

## Editorial: The Cooperation of Unequals

Cooperation implies a community of goals. However, it does not always start from this point – some goals become common as a result of both effort and care for others. Cooperation can also take many forms. In educational settings hierarchical cooperation is often a starting point, e.g., when students need to follow given goals. Cooperation of unequals means that some partners have “less to contribute to the mutual endeavour” (Nechansky 2018: 707). However, people change their capabilities depending on the institutions in which we meet them and under what pressure they operate. This issue of *Ars Educandi* aspires to map the emancipatory potential of educational work despite unfavorable settings.

This volume consists of articles sent in response to the topic of cooperation raised by the editors and an autonomous discussion in the form of a leading analytical article devoted to working with students, together with comments on it. The scope of our authors’ interests narrowed our focus in academic work to either oral or written communication. That marks the difference between the two sections in which papers are presented: “Cooperation of Unequals in Teaching” and “Cooperation of Unequals in Writing”. We could say that communication is educational if it happens at a university (as in the case of art when it is accepted by institutions and presented in galleries) and – following the contextual way of defining art – it is educational because of the context, i.e. the participation of academic teachers, who have an authority to name things. However, communication is also educational, because – as we assumed in the call for papers entitled “Unequals at work: researchers by trade and by chance together in multi-author publications” – this work (no matter whether written or oral) is meant to be educational when it is built upon difficult differences. People are different from each other, but some differences still tend to make people suspicious (e.g. different clothes, different race), while other differences can be an additional source of authority (e.g., old age, great height). Diversity in terms of experience (marked by age) or expertise (marked by academic titles) is usually supposed to guarantee an exchange of ideas and, eventually, learning. Thus, it seems rational that, e.g., teachers are older than students. Nevertheless, it would not be an exaggeration to say that meaningful communication is still a rare animal in academia.

The first group of papers was the result of a symposium on academic teaching practice, and the interpretative frame of the collected material was Rancière's concept of the ignorant schoolmaster. Joanna Rutkowiak in her paper entitled "Rancièrian emancipatory interpretations; The experience of academic work in non-state higher education institutions located in the Warmia-Mazury region" manages to capture a few such moments in which her non-traditional students emerged from the background by telling her extraordinary things: that she must endure, that the research process resembles the working of a car engine, that her lectures referred to somebody's grandmother, and that students make collective inquiries into teachers' worldviews, etc. The socio-economic background for this communication was specifically important, because of the peripheral status of the Warmia-Mazury region and the low social status of private universities in Poland. It is inspiring to follow how these meaningful, though statistically irrelevant, cases analysed in the paper reveal a social fabric and supportive networks in which Rutkowiak's students became salient knots. Such an academic teacher's work with students as members of their communities becomes fundamental for any emancipation process to be a collective experience, not just an individual educational success. However this work of teachers usually goes unnoticed, or, at least, most teachers stay unaware of the changes they inspire. Here the basic proof of communication as an educational experience came together with the informal feedback the teacher received.

Based on Barnlund's transactional model of communication (Barnlund 1970), the situations we analyze in this issue of *Ars Educandi* can be graphically represented. It is centrally important for Rutkowiak to decode the context in which it may become possible to register feedback from students at all. It was not until this author started writing her paper that the specificity of the hidden assumptions concerning equality was theorized. Social interaction was built upon cues given to recipients that they are sufficiently intelligent to speak.

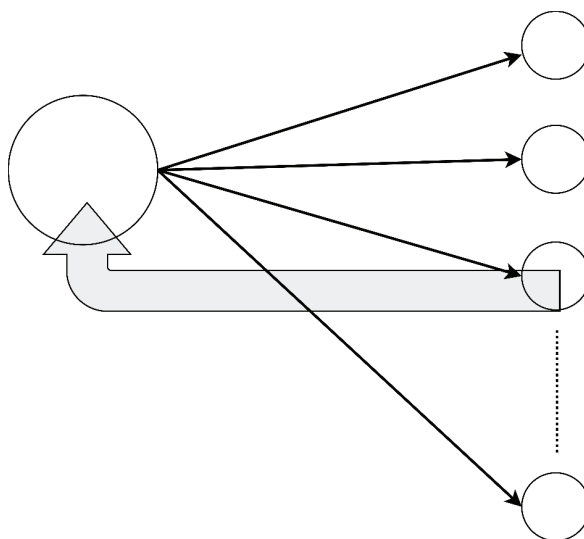


Figure 1. A teacher receives occasionally feedback from a student. A simplified model of communication in education

Author's own diagram.

