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From reconciled, stable educational objectives to change-oriented educational objectives – a report on a longitudinal study of pedagogical knowledge of prospective primary-phase teachers

This paper presents the results of a study on prospective teachers' pedagogical knowledge of primary-phase educational objectives and its alterations in the process of learning the profession during the first three years of studies. The primary theoretical category used in the study was "social representation", defined as socially reconciled, shared, supra-individual, generalized knowledge of objects. The aim of the authors' own research was to determine the evolutionary dynamics of the content, structure, and meanings attributed to representations of primary-phase educational objectives. The study, in the form of a real-life panel, involved nearly 400 students of primary-phase education faculties in the Lubelskie and Świętokrzyskie voivodeships on two occasions (two years apart). The methodology chosen by the researchers made it possible to draw maps on which the shifts of the elements of social representations between the first and second stage of the study were recorded. This enabled the dynamics and direction of change in the understanding of the objectives of primary-phase education to be observed, illustrating the tension between what is traditional, consensual, and known, and what is new, not yet negotiated and not yet understood, or misunderstood.

Keywords: pedagogy, primary-phase educational objectives, dynamics of pedagogical knowledge, social representations

Od uzgodnionych, stabilnych celów edukacji do celów edukacji nastawionych na zmianę – raport z badań longitudinalnych nad wiedzą pedagogiczną przyszłych nauczycieli wczesnoszkolnych

W artykule przedstawione będą wyniki badań nad wiedzą pedagogiczną przyszłych nauczycieli na temat celów edukacji wczesnoszkolnej oraz jej modyfikacjami w procesie uczenia się zawodu w ciągu pierwszych trzech lat studiów. Podstawową kategorię teoretyczną wykorzystaną w badaniach stanowiły „reprezentacje społeczne”, definiowane jako społecznie uzgodniona, podzielana, ponadjednostkowa, uogólniona wiedza o obiektach. Celem badań własnych było zidentyfikowanie dynamiki ewolucji treści, struktury oraz znaczeń nadawanych reprezentacjom celów edukacji wczesnoszkolnej. W badaniach pełnych o charakterze panelu rzeczywistego dwukrotnie (w odstępie dwóch lat), uczestniczyło blisko 400 studentów wczesnej edukacji w województwach lubelskim i świętokrzyskim. Wybrana metodologia umożliwiła nakreślenie map, na których zostały uchwycone przesunięcia elementów reprezentacji społecznych w 1. i 2. etapie badania. Dzięki temu można było zauważyć dynamikę i kierunek zmiany rozumienia celów wczesnej edukacji ilustrujący napięcia między tym, co tradycyjne, uzgodnione, znane, i tym, co nowe, jeszcze niewynegocjowane i niezrozumiane/niedobrze zrozumiane.

Słowa kluczowe: pedagogika, cele edukacji wczesnoszkolnej, dynamika wiedzy pedagogicznej, social representations

Introduction

“Education, as a function of social and economic life, and must respect the needs of the developing society, including the contemporary politics, economics, and culture” (Szymański, 2014, p. 24). The social changes we have been experiencing for several decades in Poland are exceptionally multifaceted and abrupt due to the overlapping of various processes: systemic transformation, globalisation, European integration. However, it is not only belonging to the globalised world and membership of the European Union, but also the fourth industrial revolution that is exerting an increasing influence on social and educational changes and on our everyday life. At its core are the high levels of participation in the digital world, e.g. the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, autonomous vehicles, 3D printing, advanced robotisation, which – at least in theory – will shape everyday life for future generations. Not surprisingly, a number of projects and programmes have emerged that are linked to the vision of education in the next decade, e.g.:

- The information network on education in Europe, Eurydice, has analysed – in relation to Polish reforms within the strategic framework of European cooperation as part of the Europe 2020 strategy – the challenges for Poland in

