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Management of school – teaching the tolerance and cultural openness

ANDRZEJ MIRSKI. **Management of school – teaching the tolerance and cultural openness.** *As we know, one of the most important goals of modern educational programme, is preparing young people to a creative life in XXI century. It is obvious that it will be time of a great co-operation of nations, of an enormous exchange of people, goods and ideas. The basic condition to effective, creative and secure life in such a society is high level of tolerance and cultural openness. Tolerance is a disposition to be indulgent towards those whose opinion and costumes are different, cultural openness is a disposition to be not only tolerant, but also actively a lively interested in other cultures. However, many local European societies have many troubles in this area. Nationalism is still strong in Europe, still provokes conflicts.*

In the results of our research we can see, that in Poland today programme of teaching is much more open to other nations and culture than used to be in the past (before the war and in the period of communism). The global results of almost every person tested are encouraging – they are positive which shows that generally both teachers and pupils are tolerant and open to other cultures. But some aspects are

less optimistic. First of all, the investigation shows, that results of pupils are higher than results of teachers. It means, that Polish school could be obstacle rather than stimulation in the process of opening to other cultures. Secondly, correctional analysis shows that in the population of pupils there is negative correlation of idealism with cultural openness, what indicate that idealistic concepts of young people are not built around ideas of international and multicultural community, but probably around the more traditional ideas.

Keywords: *management of school, teaching the tolerance, cultural openness, modern society, programme of teaching in Poland.*

1. Introduction

One of the most important goals of modern educational programme, is preparing young people to a creative life in XXI century. It is obvious that it will be time of a great co-operation of nations, of an enormous exchange of people, goods and ideas. The basic condition to effective, creative and secure life in such a society is high level of tolerance and cultural openness. Tolerance is a disposition to be indulgent towards those whose opinion and costumes are different, cultural openness is a disposition to be not only tolerant, but also actively a lively interested in other cultures. However, many local European societies have many troubles in this area. Nationalism is still strong in Europe, still provokes conflicts. In Poland nationalism and chauvinism are not so much dangerous, but the situation in our country is still far from ideal. There are many reasons for it. Ethnically, we are one of the most homogeneous country in the world. It is a new situation in Poland, because Poland many centuries our country was a home for many nations. In the area of culture, especially in the question of religion, Poland is practically homogenous as well, the enormous majority belongs to catholic church, whereas before the second war Poland was a traditional home for many religions catholic, Orthodox, Judaism, Protestants and Islam. This cultural and ethnic homogeneity guarantees the secure stability in our country and prevents any bloodshed in our country. On the other hand it deprives us from cultural richness, which was so beneficial for the history of Polish civilisation. The most interesting and valuable works in art and literature were created in most rich in other cultures places (like great poem of Mickiewicz "Pan Tadeusz", based on experience in Lithuania and written in Paris). Moreover, one can suspect, that this long lasting homogeneity could be a serious obstacle to

adaptation to life in the multinational and multicultural society. Also the experience from the past is not encouraging for Poles to join common Europe. The memories from the common existents with other nations in big empires (Habsburgian, Napoleonian, carist, nazist and communist) are rather bad. Of course, they were more or less “evil empires” and the European Union will be certainly democratic and humanistic one, but some considerable amount of scepticism is still alive. The only institution, which can seriously and effectively prepare young Poles to life in common Europe is a school. The goal of this paper is to investigate whether Polish school really do it. Particularly, I was anxious to cheque if and in what extend, Polish school teaches tolerance and cultural openness.

Certainly, school makes a big impact on attitudes of young people, mainly on two ways:

1. through official transmission: curriculum and programme of teaching
2. through unofficial transmission: the private views and comments of teachers.

In order to investigate whether Polish school inance attitudes of tolerance and cultural openness, rather than nationalism I performed:

1. a review of the curriculum and of the programme of teaching
2. a measuring of attitudes of teacher through testing.

