frac{r}{\sqrt{1 - r^2}} \sqrt{n - 2} .$$

This statistic has the distribution t of a Student with n – 2 degrees of freedom, with the assumption that the hypothesis H_0 (r = 0) is correct. In tables of distribution t of a Student for the set in advance level of significance α

and for n – 2 degrees of freedom we read the critical value t_α. This number meets the condition $P\{|t| \geq t_\alpha\} = \alpha$.

We assume, as it is often done in didactic research, the level of significance $\alpha = 0,05$.

It is known from the theory that when after comparing the calculated value t with the critical value t_α we obtain the inequality $|t| \geq t_\alpha$, then the hypothesis H_0 about the lack of correlation between the variables needs to be rejected. The conclusion is inferred as follows:

If the observed value t satisfies the inequality $|t| \geq t_\alpha$ then the zero hypothesis H_0 is rejected in the favour of alternative hypothesis which says that the correlation coefficient doesn't equal zero. However, when $|t| < t_\alpha$ there is no grounds for rejecting the hypothesis H_0 that variables are not correlated.

Literature review

The profession of a teacher in the past and, contrary to some negative opinions of some people, currently has in general quite high public recognition. Its relatively high position among other professions results from the tasks performed by a teacher. Society expects that people who become teachers should be special, taking into account both professional qualifications and moral principles. Teachers should be able to reach a specific social rank, to be an authority for students, parents and local environment (Żegnałek 2007).

It is true that many educationalists and teaching and learning experts think that indeed one can learn the skills needed for teaching profession, especially those which are directly connected with the ability to share knowledge and develop some skills of students but is it sufficient to perform educational tasks well and perform duties of a teacher and a tutor conscientiously? Is the acquisition of certain knowledge and skills a sufficient condition to be a good teacher? These questions bother many educationalist and teaching and learning experts (Żegnałek 2007).

The characteristic feature of the teaching profession is work with 'human beings who differ from each other, who are characteristic for themselves and who require an individual approach' (Miszczuk 2007, p. 43). Teacher has a role of an obliging adviser, initiator and organizer. According to R. Perry (2000) a teacher at work should present 'the ability to prepare and organize activities and experiences in such a way that they trigger the process of children's learning and thinking in the appropriate moment' (Perry 2000, p. 105).

Currently, instead of a discussion on selected personal features of candidates for teachers more and more often the notion of competences is used in literature. These competences should be acquired by a student of teaching faculty – a candidate for a teacher, including a geography teacher.

S. Piskorz (1996) writes extensively about a geography teacher, defining him or her as 'a person who identifies himself or herself with the profession of a teacher, and a teacher's speciality should be regarded in terms of the acquired profession and actual profession. An acquired profession means university studies including teaching and psychological preparation; an actual profession is the complete or incomplete teaching of geography at school' (Piskorz 1996, p. 144). S. Piskorz (1996, p. 144) defines the complete teaching of geography as 'the effective dissemination of geographical knowledge, developing various factual and formal skills and getting accustomed to the specific system of values and developing the appropriate attitudes by a person with the adequate preparation to do that' (university studies). A geography teacher from a classical perspective is a person who is energetic, enterprising, good organizer who knows the local environment very well and who works for the local community in which he or she lives. He or she is a cheerful person and even with a sense of humour. Geography teacher's character features are: cordial, just, understanding, firm, orderly, leader, a person with vivid imagination and ability to act evocatively and also to be a well-mannered person. (Piskorz 1997).

A Czech geographer and educationalist A. Wahla (2000) wrote about the qualifications of future geographers and the necessity to use various sources of knowledge by geographers (of economics, engineering, technology and politics) as well as to set the whole process of education in the aspect of profound social and economic transformations in the world.

A Slovak geographer and educationalist J. Kancir (2000) described the old, contemporary and future projects of geography textbooks as they are perceived by geography teachers. In addition J. Kancir created the criteria of textbook assessment and carried out exemplary analyses and assessment of those textbooks. In his next publication J. Kancir (2004) discussed the subject of a detailed didactics in the aspect of questionnaire surveys of students. J. Kancir made a number of remarks, mainly in the form of postulates concerning further education at geography faculty and training of the future teachers of geography.

An Austrian specialist on geography didactics G. Atschko (2004) brought up the subject of preparation of geography teachers for new forms of educational activity at school. Another Austrian geography didactics specialist Ch. Fridrich (2004) presented a theoretical model of teaching geography and economic subjects at school in the aspect of standards of teaching and assumptions resulting from curricula.

Currently, there are many various definitions of competences from the perspective of teaching profession. Pedagogues, didactics specialists and pedeutology specialists claim that it is difficult to describe a competence with an unambiguous definition.

The latest publications describe competences as all kinds of knowledge, skills, talents, virtues, experiences and social forms of authorizations, which are regarded by an individual as the sufficient ground for free, subjective activity – effective or even creative (Hartman 2007).

The division of professional competences of teachers performed by Ch. Kyriacou (1991) inspired other authors to carry out further research concerning teachers' competences. Ch. Kyriacou divided the competences into: specialist competences (those connected with a subject), psychological and teaching competences, communicative, organizational and managerial, diagnostic and interventional, competences connected with the reflection on teachers' own activities.

F. A. J. Korthagen i T. Wubbels (1995) described in detail the process of experience acquisition and the process of becoming an expert in teaching profession.

Ch. Day (2004) in the publication *Professional development of a teacher* presented the dynamics of career in teaching profession. It is a peculiar study of the reflection on school culture and the management of the quality of teacher training and development. In another publication Ch. Day (2008) tries to prove that school is the environment for intellectual challenges, also for a teacher, and teaching profession, which requires energy, involvement and determination, is for brave people. Ch. Day gives tips how to teach with passion, keep enthusiasm and how to find time for reflection and not to get discouraged from teaching career.

Czech pedeutologist J. Průcha (2006, p. 306) defines teacher's competences as 'a set of professional skills, knowledge, values and approaches which every teacher should possess in order to perform their job effectively. J. Průcha (2006) indicates the following elements of teacher's competences model:

–   'planning and preparing a lesson (aims of a lesson),
–   performing the lesson,
–   managing the lesson (keeping students' active involvement strong),
–   the atmosphere during the lesson (creating positive approaches among students and motivating them to participate in a lesson),
–   discipline (keeping order during the lesson),
–   assessment of students' achievements (assessment of achievements mainly in order to help students in their personal development),
–   reflection on teachers' own work and evaluation' (J. Průcha 2006, p. 308).

Ch. Vielhaber (2006) wrote about the classification of competences and the profile of a geography graduate of University of Vienna. Interestingly enough, Ch. Vielhaber gives little attention to competences connected with the subject of geography. He emphasises the competences in cooperation, motivation to take action, plan, reflection on one's own actions, introduction of innovations. Such a division of competences puts stronger emphasis on soft competences which are nowadays more and more often analysed and described (Osiński 2010, Osuch 2011).

H. De Jong (2008) wrote about training of geography students – candidates for teachers in the Netherlands. Apart from the analysis of syllabuses of geographers' training and teaching practice at school H. De Jong described the profile of graduates and their competences. He divided competences into: communicative, pedagogical, specialist, teaching, organizational, in the scope of cooperation with teachers, parents and in the scope of reflection and professional development. Curiously enough, competences concerning the subject of geography are not emphasised separately but discussed together with teaching competences.

Ch. Vielhaber in his next publication (2008) expressed his point of view in the discussion on standards of geography students' training and competences invoking definitions of other authors, for example J. Erpenbeck's and L. Rosenstiel's (2003) and modifying them. It was the introduction to the

discussion on the subject of relationship between standards and competences, what students of geography should know and what they must know.

D. Lambert (2008) in his article presenting the theoretical discussion and assumptions of the future school geography taught in high schools. He wrote on curricula, students' competences, about the necessity to continue geography education after reaching the age of 14, about the great 'potential' of geography and the need to use it, despite the criticism of this subject in the British mass media which described the subject as 'taught in a boring way'.

E. Hofmann (2009) presented the position of geography as the subject taught at Czech schools, referring to the rank of geography didactics. E. Hofmann invokes the textbook written by D. Lambert and D. Balderstoune (2000), which became the inspiration for the English and American school of teaching geography. He stirs up a discussion on the possibilities of development of geography didactics. Matters discussed by E. Hofmann seem to be relevant today and needed because school geography and geography didactics are in regression in Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia.

In recent years, especially in the countries of western Europe, research concerning later professional fate of university graduates, including geography faculty graduates, is performed. The research concerns the relationship between the employers' demands for specific competences of university graduates, quality of students' education and the situation on the job market. For example, research concerning the demand for specific competences was carried out as a result of university geography education among employees on a European scale (Donert, Charzyński, Podgórski 2007). This research shows different directions of the approach to studies and professional work. For instance, studies for passion (this is an ideal situation) and the equipment with numerous factual and formal competences constitutes the sufficient input of university into preparation of a graduate for the job market. Employability is not treated as the aim of studying, as this is the job of vocational schools, but one of its effects and this is the task that graduates equipped with a set of competences should deal with on their own (Heron, Le Hathaway – 2000, Owen 2001). High interest of employers in graduates of geography, ecology and geology faculties owing to the research being performed, is also the result of preventing unemployment among graduates (Gedye, Fender, Chalkley – 2004 and Maguire, Guyer – 2004).

D. Piróg (2010) reviewed the research on education and job market, the research on later professional fate of graduates, the quality level of university education paying special attention to the job market and the research concerning employers' requirements which graduates – candidates for work need to meet. Unfortunately, in Poland such research hasn't been performed on a wider scale, although one may expect that soon, also among geographers of different specialities, such research will be carried out.

The presented above review of literature does not exhaust the subject of widely understood professional training of geography teachers. It gives only the theoretical basis for further discussion and analyses concerning the development of competences.

Research results – competences of geography teachers and students – candidates for teachers

Maximum 415 points could be received in the questionnaire concerning teaching and factual competences of geography teachers (and also geography students – candidates for teachers). The questionnaire consists of four parts whose each refers to a different group of competences. Part I concerns the factual competences in the field of geography. Each respondent could receive maximum 200 points. Part II refers to teaching competences in geography didactics. Each respondent could receive maximum 100 points. Part III is about teaching competences in protective and educational pedagogy. Each respondent could receive maximum 70 points. Part IV concerns competences in the knowledge of educational law. Each respondent could receive maximum 45 points (Osuch 2010).

Detailed results of the self-assessment of the acquired competences by both teachers and geography students – candidates for teachers are presented on the chart (Fig. 1).

The results of the research on the acquired competences are diversified in each group.

On the basis of the obtained results it must be stated that teachers of various subjects, doing postgraduate studies in geography demonstrated significantly worse competences than active geography teachers. The score is as much as 80 points worse. In this examined group of people both very positive examples of developing competences and negative examples were observed. The negative examples aroused many doubts or even controversy over the

Fig. 1
Competences acquired by teachers and geography students in point scale.

Legend:
- teachers at gimnazjum
- teachers at liceum
- full time students
- postgraduate students
- BA students

Categories:
- Part I. Competences in the subject of geography
- Part II. Competences in geography didactics
- Part III. Competences in protective and educational pedagogy
- Part IV. Competences in educational law
- The total number of points received for the acquired competences

X-axis: 0, 50, 100, 150, 200, 250, 300, 350, 400 pkt

Source: Author's own study based on survey research.