- terms of: measurable objectives for education and individual recommendations for the implementation of educational strategies promoted in the EU¹;
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015, commits the European Union to moving towards a Europe that is economically sustainable², which is inherently connected to the necessity of implementing the educational objectives for sustainable development in terms of the protection and restoration of nature, a better equilibrium between nature and economic activity, contributing to a transformation that will permeate all parts of society, ensuring the health and well-being of people and nature. The concept of education for sustainable development implies, *inter alia*, an educational environment conducive to constructivist, participatory education, encouraging commitment and activity for the common good. Therefore, it is reasonable to form the objectives of primary-phase education so as to prepare for living in a sustainable environment;
 - The OECD *Education 2030* project, which focuses on developing cooperation between countries, leaders, school networks, teachers, students, and social partners to help education stakeholders effectively implement the curriculum reform linked to the educational objectives over the next ten years³.

Thus, daily life also demands that teachers take a new perspective on their own professionalism, requires them to be proactive in taking up challenges that meet the expectations of the modern world (Szplit, 2020). The number and diversity of such challenges make it possible to analyse all scientific and research issues within the latest recommendations from different angles. Indeed, socio-political and scientific transformations and curricular reforms have strengthened and disseminated scientific criticality towards theoretical negligence and primary-phase educational practice, in order to uncover those features and mechanisms of the child's education in an institution which – transferred from the Modernity – inhibit the implementation of socialisation and upbringing functions which are important for individual and community reasons.

¹ European Commission. Retrieved 31 January 2022. Site https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/european-perspective-50_p

² 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals, Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA). Retrieved 31 January 2022. Site <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015>

³ Ministerstwo Edukacji i Nauki (2019). *Projekt OECD Edukacja 2030 z udziałem przedstawicieli MEN*. Retrieved 31 January 2022. Site <https://www.gov.pl/web/edukacja-i-nauka/oecd-edukacja-2030-vancouver>

We still presume that primary-phase education is a ‘fundamental education’ which is supposed to lay fundamentals for lifelong development and the fulfilment of one’s own life plans in the future. It is not only about elementary school skills, such as reading, writing, counting, but also about the place and conditions for socialisation and upbringing of the child in a democratic society, learning the difficult craft of choosing values which determine the direction of ‘getting along’ with the world and oneself (Bałachowicz & Zbróg, 2021, p. 137).

A report for UNESCO by Jacques Delors attributes primary education a prominent role in the development of the individual and the humanisation of the world.

It is during this period that each of us acquires the tools for developing in the future our own capacity for reasoning and imagination, our own judgment and our own sense of responsibility, and learns to manifest inquisitiveness about the world around us (Delors, 1998, p. 117).

Therefore, primary-phase educators draw attention to the need to put into practice the seemingly contradictory educational objectives of developing an independent and autonomous personality and at the same time the ability to function in a community.

Indeed, the primary education period is a period of socialisation, which has been reinterpreted in the paradigm of symbolic interactionism – it is an important stage of developing a sense of subjectivity, autonomy, and a unique „I”, with the simultaneous shaping of a „We”, constructing knowledge and developing social patterns of self-control, forming more general action patterns, creating meanings and ways of life based on values, and establishing social networks based on emotional and task-oriented relationships (Bałachowicz & Witkowska-Tomaszewska, 2015). Therefore, in discussions on primary-phase education functions, objectives, and curricula, educators postulate to maintain a balance between educational practice that fosters harmonious child development and an approach focused on structuring children’s knowledge and cognitive skills.

A descriptive model for educational objectives

“A school philosophy that does not aim at developing a person’s personality and intellectual abilities, but at doing homework and passing exams, will always contradict the idea of human- and subject-oriented education” (Kunicka, 2005, p. 115). With reference to this statement, the analysis of the associations of the surveyed students in relation to the inductor relating to the objectives of primary-phase ed-

ucation (*What would you like to teach your pupils?*) can be conducted along the classification into:

- short-term objectives – the surveyed refer to preparing pupils for the next stage of education and to teaching them basic skills. “This may stem from taking responsibility for pupils only at the stage of direct influence on them, as well as from the frequent evaluation of the work of primary-phase education teachers only from the perspective of pupils’ knowledge verified in the fourth grade” (Kunicka, 2005, p. 117);
- long-term objectives where the surveyed intuitively intend to prepare pupils for life in a rapidly changing society, for participation in the social and political life of the country, for coping with the problems of contemporary civilization and the need to take care of themselves, others, and life environment.

