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16th Summer School for Researchers on Adult Education and Counselling Studies, Zielona Góra, May 18-21, 2015

In May 2015, a cyclical meeting of experienced and young social sciences and humanities scholars, the sixteenth in the series, took place in Zielona Góra this time. The researchers convened to participate in the 16th Summer School for Researchers on Adult Education and Counselling Studies organised at the University of Zielona Góra under the patronage of the Social Pedagogy Unit at the Committee on Pedagogical Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The meeting was an outcome of close collaboration of the Faculty of Education, Sociology and Health Sciences, University of Zielona Góra, the University of Lower Silesia in Wrocław, the Academic Andragogy Association and the Counsellogical Society. Dr Maciej Szumigraj was Secretary of the 16th SSRAECS, while Professor Józef Kargul took care that the School's classic, years-long model should be continued. Meetings of novice lecturers and researchers with practised scholars, andragogues and counselling studies specialists made for the axis of the event.

The participants of the School co-created its conceptual content not only by delivering papers on their own research but also by discussing each presentation, reflecting on the ideas conveyed in it and the relevance of the research aims it represented. Besides, the School's students introduced the Visiting Professors' work and moderated meetings with their Masters. Participation in the SSRAECS entailed also accumulating practical insights into research project structuring and research methodology designing. This was facilitated by, for example, "a simulation game," in which the young researchers adopted the roles of journal scientific boards and critically assessed articles they had been assigned for review. Each participant also had an opportunity to work on his/her own article to be published (if positively reviewed by two referees) in *Dyskursy Młodych Andragogów (Adult Education Discourses)*, as announced by the journal's editor-in-chief Dr Małgorzata Olejarz.

The School was officially opened by Prof. Zdzisław Wołk, Vice-Rector for scholarship and international cooperation of the University of Zielona Góra, Professor Mirosława Nowak-Dziemianowicz, Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Lower Silesia, and Prof. Alicja Czerkawska (University of Lower Silesia), President of the Counselling Society. Prof. Z. Wołk showed and discussed materials from the first conference, held in Ochla in 1999, which gave an impulse to launch the Summer School for Young Researchers on Adult Education. He dwelled on texts authored by the School's first participants, such as Ewa Kurantowicz, Dariusz Jach, Hanna Solarczyk and Alina Matlakiewicz.

In her opening address, Prof. M. Nowak-Dziemianowicz recalled her first years as a student, when she met Prof. Józef Kargul and Prof. Alicja Kargulowa – her lecturers at the time. Prof. A. Czerkawska emphasised the importance of the decision to include the counselling studies discourse in the School's thematic scope, expressed appreciation for counselling studies scholars' constant engagement with the School and applauded re-naming the Summer School for Young Researchers on Adult Education as the Summer School for Researchers on Adult Education and Counselling Studies.

The opening lecture of the 16th Summer School titled *Between 'employability' and struggle for recognition: Neoliberal and ethical concepts of the individual and community* was given by Prof. Nowak-Dziemianowicz. The speaker reflected on two concerns in the interpretive discourse, called “a discourse of freedom” by Czyżewski, which offers an alternative to the concept of employability. One of the concerns involves the dilemma whether the existing practices should be explicated or, rather, whether their latent dimensions should be exposed. The other concern focuses on the question whether the institutional status quo should be preserved or whether employees should be encouraged to seek emancipation and change. Besides, Prof. Dziemianowicz addressed research methodology issues and the role of interpretation in scholarship. She observed that interpretation is by default subjective and governed by the researcher's own research questions and needs. Continuing her argument, she stressed also that education had ceased to be an autotelic value and insisted that this value must be urgently restored. In conclusion, she pointed at some pedagogical narratives of recognition intertwined with cultural and social change processes.

