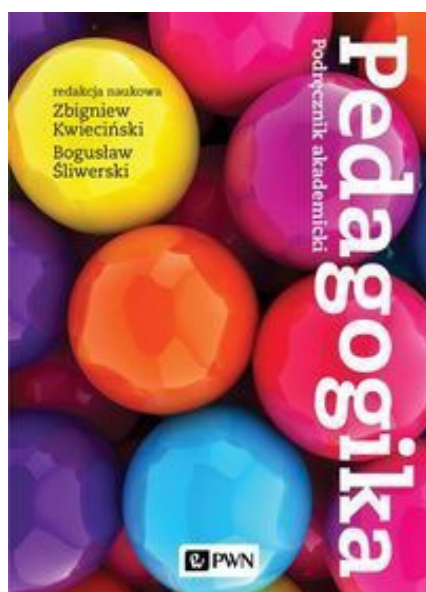


REVIEW OF THE PUBLICATION PEDAGOGIKA. PODRĘCZNIK AKADEMICKI

Zbigniew Kwieciński, Bogusław Śliwerski and Collective. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN SA, 2019, revised and expanded edition, s. 1120. ISBN 978-83-01-20715-1.



The present publication *Pedagogika. Podręcznik akademicki* (Pedagogy. Academic Textbook) brings a revised and supplemented edition of a publication that has earned its irreplaceable place in the education of teachers and educators in Poland. The team of authors led by Zbigniew Kwieciński and Bogusław Śliwerski conceived the text as an analytical-interpretive one. It is primarily intended for students of various pedagogical orientations and also for teachers of all types and levels of schools, for bachelor, master and doctoral studies. It offers them both "canonical" knowledge and contemporary issues that are continuously raised in the context of the ongoing transformation of Polish education,

which at the same time brings the need for defining key pedagogical issues in social, sociological, economic, philosophical, ethical, psychological and pedagogical context.

Although there are a considerable number of different introductions to pedagogy in current academic production, this textbook stands out for its breadth of scope, depth of analysis and clarity not always found in similar texts. Its coherent thought system, logical arrangement of the sources and consistency of interpretation provide students with a deep theoretical knowledge that allows them to ask questions in the field of educational sciences, to problematize and see new problems, to seek their solutions, and to realize the meaning of pedagogical action. There are not many texts that form a bridge between science and its application on the current Polish market (but also in the Czech Republic). There are very specialized texts analysing the methodology of science and professional work in its "broad spectrum", while on the other hand there are texts of a more methodological or unilateral application character. The connection between the two levels tends to be the exception.

The authors seek to ground the activity aspects and skill systems of the teaching profession in knowledge and understanding of pedagogical phenomena, processes and patterns. In this sense, the publication aims to promote independent pedagogical thinking that penetrates the basic relations of the pedagogical process, seizes the connections, is able to critically analyse and evaluate

individual pedagogical concepts, and distinguishes the stimulating elements from the fashionable in current debates. All this broadens the basis on which the educator can build in his educational and training activities. At the same time, it also opens up the practical significance of this knowledge and creates the conditions for fulfilling its guiding function in practical activity.

The authors do not want to overlook that in practice the educator also needs concrete advice and suggestions for his/her own creative endeavours, but at the same time they are aware that the practical problems that the educator encounters in his/her activities are closely linked to the theories. They therefore understand pedagogy neither as a purely academic discipline nor as a purely experiential and pragmatic doctrine. On the contrary, they assume the unity of theoretical knowledge and the formation of a whole complex of skills. The overall layout of the publication corresponds to this intention. It consists of three basic sections, which are logically linked to each other. Each section is then divided into subchapters.

Section I, *Pedagogy as a Science, (Pedagogy as a Teaching)*, provides an outline of the history of education and pedagogical thinking in 23 subchapters and focuses on the characteristics of the disciplines of pedagogy. The authors assume that changes in the development and transformation of society and the family are reflected in educational theory and its disciplines, as well as in the school environment and in the various educational institutions. The complex of educational sciences is significantly affected by the above processes, both positively and negatively. In relation to this, they then define current topics that need attention not only in Poland, but also in the wider international context. These include the definition of education as a value and its place in society; the requirements for the quality of

education and its orientation; democracy in education and the problem of differentiation; the permeability of different types and levels of schools; the position of the teacher in the school and his/her competences; the personality of the pupil and his/her position in the school; the criteria for evaluating the results of pedagogical activity; the problem of the management of the educational system, etc. Furthermore, they analyse historical aspects (Stefan Woloszyn) and the current state of Polish pedagogy (Janina Kostkiewicz) and characterise the vast corpus of educational sciences, which we will only selectively outline: they present the concept and characteristics of educational theory (Bogusław Śliwerski), philosophy of education (Rafał Gordoń), religious pedagogy (Bogusław Milerski), social pedagogy (Barbara Smolińska-Theiss, Wiesław Theiss) and special pedagogy (Iwona Chrzanowska). Interesting reflections and current issues of adult education are offered in the chapter on andragogy (Mieczysław Malewski). The section concludes with an analysis of the paradigms of qualitative (Donuta Urbaniak Zajać) and quantitative pedagogical research (Krzysztof Rubacha). Taken as a whole, the first theoretical section offers a compact multidimensional and multidisciplinary view of pedagogy as an important scientific discipline.

