

MIHÁLY FÓNAI¹

Beata Pituła, Inetta Nowosad (Eds.), *Education – Multiplicity of Meanings, Commonality of Goals*, V&R unipress, Göttingen 2022, pp. 239

As a whole, it can be stated that the book provides a thorough analysis of today's education systems and schools. Its findings and conclusions have general validity beyond the Polish education system. The book is thematically diverse, analysing a wide range of education-related issues. The wide range of the issues does not overwhelm the structure of the volume, the editors have developed a clear structure, and as a result, the individual studies build on each other with synergistic effects. A major part of the book analyses the global challenges, and the other part focuses on the issues related to the Polish education system. In addition to the theoretical issues, the volume includes several studies based on empirical research. The results of these studies support the theoretical issues. The volume is coherent and has a 'message'. The principles of editing create coherence between the individual studies. The message of the volume is also clear: how a centuries-old institutional system that has long been characterised by immutability can respond to rapid change. In addition to the institutional and structural changes, how the internal world of the school and the teaching and learning process are transformed, and how schools become inclusive. How schools can accommodate changes and become inclusive in this sense.

I recommend the volume to all “lay people” and professionals interested in education and the state of education.

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Jolanta Szempruch: The goals of modern education in changing society. Szempruch's paper gives the foundational, theoretical study of the whole and the first part of the volume. The author deals with four closely related phenomena and issues (Principles of social life; The functioning of an individual in a changing society; Features of the modern society; Goals of education in the face of social change). The individual phenomena examined build on each other well and support the author's "message". In the post-modern society, it is education that determines success. The paper deals with modernity, the changing world, globalisation, uncertainty and the new status and purpose of education. The author's thorough theoretical background, knowledge of the literature, and ability to make sense of the issues are emphasised.

Beata Pitula: Correlation of communication relations between the teacher and the student in the teaching process and theories of individual personality traits. The study examines the factors influencing teacher communication and focuses on teachers' personal characteristics. The question of "who is a good teacher" is a recurring question in the international literature. Thus, the nature and the quality of teacher communication can also provide an answer to this question. The author emphasises the importance of communication in many professions, and teachers are a prominent group. There is extensive literature about communication research, of which the author draws on the theory and research of Jolanta Wilsz. I highlight three topics from this high-quality study. The first is which values of personal characteristics significantly impact communication. "According to the accepted and empirically verified model of the perfect teacher, the expected proper values of the personality traits are as follows": processability, reproducibility, talent, emissivity, tolerance, firmness and consistency of action (for vulnerability). The processes of interpersonal communication are associated with numerous functions, but from the teacher's point of view, they must be as follows: informative, motivational, controlling, and emotive. In terms of the effectiveness of teacher communication, I would also highlight the following determinants: current and verified knowledge, energy resources, the accumulated repertoire of influences on the surroundings, degree of one's ability to store and process information, and one's ability to prevent information dispersion and loss of energy (motivation).

Inetta Nowosad: Innovation and ICT in school education. It is no exaggeration to say that innovation and ICT are our time's two defining concepts and processes. It is also true for education. This paper focuses primarily on the conceptual issues of innovation in education, in addition to a more general understanding of innovation.

In addition to using ICT tools in schools, it shows the activities specific to teachers. Their role is crucial, as their professional development and personal beliefs play a major role in the renewal of the effectiveness of education. The study represents a high scientific standard. Its table summarises the types of changes and innovation in education as a model. Its conclusions are also important: “In the area of institutional education, we have neither left (or closed) the era of knowledge, not yet entered the era of innovation”. “Not every change is an innovation. This raises the need for initiatives to increase teachers’ awareness of what constitutes innovation so that they can gain a real sense of their work”.

Danuta Uryga, Marta Wiatr: School Space as Teaching and Learning Technology – Social World Perspective. The authors explore the world of school as a “social world”. As a theoretical background, they analyse the concept of school and the world of school and the concept of the ‘social world’. The concept of the social world is seen as the most appropriate one for studying school-related phenomena. In addition, they focus on the impact of the activities related to the aims, organisational framework, form and content of education in the context of educational change. The authors used qualitative research to investigate the perspective of the “social world” in a specific school. Their research questions are convincing and measurable. Their fieldwork research on ‘typical places’ shows that there are characteristic dichotomies and dualities in relation to ‘spaces’: «They coexist on equal rights in the school space as an expression of a compromise between teaching (learning) focused on individual vs team, reproduction vs creation of knowledge, “static” vs “dynamic” “cool” vs “hot”, “old” vs “new”».

