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Teaching for Wisdom in Early Modern Education

Today, modern education is looking for innovative organizational and methodical solutions that will effectively support the development of children's potential. The increasing individualization of work with children and attempts to adjust the educational process to their needs and abilities is fostering in young people active examination and discovery of their surrounding reality, as well as the gaining of new experiences and skills in an independent way. Furthermore, the reorientation of educational goals supports children's active participation in social life, while the expected task of the teacher is to implement the idea of education in values.

One of the universal values that is now growing in importance, not only at the level of international relations, but also at the level of human relationships in a local environment, is wisdom in terms of behaviour – interpreting a situation, making decisions, undertaking actions, evaluating the activities of others etc. However, *wisdom*, which has been analyzed and defined throughout the ages mostly as the goal of philosophy, or as a philosophical category[1], hardly ever appears in the literature as a characteristic of an individual, subject to pedagogic influence.

Wisdom is most often understood as the final stage of the development of an individual or expert knowledge (Carr 2009, pp. 181–188) and, when defined in this way, it is not available to individuals in their

[1] Cf. the concepts of Socrates, Plato, Thomas of Aquino, Descartes, G. W. Leibniz, D. Hume.

childhood. However, modern psychologists also see *wisdom* as a result of learning (knowledge) and experience (Sękowski 2001, p. 98), a holistic cognitive process (Csiksentmihalyi and Rathunde 1990), which means a feature and attitude of the mind. In this case, it is a characteristic that can be developed in all people, from their youngest years, because it not only relates to knowledge and intelligence, but also to an attitude towards life, cognitive abilities, a number of personality traits and the motivation to act (Sękowski 2001, p. 111). It is also understood as an integral part of the practical intelligence and creativity of an individual, when its application leads to usefulness and the successful implementation of ideas by an individual or a group (Sternberg and Davidson 2005, pp. 327–340). Moreover, according to theoreticians, only *wisdom* introduces harmony into internal life and relationships with others because it is the basis for logic, prudence, moderation, and just judgments and decisions, which in turn results in success in learning, social activity and – in adulthood – a professional career (Sternberg et al. 2009, p.105).

Wisdom, particularly according to Sternberg's concept, is a category conditioning successful actions and the proper use of general and practical intelligence, as well as creativity in the development and implementation of different solutions, projects, visions and plans in accordance with the needs of individuals, groups, communities and institutions. The basic assumption of this concept is the integrated development and application of Wisdom, Intelligence and Creativity Synthesized (WICS), as this conditions transgressive thinking, which is based on the assessment of previous solutions and ideas, and the usefulness of new ones (Ibid).

Thus, the basis for the development of *wisdom* is the development of personality traits, interpersonal and intrapersonal attitudes, the image of the self in relationships with oneself and the external world, the involvement in action and the ability to use memorized information in order to change and improve the surrounding reality for the sake of the individual and/or the common social good. More and more often, this kind of teacher's educational activity is described in English psycho-pedagogic literature as *Teaching for wisdom*. This includes not only the

teacher's methodical activity which leads to certain competences, and supports manifestations of the students' wise behaviour in the future, but also the organization of specific conditions within the teaching-learning process, allowing for the purposeful shaping of skills and competences related to the valuation, design and implementation of wise decisions, undertakings and behaviour towards oneself and others in life. In Polish, this process could be called *Edukacja dla mądrości* (*Teaching for wisdom*).

One of the barriers to the development of students' wisdom in modern schools is not only the issue of the notion's complexity, but the fact that – according to the observations of theoreticians – schools do not teach the art of asking questions, openness to change, sensitivity to essential problems, tolerance for ambiguity[2] or how to boldly move the borders of cognition (Sękowski 2001, p. 106). Furthermore, due to its complexity, *wisdom* as a personality trait or a characteristic of the mind escapes simple measurements which dominate in the evaluation of the ability and competence of effective learning, as well as other intelligence measurements, which discourages practitioners and theoreticians from extensive research in this area (Pietrasiński 2008, p. 17).

