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## Introduction

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Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej [bazhum.muzhp.pl](http://bazhum.muzhp.pl), gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

## INTRODUCTION

Franz J. Mönks, a renowned psychologist specialising in the field of abilities, stated that the 21st century has a chance to become the era of “The Movement in Support of Educating Gifted Students” [2004]. In 1994, the European Union Education and Culture Committee gave a recommendation for the European Parliament concerning gifted children. The present interest in the issues of ability in Europe has been formed on the basis of new philosophical concepts, and according to them the good development of individuals and social groups requires identification and support of individual human potentials.

The arguments for the development of psychological and pedagogical knowledge concerning creativity and ability have their origins in theory and practice. There are appropriate fields of study, courses, textbooks, numerous publications, learned societies and research institutes. However, this great volume of initiatives cannot overshadow certain negligences [cf. Popek 2002, p. 60].

The present Volume 17 of “Pedagogical Studies of the Jan Kochanowski University of Humanities and Sciences” includes articles devoted to human creativity and ability. It is the first issue after the transformation of the Świętokrzyska Academy into the Jan Kochanowski University of Humanities and Sciences. It opens a new, university stage of the research into the knowledge of abilities in our community. Research within this field has a long tradition in Kielce. It has been initiated by Professor Witold Dobrołowicz, who was in charge of the Psychology Department for many years in the Higher School of Pedagogy. The problems of creative skills and abilities have always appeared in research programmes and publications of the researchers of our University. At present these problems are also investigated by the first doctoral students of the Faculty of Pedagogy and Arts.

Among the authors of the present volume are research workers of the Institute of Pedagogy and Psychology, who represent various scholarly disciplines: pedagogy, psychology, history and philosophy. We consider that multifaceted analysis provided by different specialists may be interesting for the reader. In this collection, there are

also papers of foreign researchers who co-operate with the Institute, as well as papers of authors from other institutes in Poland. For some of the authors, the issue of creativity and ability is the main area of their research. For the rest, this issue is marginal to their main research.

The publication is divided into 3 parts and includes 18 papers.

The first part, titled *On issues concerning education of the gifted*, includes works, whose authors seek new educational solutions in Polish schools supporting the development of a creative person, open to changes, able to solve changes, characterised by creative and critical thinking. The papers show that without teachers who thoroughly understand the need for supporting abilities in children and adolescents, no postulate concerning creative upbringing and education is feasible. Moreover, the papers present the role of the media and the cultural context needed for developing students' abilities and creative attitudes.

**Zdzisław Ratajek** discusses the issues of professional competence of teachers within the scope of interpersonal relations with students in the process of education. The competence comprises two types of features – praxeological and psychological. The relations referred to in the article have a personality-creating dimension and enhance 'human potential'. Teachers introduce new values in students' lives in order to facilitate self creation. The author stresses that one can consider self creation from the point of view of the development of a teacher and student as well.

**Larisa M. Mitina**, professor of psychology in the Russian Academy of Education in Moscow, where she has long been Head of the Department of Psychology of Professional Development of Personality and the author of 200 scholarly works (15 monographs) and the concept of professional development of a teacher, presented in this publication. The author provides a thorough description of psychological factors, conditions and mechanisms (dynamics) of teacher development, taking into consideration its motivational and behavioural aspects.

**Jiří Prokop**, professor of pedagogy at Charles University in Prague, points out the possibilities of using the Dalton model of teaching in creative work of teachers. He is also Deputy Director of the International Association of Dalton Schools and co-operates with the Jan Kochanowski University within the framework of Socrates-Erasmus programme. He outlines the history and Dalton development plan along with the basic principles worked out by Helen Parkhurst – freedom, co-operation, independence and individual work. The Czech Association of Dalton Schools was established in 1996 and has its headquarters in Brno, where the Chalabalova Primary School is situated. A pilot plan of Dalton teaching is being realised there. Implementing the elements of the Dalton plan requires a lot of initiative from teachers, openness to changes and creative thinking and acting, which seems to be the success of such pilot schools.

