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PLACE, ROLE AND TASKS OF TEACHER-ANDRAGOGUE IN EUROPEAN REGIONAL EDUCATION OF MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

The authors of this article aimed at emphasizing the most significant issues related to the broad concept of multicultural education. The inspiration came from the fact that current federation of European countries – European Union – has made a multilateral progress during recent 10 years. The ensuing implications concern the diversity of cultures within societies of the Union member countries.

The article displays an outline of the role that needs to be fulfilled by teachers of adults called andragogue teachers. As such they assume responsibility for unequivocal and uniform coexistence of all people within the European Union despite social, cultural, economic, and political discrepancies.

The role of andragogue teachers is becoming a cornerstone of European education. Their professionalism derived from desirable competence and appropriate personality determines the consolidation of multicultural awareness among societies. Consequently, it leads to peaceful coexistence of diverse European cultures considering the rules of humanism, democracy, solidarity, and mutual tolerance. Hence andragogics should constitute the ultimate educational objective for European Education.

According to authors, the content of article may encourage further investigation and development of andragogue concept.

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The changes occurring in the social / economic, political, ecological, IT and cultural systems present new challenges to the education, indicating the need of modifications and designing of the activities protecting the “rootedness world” and, at the same time, undertaking of actions shaping the national/ state as well as continental/global conscience.

The multi-cultural world opened the education for the problems of differences, different natures, separateness, rejection, marginalising, prejudices, stereotypes, etc.¹

INTRODUCTION

The multi-aspect and multi-plane character of understanding of the “multi-cultural character” is determined by its multiple-factor and multiple-range character. This implies the fact that it may be considered in²:

- **the territorial** respect, in the context of residency, and
- **the processual** respect, as that disclosing itself in separateness, animation of ethnic movements, creation of new independent countries and democratisation processes being carried on.

Discussions about the multi-cultural societies were started, and more and more frequently in the 20th century and, consequently, some attempts to build such society have been undertaken. This happened in the Western Europe and United States. It was a consequence of inflow of immigrants from countries of quite different traditions, believing in another religion, etc. This being so, the coexistence of various cultures, often set at odds, became a real fact. As Janusz Kochanowski wrote³: **Since a superiority of one culture with respect to another one can not be recognised, the exclusive appropriateness of one or the other party in a cultural dispute**

¹ A. W. Brzezinska, A. Hulewska, J. Słomska, *Edukacja regionalna [Regional Education]*, PWN, Warszawa 2006, p. 91.

² J. Nikitorowicz, *Edukacja międzykulturowa wobec dylematów kształtowania tożsamości w społeczeństwach wielokulturowych [Inter-cultural education versus identity forming dilemmas in multi-cultural societies]*, [in:] *Edukacja wobec ładu globalnego [Education with respect to global order]*, T. Lewowicki, J. Nikitorowicz, T. Pilch, S. Tomiuk (ed.), Warszawa 2002, p. 41.

³ J. Kochanowski [Citizen Right Ombudsman in Poland], *Wielokulturowość a wolność [Multi-culturalism and freedom]*, Presentation of the Citizen Right Ombudsman on the conference: *The Trans – (re) – lation of Law and Laws. Mediation and Negotiations*, 18.06.2007, in Cracow.

can be hardly recognised. Instead of deciding on values of various culture, the emphasis should be put on their possibly best coexistence.

This same Author, describing the European multi-culturality, asks the question⁴: *Is it possible the Europe wherein nations live of quite homogenous culture?*

One can hardly answer the question univocally, keeping in mind not so old events that happened in Europe, i.e. the bomb outrages in Madrid and London, blood shed in Balkans or uninterruptedly continuing dilemmas with people who wish incessantly to wear religious signs in a form of rugs, crosses or David's stars, etc.

More and more often, within our surrounding reality, i.e. the press, radio, television, but also school, free time and rest spending places, etc., the problem of multi-culturality (multi-culture character) is raised. The reason that it happens so is the membership of Poland in the European Union, that moves into foreground.

Though Poland is, basically, a homogenous national/religion structure, wherein 1% of the whole population only is constituted by representatives of other nationalities (as per the General Census in 2002), there are no univocal declarations, however, concerning religions believed. One should not forget also about the 123 years of partiations of Poland, and, consequently, about the influences of partiating countries upon our national culture, etc. Various implications created due to that are, till now, of significant impact on the regional/cultural diversity of inhabitants of our country.