Source: Osuch W. (2010, p. 167) – Fig. 69

suitability of those people to become teachers. Teacher with more experience and at the higher level of professional advancement developed competences to a significantly larger extent than teacher with less experience and at the

lower level of professional advancement, which can be easily noticed in the results obtained in part IV, III and II of the set of competences. Especially the results obtained in these parts of competences may reflect the work experience of a teacher.

The results obtained by full time geography students in the scope of development of competences are a few or a dozen or so points lower for each analysed set of competences in comparison with active geography teachers in gimnazjum and liceum. This difference in points is about 72 points in relation to the total amount of points received.

Geography students received less points especially in part II, III and IV of the set of competences as they lack experience in developing competences particularly teaching competences which are also (especially) developed and practised during practical lessons at school during a longer period of gaining teaching experience. Vocational teacher training at both gimnazjum and liceum is too short to develop, practise and verify the acquired experience. Teaching competences in geography didactics were less developed by MA students (about 13 points less). The results obtained by these group of students in part II and IV of the set of competences were similar to those obtained by postgraduate students. This results from the work experience of active teachers who reach the consecutive levels of professional advancement.

Results concerning the acquired competences among part time BA students are more levelled and less diversified than the results obtained by MA students. The fact that the results obtained by part time BA students are less diversified may be caused by the fact that there was a small number of the analysed questionnaires (36) and that students were highly motivated to prepare themselves for the role of a geography teacher.

Research results – the correlations between the assessment of the acquired competences and work experience of teachers

In the next part of the research geography teachers' competences were assessed during their lessons at school. The assessment was performed by geography students doing vocational teaching training. Students used a questionnaire survey. The author of this paper had detailed results of geography teachers' surveys and also additional information concerning teaching experience of those teachers at school. In this case data concerning teaching experience of each geography teacher and assessment performed by students doing vocational teaching training were used.

At the beginning of the research a hypothesis was formed that the assessment of geography teachers' competences performed by geography students during observations depends on the teaching experience of those geography teachers.

Correlations were calculated for five groups of teachers:
a) teachers at gimnazjum – mentors of part time geography students,
b) teacher at post – gimnazjum schools (most frequently at liceum) – mentors of full time geography students,
c) teachers at gimnazjum – mentors of full time geography students,
d) teacher at gimnazjum and liceum – mentors of full time geography students (sum b + c)
e) all teachers – mentors of vocational teaching training (sum a + b + c).

Re a) Correlation r = 0.21 was calculated with the critical value $r_\alpha = 0.20$, which means that there is a correlation (significant correlation) between the teaching experience of teachers – mentors of vocational teaching training of part time students at gimnazjum and the assessment of teachers' competences performed by geography students during observations. Positive correlation means that the longer the teaching experience of a geography teacher is, the better mark they received for their lessons from geography students. The obtained result may prove both that there is a regularity that an experienced teacher with a longer teaching experience and at the higher level of professional advancement is able to give effective lessons and also very good lessons in the opinion of geography students. In addition, teachers – mentors in small towns cooperate with universities more seldom than teachers in cities, e.g. in Cracow and are much better prepared for the lessons which were observed by geography students.

Re b) Correlation r = –0.31 was calculated with the critical value $r_\alpha = 0.18$, which means that there is a significant correlation between teaching experience of teachers – mentors of vocational teacher training of full time students in liceum and the assessment of teachers' competences carried out by students while observations. Moreover, the negative correlation means that the longer teaching experience of teachers at school (in liceum) is, the lower mark was given to those teachers from students who observed their lessons. The obtained score is highly surprising and can be interpreted in various

ways. Among other things, teachers with longer teaching experience and often older teachers fall into a routine during lessons. Such teachers' lessons are not interesting in liceum. They do not use diversified teaching methods and often give a lecture during their lesson which is an effective way to cover the material and prepare students for their matura exams (equivalent of A-levels). More experienced teachers often cover the material quickly without any moments to give some thoughts to the material, to discuss it with students or reflect on it. Teacher at schools in big cities (e.g. in Cracow), who are preoccupied with the abundance of duties and tasks, do not give too much attention to looking after students during teaching training. Also students themselves would like to have as their mentors in liceum teachers who are ambitious and active, often with less teaching experience and younger but not conservative teachers who do not fit in the modern world and school's tasks. MA students are demanding towards their teachers-mentors while vocational teaching training at liceum, where teaching experience of their mentors, their age, and the level of professional advancement is significant for the assessment of their competences during observations and thus the whole teaching experience of these teachers-mentors.

Re c) Correlation r = –0.18 was calculated with the critical value r_α = 0.14, which means that there is a significant correlation between teaching experience of teachers – mentors of vocational teacher training of MA students in gimnazjum and the assessment of teachers' competences during geography lessons carried out by students while observations. Teaching experience of teachers at gimnazjum influenced significantly the assessment of competences performed by full time students doing their first teaching training. It means that both older teachers and those with longer teaching experience were assessed by geography students as well as younger teachers and those with shorter teaching experience. Moreover, it must be stated that, above all, young teachers with short teaching experience were exceptionally highly assessed by students (hence the negative correlation). MA students undergoing their vocational teaching training at gimnazjum also proved to be strict for their mentors (similarly to lyceum, see item b above).

Re d) Correlation r = –0.20 was calculated with the critical value r_α = 0.11, which means that there is a significant correlation between teaching experience of teachers – mentors of vocational teacher training of full time students in gimnazjum and liceum (sum b + c) and the assessment of teachers' com-

petences during geography lessons carried out by students while observations. In addition, negative correlation means that the longer the teaching experience of a teacher at school (at gimnazjum and liceum) is, the lower mark in competences that teacher received from observing them students. Certainly, the result was influenced by the analysed separately example of MA students' teaching training at lyceum (see item b above) but also some examples of lessons assessed by MA students in gimnazjum. Moreover, it must be emphasised that full time students had high requirements towards their mentors not only at liceum but also at some gimnazjums, especially in big cities. Routine of some teachers was probably also taken into account during the assessment.

Re e) Correlation r = –0.09 was calculated with the critical value r_α = 0.09, which means that there is a correlation possible (a negative one) between teaching experience of teachers – mentors of vocational teacher training of all students (sum a + b + c) and the assessment of teachers' competences during geography lessons carried out by those students while observations. When all analysed groups of students are summarised, it must be stated that the longer the teaching experience of teachers at school (both at gimnazjum and liceum) is, the lower the mark for their competences was given by the observing them students (negative correlation). Such results surprised the author of this paper, as he had not expected a negative correlation for the total of all analysed cases.

As it was mentioned before, among the group of geography teachers – mentors of students' vocational teacher training, information about teaching experience was included in the questionnaire as well as marks in points for the acquired competences. It was decided that it had to be examined whether there was a relationship between the teaching experience of geography teachers and the total amount of all points given for the acquired teaching and subject competences (on the basis of self-assessment of teachers). Correlation r = 0.35 was calculated with the critical value r_α =0.27, which means that there is a significant correlation between teaching experience of teachers and self-assessment of those teachers concerning the total amount of points given for each acquired competence. Correlation for the group of all geography teachers taking part in the survey was calculated. In this particular case it can be concluded that the longer the teaching experience is, the more competences geography teacher acquired. However, it must be taken into consideration

that teachers themselves assessed acquisition of their own competences and certainly, more experienced teacher were more confident about their skills and competences. Novice teachers with short teaching experience might have been careful with their self-assessment of their competences and thus their achievements in acquisition of teaching and subject competences were lower. Attention must be drawn to the connection between teachers' teaching experience and students' assessment of teachers' competences in performing a specific lesson during vocational teacher training. In this case a negative correlation was obtained in groups of teachers at gimnazjum and liceum and in the assessment performed by full time students, which means that the longer teaching experience of geography teachers at school was, the poorer the assessment of their competences in performing a lesson was.

Conclusion and generalisations

It is difficult to state explicitly, which teachers-mentors score highly in the assessment of geography students – candidates for teachers. Taking into account teachers' longer work experience at school, higher level of professional advancement, well developed competences one may assume that such teachers should also receive high marks from students doing vocational teaching training at school. However, teachers with long teaching experience do not necessarily get the highest marks from students, both in points concerning specific competences and in a general assessment of lessons.

Reasons can be different:
– in spite of the prepared observation template, the assessment of a lesson by students is subjective. It must be underlined that for geography students doing vocational teacher training at a post gimnazjum school usually at liceum it is their second teaching training and they often already have a worked-out conception of a lesson and work with young people,
– possibility of conflicts during vocational teacher training between students and their mentors. It creates favourable conditions for stricter assessment of mentors by their students and also a lower mark in teaching practice (there were such cases, especially among teachers-mentors with long teaching experience and a significant age difference between students and their mentors),
– presented by teachers-mentors often incomprehensible approach towards young people, changes in economic and political life, imposing

one's opinion, creates favourable conditions for conflicts and stricter assessment of students for mentors' prestige (there were also such single cases, especially during teacher training in post-gimnazjum school among older geography teachers-mentors with longer teaching experience).

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Contact
Wiktor Osuch
Pedagogical University of Cracow
Institute of Geography
Department of Geography Education
Cracow
Poland
e-mail: wiktor_osuch@wp.pl wikosuch@ap.krakow.pl

A BRIEF INTERVENTION PROGRAMME FOR OUTPATIENT TREATMENT FOR METHAMPHETAMINE USERS

Michal Růžička, Edmund Wittmann

Abstract

This work aims to inform the reader about a new individual ambulatory therapy for people addicted to stimulant drugs (cocaine, crack and/or pervitin (methamphetamine)). The new methodology called A Brief Intervention Programme is used in Great Britain for users of cocaine and crack. Based on the cooperation of P-Centrum, Olomouc and the British company Foundation 66, which developed the methodology mentioned, it has been adapted for the pervitin (methamphetamine) users. The transformation followed after the programme had been applied and evaluated for a year and resulted in a new methodology called: Brief Intervention Programme for Pervitin Users. Advantages of this new methodology can be seen in its easy applicability and relatively short term duration. The methodology is based on the concept of cognitive behavioural therapy and education of the client leading to understanding the principles of his/her addiction. The work also intends to inform the reader about the transformation process of the methodology.

The main reason for placement of this article into E-pedagogium journal is the educational potencial of the therapeutical programme. We can say that the programme is partially educative and partially therapeutical. Because of this content, it is suitable as the work instrument for special education teachers and social workers who work with problematic drug users.

Key words

The brief intervention programme, cocaine, crack, pervitin (methamphetamine), treatment methodology, P-centrum.

New method to work with clients addicted to pervitin

The scope of ambulatory consulting therapeutic work largely involves work with pervitin (methamphetamine) clients. A range of those clients are motivated to solve their troubled situation, however, not behind the walls of a psychiatric clinic or residential community centre. When searching for new resources for such clients we (P-Centrum, Olomouc) got interested in

the British method described below and started a close cooperation with the company Foundation 66, where the methodology was developed. As a result of our mutual work we can now make use of a new methodology, which helps pervitin clients on their way to abstinence.