The pedagogical literature analysed by the authors also enables to explore the objectives in the following dimensions:

- individual – developing the sense of subjectivity, independence, autonomous personality, and a unique „I”, harmonious child development;
- community-related – developing the ability to live in a community, developing a group „We”, establishing social networks based on emotional and task-oriented relationships, shaping more general action patterns, creating meanings and ways of life based on values.

The content of the objectives communicates what results the respondents expect of their educational work, how they perceive their youngest pupils, what changes they want to produce in them, what educational philosophy they predominantly accept in their vision of future work – and hence, what their vision of primary-phase education is. Furthermore, the revealed social representations of the objectives of primary-phase education were indicative for the authors of the assumed functions of change-oriented education (Merton, 1968).

Theoretical and methodological background of the study

In this paper, our focus is on the thinking of (future) teachers on the objectives of primary-phase education, using full-scale research structured as a real-life panel, in which 391 students of primary-phase and pre-school education faculties in the Lubelskie and Świętokrzyskie voivodeships participated on two occasions [1st stage: the beginning of specialization at the university (1st year) and 2nd stage: after two years of studying specialized subjects (3rd year)]. In the study, we used a theoretical and empirical category of “social representation”, which is underused in pedagogy (hereinafter: SR), identified as socially reconciled, shared, supra-individual, generalized knowledge about objects (Chaib et al., 2011, pp. 1–2; Harre

& Moghaddam, 2015, p. 227; Marody, 2000, p. 35; Szwed, 2011, p. 36). Thus, we will present a study on the dynamics of future teachers' pedagogical knowledge, framed as social representations of a selected object (primary-phase education objectives). The analyses concerned the evolution of content and structure, as well as the meanings attributed to the observed representations, as the study answered the following question: *What are the dynamics of students' social representations (content – structure – meanings) of primary-phase education objectives?* They are situated within the interpretative paradigm, in a current originating from symbolic interactionism.

The study was situated in the matrix core concept specific to the social representation theory (hereafter: SRT), considered “one of the most effective conceptual tools available for the research of social representations” (Moliner & Abric, 2015, p. 92). This concept is particularly conducive to observing the process of alteration of social representations and to examining the meaning-making function of the interplaying, consensual elements of the central system (the core) and the differentiated, individualised elements of the peripheral system. The layout of the matrix of social representation (its graphic version) results from the application of the association method combined with ranking⁴.

Table 1.

Organisation of the social representation matrix based on the association method combined with ranking

I: CORE Above* average frequency Above average rank of association	II: Inner periphery Above* average frequency Below average rank of association
III: Weakly reconciled elements Below average frequency Above average rank of association	IV: Outer periphery Below average frequency Below average rank of association

Source: Abric, 2003, p. 378.

The first quarter of the table contains the most frequent and most quickly invoked associations. They form the core of the representation, which means that words that denote them have a fixed, stable form. They can be considered to be consensual (they are socially reconciled) and unanimous. The other two fields refer to the ‘ambiguous’ zone. The second zone, the ‘inner periphery’, contains ‘elements of representation that are important both in terms of their frequency and in terms of the meaning attributed to them’ (Abric, 2003, p. 378). It includes words that are most frequently spoken but do not appear immediately. Words

⁴ For details on the application and usefulness of the free association method for investigating RS, see Zbróg, 2019, pp. 255–257.

with low frequency, but easily evoked, are presented in the third quarter. This is the zone of weakly reconciled, contrasting/opposing elements that are rare but considered important by the surveyed (Abric, 2003). According to Verges (1994, p. 238, as cited in Ferrara & Friant, 2015, p. 8), these two fields constitute “a zone with the potential to cause an imbalance; it is a source of change”. Low frequency words, that are evoked less quickly, are presented in the fourth quarter of the table. The more peripheral the information, the less necessary it is to understand the RS concept/object itself (Silva, 2012).