The issue concerning teachers' creativity in the aspect of individual pedagogical style is presented by **Wanda Dróżka**. The author distinguishes this category, having analysed pedagogical experience in the autobiographical research of young and mid-

dle-aged teachers for whom schools are the area of self-realisation. The individual pedagogical style is the representation of a teacher's individuality and is manifested in creating the professional role. According to W. Dróżka, even the word 'style' includes information concerning attempts of self creation. Developing the individual pedagogical style requires the same conditions which are needed for creative activity. However, comparing the two generations of teachers one may now notice limitation of the involvement of teachers.

The point of departure for **Irena Stańczak** was the opinion of Kazimierz Denka, who stated that the aim of education may not be a comprehensive but rather a multi-faceted development of a student's personality. In the process, students themselves take over an active role. In practice, one may observe many irregularities in realising educational goals set in the Education Reform in 1999. Implementation of the integrated system of education created potentially advantageous conditions for the cognitive development of younger children. The author points out interesting theoretical proposals for building didactic programmes which support development.

**Barbara Walasek-Jarosz** treats differently the concept of developing students' abilities. The subject of analysis is the role of the media in shaping the creative attitude of students. The issue is developed in 4 basic aspects of creativity: person, process, environment and product. In conclusion, it is stated that in comments on creative education, there is a lot of wishful and intuitive thinking. However, this issue needs further research.

The relationships between pop culture and creative education are analysed by **Justyna Dobrołowicz**. She assumes that a creative individual is characterised by certain, potential predisposition to creativity; however, these abilities are not always represented in objectively creative activities. Creativity is connected with self realisation. It seems that contemporary culture, due to its wide offer, favours creativity. However, pop culture limits self realisation to consumerism. According to the author, the main goal for teachers is connected with abandoning the principles of reproduction of culture for the sake of critical thinking.

In the philosophical text of **Janusz Sytnik-Czetwertyński** one may read that a man does not create anything by himself. Discovering abilities is always connected with group creation, experience of successive generations and the phenomenon of group discovery is possible only thanks to cultural transmission. Love and imagination play a unique role. Love creates categories of community and requires from a person constant mastering of cognitive powers, and it is not possible without the help of imagination which is the energy that triggers our intuition. Love, along with imagination, helps to understand intentionality of other people's activities, which constitutes the foundation of cultural cognition.

At the end of this volume, there are two articles written by historians of education and upbringing.

**Marzena Pękowska** analyses the problem of scientific creativity and popularisation activity of teachers who educated deaf-mute persons at the turn of the 19th cen-

ture. She analyses chosen works of teachers from Warsaw and Lvov of that time. Those publications, according to the author, gave foundation for creating scientific approach to special education.

Intellectual and social aspects of professional role of a teacher in the past are presented by **Ewa Kula**. She writes about teachers who showed creative approach in their work, contributing to popularising knowledge and agricultural technologies in times which were especially difficult for Poland – the Kingdom of Poland in the era between uprisings. The achievements of teachers, presented in the article prove that their interests were varied and quite extensive.

The second part of the volume *Psychological aspects of creativity and abilities* includes works of theoretical character, concerning creative process and the role of intuition, stimulation of creative activity in family environment, personality problems of gifted individuals and capability of mental work.

The issue of intuition and decision-making process have not been extensively studied so far, thus, the article of **Witold Dobrołowicz** addressed to psychologists and teacher is up-to-date.

The author states that intuitive decision is needed for a creative process, as in every intentional activity of a man, and especially in solving new and difficult problems, which requiring creative solutions, a decision-making process is essential. Numerous examples justify the meaning of exploring the secrets of the decision-making process in creativity research.

The role of family environment in creativity treated as a phenomenon arising from the interaction of the subjective features of creators with external, social conditions of their functioning is presented by **Grażyna Mendecka**. The author stresses that family members who are the source of meaningful experience of stimulating creative activity (a sense of freedom, identity, internal integration, self realisation and autonomy) may decide whether the individual perceives himself/herself as the subject of creation.