Brief intervention programme for cocaine and crack users and its transformation into the pervitin programme

The father of the Brief Intervention Programme is Aidan Gray, who has developed two programmes for cocaine and crack users. For more information see the following website: http://www.pcentrum.cz/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7&Itemid=13.

The programme outlines two alternatives of work with the client. The first programme, i.e. the Threshold 2-week Programme is designed for those clients who do not want to stop using and are not motivated to abstain. It consists of two sessions, which concentrate on important information that the client should be aware of. You can say it involves important harm reduction information specific for pervitin. If you manage to arouse an interest in the client to work on, the client may continue in the other 12-week programme.

The second programme, i.e. the 12-week Brief Intervention Programme is destined for those clients who want to work towards abstinence. It consists of 12 keywork sessions. An outline of the programme is included in Appendix No. 1. This programme is specific in that it runs simultaneously with the main therapeutical programme. It is basically 12 keywork sessions on top of the common ambulatory meetings.

Since 1st January 2010 the above stated programmes have been applied by a working team of 7 therapists specifically trained for the methodology by its author. The therapists went through the programme with clients (pervitin users) and recorded their experience in case histories (100 case histories). These case histories and work experiences themselves were evaluated at regular meetings, where Dr. Miroslav Charvát from the Department of Psychology of the Philosophical Faculty, Palacký University, Olomouc was the main evaluator. For further information, processes and presentations of the methodology see the article. More detailed information on methodology was published elsewhere (Růžička, 2010).

After a year's experience applying and evaluating the programme, we gave it a new form so that it could be efficient and attractive to Czech clients.

New version of the Brief Intervention Programme for Pervitin Users

One of the most frequent questions asked when evaluating the programme is whether it is suitable for all pervitin users. We have found that the programme requires a certain level of the client's cognitive skills. A large part of the programme has an educational character and therefore it is necessary for the client to be able to understand individual aspects of the programme. That is why we have introduced a 'zero' session in the programme consisting of a so-called "explorative interview". This interview results either in the client's motivation for the programme or in a choice of a different form of work.

Another frequently discussed question was what reasons there were for the existence of two programmes. Having evaluated our experience we eventually drafted a single programme, making use of the experience and knowledge gained from both of the previous ones. Provided that the client does not decide to abstain, the therapy is terminated after a basic education consisting of understanding the cycles and patterns of use, harm reduction and how pervitin works.

In the original version of the programme there were 12 modules that the client gradually went through and achieved their objectives. A common therapy went alongside this programme. This alternative was finally judged as a very demanding one due to two meetings with a client per week. In case of ambulatory work on condition that the client was looking for a job or working already, it was time-consuming. For this reason we connected those programme modules with a rather educational content to therapy work. This connection resulted in so-called "therapy-intervention programme", whose length does not last more than 60 minutes a week. The whole methodology consists of four parts. Firstly, there are so-called 'solid modules', in which we mainly analyze the client's problem in reference to his/her understanding of how pervitin works in brain. Secondly, there are so-called 'free modules', which have a form of optional themes adapted to the client's current needs (i.e. health hazards, relation of drug use to crime, after-care etc.). Thirdly, there are information handouts, i.e. kind of educational facts for the client. Finally, there are worksheets, into which the clients writes down information about the work process, possibly partial results of his/her work.

As it has already been mentioned, the brief intervention programme is based on principles of cognitive-behavioural therapy. We worked in the spirit of this therapy approach as well. The key to our work is seen in making

functional analysis of the client's situation before we advance to the further activities and programme modules. To draft the functional analysis is sometimes a very difficult job, in which the worksheet *Cycles of use* is of great help. You may obtain a better view of this worksheet by reading Appendix No. 2, where a detailed scheme describes how to work with the worksheet. The therapist completes the worksheet together with the client and subsequently they refer it to other cases and situations. The last part is formed by worksheets, into which the client fills in the process or partial outcomes of his or her work. The whole duration of the programme is then 12 to 15 weeks, depending on the needs and possibilities of the client.

The original programme included information handouts. They were supposed to inform the client about the issues that were being solved during the therapy. As we were evaluating these materials we were gradually reducing the amount of information comprised in these handouts in order to make their contents as short as possible, yet still understandable. The handouts are in the form of educational tools, which aim to inform the client about certain themes. For more information see the sample of the handout in Appendix 3.

Thanks to shortening the handouts we have managed to motivate the clients to read them and we also make them think about the issues towards themselves. Since 1st September, 2011 we have been working with a new methodology that was modified as mentioned and got a name Pervitin II. We continue recording clients' case histories, which will be subsequently evaluated in the Final Draft of the programme. The whole text will be available at www.p-centrum.cz in the second half of 2012.

Conclusion

The work intends to acquaint the reader with the transformation process of the methodology developed in Great Britain with the aim of adapting it for the local stimulant drug users. It has turned out that mere translation is not enough, nor is the modification according to specifics of the target drug (i.e. pervitin). Thanks to evaluation of the work with clients (pervitin users) we have understood an urgent need of involving social, cultural and regional aspects. We are trying to make these specific aspects become part of the methodology during the transformation process. We recommend the reader to see the above mentioned website, where both the original and translated version of the methodology is available, possibly to get in touch with us if you have further questions.

Czech/English equivalent for the grant purposes

OP LZZ   HRE OP-CZ

Název projektu: Dokážu to?   Project Name: Can I do it?

Číslo projektu:(1.04/5.101/12.00005)   Project Number: (1.04/5.101/12.00005).

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Author's profile

The Author works as a therapist in P-Centrum Olomouc, where he also works as the guarantee of ambulatory work. Further on, the author works as a University teacher at the Department of Special Education (The Faculty of Education, Palacký University, Olomouc).

Contact

Mgr. Michal Růžička, Ph.D.

workplace:
P-Centrum
Lafayettova 9
771 40 Olomouc

address:
Mozartova 57
771 40 Olomouc
Czech Republic

e-mail: m.ruzicka@email.cz
telephone: +420 720 447 119

Appendix No. 1: 12- week Programme Outline
Keywork Connections Flowcharts

Connections
Throughout the programme it is important for workers to identify themes and help the client make connections. This will help client build up their awareness of recurring situations and develop action plans for possibly dangerous situations. There are many different themes and the simple examples below follow some connections through the programme:

1. Intro & 12 week goals Client identifies working towards getting her children back as a goal.	**Keywork session** Contact developed with Social Services, high score of **102** on CMF, lapse work.
2. How crack & cocaine work Depression is strongly related to by the client in this session.	**Keywork session** Further work on depression, score of **86** on CMF, continued lapse work.
3. Health implications	Keywork session
4. Closing doors on scoring Money, other users, areas and dealers all connected with her sex work.	**Keywork session** Further work on / support with leaving sex industry, score of **75** on CMF.
5. Cycles of use Feelings thoughts of depression, guilt & worthlessness key factors in cycle of use.	**Keywork session** Support work around feelings / thoughts, score of **73** on CMF. Lapse work.
6. Patterns of using Feelings (guilt, depression), how getting money & areas all major patterns.	**Keywork session** Links being made on thoughts / feelings and sex work, score of **69** on CMF.
7. Understanding triggers Feelings, how getting money and areas are all prime triggers for her.	**Keywork session** Better understanding of links. 1st week drug free. Score of **53** on CMF.
8. Understanding cravings	**Keywork session** Lapse due to review letter from Social Services, Score of **74** on CMF.
9. Euphoric recall	Keywork session
10. Connections with crime	Keywork session
11. Dangerous situations Case review for children soon, feelings of guilt / depression very strong.	**Keywork session** Action plan / support networks put in place for review. Score of **56** on CMF.
12. After care and support	Keywork session

Appendix No. 2: Cycles of Use

Craving:

Thinking: High expectation of reward, good times only, blinkered, one track mind, focus usually only upon the drug and what it will be like or what good things are associated with its use.

Drug Use: Initial quick 'high' achieved, though is for short time, leading to repeat use to try and gain the high again. Other drugs may be used such as alcohol or heroin increasing the high and compulsion to use. Increased levels of adrenaline.

Thinking: Anxiety and paranoia may be high changing the way they think. Environment can have great effect on thinking. Chasing the high very strong. Feel out of control.

Comedown: Session has finished or the drugs have run out. High levels of adrenaline leading to the feeling of being 'prang' or 'wired'. Depressant drugs used to try and level things out and lesson the feelings.

Thinking: High levels of remorse, paranoia, anxiety and depression. Regret and feelings of it not being worth it. Just want to go to sleep to get rid of the thoughts and feelings.

Recovery: Some of the feelings of the 'crash' have worn off. May have slept and eaten food or even had a long period of recovery. Physically feeling better.

Thinking: Feelings of depression may still be strong, depending on whether a daily or bingeing pattern is being followed (depression can lead to use again). Sometimes feeling more in control, not so bad leaving the client open to cue triggers and cravings again.

Appendix No. 3: Example of a handout (Handout: How pervitin works)

Module title: How pervitin works

I. Objectives

This module explains how pervitin works in the brain and helps the client understand how the motivation for change gets transformed

1. To expand the client's knowledge of addiction in the brain (neurology of addiction)
2. To develop the client's understanding of pervitin
3. To build trust with the worker/service staff
4. To lay the foundation for forthcoming sessions

II. Guidelines

Before starting the session, therapists should refer to the information that has been gathered by the Comprehensive Assessment paying particular attention to:

- Amounts of pervitin used
- Routes of use
- How it is supporting the habit

The Comprehensive Assessment will give you information that can be used in this session and enable you to personalize how pervitin is working with this client.

Reward system in the brain – a regulatory mechanism, which provides things necessary for survival and reproduction, and creates feelings of well-being. Situations, processes and stimuli in the environment that are necessary for survival of an individual (species) are connected with feelings of pleasure (reward) in order to be likely to happen again and thus the probability of survival would increase.

Biologically natural sources of reward:

➢ food (survival of an individual)
➢ various forms and levels of social relations (survival in a group)
➢ sex (survival of a species)

The reward system ensures motivation for an individual to behave in such a way to gain the natural reward and survive. The key functional and anatomic reward system structure is considered to be the brain part ***nucleus accunbens***, where the reward system increases the release of **dopamine**.

The reward system cannot be seen as an isolated centre. You had better picture it as a brain network, which is intensively and mutually interconnected as well as abundantly connected with other close function centres.

The reward system is closely connected with the function of **memory, stress system and system responsible for compulsive repetition of activities**.

The reward system is closely connected with the function of **memory**. The whole picture of the situation when reward was gained is recorded in the memory. Then the pictures are arranged in brain according to their importance and difficulty to obtain, by means of which an individual gains a palette of experience. A man remembers an efficient strategy of behaviour leading towards successful achievement of pleasure by current stimuli or those set aside.

Stress systems are also in close connection with the reward system. They work to avoid situations which might lead to great discomfort or danger. Unpleasant stimuli causing feelings of discomfort are in cooperation with memory system associated with a negative psychic process, e.g. an emotion.