In particular, the authors focused their own analyses on the identification of socially negotiated elements of pedagogical knowledge that define group-shared, or co-shared, rationality, normality, and stereotypicality. Nevertheless, it is known from the assumptions of the matrix core concept that the greatest potential for change in the RS of an object (here: education) lies not so much in socially reconciled and sustained knowledge, but in differences and diversity. Hence, questions arose about which elements of pedagogical knowledge belong to the stable, consensual core, and which are located outside of it and are individualised, innovative, non-stereotypical, may generate confusion, anomalies, as well as what is the nature of alterations in the content and organisation of RS of the investigated objects and what are the areas of possible change.

Therefore, the authors sought to identify changes in the content and structure of pedagogical knowledge of the respondents, in order to determine which elements of the knowledge system of future teachers are conservative and uphold the traditional understanding of pedagogical categories, and which can be described as resources for educational change associated with the need to prepare for real and anticipated social changes. According to the TRS assumptions, the evolution of RS takes place – as any social change – in the conditions of balance between stability, determined by the history and identity of a specific group, community or the whole nation through experiences, the memory rooted in previous knowledge and experiences (of individuals and groups), and change, which involves new knowledge, new experiences, new social practices, new educational objectives.

Thus, taking into consideration the research objectives and the problem type, it can be said that the study carried out by the authors was theoretical and both exploratory (research type), and thus providing indications on the possibility of using the TRS in empirical research, as well as general (generalising), referring to a certain community, a specific group constituted by the same professional interests (Ratinaud & Lac, 2011, pp. 55–56), rather than to a single object (Konarzewski, 2000, p. 12). The research was conducted in the form of a longitudinal survey – a real-life panel was applied, i.e. the same questionnaire was used to measure the same sample of respondents, but at different points in time.

The data corpus at each stage of the study was collected using a questionnaire (Konarzewski, 2000, pp. 137–139). As complementary data collection methods, free association and hierarchical evocation were employed, as well as systematic qualitative observation and document analysis. The primary method for data analysis and interpretation was content analysis, while auxiliary methods included semantic field analysis and thematic categorisation with reasons for the respondents' standpoint/collective attribution of meanings. Indeed, a special place in the TRS methodology is held by group discussion. Its main axis is spatially and temporally limited interaction of the surveyed, during which they negotiate the understanding of certain themes and reconcile the meanings attributed to the objects of study. This makes it possible to capture the meanings as seen by the surveyed and to minimise the meanings that may be imposed by the researcher and the observer. The negotiated findings are recorded as conclusions of the collective reconciliation of meanings. As a result, this allows a coherent characterisation of the content and composition of the representations to be articulated⁵.

The research procedure took the form of an 'integrated panel research', combining several rounds of qualitative research and survey research. A parallel strategy of combining different types of data was applied both during collecting and elaborating the research material. The choice of research methods was a natural and logical consequence of the fact that the research topic was previously situated within the paradigm of social representation theory (multimethod approach).

Results of own research

Due to the form (a paper), which significantly limits the level of detail in presenting the dynamic data obtained in the research and their (twofold) analysis, it was decided to present only the final graphical version – the matrix of social representation of educational objectives. This means that the presentation of the detailed distribution of associations from the 1st and 2nd stages of the study (as, for example, in Zbróg, 2019, pp. 361–364) was abandoned, and that the authors focused instead on the most specific version of the results.

The two following Tables 2 and 3 provide information about the gradual changes in the structure of the core and periphery of the RS of primary-phase educational objectives. The inclusion of both average frequencies and average ranks demonstrates the strength and importance of a specific association for the surveyed and, at the same time, places a specific meaning in the corresponding segment of the analysed RS.

⁵ For more detail on this methodology see: Zbróg, 2019, pp. 248–266.

Table 2.