Considering the facts mentioned above, it is not difficult to indicate the most important component of the multi-culture integration – the **education**. It appears that the contemporary Polish education, as it can be read in many expert publications, does not understand it to the very end and focuses on the occurring differences fore not sole Poles, but European-Poles: the European Community citizens.

EXPANSION

In the domain references, what seems to be reasonable, many authors identifies the regional education with a timeless “clip” not only for the natural, social and cultural environments, but also for the upgrading domains, providing it with a general human sense and thus reducing education to the sources of home, local, regional, national and general-social culture.

⁴ Ibidem.

Therefore, within a multi-culture society, a special meaning is get by the place (Fig. 1) and the role to be played therein by the teacher-andragogue. On one side, what competences may ensure him or her to meet his or her professional functions duly, thus ensuring the national identity to the persons entrusted to his or her care, irrespective of their believes, religious diversity, attachments to its nation's traditions or the believed-in value system that is valid in the family, society they originate in, etc. On the other side, how he or she is to build his or her authority so that neither infringe the dignity of his or her students nor depreciate some general-human believes with regard to other ones, etc.

FIG. 1. PLACE OF THE TEACHER-ANDRAGOGUE IN THE EUROPEAN MULTI-CULTURE SOCIETY
(source: own study)



At the beginning of 21st century, Poland became a full-right member of United Europe. Therefore the country bears a particular co-responsibility for taking into consideration the regional education constituting the foundation for shaping the national identity (Fig. 2).

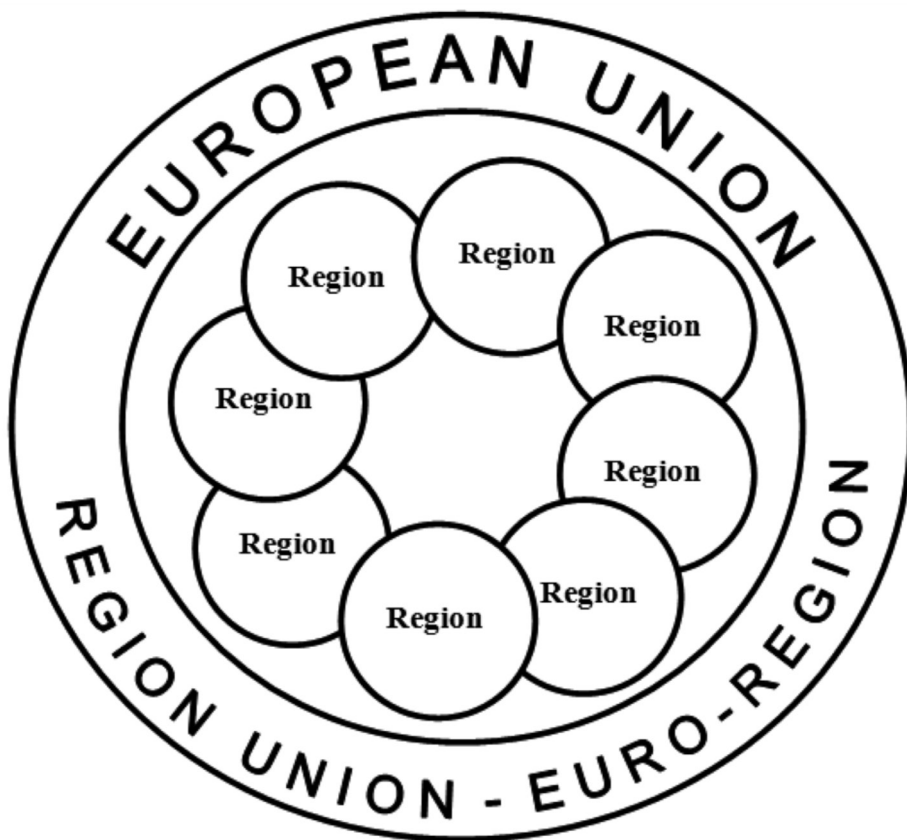


FIG. 2. INFLUENCE OF EUROPEAN UNION UPON THE REGIONAL POLICY OF THE COUNTRIES CONSTITUTING IT
(source: own study)

The teacher-andragogue's competence range should consist in appropriate comprehension of the regional education. His or her competences should be based on the adequate knowledge and skills within the class performance conception, in particular those referring to the regional education and to defining the significant didactic/upgrading goals, the regional teaching content timetable for the whole schooling period, as well as to the preparation of merits to the best possible carrying on the classes, in conformity with the didactic rules, etc.