Pervitin – an artificial source of reward. Differences in comparison with natural sources of reward are as follows:
➢ To achieve the reward is faster and easier
➢ The reward is much more powerful
➢ There are no mechanisms to stop accepting artificial rewards

**"Pampered brain"** – a change after long-term, regular and intensive pervitin use:
➢ **It wants a fast reward** straight away and it does not want complicated strategies to achieve it
➢ **Stress is solved by drug use**
➢ **Memory** is filled at different levels by information how to gain drug reward
➢ **Systems that are connected with complicated long-term strategies are ceasing to be used**

Pervitin – how it works
Pervitin does not cause physical dependence; however, it creates a very strong psychological dependence. Pervitin works by triggering the release of chemicals that are already present in the body. These chemicals are part of the body's response to danger (adrenaline) and pleasure (dopamine).

Pervitin changes the way of communication between the nerve cells (neurones). Nerve cells in the brain normally send messages to each other using chemicals called neurotransmitters. These neurotransmitters are transferred between two cells in so-called **"synapses"** (connection of two neurones). Neurotransmitters fire across a gap between each cell and attach onto receptor sites. Once the message has been received the transporter cell then collects up the neurotransmitters so that the levels in these chemicals remain balanced.

A nerve cell and its communication with another nerve cell
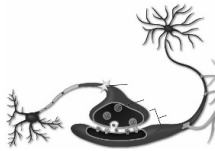
Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that helps to **control the feelings of pleasure** and is repeatedly released by the use of pervitin. At the same time the transporter cell is blocked and does not return this neurotransmitter.

This results in a significant increase in the concentration of dopamine in synapses.

This leads to the **extended feelings of pleasure** that are experienced when taking pervitin and also ultimately leads to the **'downs'** experienced by causing depletion in these chemicals.

Imagine getting a brand new credit card, you have extended spending power for a period of time, you have fun and then the bill arrives through your letterbox.

Pervitin works with the sympathetic part of the nervous system, which is concerned with outside stimulus such danger and anticipation. The 'Fight and Flight' response is part of this and releases adrenalin and stress hormones into the body.

Adrenaline is released from adrenal glands as part of body's response to danger or excitement. It alerts senses and enables the body to work at full volume. It does so by:
- **Increasing heart rate** – It increases the speed of which oxygen gets into muscles
- **Increasing breathing rate** – It increases the amount of oxygen in the blood stream
- **Sweating** – It prevents the body from getting too hot
- **Shaking** – This is due to the increased energy ready for release

- **Butterflies in the stomach, urge to go to the toilet** – This is due to blood leaving the stomach and being diverted to muscles

Users may interpret the above symptoms as the feelings they get when craving pervitin or are just about to score. When they do use pervitin, they are again releasing adrenaline.

Persistent release of adrenaline caused by pervitin use can lead to decreased need for sleep; loss of appetite; visual and auditory hallucinations; memory, perception and concentration disorders; anxiety and paranoia, see **toxic psychosis**.

Toxic psychosis manifests itself by auditory hallucinations and hallucinations of other senses (visual hallucinations appear only rarely). The affected person is very touchy as though being permanently chased. They have a feeling that the whole world has conspired against them and that their friends gossip or at least talk about them. They are uneasy or on the contrary rigid. They are anxious and experience abnormal emotions, which do not have a real basis. They fight a thought-out attack or run away from something that is existent in their minds only.

Metaphor: a flying balloon, a pot of pleasure substance that is being exhausted.

SELF-EVALUATION OF SKILLS IN THE AREA OF ICT IN 1ST LEVEL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS: PARTIAL RESEARCH RESULTS

Martin Skutil, Martina Maněnová, Marta Faberová

Abstract

The article presents research aimed at exploration of information and commutative technologies at primary schools in the Czech Republic. The research was aimed at work with ICT of the 1st level elementary school teachers and on self-evaluation of work skills with ICT. Younger teachers evaluate themselves better than older ones from the viewpoint of self-evaluation of skills. According to their opinion, teachers master a text processor best, followed by a programme for creating presentations and the lowest skills are demonstrated in work with a table processor.

1 Introduction

If we look around us we can observe that ICT are a part of most people's activities. Computer literacy is gaining in importance and is becoming a necessity for many branches of human activity. These new trends establish new demands on education (Šimonová, Poulová, Bílek, 2010).

The aim of education and appropriate decisions must be oriented so that potential information and commutative technologies are used to the maximum. Teachers should be prepared for this at universities that provide their pre-gradual preparation.

The ability to use a foreign language is mentioned most often in connection with work with information and commutative technologies. A necessary condition of successful accommodation to the forthcoming situation is that teachers master ICT on the required level.

The contribution is based on the GAČR project 406/09/0669. Evaluation of the Modern Technologies Contributing Towards Forming and Development of University Students' Competence.

2 Theoretical backgrounds

Network literacy is characterized by the ability to identify, use and approach information in electronic form from the information net (McClure, 1994). The content of network literacy shifts in direction to work with the internet and the exploration of its possibilities (Woessner, 2004).

In 2002 the Bertelsmann Foundation and the AOL Time Warner Foundation arranged a conference aimed at literacy for the 21st century. The conferfence conclusion report states that a part of literacy for the 21st century is (Bertelsmann Foundation, 2002):

- **technological literacy**, which is described as an ability to use media (especially internet) as a means for an approach to information;
- **information literacy** (see above);
- **medial creativity** represents the ability to understand and take an active part in forming the content of media;
- **social skill and responsibility** means that man is able to recognize, which social consequences the publishing of information will bring and what influence these published pieces of information will have on the younger generation.

However, the concept of digital competencies has not been mentioned yet. Digital competences are a set of skills and abilities to solve problems by the use of ICT. It includes even the basic knowledge of ICT: use of computers for obtaining, evaluation, storing, forming and exchanging information and for communication and cooperation in the frame of nets, by means of finding information on the internet and judging their quality (Bunt-Kokhuis, 2009; Recommendation, 2005).

If we focus on the key concept of the present text, we understand self-evaluation in accordance with Nezvalová (2006) as "a process of systematic collection and analysis of information to form judgments about values based on solid evidence (Rogers and Badham, 1994. These judgements focus on identification of states of the achieved specific goals. They should therefore lead decision-making process in the field of development. Self-evaluation is often set into the context of the cycle of monitoring, analysis and revisions (Tipple, 1989)." This is confirmed by I. Roupec (1997) who says that self-evaluation is a systematically prepared and planned evaluation, directed according to predetermined criteria to predetermined objectives.

3   Methodology of research

The research is designed as a quantitative study using a questionnaire of its own design, which aims at describing the examined phenomenon from the perspective of teachers. The present results are based on previous researches, published for example in the publication of Primary Education Teacher in Relation to ICT (Maněnová, 2009).

3.1 Goals of the research

One of the goals of the research was to map the use of ICT by primary school teachers according to age, duration of pedagogical practice and education of the respondents in the area of ICT.

We ask research questions in connection with the following goals:
- What programmes teachers use at primary schools?
- What is the structure (are there some typical combinations of used programmes)?
- What is self-evaluation of teachers in the ICT area?
- What is evaluation of your own skills?
- Does any relation exist between self-evaluation in total and the evaluation of your own skill?

3.2 Research tool

A questionnaire as a basic research method consisted of three parts. The first one, beside the basic description data (age, sex, etc.), is aimed at the frequency of work with ICT both in learning and preparation for lessons. In this part of the questionnaire there are yes/no questions, scaled questions (used four or five level according to Likert), multiple choice questions and open-ended questions (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2005).

The second part of the questionnaire is aimed at work with office programmes, which, according to our research, are most often used by teachers when preparing educational materials, handouts for their lessons and pedagogical documents. The tasks in this part are general, displayed outputs could be formed in different office programmes (Microsoft Office, OpenOffice.org, etc.). For this reason the titles of concrete programmes do not occur in the questionnaire, just the general names for a given type of software do (e.g. text processor).

The third part of the questionnaire is aimed at the peripheral computer equipment. The content of this part is selected on the basis of practical experience and analysis of textbook contents. The Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education introduces, apart from other things, one of the expected outcomes is the pupils' ability to use basic peripheral computer equipment. Furthermore, pupils should be aware of basic maintenance problems of computers and be familiar with common problems with hardware and software. It means that teachers should know how to connect various peripheries and should not rely on chance or on the trial-and-error method. Knowledge tested in this part of the questionnaire is applicable even outside the profession of teacher (in practice, e.g. it is suitable to know which ports are available in the computer when choosing a computer keyboards,. Our experience also shows that one of the most frequent failures of computers in classrooms is connectors wrongly connected or unplugged (pupils often try to sabotage lessons in this way). In such a case the best way for teachers is to solve this small defect himself and not to need to seek help and lose time which is given for teaching.

3.3 Pilot research

The main objective of the pilot research was to test the questionnaire for teachers, created as a research tool for the frequency of ICT use in teaching and teachers' preparation of and their self-evaluation in the area of ICT. The pilot researchwas carried out from June until October 2008. The questionnaires were administered to a group of 22 respondents. Furthermore, the questionnaires were statistically processed and the reliability of questionnaire was determined. By use of Cronbach alpha coefficient, reliability of separate areas of the questionnaire was obtained in the range of 0.69–0.71. The questionnaire was discussed with some respondents and modified after discussion. The item "How often do you search information on the internet?" was changed to more concrete one: "How often do you search information for teaching on the internet?" Also, with regard to the respondent s' attention and getting out of stereotype, the type of questions in a part of the questionnaire (Q9 – Q13) was changed. The objective of the pilot research was achieved and after the modifications the questionnaire was used for the research. Again-interviewed reliability reached level of 0.74 of the Cronbach alpha coefficient.

3.4 Research sample

The research was realized on teachers of elementary schools in the Hradec Králové and Pardubice regions. A total number of 700 questionnaires were distributed both by the students of the Pedagogical faculty at the University of Hradec Králové and by mail to separate incidentally selected schools in the above named regions. The questionnaire return rate was 74.1 %.

The research sample consisted of 519 respondents in total. From this number of respondents, 21 were men (4 %) and 498 (96 %) women, it corresponds with data, introduced by the Czech Statistical Office (Czech Statistical Office, 2009). The age of respondents varied from 20 to 65 years, length of practice was from 0.5 to 40 years.

Table 1: Basic data of descriptive statistics

	Age	Length of practice
Mean	33.6	9.2
Standard deviation	8.99	8.87
Minimum	20	0
Maximum	65	40
Mode	26	1
Median	30	5

It is important that teachers also have this technology, i.e. a computer connected to the internet, at their disposal at home. We found out that 95.8 % of respondents have access to a computer at home and 93.6 % of respondents have internet at home. If we compare our data with statistical survey published by the Czech Statistical Office (2009), it shows that our research sample is exceptional from the point of view of household computer equipment (Fig. 1). We must take into consideration that teachers mostly share a computer with other teachers at school and the preparation of lessons or schoolwork is done at home.

4 Results

The obtained data processed by NCSS 2007 STATISTICA 8 and Microsoft Excel 2007. For hypothesis testing the level of significance was set $\alpha = 0.05$.

It could seem that there is an unambiguous answer. Do teachers mostly use Microsoft Office programmes? With regard to the fact that in the re-

searched sample (group) there were teachers who took ICT lessons at universities and teachers who were educated in this area in courses, we expected a more colourful range of used programmes. It is true that Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Internet Explorer prevailed but even Firefox had its users. There is also an impact of affordability of digital cameras, i.e. wider usage of programmes for editing and filing photographs.

According to the realized investigation the most used programme amongthese was Photoshop. The question remains whether the users of this programme use it legally, as for several years Photoshop has occupied a top position among illegally used programmes on the international level (SIIA, 2009).