Matrix of social representations of primary-phase educational objectives produced by the association method combined with ranking – **study stage 1**

	AEO* ≤ 2.7	AEO > 2.7
$f_M \geq 31$	I: CORE autonomy (2.18; 62) appropriate behaviour (2.28; 47) personal culture (2.36; 56) knowledge of the world (2.53; 40) responsibility (2.59; 64)	II: Inner periphery creativity (2.86; 37) reading (2.95; 62) respect for others/ respect (2.98; 58) teamwork (3.04; 70) writing (3.09; 55)
$5 < f_M < 31$	III: Contrasting/ opposing elements values (1.67; 12) life (2.00; 12) tolerance (2.27; 22) resourcefulness (2.47; 15) knowledge useful in life (2.63; 19) curriculum (2.65; 17) friendship (2.70; 10)	IV: Outer periphery coping in life (2.76; 21) systematic approach (2.81; 21) empathy (3.03; 30) helping others (3.18; 28) coping with difficult situations (3.21; 14) counting (3.60; 10)

AEO – average rank from all items (1 to 5); f_M – total average number of indications, for number over 5; an estimate from two measurements; $AEO_{2014}=2.689$; $AEO_{2016}=2.655$; f_M ; stage 1=34; f_M ; stage 2=31; * – the lower the average, the higher the position/meaning meanings in segments are ordered by decreasing order of ranks (without inversion).

In line with the TRS assumptions, the core is a depiction of collectively reconciled knowledge in a specific group about the object of study, characteristic and specific to that group. In the core of the primary-phase educational objectives RS, at the 1st stage of the study, there are associations that indicate that future teachers of grades 1–3 would most wish to teach their pupils the following: *independence*, *appropriate behaviour* and the related *personal culture*, which is followed by *knowledge of the world* and *responsibility*. This means that for the surveyed group, at the early professionalisation stage, these elements are non-negotiable, i.e. they determine the meaning of the object, even though it is assumed that it may be polysemantic and dynamic in nature, i.e. subject to change over time as a result of communication and activities, e.g. participation in social practice of profession learning, and thus on the basis of the respondents' own experience.

At the 2nd stage of the study, after two years of specialised education, the same group of future teachers of grades 1–3 expressed their views again on the same topic, so that the structural arrangement of the RS of the studied object could be compared.

Table 3.
Matrix of social representations of primary-phase educational objectives produced by the association method combined with ranking – study stage 2

	AEO* ≤ 2.7	AEO > 2.7
$f_M \geq 31$	I: CORE independence (2.16; 85) responsibility (2.41; 87)	II: Inner periphery personal culture/culture (2.89; 35) resourcefulness (2.94; 32) teamwork (2.99; 71) creativity (3.02; 42) respect for others/respect (3.12; 50)
$5 < f_M < 31$	III: Contrasting/ opposing elements counting (1.34; 29) values (1.60; 20) life (2.08; 13) tolerance (2.21; 28) knowledge useful in life (2.30; 23) knowledge of the world (2.56; 25) coping in life (2.60; 20) appropriate behaviour (2.62; 29) writing (2.63; 8) knowledge (2.68; 22)	IV: Outer periphery systematic approach (2.93; 15) helping others (2.96; 28) coping with difficult situations (3.00; 6) reading (3.11; 9) empathy (3.12; 25) coping with problems (3.80; 15)

AEO – average rank from all items (1 to 5); f_M – total average number of indications, for number over 5; an estimate from two measurements; AEO₂₀₁₄ = 2.689; AEO₂₀₁₆ = 2.655; f_M ; stage 1 = 34; f_M ; stage 2 = 31; * – the lower the average, the higher the position/meaning meanings in segments are ordered by decreasing order of ranks (without inversion).

The results shown in matrix 2 reveal visible changes to the core of the social representations of primary-phase educational objectives. Only 2 elements remain in the core which are unquestionable, non-negotiable, stable over time, unanimous, according to the surveyed. The consensus covers only the willingness to teach *autonomy* and *responsibility* to children of grades 1–3.