Another barrier to the implementation of the idea of preparing young people for a wise life in modern schools is the lack of theoretical bases in this field: only a few Polish psychologists and educationists are dealing with the issue of *wisdom*, creating its definitions and determining the scope of the competences it includes[3]. Because of all these problems, the notion of *Teaching for wisdom* is not present in Polish education, although the relationship between quality of life and the effectiveness of education, and such personal characteristics as practical intelligence, reflective thinking, dialogue, creativity and wisdom are being increasingly acknowledged.

[2] Cf. N. Postman. *W stronę XVIII stulecia*. Warszawa: PIW, 2001, p. 174; K.J. Szmidt. „Teoretyczne i metodyczne podstawy procesu kształcenia zdolności myślenia pytajnego." *Dylematy edukacji artystycznej, Tom II. Edukacja artystyczna a potencjał twórczy człowieka*. Ed. W. Limont and J. Cieślikowska. Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls, 2006.

[3] One should list the publications by Z. Pietrasiński, A. Sękowski, K.J. Szmidt.

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In Poland, the need for education that develops the wisdom of an individual (although not expressed directly) has been considered by:

- Janusz Korczak, in his concept of educating children for cooperation and responsibility (Korczak 1957);
- Tadeusz Lewowicki, in his demands for the more frequent implementation of the socialization function in schools, which means presenting modern valuable life standards and models that are appealing to young people (Lewowicki 1991);
- Zbigniew Kwieciński, through the idea of education fostering awareness, creativity and the active fulfilment of one's identity and the self by undertaking extrapersonal activities (Kwieciński 1995);
- Krzysztof J. Szmidt, in his demands for the support and development of creativity in children and students through creative problem solving and the development of interrogative thinking (Szmidt 2004);
- Zbigniew Pietrasiński, in his deliberations on teaching that promote the mind, which also covers the preparation to improve one's own behaviour and personality (Pietrasiński 2008);
- Danuta Waloszek, in her concept of gradually accustoming children to bear responsibility in certain areas of activity (choice of materials, tools, ways of performing a task, partners, pace of work etc), and co-responsibility with teachers in other areas (designing tasks to perform, choosing the subjects of classes, planning time for the activities undertaken, choosing homework and consolidation exercises etc.) (Waloszek 1994);
- Małgorzata Cywińska, in her presentation of a constructive aspect of conflict situations which are used to plan changes, prizes, redressing damages, compensation, reaching an agreement in an interpersonal dialogue (Cywińska 2004);
- Małgorzata Karwowska-Struczyk, in her presentation of an alternative methodical solution in preschool education, organized in accordance with the rule *plan – do – tell*, where the child is

stimulated to solve educational and everyday problems in a creative way (Karwowska-Struczyk 2012);

- Irena Adamek, in her proposals for ways to develop children's ability to solve problems individually and in a team, to cope with different situations and to understand problems in human relationships, such as difficult financial situations, interpersonal conflicts and the aggressive behaviour of others (Adamek 1998);
- Edyta Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska, in her demands for including such socio-emotional characteristics as the sense of being in control, pride and satisfaction, the sense of purpose and happiness after performing tasks on one's own, the attitude towards the performance of tasks entrusted by the teacher, the orientation towards communication with others and helping others during the performance of tasks, and the ability to plan and organize games in cooperation with others in the process of preparing and diagnosing a child's readiness to start learning at school (Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska and Zielińska 2011);
- Anna Buła, in her presentation of methodical possibilities and solutions for the purpose of philosophizing with early school children (Buła 2006).

Other theoretical and practical guidelines for organizing *Teaching for wisdom* during childhood can be found in the concepts of other authors who describe activities that stimulate the child to independent learning and searches, and confirm the vast developmental potential of the child, although it is not always optimally used and developed at the initial stages of education, especially in the socio-emotional sphere[4].

However, in order to develop and verify all proposals for methodical solutions related to *Teaching for wisdom*, it is necessary to define the notion of *wisdom* in the context of possible educational effects.

[4] I am referring to the publications by M. Kielar-Turska, A. Brzezińska, B. Muchacka, W. Puślecki, J. Bonar, J. Uszyńska-Jarmoc, D. Czelakowska.