Prof. Mariusz Kwiatkowski (Vice-Rector for Students' Affairs, University of Zielona Góra) gave a lecture titled *Between the rich man and Lazarus: Dilemmas of a social researcher*, in which he spoke about challenges and alternative choices confronting an individual who engages with exploration of social reality today. The first dilemma Prof. Kwiatkowski discussed pertains to the polarisation of research spaces, that is researchers' dichotomous focus on either the elites or the lower reaches of society. He highlighted a tendency observable in research ranging “from successful people to inclusion networks,” where the presence or a lack of social ties is a major factor. The second dilemma was framed in the “expose or project” alternative,

that is, the question about the ways of communicating unmasked facts or mechanisms. The third dilemma concerned the “analyse or change” alternative, wherein the speaker considered the choice between being merely an observer of and an actor in changes.

The afternoon presentations of the School’s young participants expanded the scope of scholarly reflection and discussion. Katarzyna Sygulska (Pedagogical University of Cracow) talked about elderly people’s sense of the meaning of life. Marcin Muszyński (University of Lodz) also tackled issues related to education of this age group in his talk titled *Changes in the conceptual field of elderly people education*. He focused on broad methodological questions related to his own research. Alicja Szostkiewicz (Nicolaus Copernicus University) read a paper on *Learning in middle adulthood: Factors and contexts*, in which she touched upon important conditions of learning processes and motivations for further education in adults. Anna Matusiak (Nicolaus Copernicus University) addressed social competences in her talk titled *Individual strategies of social competences development in students: A portfolio method*. Agnieszka Dragon (Pedagogium College of Social Sciences, Warsaw) spoke about mediation participants as actors of the social scene.

The following day of the SSRAECS was opened by Prof. Joanna Kargul, Head of the Photosynthesis and Solar Fuels Laboratory, Warsaw, who spoke about advanced biochemical and biotechnological research on conversion of solar energy into highly stable macromolecular pigment-protein complex and photo-systems. She told about her laboratory’s involvement in construction of fuel photovoltaic cells built of biological and bio-mimetic catalysts for water oxidation and solar fuel production (hydrogen and renewable carbon-based fuels) under the influence of visible light absorption. This highly interdisciplinary work is performed by EuroSolarFuels/Solarfueltandem, an international group of Europe’s eight leading laboratories of natural and artificial photosynthesis. The outcomes of this research may trigger considerable changes on the energy market. The paper stirred significant interest as Prof. Kargul – with background in biology and chemistry – made every effort to make her argument attractive to humanists and present issues and methodologies of natural sciences and technological research in ways appealing to young social sciences scholars.

In her talk on Polish traditions of institutional adult education in Silesia, Prof. Agnieszka Stopińska-Pajak (University of Dąbrowa Górnicza) spoke of things the SSRAECS participants found far less “exotic.” She explained that in Silesia relatively many counselling facilities had been set up side by side with traditional educational institutions as well as research on counsellor intervention methods was conducted and nationwide journal *Psychotechnika (Psychotechnics)* came out. She said also that the history of Polish counselling in Silesia made for an interesting, still understudied research field.

Afternoon sessions gave room to young participants’ presentations. Dr Iwona Górńska (Aleksander Gieysztor Academy of Humanities in Pułtusk) addressed

self-evaluation as a component of the identity concept. She emphasized that self-evaluation is a gauge of convergence between “the real self” and “the imagined self,” and she singled out self-enhancement as the most important self-evaluative mechanism. Dr Monika Sulik (University of Silesia in Katowice) in her talk on *Andragogical inspirations* spoke about the symbolism of the “under the table” andragogy lesson, highlighting the power and relevance of return to the past in andragogical reflection.

