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Effective school in a crisis COVID-19. Engaging the school community in coping with school challenges based on the Lewin and Fisher model, in transactional analysis terms

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Abstract

This article is a case study of coping with the challenge of change at Primary School No. 6 in Września from October to December 2021.

Underlying the intervention work described in the case study was the model of implementing change in an organization proposed by Kurt Lewin (Lewin, 1951; Bhayangkara, 2020) and John Fisher's approach to individual coping with change (Fisher, 2012). In this paper, we look at the process from the perspective of educational transactional analysis.

The purpose of the process was to increase the sense of psychological and content security of the 7th and 8th grade community during the period of December 2021.

630 individuals actively participated in the process. The analysis was based on qualitative research in 5 groups of school community members: teachers (N = 45), students (N = 300), parents (N = 280), a group of psychologists and educators (N = 3) and school management (N = 2). The process included: observation, in-depth interviews, group work, and discussion. Participants also had an opportunity to individually analyze conclusions and proposals developed during the process.

As a result of the actions taken, comprehensive solutions and recommendations were proposed, which were communicated and implemented in the community of classes VII and VIII,

among students, teachers and parents. In this paper we show that and why parallel work with all major stakeholder groups is necessary to effect change in the school.

Keywords: implementing change, Lewin model, passivity, systemic solutions, rapid response system, educational transactional analysis

Introduction – an outline of the situation

During the pandemic period, i.e. from March 2020 to June 2021, Polish educational institutions switched to remote teaching, interchangeably with offline and hybrid teaching. Upon returning from the vacations, there were calls in the media, social media, and in official communications from public institutions and professionals for the post-holiday time in schools to be spent on reintegration, back to building relationships, rather than on learning itself. Throughout the period of the pandemic, international organizations, such as UNICEF (The State of the World's Children 2021), as well as individual countries, including Poland, have conducted research and published reports on aspects of mental health of children and adolescents, especially on the impact that limiting social contact may have on it (Buchner, Wierzbicka, 2020; Buchner, Majchrzak, Wierzbicka, 2020; Grzelak, Żyro, 2021; Łuczyńska, Pyżalski, 2021; Ptaszek et. al., 2020; Pyżalski, 2021; Plebańska, Szyller, Sieńczewska, 2020; Sobiesiak-Penszko, Pazderski, 2020).

A year and a half later, around October 2021, both in the media and in direct communication with schools, voices were heard about an exceptional intensification of difficulties in students – even those who had managed without any particular problems so far. Difficulties were pointed out both in terms of behaviour and content competence, i.e. the knowledge that teachers expected after a few months of online work.

The theoretical assumptions of the process, the perspective of Transactional Analysis, the case study with recommendations, the juxtaposition of theoretical assumptions with implementation, and the final conclusions are presented in this paper.

The decision to present the topic as a case study stems from three key motives:

1. The challenge faced by the described school is a common one, affecting many institutions which, if they have identified the difficulty at all, are looking for solutions on their own. It is useful to show a possible way, probably not the only way, to deal with the difficulties.
2. The process was planned and carried out on the basis of research and theory, grounded in science, about which those involved were kept informed. Awareness and transparency of actions taken, drawing on proven methods and tools in organic ongoing work in schools is not standard. Meanwhile, understanding the processes that occur between people, in the process of

- learning, or in the process of communication allows, on the one hand, for their more conscious application both at the level of the individual and the group, and on the other hand allows for their application in other contexts.
3. It is worth appreciating and popularizing the openness of the headmasters, teachers and the not inconsiderable school community that engaged in co-operation, looking for common solutions.

Theoretical framework

At the core of this work is a holistic approach to both the student and other members of the school community as individuals for whom the roles they play in that community are only one role, often distinct from those outside the school (Sills, Fish, Lapworth, 1999). Equally important are the principles of working with groups already proposed by Berne (1966) and the aspect of systemicity – both at the level of process implementation and at the level of solutions.

The basis of the work was to stop and look at the situation for the here and now. Each group was invited to look not only at themselves, but also at other actors in the situation. The participants used and developed competences in building self-awareness, empathy (role playing) and perspective.

The process described in the case study was based on Kurt Lewin's model of implementing change in organizations (Lewin, 1951; Bhayangkara, 2020) and John Fisher's approach to individual coping with change (Fisher, 2012), which will be briefly presented below.