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1. Wisdom as a complex characteristic of an individual

In the context of the information presented above, *Teaching for wisdom* is inseparably related to the necessity of the development of such children's/students' traits as general intelligence, practical intelligence, creativity and reflectiveness.

Naturally, the family constitutes the first environment that introduces the child to the world of values, from which the child (when surrounded by genuine and wise parental love) should draw positive patterns of behaviour, thinking, acting and developing relationships with others. Family and the closest social environment should also provide wisdom, which means knowledge concerning the *pragmatics of human life* (Pietrasiński 2001), through one's own example and life advice (Ibid., pp. 90–93). However, this is not always the case.

The environment where *Teaching for wisdom* should be deliberately organized is school (preschool). Factual knowledge and the methodical competences of teachers can support the organization of educational situations that allow children/students to experience values and wisdom, develop their potential cognitive abilities, gain experience in the interpretation and evaluation of wise/unwise behaviour, and develop the habits of wise behaviour. These situations should be a source of getting students ready to use wisdom in life and to shape their value systems. The proposal of a detailed competence scope for the notion of *wisdom* is presented in the table below.

Table 1. Wisdom as a complex characteristic of an individual

Traits	Competences/abilities
Justice and prudence	Just assessment (judgment) of conflict situations Solving problems through dialogue Discussing and sharing views
Openness	Openness to novelty, changes Sensitivity to the needs of others Taking into consideration different points of view Taking into consideration a different perspective on a given situation Establishing relationships with others Tolerance for ambiguity

Sensitivity to problems	Noticing problems (life, civilization, social, local) Finding positive role models in literature, films and everyday life Recognizing universal values, deliberations on values
Self-consciousness, self-knowledge	Knowledge of one's own strong and weak points Presenting one's own 'naive theories' and intuitive ideas and choices Controlling one's own emotions The ability to accept positive and negative opinions about oneself Determining one's own emotional attitude towards a problem (knowledge of the significance and difficulty of the problem solved)
Motivation	Involvement in solving problems and conflict situations
Cognitive curiosity	Formulating problems Being surprised, asking questions
Analytical thinking	Analyzing problems and situations, including conflicts Analyzing the usefulness of ideas, solutions Interpreting universal values Analyzing one's own behaviour in terms of values Distinguishing important and unimportant information
Operational character and the logic of thinking	Connecting causes and effects in a logical way Predicting the effects of a situation or the undertaken activities Predicting the causes of successes and failures of the decisions made or projects undertaken Considering situations and problems from the perspective of their conditions and consequences Making generalizations
Reflectiveness and criticism in thinking	Evaluating existing solutions and ideas and their usefulness Justifying ideas, choices, resolutions Justifying the choices made Identifying advantages and disadvantages in solutions and projects (existing and new) Creativity
Generating ideas of how to solve problems	Planning one's own activities for others (for the sake of oneself and/or others) Planning individual and group undertakings, including orientation towards success Looking for alternatives, possibilities
Practical/pragmatic nature of thinking	Making appropriate choices of solutions to problems (for the sake of individuals and the community) Attempting to solve vital problems Introducing to one's life/activities learning from different sources Drawing practically useful conclusions from information Making decisions in difficult situations at individual and social levels

Source: Own study based on the literature quoted in this article.

On the one hand, such a holistic understanding of *wisdom* as an individual characteristic shows how complex the notion is, while on the other, it reveals specific abilities, skills and competences that should be noticed, supported, developed or shaped as part of the child's activity at school or preschool. All the more so as there are several important social reasons to develop wisdom in classes at school.

First of all, the aim of school (and preschool) should not only be to provide children with knowledge, but to help them use this knowledge wisely. Moreover, one has to remember that knowledge can be used for good or evil purposes, and schools should therefore teach how to use knowledge for good purposes – for the good of an individual and/or a larger community (a group of students, a class, school, family, local environment, etc).

