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30th Forum of Pedagogues: Contemporary Areas of Discourse on Education Institute of Pedagogy of the University of Wrocław, Poland, 20–21 November 2017

Forum of Pedagogues is an annual academic conference, the idea of which was conceived in 1988. The initiators, and later organisers of numerous subsequent pedagogical debates were people who had made a great contribution to the Lower Silesian academic community – dr hab. Jerzy Semków, former professor at the University of Wrocław, Vice Dean of the Department of History and Pedagogical Sciences, and former Head of the Institute of Pedagogy; and Anita Załucha, MA. Throughout thirty years of academic encounters we have discussed various themes related to pedagogy itself, the situation and the role of pedagogues in contemporary society, as well as various aspects and conditions of contemporary educational phenomena.

“The 30th Forum of Pedagogues: Contemporary Areas of Discourse on Education” conference took place on the 20th and 21st of November 2017 in Wrocław (Poland). The event was organized by the Institute of Pedagogy at the University of Wrocław, in cooperation with the Wrocław Chapter of the Polish Pedagogical Society. The Committee of Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences was the academic patron of the conference. The Marshal of the Lower Silesia Voivodship (Cezary Przybylski) and the President of Wrocław (Rafał Dutkiewicz) were honorary patrons. The conference was held under the auspices of His Magnificence Rector Professor Adam Jezierski of the University of Wrocław.

The aim of the 30th Forum was to present the widest possible spectrum of educational discourses – including discourses in some sense determined by area *sensu largo*, that is: history, tradition, conditions, contemporary social, cultural, and political discourses, etc. It was also an attempt to summarize three decades of complex transformations of theory and practice of education in Poland. During these three decades, there have been tensions, conflicts, cooperation, mutual inspiration and borrowings, appropriations, absorptions, attractions,

misunderstandings, confusions, separations, reticence, creating barriers, and taking preference between the formal and informal areas of education. The socio-cultural climate formed in this way was of great significance for the functioning of individuals and groups, as well as creating spaces and discourses of education. Mosaic differentiation and antinomies that occur in the liberal democratic society create a specific dynamics. Reflection, examination, and description are necessary to capture its features. These tasks are taken up especially by the pedagogues, commentators, and critics of pedagogical theory and practice, who bear a special social responsibility and have a profound insight into the contemporary areas of discourse on education.

As a part of the proceedings the organisers have proposed such thematic areas as:

- the development of pedagogical (sub)disciplines as an answer to the educational challenges of the last three decades;
- the diversity of relationships between the formal and the informal areas in education;
- diversity and plurality of contemporary educational areas;
- sub-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary approach to the area of education;
- the role of education in pluralistic societies;
- the main methodological tendencies in contemporary educational research;
- between pragmatics and autotelic character of educational research and practice;
- the praxeological dimension of methodical discourses in formal and informal education;
- the area of university and academic discourses in the times of systematic transformations;
- scientific reflection on the strategies of reforming education;
- chances, limitations, and barriers of application of new theories in pedagogical practice;
- educational phenomena overlooked in pedagogical research;
- pedagogical discourses ignored by educational practice.

On the first day of the conference (20th of November 2017) the event was inaugurated by Professor Alicja Szerłaż (Head of the Institute of Pedagogy at the University of Wrocław) and Professor Witold Jakubowski (Vice-Dean of the Faculty of History and Pedagogical Sciences at the University of Wrocław). Then, Professor Wiktor Żłobicki (Head of the Wrocław Division of the Polish Pedagogical Society, University of Wrocław) led the plenary session. The first

speaker of the plenary session was Professor Alicja Kargulowa, who delivered the lecture *Counsellogy as an Area of Educational Discourse*, presenting theoretical and research framework and the insights produced in this field of pedagogical reflection. Counsellogy studies include not only counselling *sensu stricto*, but also the counselling aspect of other educational and cultural phenomena (for instance: guidebooks). Counsellogy adjusts to its area of research – which in the indeterminate postmodernity remains to a certain degree fluid and is undergoing constant transformations – making counsellogy itself rather fluid and changing, constantly developing, instead of being closed and fossilized.