The authorial comments to the analysis presented by Joanna Rutkowiak can be read in any order, checking how individual voices of commentators engage with each other. Accordingly, as Piotr Zamojski reminds us in his comment, only a trained eye sees such feedback, because it tends to occur only as a blink. Jarosław Jendza notes that Rutkowiak's serious consideration of terrain and people should be part of the diagnostic efforts of teachers before coming to work with students. However, institutionally, academic teachers are not encouraged to provide such high-quality teaching. Maria Reut attempts to undermine the conviction, widespread in Poland, of the lower quality of education at private universities. Anna Blumsztajn emphasises that the instrumental approach to learning, away from which Rutkowiak attempts to lead students, is not a matter of deficits arising from the place of origin of these students, but it is a common, learned adaptation to the system of education, regardless of the social origin of students. Tomasz Szkudlarek, inspired by Rutkowiak's report, explores the underestimated role of small talk in relation to politics and emancipation. He notes that Rutkowiak's radicalism, if it is performative only, can be seen as a component of any meaningful education. Oskar Szwabowski draws attention to the perverse role of a teacher's writing practice. Even when it is meant to register, it re-creates the past and forces a writer to think differently than expected. There would be no story without words creatively capturing what is scattered through an intense experience.

The second group of papers does not relate to each other directly, but, together, they contribute to a better understanding of the complexity of collective text

production. It may be surprising that the authors take into account not only scholarly/scientific articles which are reports on research conducted.

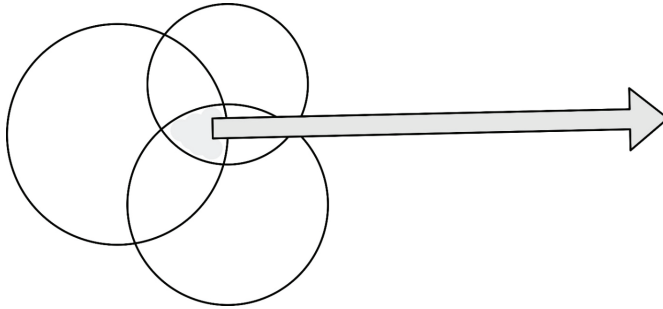


Figure 2. Diverse actors try to produce a text together, for which they need a common space of understanding

Author's own diagram.

In his paper Jakub Jankowski describes the process of creating collective translations. Cooperation of students with academic staff can take place within the framework of a scientific interest group/circle, and its effects, in the case analysed in the paper, are published. The practical effect of this cooperation forces a change of the role of the researcher from that of a supervisor to that of a text editor. This professionalization of relations is perceived as democratizing, because it focuses everybody on the text and suspends the social status of individual members of the circle. Oskar Szwabowski, Paulina Wężniejewska and Monika Stodolna produce a co-autoethnography, looking at a lecture from the position of both teacher and students. The authors then take their text to conferences and trace how simple small talk responses can signal the emergence of new communities. Nini Fang, Elizabeth O'Brien and Annie Pirrie deal with new forms of bureaucracy that disorganize academic life, but provide evidence that some work probably takes place, because time is wasted. A Workload Allocation Model is a top-down and external gaze on academic work and is based on the rationing of working-time. However, the model remains blind to the fact that work is a social effort, and that it therefore requires care for others in creating secure spaces of understanding. The authors give examples of both the intrusion of this system into the private life and the psyche of a rapporteur, as well as examples of a space of liberation, escape and refuge at a conference. The last paper is also focused on social aspects of academic work, but from the perspective of the seemingly technical issue of co-authorship of academic papers. The order of names in a scholarly/scientific article should reflect the participation of individuals in research. This is not always easy and can lead to subjecting reality to technical requirements as well as to violating ethical standards.

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There is nothing else for me but to encourage readers to suspend their specific performative technologies and jointly to desecrate their working time. Indulge yourself in reading for the commons!

Piotr Kowzan

### Literature

- Barnlund D.C., 1970, A transactional model of communication [in:] J. Akin, A. Goldberg, G. Myers, J. Stewart (eds), *Language Behavior: A Book of Readings in Communication*, The Hague, Paris: Mouton.
- Nechansky H., 2018, Forms of Cooperation, *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 35.