The author's introversion activity presented here has not been previously implemented or described. It was designed at the executive level based on the facilitator's years of psychological, coaching, mediation and intervention experience and good knowledge of the school environment.

Lewin's model

One of the key challenges from the beginning of the process was to achieve the goal while providing the process participants with a sense of security and empowerment. Hence, at the organizational level, Lewin's (1939, 1951) proposal was applied, for which these needs are an integral underlying value.

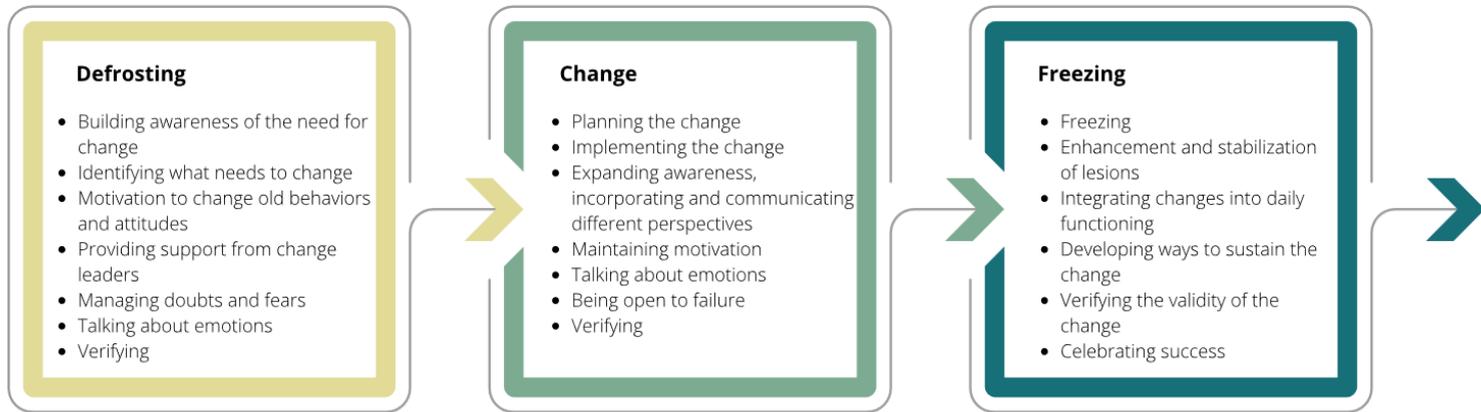


Fig. 1
Kurt Lewin's model for implementing change
Source: Lewin, 1951.

According to Lewin's conception, effective and safe implementation of change in an organization involves 3 phases:

Unfreezing, the change itself and freezing, initiating the change unfreezing includes: a. building awareness of the need for change, b. determining what needs to be changed, c. motivating to change old behaviors and attitudes, d. providing support from change leaders, e. managing doubts and fears, f. talking about emotions, g. verification.

Change, including: a. planning the change, b. implementing the change, c. expanding awareness of the change, d. incorporating and communicating different perspectives, e. maintaining motivation, f. talking about emotions, g. being open to failure, h. verification.

Freezing: a. reinforcing and stabilizing change, b. integrating change into daily functioning, c. developing ways to sustain change, d. verifying that change is valid, e. celebrating success.

Process of personal transformation

From the beginning of the process, it was obvious to the implementers that the implementation of the recommendations, whatever they might be, would evoke different reactions from the school community not only at the system level, but also at the individual level. Therefore, from the very beginning of the process, both its plan and – as a part of micro-education – the mechanisms likely to be triggered in each of the participants were communicated. To this end, Fisher's model was used, with an attractive visualization designed to inform about the stages of coping with change without imposing an additional burden on the audience.

An important element that Levin did not include in his model and that Fisher writes about (Fisher, 2005; Fisher, 2012) is the aspect of time – the importance of the past and future to the change processes that occur in the here and now. Fisher cites Mahoney (Mahoney, 2003), according to whom we are all “conservative” in our way of thinking and thus more or less resistant to change. We need order in our lives and seek it in the familiar (whether it is most effective and efficient is not as important as the fact that it is familiar). Mahoney (2003) goes on to state that all change occurs in the context of interpersonal interactions, so for an organization to change, individuals must be taken into account - understanding at the very least that change can mean something different to each individual and his or her environment and its impact on a person's situation can vary.