The next speaker was the Head of the 1st Forum of Pedagogues – Professor Jerzy Semków, who spoke about the idea of the conference, which was conceived as a meeting of theoreticians and practitioners of education, education scholars, as well as graduates and students of pedagogy. For three decades the organisers of the Forum have attempted to spark discussions on the most important problems faced by pedagogy in an ever-changing world. Professor Jerzy Semków also mentioned pedagogues who had made their first steps in the world of science at those conferences, and who are currently setting the tone for Polish pedagogy.

The next speaker, Professor Danuta Waloszek (Higher School of Business in Dąbrowa Górnicza), in her paper *From Pre-School Pedagogics to Pedagogy. Reflection on the Science of the Subdiscipline*, discussed the problem of difficult status of this sub-discipline of pedagogy. The ‘unscientific’ discourse is posing a threat to pre-school pedagogy in terms of methodology and terminology, which is connected with the non-scientific way of conducting research in this sub-discipline and its fragmentation into numerous “smaller” pre-school pedagogies.

Then, Professor Beata Cytowska (University of Wrocław) presented the paper *Inclusive Face of Public School*, in which she discussed the situation of pupils with special needs in public schools in Poland, against the background of solutions in other European countries. The speaker analysed the conditions underpinning this situation: attitude of teachers, pupils, and family environment, as well as other factors (material, organisational, financial, legal, etc.). She also presented the current state of play and perspectives of inclusive education.

The last paper of the plenary session was *The Possibility of Implementing the Idea of Respecting Dignity of a Person with Disability in the Perspective of Special Pedagogy* by Professor Bernadeta Szczupał (University of Wrocław). The speaker focused on the problem of objectification and dehumanisation, which constitutes a real obstacle to educating people with disabilities. People with disabilities are at an increased risk of abuse and various forms of violence. Special pedagogy should clearly and effectively demand respect for dignity of persons with disabilities during all phases of education.

After the plenary session, the conference proceeded in thematic sessions. In the First Section participants discussed such topics as: school education, role of the teacher, student, and parent, the ability to learn among young Poles, State and

private education, as well as functions of a contemporary school. In the Second Section participants discussed pedagogical research in the quantitative, qualitative, and combined paradigms, sub-disciplinary character of family pedagogy, interdisciplinarity of health pedagogy, new trends in labour pedagogy, and the methodological discourse of pedagogy in family-related sciences. The Third Section was dedicated to academic education: problems connected with the work of academic teachers, reflectivity as a key competence, the paths of self-development of young pedagogues, as well as barriers in the education of pedagogy students. In the last section, the participants discussed education of older people: the role of informal education, possibility of using literature, assistance for seniors with disabilities, educational paths for older people, and the categorization of this period of maturity.

The next part of the conference consisted in pedagogical debates organised by the Departments of the Institute of Pedagogy at the University of Wrocław: *Education of Adults in the Social, Cultural, and Methodological Perspectives* (Department of Education and Culture Studies), *Intercultural Education – Opportunities and Threats for Dialogue in the 21st Century* (Department of Intercultural Education and Research on Social Assistance), *School in Society and for Society* (Department of Pre-School and Early School Education), *Contemporary Problems of Special Pedagogy as a Discipline* (Department of Education of Persons with Disabilities), *Future of Education in the Context of the Reform of Higher Education* (Department of General Pedagogy), *Social and Cultural Areas of Communication in Education* (Department of Media Education), and *The Issues of Effectiveness in Prophylaxis and Resocialisation* (Department of Resocialisation). One of the debates was the panel discussion *Competences of a Contemporary Counsellor* organised by the Department of Counselling. The moderators (dr Violetta Drabik-Podgórna, Professor Andrzej Ładyżyński, Professor Edyta Zierkiewicz) discussed the possibility of creating a typology of contemporary counsellors working in distinct areas of assistance, and outlined the framework of their competences, which sparked further discussions about family, vocational, formal and informal counselling, as well as about the counselling aspect of popular culture.