Another reason for the necessity of implementing the idea of *Teaching for wisdom* is the growing phenomenon of social, political, economic and ecological *ignorance*. This – in a situation when schools depart from the implementation of education in values – can be manifested by the *lack of time* (as teachers often explain it) for supporting individuality, interests, artistic skills, dialogue, creativity, true cooperation with others in learning and problem solving. It can also be a consequence of the fact that schools follow an encyclopedic curricula, oriented towards knowledge and derivative skills, instead of preparing students for making wise decisions, taking into consideration the alternatives and effects of their actions.

Furthermore, the problems of modern youth, such as with addictions and establishing social relationships, as well as with disorders related to learning and carrying out tasks in cooperation and contact with others, may result from the lack of the need and ability to *analyze the experience gained, properly distinguish important and unimportant information, draw practically useful conclusions from it* (Sękowski 2001, p. 100), and establish priorities in life. This translates into young people's inability to organize their own free time in a way that would enrich their personalities and abilities; the fact that they look for exciting but not always socially acceptable activities within their peer group; and fatal accidents

being a consequence of the lack of common sense, the ability to assess the situation, to feel empathy or the inability to take into consideration the possible effects of the situation.

Other factors confirming the need to implement *Teaching for wisdom* that should be listed here are suggestions related to the theory of positive psychology: wise individuals build harmony in their relationships with others, feel good and have a sense of happiness and satisfaction with their lives[5]. This is because the basis for *wisdom* is focus on the positive aspects of human life, the strong points and characteristics of an individual's functioning and the positive aspects of social life, which, unfortunately, is not the main tendency in the Polish culture.

Another argument justifying the need to implement *Teaching for wisdom* at all levels of education in Polish schools is the tendency to subordinate one's own behaviour to so-called mental traps, described by the American psychiatrist Aaron T. Beck (2002), which have a negative influence on everyday relationships with family and friends: tunnel vision (when people see only what they want to see), overgeneralization (*You always… You never…*), exaggerating, ascribing base reasons or bad intentions to the behaviour of others etc. These kinds of behaviour are also listed as errors made by teachers when assessing their students' progress (Aronson et al 1997; Ledzińska and Czerniawska 2011): attribution error (when students who *look* better/worse are assessed better/worse), the self-fulfilling prophecy effect (when a student who is classified as being worse is consistently assessed worse), the error of reinforcing negative states, generalizations etc. Other errors made by teachers in the educational process were listed in a publication by Małgorzata Taraszkiewicz (1996): failing to use students' personal experience or to address their imagination, criticizing children's associations, lack of behaviour encouraging expression of oneself, lack of awareness of the lesson's aim, emphasizing the negative aspects in comments on class and homework etc,

[5] Cf. M. Csikszentmyhalyi, *Przepływ. Jak poprawić jakość życia. Psychologia optymalnego doświadczenia*, Warszawa 1996; A. Carr, *Psychologia pozytywna…*, op. cit.; R.J. Sternberg, L. Jarvin and E. L. Grigorienko, *Teaching for Wisdom…*, op. cit.

and labelling students. It could be argued that this confirms, in the school context, a shortage of wisdom in the actions of many adults.

In summary, it has to be said that *wisdom* is a complex characteristic of an individual, which does not only relate to people's character, but also to the way they think. It is closely connected with the life and educational experience of the individual, their emotions and experiences, as well as the values preferred and shaped by their environment. Furthermore, it has to be emphasized that wisdom depends on the social environment and its expectations, as well as external conditions which are often coincidences in the life of an individual, either supporting or not supporting the development of wise behaviour (Sękowski 2001, p. 100). Thus, it is worth considering how to organize deliberate and insightful educational effects, which would intentionally (and not by chance) provide experiences and situations that foster the child's maturity towards wisdom.

2. Proposals for methodical solutions in Teaching for wisdom[6]

Teaching for wisdom requires the development of theoretical and methodical grounds. Academic guidelines related to the development of wisdom are the indispensable elements of these grounds; publications on philosophy, psychology and pedagogy serve as the basis for the implementation of practices, academic research and the diagnosis of the current state of affairs. Educational guidelines related to the implementation of *Teaching for wisdom* are also of importance and include provisions in the core curriculum at all stages of general education, the guidelines of the Ministry of National Education and pedagogical supervision.