Barbara Grzyb: Virtual University – Reality vs Evaluation by the Polish Pedagogy Students. The study reflects on the challenges of COVID-19 in education and higher education. Although distance education has literature and is an established practice, the epidemic has brought a new situation with the mass adoption of distance and online education. Universities have only partially been able to respond effectively. As a result, student dissatisfaction with online digital education and its methods has increased. In an empirical study, the authors investigated the views of pedagogy students on distance learning they had been involved. The results of the research showed that the students experienced many negatives. The results suggest that more emphasis should be placed on the transfer of the methods of distance (digital) education in teacher education. I consider the empirical results important for developing the methods and didactics of distance education.

Elżbieta Jaszczyszyn: Community of goals and differentiated ways of achieving them in preschool education. The paper draws on a thorough literature review to explore the differentiated ways of building the community of purposes and goals in preschool education. It touches upon and analyses many contexts of the topic, from Dorota Klus-Stańska's model to the "four steps of competence". Although the study has a rather theoretical focus, the conclusions of the analysis can also support the practice of preschool education. This approach – the generalisation of experience – is represented by Dorota Klus-Stańska when she formulates the four premises of standardisation (directionality, progressiveness, the correctness of the normalisation of development, institutionalisation of development). In the study, the author focuses on the context of the objectives. The goals are influenced by various stakeholders: the community, the family, teachers, politicians, and local government. The author considers it important to define the 'environment' as influencing the outlined goals. The 'environment' is complex, comprised of economic, cultural, political, and institutional processes in their interrelationships and interdependencies. The links between kindergartens and other social institutions are fascinating. These represent five possible models – this also shows that the narrower topic of the study, preschool education, is highly (socially) context-dependent. [The models: the model of negative cooperation, model of "hot potato" or linear cooperation, model of domination – the course of cooperation is determined by only one of the parties, parallel operation model, model of cooperation (partnership cooperation) – partners are cooperating placing themselves in equal positions]. The "four stages of competence" model is equally witty and apt.

Marzena Farnicka: Education in XXI – how to overcome problems with dispersion. Farnicka's study analyses the new phenomena of today's society and its education with a special focus on digital processes (digital natives, e-education). The process of the emergence of 'cyberspace' is embedded in M. Straś-Romanowska's model of human being and development, and the model is analysed in detail. In the context of the circumstances (i.e., the conditions of 'change'), she distinguishes between the environment and the context of the development. "Developmental environment comprises all the material and non-material elements that an individual potentially has access to and by which he or she is potentially influenced" (p. 126). The emergence of cyberspace is a new phenomenon in education. It impacts the use of digital natives' devices, the time spent on the Internet and the cognitive function of education. The educational process can be divided into several levels, where the teacher and the learner must carry out individual activities. These levels are the cultural, the relational and the operational level. The role of the teachers

in the educational process is to support the process itself. The author interprets the ICC as a “solution” to altering education. The ICC requires new competencies, which are presented in the context of the challenges analysed in the Salto EU Report. The paper also highlights the role of ‘E’ in education, highlighting that (pp. 133–134):

1. The development of e has many stages and levels (goals, attitudes, values, skills and way of action),
2. E presents itself in many forms and needs support,
3. E needs a specific climate,
4. E often extends beyond the confines of the physical environment;
5. it could be measured and evaluated.

Zenon Gajdzica: Reasons of insufficient cooperation between special schools and mainstream schools in Poland. The study analyses one of the neuralgic problems of today’s education systems: educational inclusion, the situation of “special” schools, and their cooperation with “mainstream” schools. In the introduction, the author draws attention to two phenomena: the diversity of inclusive education and the fact that inclusive education is often linked to segregated education. In Poland, learners with disability have access to three forms of education: the special (special schools), integrated (integrated schools and classes) and inclusive form. However, the mainstream schools have not yet been well prepared for the introduction of inclusive education (teacher training, low methodological skills, insufficient diagnostic preparation). The reviewer’s comment: these are general problems of inclusive education, not only specific to the Polish education system. Similar situations exist in the methods and forms of inclusive education (learners with disability in classes of mainstream schools, learners’ development is marginalised, inclusive education in the broader context of general education, school as a community). The study analyses cooperation between special and mainstream schools – presenting the four models. These are the model of ‘one campus’ called ‘neighbours’, ‘cluster of schools’, and a ‘school within a school’. These solutions mainly concern the organisation and the management of school work. The areas of educational cooperation can include increasing teachers’ competencies in majority schools, organising joint lessons, and teachers from specialised institutions teaching in majority schools.