The second day of the conference (21st of November 2017) began with the proceedings of thematic sections. In the First Section the participants discussed cooperation of teachers and parents, agreement and conflicts between parents and youth, diversity of contemporary high school education, dialogue in contemporary school, and citizenship competences of pupils in special schools. The Second Section was dedicated to such problems as: politics of apartheid in South African school system, memory turn in contemporary pedagogy, the meaning and the role of fairy tales and stories about magic, possibility of (re)constructing social identity through the visualization of memory, experience and education in the perspective of pragmatism, and the opportunity to apply hermeneutics of

translation in pedagogy. In the last thematic section, the participants discussed prioritisation of STEM in education, intellectual education, research on the role of women in gangs, ideology and political correctness in education, as well as e-learning in traditional education.

The plenary session on the second day of the conference began with a special event – the awarding of Professor Alicja Kargulowa with the Medal of Merit for the Development of Polish Pedagogy, awarded by the Committee of Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The medal was formally given, on behalf of the Committee of Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences, by the Head of the Committee Professor Bogusław Śliwerski. In the laudation in honour of Professor Kargulowa, Professor Śliwerski emphasized two aspects of her work: scientific and administrative. Numerous publications (six monographs, over 220 chapters in edited volumes, several dozen of articles in academic journals) of the highest scientific value in Polish pedagogy, as well as successful administrative work in various academic institutions have led Professor Kargulowa to create a true “Wrocław School of Counselling”. Professor’s former students (many of whom are now her collaborators), representing numerous academic institutions and various fields of counselling, or more broadly – pedagogical discourse, gathered in the Great Hall of the Institute of Pedagogy at the University of Wrocław as a living proof of the impact that Professor Alicja Kargulowa’s contribution made in Polish science.

After this solemn moment the plenary session began, led by Professor Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań). The first speaker was Professor Bogusław Śliwerski (Head of the Committee of Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences, University of Łódź, Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Pedagogy in Warsaw), who in the paper *Garden of Contemporary Pedagogical Thought* spoke of the diversity of Polish pedagogy, presenting this phenomenon in the wider European and global perspective. He also discussed the need to gain a good understanding of this diversity, which can indeed intimidate novice pedagogues, who – thanks to proper academic preparation – can learn to use the richness of pedagogical thought. Professor Śliwerski also discussed the political entanglements of pedagogy – through its close relationship with educational policy – and the attempts at taking control of the pedagogical discourse by politicians.

The next speaker was Professor Zbyszko Melosik (Vice-Head of the Committee of Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań), who in the paper *Football and Reconstructions of Socio-Cultural Identity* discussed the phenomenon of mass sports as a significant factor in shaping identity in the postmodern world. The speaker analysed two national teams: Dutch and Brazilian, discussing how the style of playing can be interpreted as an expression of national character or culture and the identity of a certain community.

The next paper was *Constructing Identity in Educational Discourse. Between Community and Individual* by Professor Mirosława Nowak-Dziemianowicz (University of Opole), who presented a wider social and cultural context of identity formation among people today. Referring to numerous examples, she focused on the fact that, on the one hand, people (especially young) are nowadays, in a way, forced to search for and express their own identity and, on the other hand, they are doing so on an ever more shallow and ever more superficial level, focusing only on what is visible.

The next speaker was Professor Edyta Zierkiewicz (University of Wrocław), who in the paper *Constructing the Experience of Death as a Lesson of Life in Autopathographs: Thanatopedagogical Analysis* discussed the image of death in autopathographs of women diagnosed with cancer, against the background of contemporary social sciences and humanities reflection on death, as well as on the place of death in pedagogical reflection and the presence of death in education. The speaker also discussed the developing field of academic reflection – death studies, proceeding according to the social and humanities perspectives in Western countries, but now also emerging in the Polish academia.

The plenary session of the conference was concluded by Magda Karkowska, PhD (University of Łódź), who in the paper *Narrative Strategies for Creating Identity – About Biographical Narrations* discussed the meaning of narration in creating identity by contemporary people, as well as the use of biographical method in researching this field. It is biographical research which constitutes one of the most important fields that strive to deepen our understanding of contemporary human beings in pedagogical research.

The end of the conference was marked by the speech by the Head of the Forum: Professor Wiktor Żłobicki, who thanked the speakers, participants, and guests of the Forum of Pedagogues and invited them to take part in the next 31st Forum of Pedagogues in the future.

Translated by Jacek Gulanowski