We also identified four typical groups of users (Fig. 2).

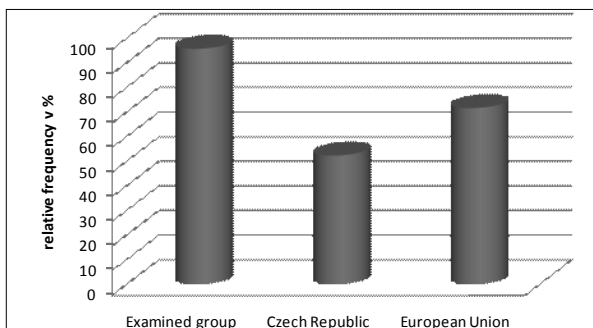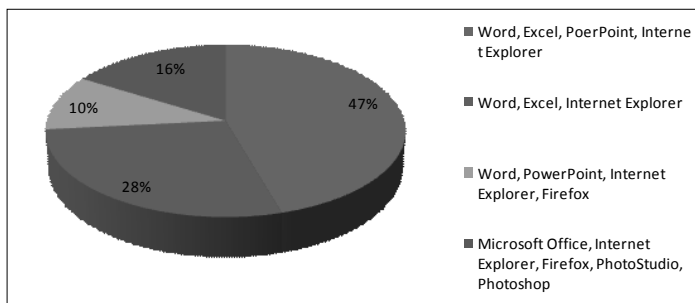**Fig. 1:** Comparison of households equipped with a personal computer

Fig. 2: Typical groups of users

One group uses the set of the Microsoft Office programmes and marginally Photoshop, the second group works most often with Word, searches information by means of Internet Explorer, minimally by means of Firefox (but users know it) and also works with Excel, but substantially less than with Word. The third group, in our opinion, is formed by typically older teachers who have been introduced in ICT use during their pedagogical practice; they write in Word, search information (Internet Explorer, Firefox) and prepare presentations for their lessons (PowerPoint). They search for material for presentations in other places as well as on the internet – they started to take pictures and edit them by means of computer (with Photoshop but marginally). The fourth group, according to our opinion, consists of young teachers, a few years after graduation, they work with the highest number of programmes (Microsoft Office, Internet Explorer, Firefox) and even make use of computer graphic (Callisto, CorelDraw, Picasa, PhotoStudio, Photoshop).

We also wanted to find out whether we could identify typical groups of users of certain types of programmes. From this viewpoint, we chose a non-hierarchical cluster analysis for elaborating data. Calculations were done for three, four, five and six clusters; a method of calculation was selected according to K-means with equable initialization, 11 variables (variables – programmes, which had a relative frequency less than 5 %, were excluded from the calculation) were selected for the analysis. This was only the case of orientation calculations as we were aware that cluster analysis is not ideal for bipolar variables. We analyzed the results of clustering with regard to the following reasons; four clusters were considered to be the optimal ones (see Skutil, Maněnová, Zikl, 2010).

On the basis of the analysis, the respondents were divided into groups which could exist in reality. It is evident that working with the group of the Microsoft Office programmes and Internet Explorer prevails, but also the freely distributed Firefox has its representation. It is a pity that programmes distributed for free, e.g. Open Office and graphical programmes, are not used more often.

What is self-evaluation of teachers in the area of ICT?

The respondents expressed their identification with a verdict on a five-point scale. If they fully agreed with all the statements, the maximum possible score, which could be achieved, was 30. A higher average rate of consent was in younger teachers (21.8) than older one (19.4). After testing the null hypo-

thesis, we had the results of the Student t-test and Mann-Whitney test rejected (t = 5.4197, Z = –4.6311), we confirmed the hypothesis that self-esteem of older teachers is lower than that of younger teachers.

The question of the relation between self-evaluation and frequency of using ICT seemed unambiguous to us. We supposed that those with higher self-evaluation (higher score) would use ICT more often as they master technology better, can use it. The correlation coefficient was relatively low (0.386). After testing the closeness of relations we could conclude that our presumption was correct.

What is the evaluation of one's own separate skills?

Writing text on computer is probably the most widespread activity and even self-taught people could work with the text editor quite quickly. According to our research LearnInd CTS (Korte, Hüsing, 2006), who compared approach to and use of ICT at schools within Europe, about 90 % of European teachers feel confident about their work with a text processor; about their work with programmes for presentations it is only the case of 57 % of teachers. Our research showed that in other cases (work with a table processor, work with a programme for creating presentation and the basic plugging of connectors) younger teachers reach better evaluation. The fact that younger teachers evaluate themselves better than the older ones is, according to our presumption, effected by studying at universities where they already worked with ICT. We even took into consideration the type of education in the area of ICT. The unequivocal difference among teachers, who had been introduced in ICT at universities and in other courses, and the other two groups, wasproved. It was confirmed that the items of the questionnaire concerning skill evaluation reflects education in the area of ICT (at universities and in courses) and at the same time one of the principles of learning. Repeating is not only fixation of acquired matter, but it means development and improvement of the acquired results. Repeating should be carried out in correspondence with certain rules. It is, e.g., systematic, activity, structuralisation, motivation, respecting the rules of mental hygiene (break, changing activities, curve in psychic performance, etc.).

5 Conclusions

We were interested in programmes which teachers work with, what is the structure of these programmes, what is the frequency of ICT use by teachers

and what is self-evaluation and evaluation of separate skills in the area of ICT. Primarily, we aimed at answering questions.

As the research result shows, it could seem that there is an unequivocal answer. Do they use mostly the Microsoft Office programmes? With regard to the fact that there were teachers in the research sample who passed ICT at university, and teachers who were trained in courses, we expected a more colourful variety of programmes used. It is true that Word Excel, PowerPoint and Internet Explorer programmes prevailed but even FireFox had its users.

According to the realized research, Photoshop is the most often used programme from all of them. The question remains: do these users use this programme legally? For several years already Photoshop occupies a leading position among the illegally used programmes on the international level (see Korte, Hüsing, 2006).

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Contact
Mgr. Martin Skutil, Ph.D.; martin.skutil@uhk.cz
PaedDr. Martina Maněnová, Ph.D.; martina.manenova@uhk.cz
Doc. PhDr. Marta Faberová, CSc.; marta.faberova@uhk.cz

The Institute of Primary and Pre-primary Education
The Faculty of Education, University of Hradec Králové
Rokitanského 62
500 03 Hradec Králové

QUALITY OF LIFE PERCEPTIONS OF CAREGIVERS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Milan Valenta, Jan Michalík, Sharon Raver-Lampman, Anne Michalek

Abstract

Caregivers of individuals with disabilities in the United States have been reported to experience additional hardships than families with typical children as they attempt to balance family and work (Parish, Rose, Grinstein-Weiss, Richman, & Andrews, 2008). In this study, 31 caregivers of individuals with intellectual disabilities from the United States and 225 from the Czech Republic completed a qualitative quality of life survey. Similarities in the two groups were found in reported gains and losses from caregiving responsibilities. Differences in perceived spirituality, personal sense of peace and serenity, life optimism, ability to rejoice in life, personal life perspective, health, financial changes, changes in family social life, feelings of enrichment, family caregiving responsibilities, and attitudes about the future were also revealed. The implications for supporting families through governmental programs and individualized services are discussed.

Keywords

Caregivers' perceptions, caregivers of individuals with intellectual disabilities, comparison of caregivers' attitudes in United States and Czech Republic.

Comparison of Quality of Life Perceptions of Caregivers of Individuals with Special Needs in the United States and the Czech Republic

A disability is a culturally and socially constructed phenomenon in which each society defines the parameters of what is considered "typical" (Linan-Thompson & Jean, 1997). Frequently parents do not perceive a disability the same way as professionals, especially when the diagnosis involves young children. The literature suggests that parents vary in their reactions, and that most parents go through a period of adjustment, with further adjustments as their child ages (Harden, 2005; Raver, 2009). Although parents and guardians expect to perform caregiving tasks during the upbringing of

a child, when a child has intellectual impairments, roles and duties may change as caregivers face the possibility that a child may require long-term care beyond the typical child-rearing years (White & Hastings, 2004; Raina et al., 2005). Caregivers may experience stress and an array of other feelings as they adjust to the demands of caring for someone with special needs while trying to balance the needs of the entire family and work responsibilities (McDonald, Poertner, & Pierpoint, 1999; Plant & Sanders, 2007; Raina et al., 2004; Rosenzweig, Brennan, & Ogilvie, 2002). Providing care for an individual with a disability may drain financial resources and physical and emotional energy (Murphy, Christian, Caplin, & Young, 2006). Research has shown that caregivers of children with disabilities report increased health and psychological problems when compared to parents of children without disabilities (Florian & Findler, 2001; Maes, Broekman, Dosen, & Nauts, 2003). Further, supplementary costs for medical procedures, therapies, and adaptations may increase financial pressures on caregivers, causing more tension (Parish, Rose, Grinstein-Weiss, Richman, & Andrews, 2008).

Method
Participants

Thirty-one caregivers of individuals with intellectual disabilities (e.g., mental retardation, autism) residing in the United States, and 255 caregivers of individuals with intellectual disabilities (labeled as having mental retardation) in the Czech Republic participated in the study. A caregiver was defined as any individual, at least 18 of years of age, who assumed at least 50 % daily caregiving responsibility of an individual with any degree of an intellectual disability. Characteristics of respondents from the United States and the Czech Republic, and the individuals for whom they provided care, are summarized in Table 1. The majority of respondents in both countries were female (U.S. 74.2 %; C.R. 81.3 %) and were responsible for caring for a child (U.S. 77.4 %; C.R. 67.56 %). Most of the caregivers were married or in a partnership (U.S. 58.6 %; C.R. 68.9 %). The majority of respondents from the United States had a college education (61.3 %) while the majority from the Czech Republic had completed secondary school (56.1 %). Respondents from the United States cared for individuals they identified as having intellectual disabilities or mental retardation and/or autism. Those in the Czech Republic cared for individuals defined as mentally retarded which included some with

Table 1: Characteristics of Caregivers in the United States and Czech Republic and the Family Member Who Received Care

Caregiver	Percent of Respondents		Family member who receives care	Percent of Respondents	
	United States	Czech Republic		United States	Czech Republic
Gender			**Relationship to Caregiver**		
Female	74.2	81.3	Child	67.7	67.6
Male	22.6	18.7	Sibling	16.1	1.3
			Relative	12.9	24.0
			Not Related/Guardian	0.0	4.4
Age			**Age**		
Up to 20 years	3.2	0.0	Up to 6 years	32.3	5.3
Up to 30 years	22.6	4.9	Up to 20 years	45.2	40.4
Up to 40 years	29.0	19.6	Up to 40 years	9.7	11.6
Up to 50 years	25.8	17.3	Up to 65 years	6.5	10.7
Up to 60 years	16.1	57.3	Older than 65 years	3.2	32.0
Living Status			**Disability**		
Married/Partner	48.4	68.9	Mental Retardation	77.4	100.0
Single	35.5	30.7	Autism/MR	22.6	0.0
Time caring for family member with disability			**Severity of Disability**		
Up to 6 years	41.9	38.7	Mild-Moderate	70.9	21.8
Up to 10 years	16.1	22.7	Severe-Profound	25.8	72.9
Up to 15 years	12.9	12.0			
Up to 20 years	19.4	12.9	**Facility Attending**		
Longer than 30 years	3.2	10.5	School Program & At Home	80.7	92.4
No Answer	0.0	3.5	Year-round Program	6.5	4.0
			Other	6.5	0.0
Residence			No Answer	0.0	3.6
In a city	67.7	93.5			
In a small town	29.0	2.2			
Education					
Primary	3.2	10.2			
Secondary	12.9	56.1			
Vocational training	19.4	12.4			
University	61.3	17.8			
Employmenr Lenght					
0 - 15 years	32.3	36.5			
16 and more	64.6	61.3			
Currently Employed					
Full-time	64.5	17.8			
Part-time	12.9	8.0			
No	19.4	71.5			

additional health and physical disabilities. The majority of caregivers from the United States indicated that their family members' disability fell in the mild to moderate level of impairment (70.9 %). The largest group receiving care in the Czech Republic was identified to be in the severe to profound level of impairment (72.9 %). Finally, the majority of the American and Czech respondents had been employed for 16 or more years (U.S. 64.6 %; C.R. 61.3 %).