In the case of theoretical grounds, it is vital to determine the rules of conduct for teachers who consciously prepare children from their

[6] In this part of the article, I use proposals for methodical solutions which I have already published, drawn from Sternberg's concept that is presented in *Teaching for Wisdom, Intelligence, Creativity, and Success*. However, they are supplemented by new proposals for educational situations which support the acquisition and development of wisdom in children at early stages of education.

youngest years to wisely function within society, and to expand teachers' education by classes and training which introduces the theoretical and practical knowledge necessary to implement *Teaching for wisdom*.

When developing the bases for *Teaching for wisdom*, one should determine certain standards of teachers' conduct, the aim of which should be to achieve goals related to the preparation of children for a wise life. Here it is apt to quote Robert Sternberg's guidelines, according to which teachers should:

- Be a role model for children/students, because sooner or later the teachers' actions can be reflected to a greater or lesser extent in the students' behaviour; this also concerns reflective thinking and wise behaviour,
- Base their educational work on universal values,
- Support and stimulate students' aspirations to achieve, which means focusing on the strong points of children's functioning and their abilities,
- Use diverse teaching methods which support the activity of students' different developmental spheres,
- Use tasks and instructions concerning different kinds of students' activity and make use of their different abilities and competences (memory, analytical, creative and practical skills, and wise thinking),
- Maintain a balance in the development and stimulation of students' differing abilities and skills, including those involving analytical, practical and creative intelligence,
- Take into consideration different ways and means of providing students with knowledge: through analysis, critical and creative thinking, and practical activities,
- Pay attention to the use of tasks and instructions that make students realize their strong points (Sternberg et al. 2009, pp. 6–7).

Based on the demands of other educationists and psychologists, one can formulate other rules for teachers when implementing *Teaching for wisdom*:

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- The use of Edward de Bono's techniques, which support the development of reflective thinking (Pietrasiński 2001),
- The use of diverse techniques of creative thinking in modern education because they support the development of personality and creativity, as well as reflectiveness and interrogative thinking (Płóciennik 2010),
- The introduction of open tasks into education at the same time and to the same extent as convergent tasks (Bonar 2008),
- The use of conflict situations between people, students and children to constructively improve the relationships between them and/or to analyze the benefits of such behaviour (Cywińska 2004).

Teachers as organizers of children's/students' activities should also be aware of the positive emotional aspects of creative processes and independent actions; they should understand the need for searching and going astray; they should understand and appreciate the value of children's strong personal involvement in the organization of their own activities. Thus, they should let children/students be original, fantasize, be inventive and unconventional in their actions; they should form and develop cognitive motivation and the need for achievements. In the designed educational situations they should involve the imagination of children/students because it is the *"…driving force of true creative experience, determining the states of curiosity and anxiety, discovery and search, allowing experience of things in a full and intensified way*" (Dewey 1975). They should also be aware of the fact that activities such as inventing stories, drawing picture stories and carrying out all kinds of projects develop not only the imagination, creativity, ingenuity and eloquence, but also literary, composition and artistic skills. On the other hand, the techniques of creative thinking and teachers' work in accordance with the rules stimulating (and not hindering) development also accelerate and optimize other achievements by children, as they are related to the development of general and special skills, practical intelligence and the children's involvement in action (Renzulli 1998).

In relation to the practical bases, it is necessary to provide teachers who implement *Teaching for wisdom* with educational support, including proposals and the preparation of teaching aids and tools that would help teachers work in this area, such as philosophical tales, proverbs and anecdotes tailored to children's perceptual abilities at the level of early education. This would allow for clarification of difficult information and issues for children, in accordance with the accessibility of the rules and the use of visual methods.

Looking at teaching aids that can be used at school/preschool in order to implement *Teaching for wisdom*, one has to mention those that are traditionally used in educational processes, such as scientific kits which include instruments such as magnifying glasses, microscopes, measures, scales, loose substances, containers, scent cups, sound-emitters etc; plant breeding kits with all kinds of natural materials; dice games (including those made by children), jigsaw puzzles, lotto (including pictures for associations), and teaching aids which make it easier to recognize and express emotions, such as emotion cards, feelings dice, hand puppets, mirrors etc. However, there are also special kinds of teaching aids that support children's understanding of the content of *Teaching for wisdom*, examples of which are:

- Different books of stories and fables, including those made by children.
- Educational, documentary and feature films presenting different situations and civilization, social and health problems, etc.
- Dynamic pictures showing different situations in human relationships that present universal values[7].