Additionally, I tested youngsters in school using the same test in order to compare tolerance and cultural openness of teachers and students.

2. Official (institutional transmission)

Generally one can say, that until the early nineties Polish school were oriented more into the direction of some isolationism. Before the second war the enthusiasm of regained independence was accompanied by the deep distrust (unfortunately often justified) to the neighbours: Russian, Germans etc. Young people were brought up on the patriotic poems and romans of Mickiewicza and Sienkiewicz. More universal and progressive writers like Słowacki, Prus, Żeromski were not popular in Polish school.

After the second war isolationist tendencies were even stronger, but in different way. Poland was isolated by a communist system from the rich and creative world of western civilisation. At the same time nobody believed in cultural greatness of Soviet Union or in so called proletarian internationalism. In effect, Polish school was still closed

in the world of national literature and culture without so fruitful and necessary communication with other cultures. After the fall of Berlin wall situation improved. In the majority of modern handbooks of history the chapters describing history of Poland and history of other countries have approximately the same length (proportion 1 to 1). The proportion of Polish and non-Polish literature is like 1 to 2/3, which seem to be reasonable. Unfortunately, there are still in school programme some Polish poems and romans which nowadays could be consider as nationalistic or maintaining the bad images and stereotypes or other nations or cultures (for instance poems of Sarbiewski and Orzechowski from XVII century, poems of Krasiński, romans of Sienkiewicz). Only careful, critical and rational interpretation of teacher could prevent young people of acquisition bad stereotypes of other nation and religions from this types of literature.

3. Unofficial transmission – tolerance and cultural openness of teachers

It seems, that in school much more important than official programme is what teachers think and communicate to pupils. Each item existing in the programme could be interpreted by teacher in the way, which practically allows him to transmit his or her opinion or point of view. In order to investigate opinions of teachers on tolerance and attitudes of teachers towards other nations, cultures, religion etc. I tested a sample of teachers by the “test of tolerance and cultural openness”.

4. Tolerance i cultural openness of pupils

In order to answer the question whether Polish school teaches the tolerance and cultural openness I tested also pupils by the same test. It gave me also the possibility to compare the results of pupils with results of teachers.

5. The method

I used created by me “test of tolerance and cultural openness”. Since tolerance and cultural openness are very broad variables, contained many factors, I defined in my test seven dimensions:

- 1.E: Equity – National megalomania
- 2.T: Tolerance – Intolerance
- 3.O: Open interest – Closeness
4. I: Integration – Isolation

5.P: Progressivism – Traditionalism

6.C: Critical attitude toward stereotypes – Stereotypes

7.Ex: Exchange – Rejection

Each of those dimension have six sentences. The possible answers are: +2, +1, 0, -1, -2 depending of the level of accordance with the sentence. Thus, the score of each dimension vary from -12 to +12. The global score of the test is the sum of results of all dimensions. It can vary from -84 (minimal tolerance and openness) to +84 (maximal tolerance and cultural openness).

6. The results

6a. Results of teachers.

I tested 20 teachers. Table below represents results of each teacher, beginning from 1st until 20th. In each columns there are dimensions, the last column contains the global scores of the test. In the two last row there are medium results and standard deviations.

Table 1: Results of teachers

	E	T	O	I	P	C	Ex	CO
1	2	10	11	0	8	2	5	38
2	5	5	10	1	11	2	5	39
3	6	6	6	1	6	6	4	35
4	3	7	11	2	4	5	8	40
5	6	12	12	10	10	5	7	62
6	0	-3	3	0	1	-2	3	2
7	-1	7	11	2	2	6	6	33
8	4	7	10	4	4	8	7	44
9	9	10	12	12	8	11	9	71
10	10	12	11	3	8	6	2	52
11	0	-5	4	12	-7	-5	8	16
12	7	8	10	-5	1	6	7	34
13	0	5	5	10	1	7	3	31
14	3	4	11	7	6	1	4	36
15	6	9	11	0	8	5	4	43
16	8	7	8	2	7	10	3	45
17	8	2	10	0	0	1	1	22
18	3	9	8	1	10	8	3	42
19	3	-2	4	2	4	1	5	17
20	9	12	9	7	5	8	4	54
Mean	4,55	6,10	8,85	3,55	4,85	4,55	4,90	37,8
st.dev	0,75	1,09	0,64	1,03	0,97	0,90	0,49	3,56