The School’s third day commenced with a “reactive” discussion panel on *What is important in andragogy and most important in adult education?* chaired by Prof. Józef Kargul. The panellists were Prof. Tadeusz Aleksander (professor emeritus of the Jagiellonian University), Prof. Anna Walulik (Ignatianum Academy in Cracow), Prof. Bogdan Idzikowski (UZG) and Prof. Zofia Szarota (Pedagogical University of Cracow). Prof. Tadeusz Aleksander insisted that the bibliography of multiple publications on adult education must be revised and ordered. He explained that, for andragogy, such a revision was first performed by Prof. Kazimierz Wojciechowski, who classified 1100 books published in 1900–1971. Since 1995, no list of the literature on the subject has been compiled. In turn, Prof. Bogdan Idzikowski pointed at a paradoxical status of andragogy. In his view, andragogy could be seen as a “mega trendy” discipline given the current development of knowledge society. At the same time, however, he argued, andragogy is practically barely present in the social environment. Prof. Zofia Szarota stressed that, as a new discipline, andragogy could not but be variable and dynamic. This is where its potential and power lies, but this also produces difficulties and pitfalls for andragogues. As such, it calls for permanent education, practising which equals unique education in adulthood. Professor Szarota advocated thus constant dedication to defining and delineating the object and methods of research as well as the terminology in circulation. Prof. Anna Walulik carried on the discussion on the identity of andragogy. Because andragogy is very dynamic, it must be continuously constructed. She analysed andragogy in terms of the expansive function, inquiring to what extent andragogy might be an autonomous discipline. She postulated that in its creative function, andragogy should adopt a future-oriented perspective on adults’ experiences; and due to its “retaliatory” function, its identity should be constantly co-constructed. Prof. Józef Kargul summed up the panel discussion, stating that equally important were documentation skills, envisaging various variants of andragogy and using resources and findings of other disciplines. Additionally, it is also crucial to identify pragmatic dimensions of andragogy, therein to grasp the difference between adulthood and maturity.

The meeting with Prof. Krystyna Pańkowska (Warsaw University) provoked another discussion, this time on the erosion of the canon as part of the crisis of culture. The speaker emphasised that the canon which in the Antiquity defined a set of values and was associated with intercultural transmission was in fact designed for future generations. She insisted that the canon was not a closed structure but

changed as the times changed. She referred to the communal character of the canon and its communication and identity-forming functions. Prof. Pańkowska addressed also a dilemma many scholars find pertinent today: Should the canon be defended or should its meaning and relevance be interrogated? She asked the listeners to reflect on what could happen if we were to give up on the canon completely – how would the intergenerational transmission take place? What could serve as its vehicle? The questions were heatedly disputed long after the talk had finished.

Talks by young scholars were another item in the School's programme. Student Nina Rapo (University of Rijeka/Nicolaus Copernicus University) gave a talk on *Andragogy in Croatia: Past – present – future*, in which she outlined the development of andragogy in Croatia since the 1950s and 60s. She discussed also current issues the discipline struggled with in her country such as a lack of legislation on adult education and a refusal to treat andragogy as an independent discipline. Dr Joanna Kłodkowska (University of Lower Silesia) reflected on aspects of becoming a field researcher. She showed how the researcher becomes a tool of his/her own research, “goes-in native” and merges with the research process by staying with the group s/he studies. Natalia Anzulewicz-Pyzik (Nicolaus Copernicus University) spoke about *The transmission of cultural heritage in Polish emigrant circles*, discussing factors affecting cultural identity formation in Polish émigrés. Fervent discussion was stirred by Aleksandra Litawy (Pedagogical University of Cracow), who discussed *Motivations behind adults' starting and continuing singing in amateur choirs*, addressing such motivations in the context of social, intellectual and personal factors.

Study visits are traditional components of Summer Schools. This time the participants visited Krystyna Betiuk, an artist and educator engaged with art- and aesthetic education, who has managed a peculiar gallery in an old art-filled cottage in Bukowica for the last 15 years. Once a German farmhouse, the living spaces have been combined with a site for art-making and -viewing, producing “a gallery, an exhibition merging old objects with household and farmhouse appliances, crossed with a hostel for participants in artistic projects, ateliers and a social and educational hub. The Betiuks' farmhouse in Bukowica is an extraordinary place where art meets ecology, people meet nature, creative work meets agricultural labour, intellectuals meet locals and amateurs meet professionals.”¹ The workshop conducted by Krystyna Betiuk brought together around one table young PhD candidates, doctors, veteran professors, regular visitors at the SSRAECS and first-time participants. This was an opportunity not only for further discussion but also for original art-making and traditional feasting at the bonfire.