The teaching aids listed above can be useful in the following educational situations, covered by *Teaching for wisdom* at the preschool level and early school education:

[7] Cf. E. Płóciennik, A. Dobrakowska. *Zabawy z wyobraźnią. Scenariusze zajęć i obrazki o charakterze dynamicznym rozwijające wyobraźnię i myślenie twórcze dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym i wczesnoszkolnym*. Łódź: Wyd. WSHE, 2009.

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1) Familiarizing children/students with literature and philosophical tales in order to identify and analyze the wisdom of their characters (including wise men).
2) Presenting valuable role models from the life of the closest and further environments, including drawing the children's attention to valuable behaviour of their peers and adults at school.
3) Drawing the attention of children/students to valuable and wise behaviour of characters in films, computer games and plays, and holding discussions about this.
4) Analyzing these values together with children/students and distinguishing the most important ones (for students and/or the group).
5) Monitoring and analyzing behaviour together with the children/students in terms of the values discussed.
6) Involving children/students in discussions about projects which allow them to identify and describe 'lessons' drawn from different sources, and then initiating their implementation in everyday life.
7) Designing the process of implementing values and wise behaviour in the life of an individual and a peer group together with the children/students.
8) Initiating and arranging situations which add to the common good of the group/class.
9) Considering, together with the children/students, better and worse effects while planning common and individual activities, and also including short-term and long-term perspectives and different points of view.
10) Carrying out different tasks together with children/students, based on the project method, in which participants analyze their own knowledge and skills (or lack thereof) in a given area; in planning improvements and carrying out tasks for the common good, they assess their own activity and analyze the effects.
11) Analyzing, together with the children/students, the knowledge and skill requirements necessary to carry out the planned tasks.
12) Organizing true participation of the students/children in activities that support the development of social sensitivity.

13) Organizing educational situations that aim to:
- Analyze and improve interpersonal relationships in a group based on discussions and corrective measures (for example, planning apologies),
- Formulate feedback and one's own reflections with the use of the unfinished sentences method, such as: *I have learned today that…, I have noticed that…, I was sad when…, I was happy when…, I was surprised today to discover that I can…, I was surprised today to discover that I can't…, Tomorrow I would like to learn…*,
- Plan and organize the course of a thematic game, breeding plants or animals, taking part in environmental actions and regional events,
- Plan and carry out one's own projects for organizing free time in different situations or in case of bad weather (*What can you do at home when it's raining?*), and then analyze their implementation and propose modifications,
- Encourage children/students to imagine the nearest future or express their dreams/desires, and then plan small, gradual, realistic steps that can be carried out within a short time in order to initiate the process of fulfilling these visions right away, as far as possible, including the planning of necessary improvement activities.

14) Organizing situations, in which children/students:
- Generate ideas for dealing with difficult situations, taking into consideration their conditions and consequences,
- Express opinions and judgments about problems and solving different problems in the environment,
- Criticize events, information, behaviour from their environment and generate ideas for alternative positive behaviours, solutions, information,
- Reconstruct different situations and scenes which present different kinds of situations and conflicts between people, and then suggest alternative solutions supporting a peaceful solution to the problem,
- Develop creativity through exploration, combinations and transformations,