Procedure

To determine if there were differences in perceptions regarding quality of life issues and concerns between caregivers living in the United States and the Czech Republic, caregivers completed a paper survey by circling the response that most closely matched their opinion or perception. In the United States, the survey was distributed to two educational facilities and two family support groups in the eastern part of Virginia. Names were not placed on the surveys which contained instructions and a self-addressed, stamped envelope so completed surveys could be returned anonymously. In some cases, surveys were placed in an envelope and sealed by the respondent, and then handed to an associate of the research team. In the Czech Republic, surveys were distributed to five special and/or residential schools and two rehabilitation resource centers which were located throughout the country. Respondents completed the survey, sealed it in an envelope to keep it anonymous, and handed it to a representative of the research team. The survey took about 25 minutes to complete, and all participants completed it voluntarily. In the United States, 130 surveys were distributed, with a 23% return rate. In the Czech Republic, 250 surveys were distributed, with a 90% return rate. The surveys in the Czech Republic were distributed by administrators of special schools and rehabilitation centers which may have accounted for the higher rate of return in the Czech Republic.

Data Analysis and Instrument

All responses were calculated into percentages, including demographic information, and then compared by survey item and country. Responses to open-ended, write-in questions were clustered into principal ideas, and then summarized by percentages.

The survey was developed based on a literature review of caregivers' major quality of life indicators, life stressors, collaborations between American and

Czech colleagues, and field interviews with other caregivers prior to the initiation of the study. Some items from *The Family Quality of Life Scale* (FQOLS) (Park et al., 2003) were adapted for the instrument. Excluding demographic questions, the survey had a total of 26 items and two open-ended questions, and was divided into two parts. Part I addressed demographic information including the following about the caregiver: gender; marital status; residence in city or small town; age; educational level; length of employment; length of time the respondent had been caring for the identified family member; and current employment status. Further, information about the individual being cared for was gathered: the disability; the severity of the disability; the age of the individual; the relationship of the individual to the respondent; and the identified family member's current educational, work or leisure placement.

Part II was divided into five sections and asked respondents to indicate their emotional, spiritual, social, health, occupational and economic perceptions of their caregiving responsibilities. Section A asked respondents to identify how caring for their family member with a disability had or had not changed certain aspects of their life (e.g., spirituality, altruism). Participants were asked to indicate how these aspects of their life had either "increased", "remained the same", or "had been reduced". Sections B and C probed caregivers' feelings regarding control, fatigue and the social life of their family and how these aspects of their lives had or had not been changed by caregiving responsibilities. Respondents circled one of 4 choices which best matched their perception (e.g., "yes – there was a change", "it is likely there has been a change", "it is likely there has been no change", or "no – there has been no change"). The next sections, Sections D and E, probed the economic impact of caregiving, who in the family provided assistance with care, caregivers' attitude regarding government-sponsored services and supports, and attitudes regarding the future. Respondents circled the 5-choice option that best matched their perception. The last part of the survey asked respondents to write their biggest "gain" and "loss" as a function of providing care (open-ended questions). Table 2 shows a summary of the survey questions, excluding demographic and open-ended questions.

Table 2: Summarized Items from The Caregivers' Perceptions Survey

PART II, Section A	Section C
Spirituality	isolation from other people has increased
Altruism	state of health has deteriorated
tolerance toward other people	economic standard of family has deteriorated
peace and serenity	relations between family members have deteriorated
faith in humanity	social life of family has deteriorated
life optimism	feel enriched by the situation
humbleness towards what life brings	**Section D**
	who provides most care
Section B	help from siblings
loss of control in life	help from wider family
feelings of depression and despair	**Section E**
feelings of great fatigue	I believe governmental financial support provided to families is sufficient
loss of ability to enjoy free time	I believe persons providing care enjoy respect and recognition from my country
loss of ability to rejoice	I believe the situation of individuals with special needs and the persons providing care for them will continue to improve in my country
loss of personal life perspective	I look forward to what the future has to bring

Results
Differences in Caregivers' Perceptions

This research question attempted to identify similarities and differences in the stressors, perceptions and/or attitudes of caregivers from the two countries. The following are the highest percentage of responses reported for each survey item, by section.

Section A. Responding to how their level of spirituality had been influenced by caregiving, the American respondents indicated it had remained the same (48.4 %), while Czech respondents indicated that it had increased (49.3 %). Indicating how their level of altruism had been influenced, 48.4 % of respondents in the United States indicated it had remained the same while 45.8 % of the Czech participants indicated this. In reporting how their level of tolerance had been influenced, American respondents reported it had increased (64.5 %), while 43.1 % of respondents in the Czech Republic indicated that it had increased. Indicating how their level of peace and serenity

had been impacted, respondents in the United States expressed that it had remained the same, while 40.9 % of the Czech respondents reported that peace had decreased. Responding to how their level of faith in humanity may have changed, 50 % of the American respondents indicated it had remained the same, while 44.0 % of respondents in the Czech Republic indicated this response. Noting how their level of life optimism had been influenced, 48.4 % of American respondents indicated it had remained the same, while 41.3 % of the respondents in the Czech Republic suggested that this aspect of their life had decreased. Responding to how their level of humbleness toward what life brings, 66.7 % of the Americans indicated it had increased as 41.8 % of the Czech respondents reported the same.

Section B. Responding to whether they felt a loss of control in their lives, 54.8 % of respondents from the United States reported that they did "sometimes", while 51.6 % of respondents in the Czech Republic did not answer this question. Fifty-four percent (54.5 %) of the American respondents indicated that they "sometimes" experienced depression and despair, while the largest group of respondents in the Czech Republic (29.4 %) felt the same. No answer was given to this item by 45.3 % of the Czech Republic group. Indicating if they felt fatigue, the highest percentage of respondents in the United States (45.2 %) indicated that they did "sometimes" experience fatigue while 34.7 % of respondents in the Czech Republic also felt this way. In answering if they were able to enjoy free time, 38.7 % of the respondents in the United States indicated that they did "sometimes", while 29.8 % of respondents in the Czech Republic said "yes" they enjoyed their free time and 38.2 % did not answer this question. Regarding the ability to rejoice in life, 35.9 % of American respondents reported that they were not able to do this, while 24 % of Czech respondents indicated that they could "sometimes". Responding to whether there had been a change in their personal life perspective, 29 % of American respondents indicated "no", while 35.2 % of Czech respondents reported there had been no change.

Section C. Reporting whether they perceived their isolation from people had increased as a result of caregiving, 25.8 % of American respondents suggested that "yes" it had and the same number reported "no". Respondents in the Czech Republic (34.5 %) indicated that "yes" isolation has increased. Reporting whether their health had deteriorated, 35.5 % of American respondents reported "no" to this question, while 25.8 % of Czech respondents

indicated that their health had "somewhat" gotten worse. In examining if the economic standard of their family had deteriorated, 29 % of respondents in the United States revealed that there was "no change", while 28 % of respondents in the Czech Republic indicated that their economic standing had "declined". Forty-two percent of American respondents in the United States indicated that there had been "no change" in relationships with family members, while 31.1 % of respondents in the Czech Republic indicated this response. American respondents (29 %) indicated that the social life of their family had "somewhat changed" while 32 % of Czech respondents revealed that "yes their social life had declined". American respondents (38.7 %) reported feeling enriched by their situation and 38.7 % of the American suggested they felt "somewhat enriched". Czech respondents (24.9 %) indicated that they were not "enriched".

Section D. In responses to whom provided the most care, American respondents (51.6 %) indicated that males and females took turns, while 73.3 % of respondents in the Czech Republic indicated that the female caregiver provided the majority of care. American respondents (32.3 %) indicated the "no" siblings did not help with care, while 42.6 % of respondents in the Czech Republic reported feeling this way. Indicating whether the wider family provided assistance with care, 32.3 % of American respondents reported "yes", while 30.7 % of Czech respondents reported "no". Figure 1 shows the ten survey items that revealed a difference in the highest percentage responses between caregivers in the United States and the Czech Republic for Sections A-D of the survey.

Impact of Governmental Services and Supports on Caregivers' Perceptions

The questions in Section E of the survey attempted to address the impact of governmental support and services on caregivers' quality of life. Responding to the question which asked if the caregiver believed that governmental financial support to families in their country was adequate, the highest percentage of respondents in the United States (41.9 %) indicated that they believed that was the case, while the highest percentage of respondents in the Czech Republic (35.6 %) indicated that they did not believe support was adequate. Responding to whether caregivers are given respect and recognition in their country, 75.8 % of American respondents indicated "yes", while 24.8 % of the respondents in the Czech Republic indicated a "rather no" to

Figure 1: Differences in the most common responses to survey items between caregivers in the United States and those in the Czech Republic

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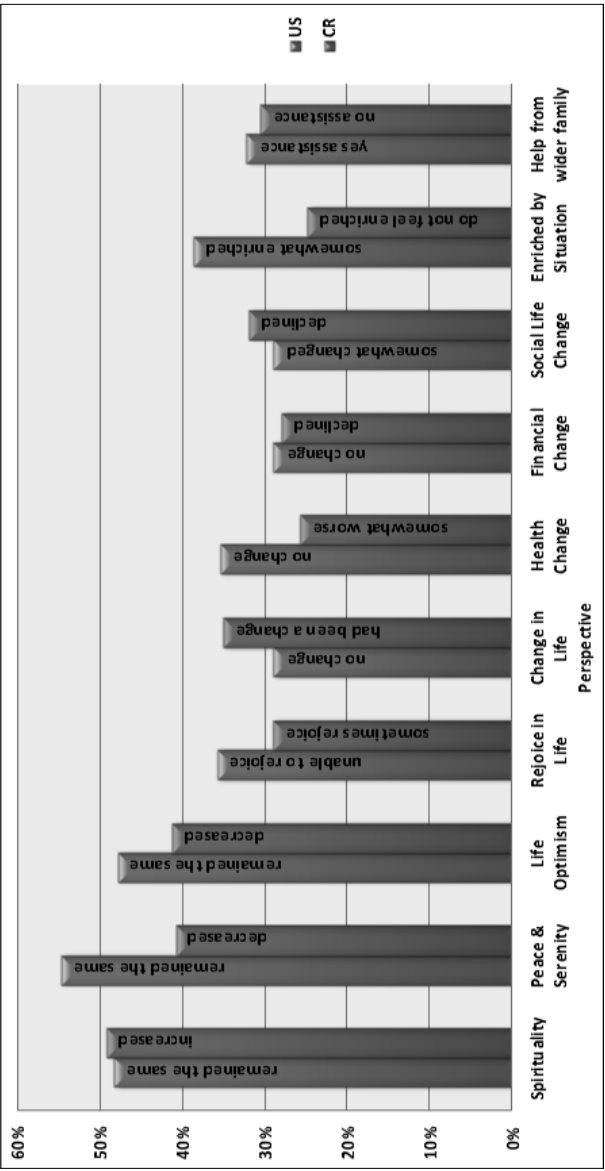
this item. When asked if caregivers believed that the situation for individuals with special needs and the persons who provided their care will continue to improve in their country, 29 % of the American respondents indicated "somewhat yes", while 36 % of respondents in the Czech Republic indicated that they "did not know". When asked if caregivers looked forward to what the future would bring, 29.6 % of the respondents in the United States indicated "absolutely", while 38.8 % of Czech caregivers reported they "were afraid of the future". Figure 2 shows the highest percentage responses to survey items that addressed governmental support and services in the two countries.