Section II, *Modern Thinking - Streams and Directions (Współczesna myśl pedagogiczna - prądy i kierunki)*, deals in more detail with pedagogical thinking in the 20th and 21st centuries. It contains 15 chapters in which the authors characterise from the positions of general philosophy, philosophy of education, educational theory, sociology of education, ethics and comparative pedagogy such trends as personalist, critical, emancipatory, ecological, anarchist or intercultural pedagogy. Again, let us just briefly outline some selected perspectives. The dual psychological dimension of human existence, the dimension of the world and

the dimension of the spiritual sense of education, is the subject of a number of chapters. Anti-authoritarian pedagogy is also briefly characterised (Bogusław Śliwerski). The author reflects on the relationship between freedom and responsibility, rights and duties, etc. The author notes that authority has not disappeared from the world, but it is perceived in different context, and in the relationship between adults and children it takes on new forms and shapes. However, the above-mentioned circumstances do not make it any easier to find an answer to the basic question of how to conceptualise adult authority in relation to the child, what to base it on and how to use it. The analytical interest of the authors is also aroused by anti-pedagogy and anti-authoritarian trends in education (Bogusław Śliwerski), critical pedagogy (Hanna Kostyło), postmodern pedagogical thinking (Zbyszko Melosik), and ecological (environmental) pedagogy (Anieszka Gromkowska-Melosik). Gestalt pedagogy (Wiktor Zlobicki) and, last but not least, intercultural pedagogy (Tomasz Szkudlarek) are also mentioned.

Since pedagogy always responds to the conditions in which education and training take place, the various currents of pedagogical thinking reflect not only historical contexts but also the problems of the contemporary world. Therefore, the authors invite us to reflect on how global changes (global trends such as the creation of a power society, the information explosion, ecological problems, loss of the meaning of life and value relativism, social isolation as a result of information technology, etc.) are reflected to one degree or another in the life of Polish society and what specifics of this reflection are characteristic of the conditions in a country that has been coping with the problems of transition to a democratic society for a long time. The purpose is then to inspire deeper reflection, to ask questions of oneself and to consider the context of the presented trends background.

Section III, Reform Pedagogy (Pedagogika reform edukacyjnych) offers in 12 chapters a clear description of the different trends of reform pedagogy and new pedagogical alternatives. On the basis of more detailed theoretical analyses and experience from Polish school practice, the authors then aim to summarize their findings into some generally valid conclusions. The specifics of new education (Wiesław Jamrozek), Waldorf pedagogy and Daltonian plan pedagogy (Bogusław Sliwerski), Montessori pedagogy (Malgorzata Miksza) are presented. The pedagogy of Janusz Korczak (Bogusław Sliwerski) and the issues of school culture (Inetta Nowasad) are also analysed. Within this section, it is impossible not to notice that the issue of reform schools and innovative pedagogical approaches has its own history in Polish pedagogy and also has a significant place in the present. Thus, detailed overviews of educational reforms implemented in Poland since the 1970s are also provided.

The authors approach the topic with an awareness of some terminological difficulties. They are aware that the term reform school (alternative education) has many meanings and is often used as free school, open school, independent school, non-traditional school, private school, etc. There is terminological confusion in the field, compounded by different understandings of the term 'alternative' school in different countries and pedagogical territories. At the same time, they appreciate that, on the basis of reformist pedagogy, a productive opposition to the existing state-run system has gradually developed. Hence, the quest for alternativity is still a constant consideration in reform efforts, their planning and argumentation, and often a form of education.

The authors are aware that alternative schools have developed around the world as a variety of specific types and forms of

educational institutions and that each type of alternative school has its own features, its own positives and limits. It is therefore not easy to characterize these schools overall. Generalizations tend to indicate that the alternative school has the following features: it is pedocentric; the school is active; the school aims at a comprehensive education of the child; the school is conceived as a 'life community'; the school is understood according to the principle of learning 'from life for life'. At the same time, the team of Polish authors agrees that alternative schools are unlikely to become widespread enough to become the main type of school education, if only because they are quite different from each other and do not represent the only "alternative" development. However, they can be expected to have a greater impact on mainstream educational practice and educational theory in the future than they do today. Some of their progressive elements will gradually make their way into traditional (state) schools in Poland.

The added value of the present book is not only to help teaching staff to manage educational and training activities operatively, but also to manage specific situations in the teaching environment. It helps them to reflect on their meaning, to form sufficient perspective, to be able to engage in dialogue, to demonstrate the ability to reinterpret problems in new contexts, to search and think independently and critically, and to be aware of pedagogical phenomena in their development. Therefore, together with a system of

knowledge, it opens up an understanding of pedagogy in terms of change, conflict and innovation. In this way, this concept can be of benefit not only to students but also to professionals in different areas of educational sciences. An extensive list of Polish and foreign literature, comfortable orientation through indexes (both name and subject), and brief information about individual authors are also useful for understanding the overall context, to contribute to the quality of the text.

The publication manages to reflect the latest scientific and methodological findings in the field of education sciences in an attractive, interesting and yet comprehensible way, with an invitation to further in-depth reflection. It contributes significantly to the formation of a system of thinking that is capable of development and is open to the future not only in Poland but also in the international context.

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