**Irena Pufal-Struzik** analyses complicated, creative SELF of gifted persons who, in spite of rich and versatile personality, frequently experience difficulties in emotional sphere and in social life. The author points out the reasons of developmental problems, emotional costs, concerning teenagers who try to combine the process of shaping their own personality with the development of intellectual potential (strong and long-term intellectual and emotional frustration, blocking of creative development and independent SELF). The author stresses that in order to understand personality problems of gifted and creative persons, it is indispensable to treat their features as multiple and opposing. In spite of the fact that creative individuals have a special gift of integration of a wide range of human psychological properties in their personalities, the intensified aspiration for self-identity, autonomy, intimacy and personal success may increase in the gifted individuals the sense of withdrawal form the group of peers or even cause alienation.

In his article, **Paweł Bilous** describes the ability for mental work and treats it as one of the most important, general human abilities. He defines the notion of mental

work, its psychological structure, dynamics and the ways of its diagnosing. The practical meaning of ability for mental work and its efficiency in cognitive human functioning at different stages of development are presented.

In the third part of the volume: **Research into abilities and creativity**, there are articles, whose authors use their own empirical research. Their subjects are varied as the issues described are not closely connected: malfunctioning of school, children's play, creative activity of sportsmen, autistic disorders. Their variability proves how vast the phenomenon of human creativity and ability is.

The problems of educating gifted students within the framework of ordinary school is described by **Teresa Giza**. Numerous critical remarks on schools are added to the existing ones – the area of work with gifted children is widely neglected. The author's own research shows that schools deepen the social differences through selective processes of gifted students, absorbing to elites children whose families enjoy a high social status.

The results of the research of **Agnieszka Lasota** shows that children's play may stimulate creative thinking and be the stimulant of creativity in a later stage. On the basis of her own research, the author proves that symbolic games of children aged 2.5 years may be of creative character as those children are capable of using in a game substitutes of various objects, which requires using creative imagination.

**Aldona Litwińska** describes creative abilities of sportsmen and sportswomen who passionately seek the activities which give sense to their lives. The results of the research presented by the author show that different sport disciplines (mountain climbing, parachuting, athletics) variably influence creative activity and presentation of creative attitudes. The analysed sport disciplines are individual, however, they vary in features that can have a great influence on the creative level of people who practise them.

The specificity of cognitive functioning of an autistic boy is presented in the article of **Agnieszka Mazur** and **Izabela Chojnowska-Ćwiakła**. Due to theory of mental deficits in autistic people, there are usually disorders connected with creativity and using mental concepts which would allow interpreting states of mind of other people and anticipate their behaviour. Autistic people have a seriously impaired ability of recognising mental states, such as beliefs and thinking, as well as recognising their influence on behaviour. In the article one can find original phrases of the boy, and typical autistic concentration on single aspects of stimulus situations, which in relation to the theory of the mind, according to Frith [1989], may be interpreted in categories of cognitive deficit, which is characterised by inability of finding context for combining separated information.

This publication is addressed to the group of specialists of pedagogy and psychology of creativity and ability. The second group of readers are students. We recommend this publication for the needs of studying subjects within the group of social sciences in various fields of study. We would like to draw the attention of students, practising teachers and educators to developing in themselves and in those under

their care abilities and creative attitudes needed for solving various problems which people encounter in life. In the realisation of this task a thorough awareness of people and institutions responsible for educational policy about the role of individuals in contemporary society is necessary. This volume is also addressed to a wider group of readers who are united by the aspiration for creative perception of themselves and the world.

As the editors of this publication, we are deeply convinced that thanks to studies and articles presented here, the psychological and pedagogical knowledge of human abilities will be developed. We would like to thank all the authors of the texts for their interest in our project and kind co-operation. We would like to express our gratitude to Prof. Jan Łaszczyk of The Maria Grzegorzewska Special Pedagogy University in Warsaw for preparing the review of this book.

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