The table above shows that the highest scores teachers achieved in the dimension of O (open interest to others): mean 8,85, and second highest in the dimension T (tolerance): mean 6,10, whereas the lowest in the dimension of E (equity) and C (critical attitude towards stereotypes): in both cases: mean 4,55. It is quite optimistic that the scores in all dimensions are above zero. However, in some cases there are also negative (below zero) results.

6b. Results of pupils.

I tested 28 pupils.

Table 2.

	E	T	O	I	P	C	Ex	CO
1	8	9	11	7	2	10	5	52
2	6	12	12	5	8	4	8	55
3	1	7	11	8	10	10	12	59
4	10	12	10	6	7	11	2	58
5	4	9	11	10	8	9	7	58
6	1	10	11	2	4	6	12	46
7	7	4	7	5	9	5	9	46
8	10	11	12	11	9	9	12	74
9	4	2	10	3	7	8	7	51
10	4	12	10	3	7	8	7	51
11	8	8	12	8	5	5	6	52
12	3	9	12	-2	11	11	7	51
13	7	7	10	11	6	6	9	56
14	4	5	5	11	-1	6	7	37
15	4	2	11	7	2	2	6	34
16	6	8	12	6	7	10	6	55
17	8	9	11	8	3	9	5	53
18	0	6	11	2	-2	5	6	28
19	4	8	10	4	1	10	11	48
20	2	10	11	6	10	7	7	53
21	8	8	9	4	9	6	9	53
22	4	5	5	11	-1	6	7	37
23	8	9	12	4	5	8	9	55
24	6	10	12	-2	6	6	6	44
25	3	7	8	2	9	7	4	40
26	10	9	11	4	1	4	6	45
27	9	11	12	8	12	10	11	73
28	6	11	10	11	0	6	11	55

Śr.	5,54	8,57	10,32	5,82	5,50	7,29	7,64	50,68
od.st.	0,54	0,48	0,36	0,70	0,75	0,45	0,48	1,91

Similarly to teachers, pupils have the highest scores in dimension: O (open interest) and T (tolerance) and the lowest in the dimension E (equity): and I (integration). The high scores they have also in dimensions: C (critical attitudes towards stereotypes), and in Ex (exchange).