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- Look for as many disadvantages, shortcomings, deficiencies of certain solutions (concerning construction, learning, organization) and risks these solutions entail as possible, and then find a way to eliminate them,
- Imagine the plot of a story presented by a teacher (positive visualization can serve as a correction measure: strengthening individuals who imagine their own positive traits or behaviour towards others; negative visualization, on the other hand, discourages the pursuit of certain activities by presenting situations related to negative emotions, and serves preventive purposes),
- Come up with answers to questions: *What is it like now? What should it be like? Why it is not as it should be? What conclusions can be drawn from this?*, using the metaplan technique in connection with such topics as: *Our school, Environmental protection, My learning, Cooperation with others*,
- Consider, one by one, the consequences of the following fictional situations related to the multiplication of certain elements of an object, and then determine the functions of the modified object, for example: *1) Imagine you receive additional pairs of arms and legs. What would happen if you had four legs? What new skills would you have? How would this change your life? 2) Imagine you could install an additional hose on a vacuum cleaner. What difficulties and what new possibilities would this entail?*,
- Take a close look at an example object, from close up and from a distance, paying careful attention to it; participants should note all the characteristic features: scratches, bites, fold marks, dents, bulges etc. After getting to know the object the participants can change its name to something they feel is more appropriate,
- Ponder the explanation of example antinomies given by the teacher (an antinomy is a logical contradiction: a combination of two notions that are apparently mutually exclusive), such as: *a strong weakness, bad love, a poor rich man, a weak strongman* and so on; then come up with their own examples of antinomies, choose one of them (the one they like most) and present it in an

artistic or spatial way, based on their own idea. At the end, the works are presented and the students' associations are explained.

Teaching for wisdom (especially at the early educational stages) requires personal competence by the teacher, interesting teaching aids and modern, motivating techniques that stimulate and develop the child's potential abilities and competences related to general and practical intelligence and creativity. In early education, of particular importance is the type of children's/students' activity that leads to the direct experiencing of the surrounding cultural, natural, technical and social reality. Such activity is undertaken by individuals through internal emotional involvement, which leads to the experiencing of values in an in-depth way, supporting development and gaining all kinds of practical experience, which in turn fosters maturity towards wisdom.

The gradual development of wisdom in an individual as *a form of species adaptation to the most difficult challenge, i.e. life management skills* (Pietrasiński 2001, p. 32), is possible only thanks to the internal development of an individual, but is necessary for all humankind. This is why *wisdom* as a complex individual characteristic, subject to pedagogic influence, should be present not only in discussions about the positive and optimum functioning of individuals within society, but also in discussions about the essence of changes in education. Although developing wisdom, based on dialogue and the teacher's ability to ask questions which trigger independent thinking and reveal the potential of individuals as part of the creation of new knowledge, was called for as far back as by Socrates and his students, modern schools still mostly train the memory and analytical skills leading to memorization and the reconstruction of information, which, unfortunately, does not support the development of a young person's value system.

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According to the presented outline of the *Teaching for wisdom* concept, it is possible to conduct education which stimulates and develops

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reflectiveness, independent thought, intelligence and creativity from the very first stage of schooling. This type of education makes it possible to prepare future members of adult society to solve vital civilizational and everyday problems in an effective way, unlike the traditional educational model, the main aim of which is to train the memory and teach analytical skills. The ability to predict outcomes, make decisions, resolve conflicts, think and act in a creative way, understand and process information, take an active part in solving problems, associate facts and phenomena, and communicate and cooperate with others, is essential for future generations. This is why such education, starting at the preschool level, is fully justified.

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Abstract:

Teaching for wisdom (especially at the early educational stages) requires personal competence by the teacher, interesting teaching aids and modern, motivational techniques that stimulate and develop the child's potential abilities and

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competences related to general and practical intelligence and creativity. In early education, of particular importance is the type of children's/students' activity that leads to the direct experiencing of the surrounding cultural, natural, technical and social reality. Such activity is undertaken by individuals through internal emotional involvement, which leads to the experience of values in an in-depth way, supporting development and gaining all kinds of practical experience, which in turn fosters maturity towards wisdom.

The environment where *Teaching for wisdom* should be deliberately organized is school (preschool). Factual knowledge and the methodological competences of teachers can support the organization of educational situations that allow children/students to experience values and wisdom, develop their potential cognitive abilities, gain experience in the interpretation and evaluation of wise/unwise behaviour, and develop the habits of wise behaviour. These situations should be a source of getting students ready to use wisdom in life and to shape their value systems. The proposal of a detailed competence scope for the notion of *wisdom* is presented in the this article.

Keywords: early education; child in pre-school age; teaching for wisdom; values; practical intelligence

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