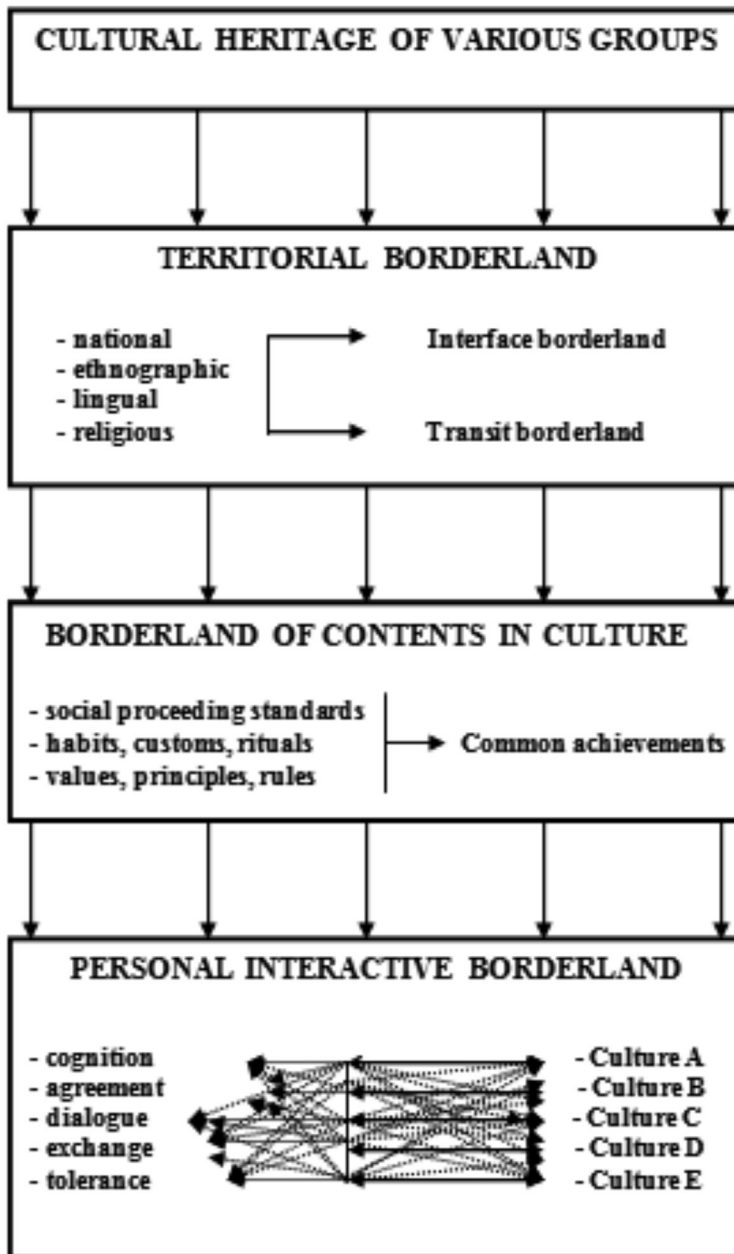


FIG. 3. TERRITORIAL, INTERACTIVE, PERSONAL BORDERLAND AS WELL AS BORDERLAND OF CONTENTS IN CULTURE⁵

⁵ Comp. source: J. Nikitorowicz, *Edukacja regionalna na pograniczach* [Regional education on borderlands], ed. cited, p. 95–96.

In the regional education, the teacher-andragogue should be capable of taking into consideration the meeting of aspirations of individual regional collectivities, autonomies, cultural heritage, etc., so that to stand up to any and all separatism within this scope (fig. 3). Thus, in the regional education, one should take into consideration the area/dimension in its wide meaning: the social/cultural, economic and political ones. The regional education practice showed that any collectivities constituting that so called “regionalism” do not reduce themselves to only one of the dimensions mentioned above, but take care of each of them.

In the world literature, when describing the competences of the andragogues, they are understood as all personality features connected with work, the knowledge, skills and values upon which the relevant person bases, to perform well the work entrusted to it, the following are specified⁶:

- objective/methodical competences,
- social/personality competences.