Figure 2: Differences in caregivers' most common survey responses to governmental support and services survey items in the United States and Czech Republic
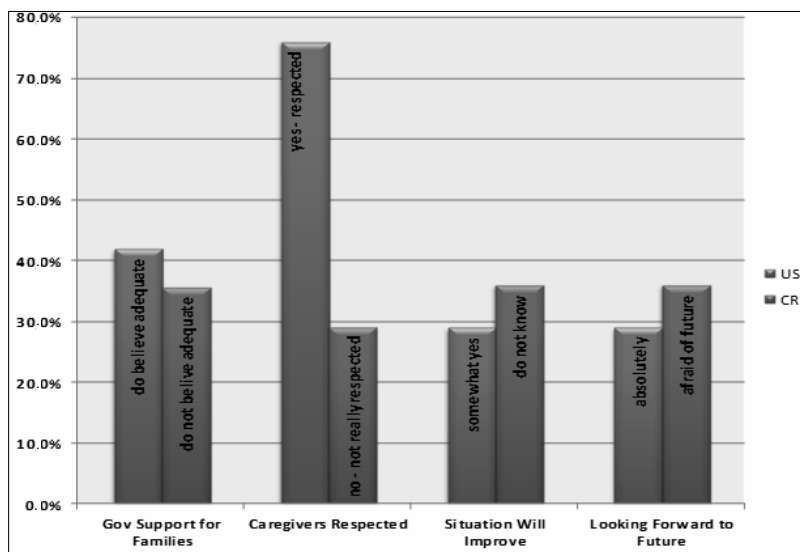
Qualitative Responses

This part of the survey allowed respondents to express their opinion in two open-ended questions. The first question asked caregivers to indicate their three "greatest gains from providing care" and the second asked for three "greatest losses from providing care". Responses were clustered by topic and

percentages calculated. Fifty-eight percent of the American caregivers indicated their most common gain from caregiving involved a renewed positive perspective on life and joy from observing the family member with a disability learn new skills. The largest number of caregivers in the Czech Republic identified their greatest gain to involve "personal gains" such as positive emotions and feelings (31.9%). When identifying their greatest losses from being a caregiver, American respondents most frequently reported strained relationships within and outside the family and a reduction in social or personal time (43%) and others (32%) commented on the financial strain of caring for a family member with a disability. Similarly, respondents in the Czech Republic reported their most common loss as a loss of personal freedom (30.1%).

Discussion

This study found that caregivers of individuals with intellectual disabilities in the United States and the Czech Republic reported similarities and differences in their responses to a survey designed to explore perceptions of their lives, their family's life, caregiving responsibilities and their country's willingness to support them and their family member with special needs. In looking at the similarities, caregivers in both the United States and the Czech Republic revealed that their caregiving experiences had increased their feelings of humbleness toward what life brings and their tolerance of others. Both groups indicated that they believed that the isolation of their family had increased, and that they sometimes experienced great fatigue. The majority of respondents, in both countries, reported that their sense of altruism, faith in humanity, and their relationships with family members had remained the same as an outcome of providing care. Further, most respondents noted that their greatest gain from caregiving involved positive personal feelings of enrichment and an increased positive personal perspective.

Several differences were revealed when survey responses were compared. For example, caregivers in the United States noted that their sense of peace and serenity and feeling of life optimism had remained the same while these feelings were described as decreased by caregiving responsibilities by the Czech caregivers. The majority of American caregivers revealed that they were unable to rejoice in life, but Czech caregivers reported being able to do this only sometimes. Spirituality was reported as remaining the same by the

Americans and as increased by the Czech group. In terms of their personal life perspective, most American caregivers indicated they did not experience a loss of this while Czech caregivers indicated that their life perspective had been negatively influenced by their responsibilities of caregiving. American respondents reported that their health had not been affected, but Czech caregivers noted their health had been "somewhat" affected. Life optimism was reported as remaining the same for the majority of American caregivers, yet was reported as decreased for most Czech care providers. While the family's social life was reported as "somewhat" worse because of caregiving demands by the American group, the Czech group indicated that their social life as a family was indeed worse. Most of the U.S. caregivers indicated that they felt "somewhat" enriched by their situation while the Czech group commented they did not feel enriched by caregiving tasks.

It seems clear that cultural differences account for some of the differences found. For instance, respondents in the United States indicated that both the male/father figure and female/mother figure in the home took turns providing care (52 %). In contrast, women were reported as the principal caregivers in the Czech Republic (73 %). Family practices in the United States, as a general rule, may be described as more egalitarian in terms of parental child rearing responsibilities than those in the Czech Republic so this outcome may not be surprising. Interestingly, most of the American and Czech caregivers noted that siblings did not provide significant assistance with caregiving of family members with disabilities in their families (U.S. 33 %; C.R. 47 %). But, American caregivers revealed that extended family members were helpful. Most Czech caregivers noted that extended family members were not helpful. Having shared parenting and caregiving responsibilities, as well as assistance from individuals outside the nuclear family, would seem to have a strong positive influence on the quality of life of caregivers living in the United States. It may be that American extended family members and others outside the family are more willing to provide assistance because there is less stigma associated with intellectual disabilities in that country. For nearly forty years, governmental services and inclusion into nearly all aspects of daily life have been commonplace in the United States. For this reason, immediate family members may be more willing to seek assistance from extended family members (Sandler, Warren, & Raver, 1995), and extended family members may be more willing to provide it.

It was uncommon for the American respondents in this study to omit answering a survey item. However, respondents from the Czech Republic did not answer about 20 % of the items and occasionally, no answer was the most common response to an item. The omitted items tended to be those that dealt with what may be described as more personal information such as one's ability to enjoy free time, feelings of depression and despair, feelings of loss of control and the ability to rejoice in life. It may be the caregivers in the Czech Republic, who have enjoyed a shorter history of freedom of speech, may have felt less comfortable answering these questions, fearing formal or informal reprisals to their child or family.

General Implications

In general, the caregivers in the Czech Republic may be characterized as slightly less positive in their outlook than the American caregivers since they reported a decrease in life optimism, less ability to enjoy free time, and that they did not feel enriched by providing care for an individual with special needs. American caregivers noted that they felt respected and acknowledged while those in the Czech Republic did not which undoubtedly affected the Czech respondents' perception of their quality of life. It may be that these findings may also be an outcome of the populations to whom caregivers were providing care. That is, the majority of Czech caregivers were providing care to individuals who they described as falling into the severe-profound mental retardation range while the majority of those receiving care in the United States were described as functioning within the mild-moderate range of intellectual disabilities. It would follow that providing care to individuals with lower levels of personal independence could be more physically draining and demanding, fostering less positive perceptions. Additionally, the individuals receiving care in the Czech Republic tended to be older than those in the United States.

Several factors affect the degree to which the results of this study may be generalized. First, respondents from the United States resided in the same geographical area and were a small sample; those in the Czech Republic represented families from across the country. Second, the majority of the respondents were female. Third, a large portion of the respondents were married or lived with a partner that may have influenced their responses. Finally, although most individuals receiving care were below the age of 20,

different results may have been generated if all family members had been of similar age and received comparable services. More research is needed which evaluates caregivers' quality of life issues and seeks to develop and identify family-centered supports that may promote the coping capacities of caregivers based on these evaluations. Further, future research needs to focus on the development of standardized evaluation tools which may give caregivers, and other constituents, a voice in shaping the services provided. This is particularly critical in countries in which parents and family members have fewer rights.

The caregivers in this study made it clear that caring for an individual with an intellectual disability presented rewards as well as difficulties. This outcome has been reported by others in the United States (Grant & Whittell, 2000; Heiman, 2002; Judge, 1998). The results of the present study suggest that although caregivers in the two countries reported many strong feelings such as increased fatigue, the majority in both countries were also able to appreciate the positive aspects associated with their caregiving responsibilities such as increased humbleness. Equally informative is that both groups revealed similar advantages (e.g., increased positive personal feelings) and disadvantages from providing care (e.g., loss of personal and family freedom and disruption in family relationships). Bailey and colleagues (1998) and others (e.g., Purcell, Turnbull, & Jackson, 2006; Wallender, Schmidt, & Koot, 2001) have asserted that family quality of life should be used as a determinant of the appropriateness of services governments and service providers offer families. In the past in the United States, services have been based on lawmakers' best guesses and informal polling of the stakeholders. Attempting to gather more quantifiable data from stakeholders should increase the government's ability to make informed decision-making.

It is generally accepted that being a caregiver of an individual with a disability can involve time, energy, and frequent disruption of family routines, particularly when health concerns are involved (Floyd & Gallagher, 1997; Murphy et al., 2006; Schultz & Quitner, 1998). Parish and associates (2008), in reporting data from a national survey conducted in the United States, found more material hardship among families raising children with disabilities when they were compared to families raising typical children, primarily due to the costs of therapies and loss of income. The Parish study and this one suggest that current government services and programs may be

inadequate in addressing the material, emotional and relationship-based hardships experienced by families. Although more research is needed to identify the specific strains families face, it is evident that caregivers need personalized supports to assist them in managing and meeting the needs of the individuals with a disability for whom they are providing care.

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THE PEDAGOGICAL CONDITION OF STUDENT TEACHERS

Eva Vyskočilová, Vlastimil Švec

Abstract

The paper outlines one of the new approaches to student teachers education – the so-called psychosomatic approach. It is based on the notion of pedagogical condition which expresses the organizing of body, mental and also moral dispositions of student teachers to acting. Pedagogical condition may be developed by means of various psychosomatic disciplines which especially include the so called (Inter)acting with the Inner Partner. The authors characterize this discipline, which was introduced to Czech awareness by Ivan Vyskočil from the Theatre Faculty in Prague. They also draw attention to finding out the increase in pedagogical condition of student teachers in (Inter)acting with the Inner Partner.

Keywords

Teacher education, pedagogical condition, (Inter)acting with the Inner partner.