7. Comparative analysis

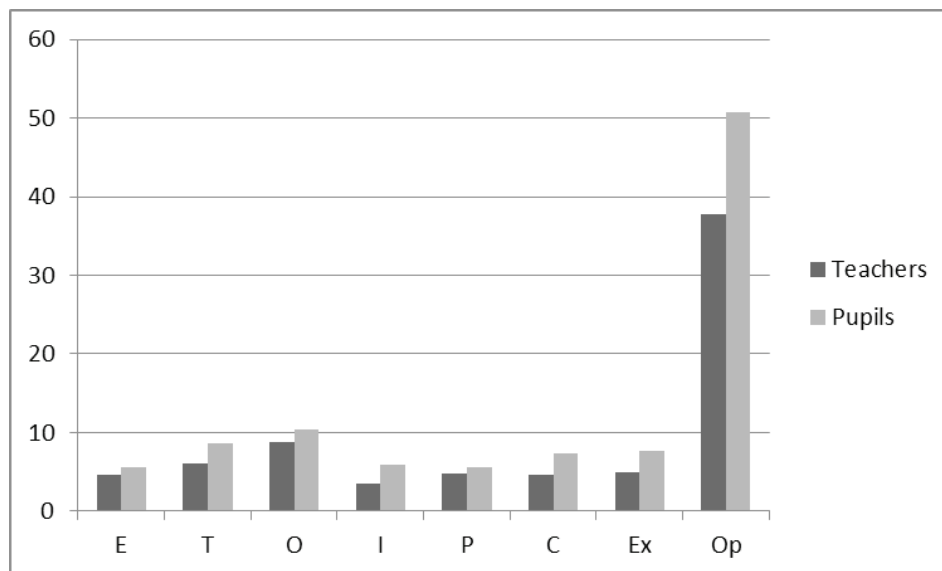
Table 3. Mean results of teachers

	E	T	O	I	P	C	Ex	Op
Śr.	4,55	6,10	8,85	3,55	4,85	4,55	4,90	37,8

Table 4. Mean results of pupils

	E	T	O	I	P	C	Ex	Op
Śr.	5,54	8,57	10,32	5,82	5,50	7,29	7,64	50,68

Figure 1.



Both pupils and teachers have the highest scores in dimensions: O (open interest) and T: tolerance, the lowest in dimension E (equity).

Probably it is not accidental coincidence, it seems that is rather something characteristic for all the Poles, young and adults, something characteristic for Polish culture what Polish poet Słowacki called ironically “peacock and parrot”. It seems that, on the one hand tolerant and lively interested in customs and achievements of other nations (parrot), but on the other hand proud and megalomaniac (peacock). However, young people are much more critical to stereotypes, more progressive, more interested in cultural exchange and in European integration. It is a question if this difference is caused by developmental features (radicalism and curiosity of young people) or by a cohort effect, e.g. by some traits characteristic only for this particular generation, first generation of youngsters after the fall of Berlin wall. Most probably both factors are involved. However, the most important difference is, that global scores of pupils are distinctively higher (mean 50,68) than scores of teachers (mean 37,8).

8. Correctional analysis

6a. Teachers: Correctional analysis shows negative correlation with idealism: -0,36, negative correlation with neurotism: -0,24 (especially in case of dimension E: -0,48 and C: -0,48), positive correlation with extravertism: 0,42 (especially in case of dimension P: 0,46 and O: 0,46).

6b. Pupils: Correctional analysis shows negative correlation with extroversion: -0,46. Extroversion correlates positively only with dimension Ex (exchange): 0,33, but negatively correlates with dimension T (tolerance): -0,48 and with dimension P (progressivism): -0,64.

There is negative correlation between cultural openness and neurotism: -0,39, especially in the case of dimension I (integration): -0,54 and C (criticism): -0,40.

9. Conclusions

First of all the results are not alarming – they are rather optimistic. Existing today programme of teaching is much more open to other nations and culture than used to be in the past (before the war and in the period of communism). The global results of almost every person tested are encouraging – they are positive which shows that generally both teachers and pupils are tolerant and open to other cultures. But some aspects are less optimistic. First of all, the investigation shows, that results of pupils are higher than results of teachers. It means, that Polish school could be obstacle rather than stimulation in the process of opening to other cultures. Secondly, correctional analysis shows that in the

population of pupils there is negative correlation of idealism with cultural openness, what indicate that idealistic concepts of young people are not built around ideas of international and multicultural community, but probably around the more traditional ideas. It seems that probably more culturally open are less idealistic so called "MTV youth" (listeners and viewers of satellite television), because certainly, from the point of view of pleasure and consumption the cultural openness is very attractive.

To sum up, one can say that in the last years polish school made some effort to enhance the tolerance and cultural openness, but being aware that Polish youth will enter adults life in to United Europe (Poland will enter UE probably in 2000) it should be done much, much more in this area.

