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Ku życiu wartościowemu. Idee – koncepcje – praktyki

[Towards valuable life: Ideas – concepts – practices]

9th National Pedagogical Congress, Białystok,

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The theme of the 9th Pedagogical Congress held in Białystok on 21-23 September 2016 addressed ideas, values, and educational practices that open possibilities of fostering valuable life. Organized by the Polish Educational Research Association in collaboration with the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology, University of Białystok, and the Committee of Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the conference was an extraordinary undertaking in terms of both its scholarship level and its organization. About 400 papers on the congress's eponymous concern – *Ku życiu wartościowemu. Idee – koncepcje – praktyki* [Towards valuable life. Ideas – concepts – practices] – were read during the three busy days of sessions.

Ideas and research findings were presented in 9 thematic sections. Although none of them referred directly to counselology, counseling theory and practice were an easily recognizable focus of Section 6 devoted to the temporal dimension of valuable life. The issue was discussed within three dominant frameworks, including historical overviews, the emancipatory role of education, and matters related to counseling and broadly defined career. Below, we discuss the presentations that significantly contributed to the counseling discourse.

Chaired by Professor Maria Czerepaniak-Walczak (University of Szczecin), Section 6 offered a forum for researchers to present and discuss their findings and reflections. The themes related to guidance, counseling, and career were presented and discussed in semi-plenary sessions and two thematic sections. Semi-plenary papers were of particular relevance to counseling theory and practice.

This part of sessions started with the lecture of Professor Alicja Kargulowa (University of Lower Silesia, Wrocław) titled “Rozwój poradownictwa: Teoria, metodologia, metodyka” [The development of counselology: Theory, methodology, methods]. The lecture surveyed the evolution of counseling theory and practices in

Poland, providing an overview of research and scholarship developed at academic centers involved in the study of counseling. The speaker thoroughly analyzed their pursuits, indicating their varied theoretical underpinnings and methodologies underlying research and counseling interventions. In her talk on “Temporalny wymiar teorii i praktyki w obszarze poradnictwa” [The temporal dimension of theory and practice in the field of counseling], Professor Ewa Solarczyk-Ambrozik (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan) outlined major changes in theories of career development, emphasizing their temporal aspect and paradigmatic shifts in career counseling. She also addressed applicability and cultural relevance of selected theories and examined the dynamics of changes within career counselling as shaped by conceptual transformations. In the next lecture “By(wa)ć mentorem – czyli o dylematach i pułapkach mentoring” [Being a mentor, or on the dilemmas and pitfalls of mentoring], Professor Magdalena Piorunek (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan) focused on the dynamic development of mentoring, examining both its theoretical foundations and its possible implementations in counseling practices. She also highlighted challenges and ambiguities inherent in the mentor role in counseling relations. The next speaker was Professor Józef Kargul (University of Lower Silesia, Wrocław) who spoke about “O niechęci do zasięgnięcia porad” [About reluctance to seek advice and guidance]. Drawing on a study carried out among students, he concentrated on young people’s averse attitudes to authority figures. He cited the respondents’ specific behaviors and views concerning learning, guidance-seeking, and using expert knowledge as examples of the young generation’s dismissal of authority.

Equally interesting subjects from the counseling area were discussed in Section 6.3 tellingly titled “Oswajanie przyszłości – poradnictwo i kariera” [Taming the future: Counseling and career]. Its first session was chaired by Professor Ewa Solarczyk-Ambrozik, and the second by Professor Magdalena Piorunek and Professor Józef Kargul. Jointly, seven lectures were presented.