The other elements which were stable for the surveyed group at the 1st stage of the study, associated with teaching *personal culture*, have shifted to the inner periphery, and *appropriate behaviour* and *knowledge of the world* have even migrated to the weakly reconciled elements. Admittedly, these elements occur less frequently in the respondents' statements, but the meaning attributed to them is linked to the fact that they are important to the surveyed. The responses contained in these two quarters are considered a source of change in thinking about the educational objectives. One may see certain mixing of associations especially in the third quarter, where there are both objectives close to basic curricular skills: *counting*, *writing*, as well as ones responding to everyday challenges of the

real world: *tolerance, life, knowledge useful in life, coping in life, knowledge of the world, knowledge*, and finally *values*. It seems that students believe that it is educated people, with knowledge in various fields, who build the society and do better in life.

The opposite direction of the change – the loss of consensual attitude towards the importance of shorter-term objectives relating to learning to *read* and *write* – is probably connected to the fact that the participants notice the importance of longer-term objectives, oriented towards social change, towards coping with rapidly changing conditions of existence.

It is noticeably that educational objectives (the fourth zone) relating to two groups of elements are consistently underestimated in the process of professionalisation:

- *coping with difficult situations, coping with problems*
- *empathy, helping others*.

All of these elements fall into the outer periphery in both stages of the study, which indicates their minor importance from the perspective of the surveyed.

The disregard for objectives relating to *coping in life* (stage 1 only), *coping in difficult situations*, and *coping with problems* was confirmed in another research conducted among students-future primary-phase teachers, which focused on styles of thinking/problem solving (Zbróg, 2017). It turned out that the respondents of that study mainly preferred the traditional thinking style. This may be explained by the specifics related to the early stage of professionalization, the uncertainty (also as to the choice of career path), and perhaps even awkwardness with dealing with professional issues, including the ambiguity and multidimensionality of the teacher's work. The traditional style of thinking is characterised by a lack of openness to change and a reluctance to adopt an attitude aimed at constantly seeking solutions and interpretations of emerging problems. The sense of uncertainty that accompanies all new duties and the need to make decisions in new circumstances makes students crave for something certain, familiar from their experiences, from watching teachers who used to work with them. While tradition seems to be something to rely on in such circumstances, not all traditional solutions are beneficial, and some are in conflict with the demands of our time, with constructivist understandings of how to organise the learning environment for children, how to excel in becoming a teacher, and finally, what kind of primary-phase education to promote, guided by one's own beliefs about its most important objectives.

The disinterest in teaching children *empathy* and *helping others* stands in contrast to one of the elements included to the inner periphery and associated with the desire to teach teamwork. Based on Tomasz Kocowski's systemic concept of needs, we know that the lack of identification and fulfilment of needs for

social value, the lack of readiness to help others, to take prosocial or altruistic action for the benefit of the group, supported by emotional involvement in the errands of the collective, leads to a failure to fulfil the fundamental conditions that an individual should satisfy in order to be an acceptable member of a group. According to Kocowski, coexistence of this nature “conditions sustainable satisfaction with life”. (Kocowski, 1982, p. 130), since “beneficial coexistence and interaction with others” is the ultimate purpose of our coexistence (Kocowski, 1982, p. 188). According to Dewey (2006), teamwork in solving cognitive problems by pupils, involving their intellectual autonomy, is the basis of upbringing for democracy, i.e. preparation for achieving longer-term objectives oriented towards change and preparation for community life and thinking in terms of „We”. At the same time, as Joanna Leek and Marcin Rojek (2021) indicate, the lack of openness to change, the lack of commitment to finding solutions in cooperation with others leads in the long perspective to the so-called social polarisation, an element hindering the development of individuals and groups.

What is of great concern is that the objective related to *friendship* has vanished from the structure of the RS matrix, which only confirms the inclination towards a more individualistic, if not egoistic, view of educational objectives. This means that friendship does not have sufficient meaning in comparison with other associations that are more important for the respondents.