The first group of the competences mentioned above refer to the knowledge [objective, practical (from the scope of: didactics, advisory, organisation), psycho-pedagogical and referring to the andragogue work conditions] as well as to its acquisition and transfer ways. On the other hand, **the other group** is connected with such social/personality features of a human being as: openness, tolerance, empathy, patience, courage, respect to other people, emotional stability and sense of humour⁷.

In the scientific literature a lot of room is taken by the managerial, planning, multimedia and advisory competences, enumerated by numerous authors as desirable for teachers-andragogues.

Many theoreticians and practitioners consider the 21st century as that of the Information Technology (IT) society, an epoch of the IT civilisation (digital technology). The IT revolution started in the 20th century, has dramatically changed the countenance of the contemporary world. The dynamic changes in the Computer and Communication Technology (ICT) industry has changed vehemently and irreversibly the economy and, more importantly, our life. In accordance with some contempo-

⁶ Lernen-en Leben Lang. Vorläufige Empfehlungen und Expertenbericht, Forum Bildung, Bonn 2001, p. 55.

⁷ Comp. T. Fur, *Kompetenzen und Ausbildung des Erwachsenenbilders. Eine Studie zur Professionalisierung der Erwachsenenbildung*, Bad Heilbrunn 1991, p. 116 and 231–233; J. F. Hartkenmeyer, *Neues Verstaendnis vom „Lernen“*, DIE 1998, 1, p. 34.

rary researchers, there the development of the post-industrial society is happening and the rate is incredible. The society where the knowledge and information are both a strategy as a warrantor of the contemporary world society changes. The changes imply incredible changes of the processes of economic, social, cultural, political, legal, technical or ecological character, etc.

The society of knowledge is the society learning persistently, that makes use of what is the most precious in the world, the resources of never-ending information (knowledge) „from outside” and being a potential hidden in our own mind (not being aware of). In accordance with Kwiatkowski, the said hidden knowledge should undergo conversion into the public knowledge through the teaching actions within the learning society⁸.

In this connection, much more diversified professional preparation should be expected in the incoming future from the teacher-andragogue also. The role of teacher of the future reduces itself to poly-professionalism covering the interdisciplinary, multidimensional, multifunctional and multi-planar knowledge being improbable to be imagined. Among the competences, the following move to the foreground:

- medial competences,
- creative competences,
- multi-functionality, multidimensionality and multi-planarity of the functions served, roles played and the use of the integrated knowledge and skills in the distant-education, etc.,
- uninterrupted participation in self-improvement (continual education), especially in the distant education,
- participation in the research activities and making use of the knowledge acquired, in the educational practice,
- etc.

The problem concerning the adult people education, who – in contrast to the children and youth – can not always keep pace the improbable civilisation/cultural acceleration of the contemporary world presents itself in a similar way. The words below state how important the continuous education in the life of each human being is, including adult people who undertake frequently the decision of educating at the older age:

⁸ E. Lubina, *Edukacja w społeczeństwie wiedzy. Wieloznaczność rzeczywistości społecznej i kulturowej* [Education in the knowledge society. Social and cultural reality ambiguity], www.e-mentor.edu.pl/artykulv2.php?17&id=350.

An illiterate of the future will not be a human being who can not read and write. It will be the person who does not know how to learn learning⁹.