The first one, titled “Poradnicze praktyki jako performatywny projekt. Kto? Kiedy? W jakim celu?” [Counseling practices as a performative project: Who? When? What for?], was delivered by Professor Elżbieta Siarkiewicz (University of Lower Silesia, Wrocław). The speaker underscored that today counseling practices unfold within institutions but also outside them in everyday life. Institutional advice-provision develops, but at the same time the counseling or advising can be enacted in a talk, a meeting, or an individual experience, past or present. The speaker emphasized also that counseling studies can cover not only the material space where counseling practices are implemented, but also a symbolic or metaphorical space. As she indicated, such practices tend to appear in all these kinds of space and be identified as help- and support-provisions. In her lecture on “Innowacyjność jako przejaw emancypacji w rozwoju zawodowym” [Innovation as a sign of emancipation in career development] Professor Jolanta Lenart (University of Rzeszów) sought first to explain relations and correlations between the phenomena

conceptually defined as innovation and creativity, and then to outline possibilities of fostering innovative skills. In her view, the development of such skills should be form one of the vital goals of career counselors. The next lecture on “Poradnictwo karier a relacje pracownicze” [Career counseling and employee relations] was given by Dr. Anna Wawrzonek (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan). The speaker examined employee relations, highlighting their intergenerational dimension, and insisted that to understand motivations of and values appreciated by particular generations one must know the narratives of those generations and the events that have shaped them and determined their attitudes to work life. The speaker also stressed the role of career counselors in the process of building and managing multigenerational teams. The last speaker in the first session was Professor Alicja Czerkawska, who talked on “Samoaktualizacja w narracji osób dorosłych w procesie poradniczym” [Self-renewal in narratives of adults in the counseling process]. With her theses revolving around such notions as self-renewal, crisis of experience and biographical shift, she spoke of the counseling process as viewed from the biographical perspective. She emphasized that the biographical opportunity provided by the contact with a counselor could trigger self-renewal and, consequently, acquisition of new biographical competences and development of new patterns of thought and action. Ultimately, the process might result in redefining the individual's roles and life goals.

The second session opened with a talk on “Kariera zawodowa. Wczoraj – dziś – jutro” [Vocational career: Past, present and future] by Dr. Magdalena Barańska (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan), who analyzed changes in career perceptions over the last thirty years. The researcher referred both to the changes in defining and understanding the notion of career and to the changes in actions people take in developing their careers. In the next lecture on “Zarządzanie talentami w organizacji uczącej” [Talent management in a teaching organization], Dr. Joanna Szłapińska (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan) insisted that the concept of talent management is expected to essentially impact the development of teaching organizations in the coming years. She stressed that its practical implementation is quickly becoming a prerequisite for effective management of a modern, competitive enterprise. The last paper titled “Orientacje zawodowe młodzieży jako istotny wymiar jej autoidentyfikacji” [Young people's career orientations as a vital aspect of their self-identification] was presented by Lucyna Myszka-Strychalska (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan), who shared her insights into career plans as part of identity-formation in young people.

Importantly, presentations dealing with counseling and career were given also in other sections as exemplified in the papers of Dr. Małgorzata Mikut (University of Szczecin) and Dr. Małgorzata Rosalska (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan). In her presentation titled “W co angażują się studenci?” [What do students get involved in?], the former drew on findings from her research to discuss extra-academic areas of students' activity. The theme was analyzed not only in

the recentivist perspective, but also in relation to career projects of students. Also Małgorzata Rosalska made students the focal point of her lecture “Studia jako czas (bez)wartościowy. Postawy studentów wobec edukacji akademickiej” [On the worth(lessness) of university studies: Students’ attitudes towards academic education]. She drew on the empirical data from her research on students’ cognitive representations of their university-related activities and on the role of universities in preparing young people for work life. Therein, she foregrounded the tension between pragmatic and autotelic motivations behind the choice of degree and involvement in other activities building students’ career capital. She concluded that career orientations are crucial in young people’s self-identities.

The Section 6 discussions and papers on counsellogy showcased the diversity and inclusiveness of the pursuits of researchers of counseling, work and occupational career. The speakers emphasized also a general relevance of such meetings as a platform on which to share recent and current insights and research findings. They also underlined the expediency of creating a space for discussion and exchange of views. This is particularly urgent since, as evidenced in the papers cited above, the counsellogy-related work of researchers from various academic centers is informed by different theoretical perspectives and various methodological approaches.

Translated by Joanna Karpińska