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Abstracts

АНДЖЕЙ МІРСКИ. Управління школою – навчання толерантності та культурній відкритості. Як відомо, однією з найважливіших цілей сучасної освітньої програми є підготовка молоді до творчого життя у ХХІ столітті. Очевидно, що настане час великої співпраці націй, величезного обміну людьми, товарами та ідеями. Основною умовою ефективного, творчого та безпечного життя в такому суспільстві є високий рівень толерантності та культурної відкритості. Толерантність — це схильність бути поблажливим до тих, хто має інші погляди та костюми, культурна відкритість — це схильність бути не лише толерантним, але й активно цікавитися іншими культурами. Однак багато місцевих європейських суспільств мають багато проблем у цій сфері. Націоналізм досі сильний у Європі, досі провокує конфлікти.

За результатами нашого дослідження ми бачимо, що програма викладання в Польщі сьогодні є набагато більш відкритою для інших націй і культури, ніж це було в минулому (до війни та в період комунізму). Загальні результати майже кожного тестованого обнадійливі – вони позитивні, що свідчить про те, що загалом і вчителі, і учні є толерантними та відкритими до інших культур. Але деякі аспекти менш оптимістичні. Перш за все, дослідження показує, що результати учнів вищі, ніж результати вчителів. Це означає, що польська школа може бути радше перешкодою, ніж стимулом у процесі відкриття до інших культур. По-друге, корекційний аналіз показує, що в популяції учнів існує негативна кореляція ідеалізму з культурною відкритістю, що свідчить про те, що ідеалістичні концепції молодих людей будуються не навколо ідей інтернаціональної та мультикультурної спільноти, а, ймовірно, навколо більш традиційних ідей.

Ключові слова: менеджмент школи, навчання толерантності, культурна відкритість, сучасне суспільство, програма навчання в Польщі.

ANDRZEJ MIRSKI. **Zarządzanie szkołą – nauka tolerancji i otwartości kulturowej.** Powszechnie wiadomo, że jednym z najważniejszych celów współczesnego programu edukacyjnego jest przygotowanie młodych ludzi do twórczego życia w XXI wieku. Oczywiście będzie to czas wielkiej współpracy między narodami, ogromnej wymiany ludzi, towarów i idei. Głównym warunkiem efektywnego, twórczego i bezpiecznego życia w takim społeczeństwie jest wysoki poziom tolerancji i otwartości kulturowej. Tolerancja to skłonność do pobłażliwości wobec osób o innych poglądach i strojach, natomiast otwartość kulturowa to skłonność do bycia nie tylko tolerancyjnym, ale i aktywnie zainteresowanym innymi kulturami. Wiele lokalnych społeczeństw europejskich ma jednak w tej dziedzinie wiele problemów. Nacjonalizm jest w Europie wciąż silny i wciąż prowokuje konflikty.

Zgodnie z wynikami naszego badania widzimy, że program nauczania w Polsce jest dziś zdecydowanie bardziej otwarty na inne narody i kultury niż w przeszłości (przed II wojną światową i w okresie komunistycznym). Ogólne wyniki niemal każdego uczestnika naszego badania napawają optymizmem – są pozytywne, wskazują, że generalnie zarówno nauczyciele, jak i uczniowie są tolerancyjni i otwarci na inne kultury. Ale niektóre aspekty są mniej optymistyczne. Po pierwsze, badanie pokazuje, że wyniki uczniów są na wyższym poziomie niż wyniki nauczycieli. Oznacza to, że polska szkoła może być raczej przeszkodą niż bodźcem w procesie otwierania się na inne kultury. Po drugie, analiza korelacyjna pokazuje, że istnieje ujemna korelacja między idealizmem a otwartością kulturową wśród uczniów, co wskazuje, że idealistyczne koncepcje młodych ludzi nie są budowane wokół idei międzynarodowej i wielokulturowej wspólnoty, ale raczej wokół bardziej tradycyjnych idei.

Słowa kluczowe: zarządzanie szkołą, nauka tolerancji, otwartość kulturowa, nowoczesne społeczeństwo, program nauczania w Polsce.