Zdzisława Janiszewska-Nieścioruk: The problematics of social and educational inclusion of people with disabilities in Poland. The study analyses the living condi-

tions of people with disabilities with a comprehensive literature review. Although its title refers to an analysis of the situation in Poland, the issues and problems examined are general, and therefore many of its conclusions concern the general situation of people with disabilities worldwide. The author examines two issues. The first is the impact of social capital and the lack of trust in the social and educational inclusion of people with disabilities. Second, poverty, unemployment and precariousness as high-risk factors hindering the social and educational inclusion of people with disabilities. The impact of these factors is convincingly analysed within the interpretative frameworks the author has chosen. It is important to underline that this approach allows for new aspects to be analysed in this volume, such as social capital and precariousness. Perhaps it could also have referred to the problem of NEET, although this issue is implicitly explored as well.

Jerzy Wolny, Monika Adamczyk: The process of social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in the opinion of teachers from special schools. An empirical study on the example of international, interdisciplinary comparative research. There is little empirical research in the international literature on the social (and school) inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities. In this context, this study fills a gap. Its relevance is enhanced by the author comparing the views of teachers in seven countries who teach in special schools on the issue under consideration. The study is well structured, with an analysis of the relevant literature and the conceptualisation of the concepts followed by a presentation of the methodology used and the sample. The study rightly devotes much attention to the conceptualisation of the issues, providing an in-depth analysis of the definitions used and applied by the literature and professional organisations. Thus, it addresses the issues of conceptual, social and practical skills. It analyses the areas of normalisation in relation to the concept of normalisation. The empirical research and the research findings are presented in terms of the four areas of normalisation. Highlighting some of the main findings, it can be stated that the level of support for people with intellectual disabilities deteriorates after the end of education. Support for people with intellectual disabilities is generally dependent on the family. In these circumstances, living independently is a “vague dream”.

Ewa Pasterniak-Kobyłecka: About the possibilities and barriers of shaping students' artistic culture at Polish school. This study addresses a critical issue of the school system in Poland and the broader “world village”. Arts education can contribute to the development of pupils' personality and cultural knowledge and skills. In relation to its potential, art education in schools suffers from many shortcom-

ings and problems, which the author analyses in great depth. The study provides the conceptual clarifications required for the question under consideration, for example, in relation to the concept of culture or the concept and the areas of art education. As there is a ‘library’ of literature on the concept of culture, the author presents some typical definitions. The study claims that culture and arts education “makes you better”. It can be framed by the synergy between arts and humanities education, of which the author gives many positive examples. At the same time, she describes the circumstances and problems that make it difficult to prepare for participation in cultural activities (i.e., the simplified content of mass culture).

Jolanta Konieczny: The concept of neuroeducation in the learning process of school failure affected students. The paper deals with one of the neuralgic problems of the functioning of the school system, the failure of schools. Failure (and success) in school is the result of many factors and causes, and as a result, there are many different approaches and explanations. The present study focuses mainly on processes and situations within the school system, with less attention to external influences (e.g., educational policy) and no analysis of explanations related to the social situation of pupils. However, this does not detract from the value of the analysis. The paper is well structured and discusses the theoretical issues related to the topic and the author’s approach at a high level. The presentation and application of the methodology (action research) also have a similarly high standard. The analysis of the results is in line with the methodology of action research and ethnographic (school) research and reflects continuously on the empirical results following the methodology. In addition to the more general comments, I highlight some of the study’s main findings. The introduction of the paper emphasises the main theoretical and empirical issues and problems related to school failure. The author has set out the aim of the research to find new ways of working with students who can experience school failure. In order to do this, it is necessary to break away from the model of the ‘transmission’ school (which is presented in detail) and choose a student-friendly educational direction. One of the tools can be neuropedagogy as a teaching method. What school is like now: “The school still does not use the potential of change, it is based on a bureaucratic system, doing only what is required by the system, without going beyond the framework, it strives to achieve a minimum of knowledge and skills” (p. 192). The author also points out that the line between failure and success in school is thin, with all students experiencing one or the other state at some stage of their education. The ‘failures’ are ‘stigmatised’ as inferior, often adopting a victim-blaming attitude. It can lead to burnout among students when they are already at school (!). Alternative schools can be

a way out of this situation (the main trends are presented in the study). The reviewer's note: In an international study, we found that success in school increases peer support and self-esteem and reduces student exclusion. These results also support the claims and conclusions of Jolanta Konieczny.

Magdalena Zapotoczna: Theories of career choice in the process of projecting educational and professional future. Zapotoczna's study forms a rounded whole, it would be difficult to add anything. The paper presents and analyses the main models, theories and claims of career choice theories. It also compares these theories with each other, indicating their differences. It contributes to a high level to enable the reader to understand the main features and statements of psychological and sociological theories of career choice. It also suggests that traditional theories were formulated in a world characterised by a high degree of homogeneity – whereas today's theoretical constructs have to consider the diversity of factors shaping the career choice process.