The School's last day was devoted primarily to a panel discussion on: *What is important in counselling and most important in counselling?* The panellists were

¹ From Bogdan Idzikowski, „Krystyna Betiuk.” In S. Słowińska, B. Idzikowski, M. Olejarz, M. Zadłużny, and J. Dulęba (eds.), *Inicjatywy i ludzie w kulturze lubuskiej. Nowe przestrzenie. Raport z badań*, 2012, <http://www.inicjatywyiludzie.wpsnz.uz.zgora.pl/raport.pdf> (Accessed 21.01.2016).

prof. Alicja Kargulowa (University of Lower Silesia), Prof. Alicja Czerkawska (University of Lower Silesia), Prof. Elżbieta Siarkiewicz (University of Lower Silesia), Dr Daria Zielińska-Pękał (UZG), Dr Ewa Trębińska-Szumigraj (UZG) and Dr Marcin Szumigraj (UZG). Prof. Kargulowa outlined the process of the rise and formation of counselling, a young discipline as such. Prof. A. Czerkawska inquired about the potential of counselling to become an independent discipline, pointed to gaps in counselling research and insisted that group counselling was largely unattended to by researcher as well as inadequately conceptualised in social consciousness. Prof. E. Siarkiewicz attempted to answer such questions as: How are counselling practices constructed and sustained? What is a counsellor? How does one “become” a counsellor? The doctors participating in the panel presented their own research, in which they seek to describe social reality in a counselling studies perspective. Dr D. Zielińska-Pękał discussed television-mediated counselling; Dr E. Trębińska-Szumigraj spoke about counselling practices observed at the Woodstock Festival Poland. In turn, Dr M. Szumigraj urged to define the necessary conditions in help-provision for counselees to experience life changes, cope with difficulties and solve problems that affect them. The themes tackled by the panellists represented the diversity and complexity of contemporary counselling and, hence, also the multiplicity of areas deserving scholarly attention.

The meeting with Prof. Mieczysław Malewski (University of Lower Silesia), which followed the panel discussion, focused on the limits of and in andragogy. The speaker considered the field of informal education, which, in the form of popular culture and social discourse, had started to oust formal, school education. He emphasised that all education is inscribed in a certain order, in a certain bigger whole. The research fields of andragogy and education sciences are subject to constant re-structuring and propped by four axioms: the notion of identity in scholarship, scientism, the concept of reason, and the belief in social progress and moral development. Concluding, Prof. Malewski stated that the greatest value in all disciplines lay in its scholars’ dedication manifest first of all in action research. In doing action research, what is referred to as the institutionally-shaped expository reason recedes, making room for emancipatory knowledge, which results in expanding andragogy onto new research areas and sustaining its development.

The three closing presentations of the 16th Summer School of Researchers on Adult Education and Counselling Studies dwelled on the speakers’ work. Dr Paweł Kaźmierczak (Ignatianum Academy in Cracow) talked about *Professional ethics of university teacher in Dietrich von Hildebrand’s biodoxography*; Waldemar Szcześniak (University of Lower Silesia, Wrocław) spoke on the *Uniformity of training goals and curriculum diversity (training Polish Army officer candidates)*, and Agnieszka Lenarczyk (County Job Centre, Milicz and PhD programme at the University of Lower Silesia) on *Profiling help-provision for the unemployed*. The presentations focused on university education, in which two former speakers worked, and services provided by the county job centre to its clients. Although they were last

talks in a very rich programme and many participants had already begun to think about journey back home, the presentations proved compelling and triggered a vigorous discussion.

The events of the 16th SSRACCS vividly show that such meetings may help the participants find their own place in the “scholarly world” through interacting with others who engage with research on andragogy, counselling studies and other social sciences and humanities. The School offers also a public and social space in which to verify and negotiate one’s role as an educator, an andragogue, a counselling scholar – briefly, a researcher. In 2015, the School was also an unforgettable opportunity to produce an artefact of another “memory place” in our memories – of Zielona Góra and the wealth of its kind intents.

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