Discussion of results

On the basis of the results from the study, a gradual change in the structure of the RS matrix of the primary-phase education objectives can be observed. As it follows from the TRS assumptions, the basis for change should be sought in the students’ associations belonging to peripheral areas 2 and 3 (Table 1). These are elements which do not have a collective, homogeneous, static (because reconciled) nature, and can even be regarded as contradictory because they are associated with representations of individuals: they are weakly socially reconciled. These two spheres comprise components of the inner periphery, such as the desire to teach children *creativity, respect for others and teamwork*, and the third quarter, such as *values, life, tolerance, knowledge useful in life*.

There is a positive change which is noteworthy, consisting in shifting, to further zones, the objectives close to, or characteristic of traditionally/behaviourally perceived primary-phase education, related to teaching *appropriate behaviour in class, courtesy formulas, politeness, punctuality, coping in senior grades, use of school utensils, reading, writing, discipline*, and above all, the desire to teach the *core curriculum*, which has been completely discarded of the RS structure of pri-

mary-phase educational objectives⁶.

At the first stage of the study, the students were more oriented towards the achievement of results in terms of didactic and educational requirements, and less concerned about social relationships as a foundation for building the sense of belonging and friendship. They were confident that what happens in the classroom determines the future life success of the youngest pupils. Some of the surveyed students were even unaware that children may not be interested in what the core curriculum offers, that it is possible to revise and reformulate educational objectives based on the contexts that accompany children's learning. Thus, it can be assumed that such awareness on the part of future teachers of grades 1–3 does not account for the educational objectives in line with their needs resulting from functioning in a specific family and cultural or economic environment, and is detrimental because it does not take into account the needs of the individual and the specific class group.

They failed to see clearly the extracurricular dimension of social reality, a life lived independently of the didactic and educational objectives they set every day.

At the second stage of the study, after two years of specialised education and pedagogical practice, as well as pedagogical reflection, which is an indispensable element of setting objectives relevant to the fast-changing world, associations began to emerge which corresponded to the primary-phase educational objectives expressed in the form of values related mainly to such RS elements as *tolerance, teamwork, responsibility, respect for others*.

The matrix structure at the 2nd stage of the study demonstrates little positive potential, which may cause an imbalance in the understanding of the objectives of primary-phase education in the context of a shift from objectives focused on what is close and familiar/traditional, to long-term objectives related to change and the future – which is unpredictable, unrecognisable, obscure. Therefore, in the following two years of education in the field of preschool and primary-phase education, it is advisable to try to provide the educational objectives in grades 1–3 with values related to:

- learning and constructing knowledge, e.g. openness to newness and otherness, cognitive inquisitiveness, ability to express one's thoughts, reflectiveness (Szplit, 2016) and valuing, inspire independence and understanding of others' views;
- action, proactivity, commitment, which is linked to courage in undertaking tasks, sense of effectiveness of one's own actions and self-control, faith in

⁶ As highlighted earlier, the results presented in this paper represent only a portion of the results obtained from the study, which even included a detailed description of changes in pedagogical knowledge. This paper among other things, does not include results of group reconciliations, but the authors use them to interpret the data.

- one's potential for creativity, responsibility for the effects of one's actions and one's own behaviour;
- the ability to function in a community, which requires, *inter alia*, care for others, participation in actions, including joint problem solving, establishing interpersonal relationships based on emotional involvement, trust towards others, making friends.

The world of today, interlinked by economic, political, and social systems, “faces an enormous cultural challenge, all too often manifested in the form of violence – wars and terrorism, xenophobia and discrimination, various forms of self-destruction. Changes in the cultural system are slow and learning how to avoid and resolve conflicts peacefully is a very important goal of education” (Bałachowicz, 2015, p. 30). Thus, the assumed functions of change-oriented education include the understanding of the aspiration that the present-day education of the child should actually exploit cultural and socio-economic opportunities to support the development of the person, their subjectivity, to inspire the individual to develop and build their potential so that they can express it in a socially valuable way, to serve them in the development of skills needed in life, and to contribute to the common good and the cultivation of values in social life, such as *friendship, empathy, respect for others, tolerance for otherness, autonomy*, etc.

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