The Paper's Context

Changes in the role of teachers are linked to changes in the teacher education. Above all, it is the curriculum that is being changed, and its realisation and implementation also presume changes in the thinking-patterns and behaviour of student teachers. Pedagogical knowledge and the thinking processes of teachers among other issues have been, up until now, at the forefront of research studies. However, the wide variety and range of pedagogical situations which a teacher encounters in schools require a deeper degree of preparation of the personality of student teachers in order for them to behave authentically and creatively in such situations. This preparation process is not only based on concrete pedagogical knowledge – but also upon the personality "settings" of these students vis-a-vis unexpected situations. We have chosen to entitle this setting the "Pedagogical Condition".

According to I. Vyskočil, **condition** is, "a certain maturity, preparation, readiness to react rapidly and flexibly and, even the need, desire, or internal

urge to act publicly, to act and to behave, and to experience directly, without barriers, spontaneously, creatively and productively, independently and responsibly. In feedback loops, in a high-quality manner" (Vyskočil, 2000, p. 7).

The Pedagogical Condition not only involves students` thought processes, but also their voice, speech and movement. Put simply, it is associated with a person's whole body, or respectively with their whole personality. For this reason, it is possible to entitle this – until the present day, unusual approach to the teacher education, a "Psychosomatic Approach".

This holistic approach is based upon the well-known, but often not respected fact that, in the preparation of students teachers, knowledge-acquisition does not take place within the head of a person, but rather throughout their bodies and that the teacher education should include their preparation for the rational and emotional mastery of social situations as well as for anticipating the same in one's imaginings. **The Psychosomatic Approach** is founded upon the encouragement of the development of the personality of student teachers which should be oriented towards their "public behaviour" being – (as far as possible) – the presentation, realisation, 'radiation' of a fully-aware, communicative, creative, responsible behaviour and experiencing of situations – a consciously moral personality" (Vyskočil, 2000, p. 6).

In the workplaces of the co-authors of this paper, (and especially in the Department of Authorial Creativity and Pedagogy, Theatre Faculty in Prague), the pedagogical condition of students is developed through psychosomatic disciplines, among which and above all are subjects like (Inter)acting with the Inner Partner, Voice and Speech Education, Movement Education and Author Readings. Since the core discipline is (Inter)acting with the Inner Partner, we shall devote our further attentions to it in this paper.

(Inter)acting with the Inner Partner

(Inter)acting with the Inner Partner (further only AIP) is based upon the experience and knowledge that man, usually when alone, speaks to or plays with – themselves. Their internal partner appears to them and calls to them. And in AIP, the whole point is that this dialogue with one's inner partners be reproduced publicly, within a group of their fellow colleagues-students and university-level teachers who have practical experience with this discipline and have experienced it and lived through it themselves.

Students receive virtually no instruction whatsoever as to what they have to do, they are simply told: *Try to hold a dialectical discussion with yourself. With yourself as you would with your inner partner.* Ivan Vyskočil provides several **recommendations for students** who are beginning with AIP (Vyskočil, 2005, pp. 20–22, and rounded-out and complemented by the personal experience and experiences of the authors of this paper):

- Do not prepare anything in advance. Inspire yourself by whatever – here-and-now, on-the-spot, comes into your mind, whatever you notice. It is necessary to make this idea public, verbally, or even – non-verbally. We will react to this idea immediately or after a while (we will respond).
- Feel, behave and act as if the others present (colleagues, the teacher) simply were not present (i.e. so-called "public aloneness").
- Concentrate, and perceptively feel what we are doing. Do not think about what to say. Do not concentrate on concentrating – since you will simply fall into a panic.
- As soon as you can, at the very first impulse you feel, give it form – act it out. But there is no need to feel an immediate duty to enact or say anything on the spot.
- Allow yourselves time to respond to this impulse. Do not hurry or rush, so that you are aware of what it is you are saying or doing; whether and how this other (inner partner) expresses themselves (i.e. whether they are already speaking or acting).
- Think of nothing. Do not think of anything. Notice what we have done, for instance – what goes on when we alter or change the position of our body, or make some gesture, etc.
- Notice where a certain sequence ends, and where opposition makes itself heard (i.e. our internal partner).
- Maintain tension – that which flows from us, "beyond the footlights", to the others. When we stiffen, for instance our hands, shoulders, are not relaxed; then we rid ourselves of the possibility of expression.
- Seek a productive anti-pole to the previous impulse; contrasts, which complement each other.
- Do not fear changes (which might even surprise us); give it expression. Accept it, act it out.
- Engage yourself fully into the dialectical discussion or behaviour; do not satisfy yourself just with voice, certain movements, grimaces, gestures.
- Enjoy the feelings from this experience and self-testing, taste it to the full.

- Express your experience and feelings from this dialectical discussion or behaviour through self-reflexion in a written form.

AIP is an unusual discipline. It places a relatively simple requirement upon students who decide to penetrate its mysteries – that they "act". Of course, "for themselves", since we cannot do any otherwise. But with whom should they act? The answer is – with their "inner partner" in the given situation of public aloneness. They are given the opportunity to do so in an ordinary faculty auditorium, where one half is reserved for the actions and behaviour of one of them, while the others sit next to each other on seats in the second half, as the audience. However, acting out one's inner partner is not equivalent to or the same as talking to oneself, breeding self-speech.

The participants are encouraged not to think in advance about what they are going to say (or do); not to prepare themselves in advance – but rather, to begin from scratch, from nothing, from themselves within the situation. The participants are warned not to rush into things and to muffle or dampen their efforts to "be good" (in what they do) – to suppress that "norming" within themselves. That they unnecessarily judge themselves too harshly, curse themselves out, blame themselves; that they not resist activity, not be unsure of themselves, despair of themselves, not be uneasy about themselves.

Why do teachers need AIP? Teachers need creativity – they need to know how to make a difference between what to do mechanically, and where a person should not simply remain bound to a habit. They need to understand their own (forms of) expression, what they are inclined towards; where their strengths might lie, their communicativeness. They need to develop their imaginations and fantasy; to learn **how to react to new situations and to anticipate other situations**.

AIP requires time; it requires that student teachers rid themselves of their everyday stereotypes in their dealings not only with pupils but also with their colleagues. One university teacher (Ms. Jaroslava Pokorná), who leads AIP training sessions, writes about this in their self-reflective diary as follows: *"Teachers master the art of self-presentation to a high degree, (since) their craft is winning over a class full of pupils. Stepping out before the eyes of others for them automatically means standing up for themselves (doing it well). All those who have tried dialogical acting know that they have to suffer a moment of helplessness, since this is the first time that a new, unusual, surprising thing is born within themselves; where they see themselves in a light they have never know before."*

The Methodological Presumptions for Research into (Inter)acting with the Inner Partner

We base ourselves on the fact that children express themselves in a more significant manner through changes in the positioning of their bodies and that for student teacher (adults), it is their tongue (and Language) which is the reflection as well as the picture of what is going on within their interiors. If we compare various linguistic pictures from around the world, it is not only necessary to take into consideration the differences between them, but also what is universal to them all (human body-forms and spatial experience, orientation on humanity, the categorisation of the world as well as its conceptualisation with the aide of metaphors).

We consider the observation that metaphors are far from being a matter of linguistics and language, but metaphorically-speaking, they are predominantly our conceptual system, way of thinking, of seeing the world – as being fundamental. Metaphors are primarily a phenomenon which is not a linguistic but rather a mental one (Lakoff, Johnson, 2002). Differences tend rather to be on the surface (the structuring of a event, description and assessment), while the similarities have to do with the deeper structure of our anchoring in the world. It has to do with a bodily and spatially oriented and based conceptual schema (Vaňková, Nebeská, Římalová, Šlédrová, 2005). Similar to Cognitive Linguistics, it has its instrumentaria and creates interpenetrations and leakages between layers of linguistic materials, similar perhaps to the ethnographic study of the culture of behaviours within social groups. It does so in the form of the documentation of the "everydayness" of groups, i.e. the language of the dealings and behaviours. It is oriented on the analysis of speech interactions, on the commonness of everyday conversation, which is the most common and most significant of all social phenomena.

This gifted Lecturer of AIP was caught by surprise to discover that there was nothing to write about what AIP is, but rather she could only describe what it lead her to. It leads her to an awareness of the weight of subjective experience and a turning away from an effort to capture and comprehend AIP in words and terms. In her self-reflective diary she writes: *"In AIP, personal, subjective experiences are given precedence over closed/fixed/finished shapes, results, performance. ... From this turning away from a tendency towards finished shapes, results, or performance flows an accentuated processional process, experiences tied to time, to space ... It also led her to a different understanding of the whole. We are used to understanding the term "whole" as something holding*

together, compact; often, as parts of something which belong together and to one another. Her experience with AIP led her to the experiencing of the whole as something which she may create, think up, conceive – even reveal. That this whole is never given in advance, and even – is not given even in the course of the rehearsal, since each of my further steps and actions alter, change and are reshaped and re-formed. This experience even led her to a different understanding of the subsequent shape. The whole changes throughout the entire time that I am actively engaged in it." (Musilová, 2003)

In this sense therefore, we needed to verify the hypothesis that, under certain circumstances, we can as viewers (observers, researchers) relatively reliably feel (differentiate, guess) strong moments in the dialectic event/output (presentation, sharing, communication) of another, whose acting is recorded on a video-recording. One of the most important features which it was possible to track with students of teaching was its processional character – optimal tension, concentration – and at the same time, "alienation – withdrawal"; filling of words with significance, the ability to allow oneself **self-expression**.

The subject of this analytic investigation is **video-recordings** of the (Inter) acting with the Inner Partner of students arranged in the order of their date of recording. The viewer/observer looks at these recorded performances – similar to a member of the audience – in the same way as at minor events whose theme is attempts at AIP. The activity of the viewer/observer and the audience-member is determined by their openness, interest engagement and lack of prejudice. In the course of watching, the viewer/observer notices the level of their interest and attention. We consider this attention and interest as being the chief index of the moment when a connection between internal happenings, external expression of the same, and the social context occurred.

Currently, we have posed ourselves the following research questions: *How far is it possible to the linked behaviour, acting and speech of the student on the video-recording? Which marked things have remained on the video-recording?* What is the significance of the video-recording? Ivan Vyskočil recommends arriving at these perceptions of the recordings through kinesthesia. To teach oneself this process at the muscle tension level. When the observer learns this way of perception, they advance in perception and self-perception.

Conclusion

We have a set of video-recordings of the (Inter)acting with the Inner Partner of our students at our disposal. And we have set ourselves the following

question: *How can we "mine" from this set of recordings those phenomena which would single out and indicate growth in the pedagogical condition of student teachers.* As Blaise Pascal said when he discovered the Law of Equivalent Pressures in Liquids: "I know what it is, but I don't know how I came up with it." We need therefore to become aware of the acts, forms, as Gestaltists say; or as M. Sedláková and J. Hoskovec (2002) also say: "We perceive content, but not acts."

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Contact

doc. PhDr. Eva Vyskočilová, CSc.
Havlovská 17
160 00 Praha 6

prof. PhDr. Vlastimil Švec, CSc.
Pedagogická fakulta MU
Institut výzkumu školního vzdělávání
Poříčí 31
603 00 Brno
svec@ped.muni.cz