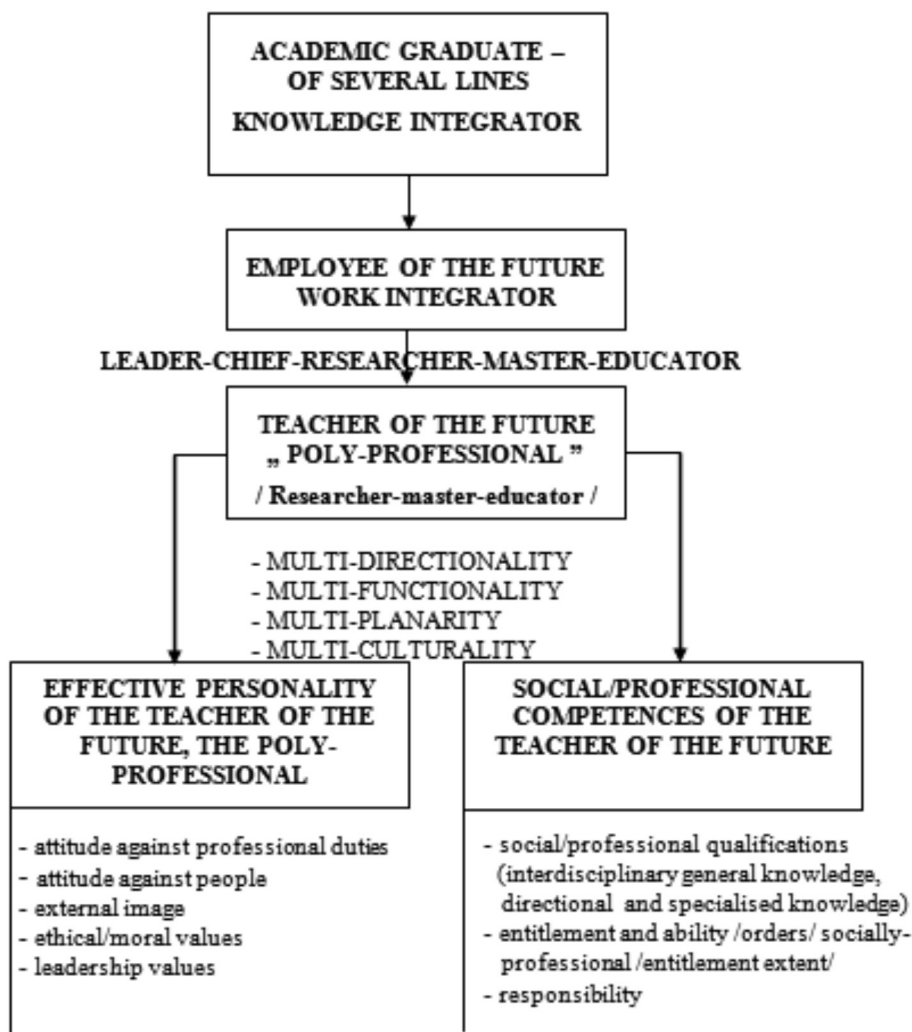


FIG. 4. THE DETERMINANTS OF PREPARATION FOR THE POLYPROFESSIONAL TEACHER-ANDRAGOGUE PROFESSION IN THE INCOMING FUTURE¹⁰

⁹ A. Toffler, *Trzecia fala* [*The third wave*], PIW, Warszawa 2001.

¹⁰ On basis of: A. Pieczywok, L. Welyczko, *Profesjonalizm zawodowy nauczyciela akademickiego w kontekście realizacji procesu dydaktycznego* [*Professional professionalism of an academic teacher within the context of performing the didactic process*], WSOWL, Wrocław 2008, p. 231.

The more so, it should be believed that the teacher-andragogue in the incoming future must acquire not insignificant knowledge and interdisciplinary skills that, supported by many-sided competences, will enable for him or her to cope with any and all educational challenges of the 21st century.

In Fig. 4 are presented the expectations that should be kept pace with by the teacher-andragogue of the future, in opinion of paper's authors.

CONCLUSION

The adult people education is an activity aimed towards the economic, social/cultural, moral/ethical, etc. equality both in cases inside each particular country and on the international forum. Taking into account the regional education of united Europe, it is extremely difficult to separate the nationality and general components occurring in each country. However, the full fervour of the teacher-andragogue should be based on tolerance for occurring variety, on respect for foreign traditions and on the right for own sense of value. Even more, the teacher-andragogue, when defining the foreground and background regional education goals in the regional education, for himself or herself, can not forget about the supervisory ones of them, that refer to:

- respecting the cultural dissimilarities of each of the persons being taught,
- treating all people in the equal and democratic way, and in accordance with observance of the rights and freedom, including expression of their thoughts, in accordance with the assertiveness rules,
- transfer of the most precious values to his or her pupils, especially within the scope of respecting dissimilarities and of tolerance against foreign cultures, traditions and the right of coexistence of all people of the world – „the global village¹¹”.

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¹¹ „The global village” – a notion disseminated by Marshall McLuhan who believed that the electronic communication media tie the world and wind it with a connection network, transferring the planet into a community of features of a local environment described by the metaphor of “a village” – comp. T. Hejnicka-Bezwinska, *Pedagogika ogolna [General pedagogic]*, Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, Warszawa 2008, p. 473.

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