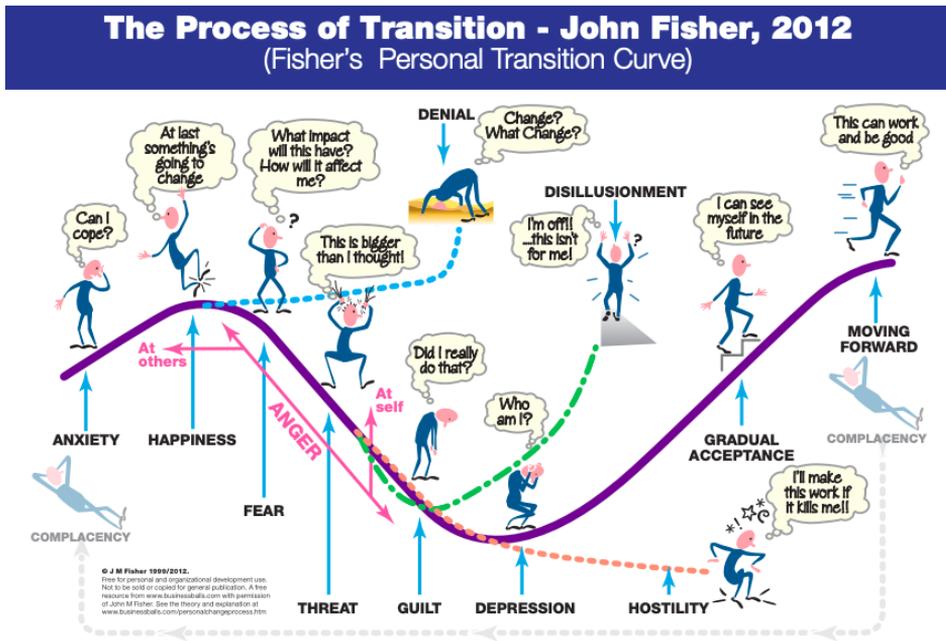


Fig. 2

Personal transition curve

Source: Fisher, 2012.

Fisher's proposed personal transition curve was helpful for the process (Fisher, 2005; Fisher, 2012; <https://www.r10.global/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/fisher-transition-curve-2012-1.pdf>).

He distinguishes 12 phases in which we can find ourselves (or get stuck) going through change:

Anxiety phase – the realization that events lie beyond the reach of anyone's understanding or control. Top, how a person handles this phase affects the rest of the curve, and finally, self-esteem.

Happiness phase – the realization that one's point of view is recognized and shared by others, there is relief that something will be corrected (regardless of how the person perceived the previous situation), and a kind of satisfaction that any of the personal reflections on the previous system were accurate (again, regardless of how the person likes the status quo, there are usually elements to change). One can have a sense of "Thank God, finally something is happening!" here, and an awareness of control over one's own life if one will only engage. The trap in this phase can be unrealistic expectations, which is why management is so important here: mindfulness and making things real.

Fisher writes: "if we can start an intervention at this stage, we can minimize impact of the rest of the curve and virtually flatten it. Through engagement, in-

forming, getting «acceptance» at this time, we can help people move through the process” (Fisher, 2012).

Fear phase – awareness of an impending change in a person’s core behavioral system – the person will behave in a different way and this will affect their perception of themselves, but also other people’s perceptions of them.

Feeling threatened phase – awareness of an impending complex change in what a person considers to be their core identity and what constitutes their sense of self-worth. The person does not know how they will behave when the old rules no longer apply and new rules have not yet been established.

The guilt phase – the awareness of the movement of our self away from our core self-perception, when a person examines how they have behaved in the past and looks at alternative interpretations, they begin to redefine their sense of self. Recognizing the inappropriateness of one’s past actions and their consequences can trigger feelings of guilt.

Depression phase – the realization that our past actions, behaviors and beliefs are inconsistent with our basic construction of our identity. General lack of motivation and confusion. The person does not know what the future will be or how they will cope in it.

Phase of gradual acceptance – the person makes sense of the situation and his or her place in the change is at the beginning of the process of managing his or her own control over the change, making sense of it, the background of the “light at the tunnel” stage.

The phase of moving forward – the person begins to exert more control, regains a sense of self. He or she knows who he or she is again and begins to feel comfortable acting in accordance with beliefs.

Disillusionment phase – the realization that your values, beliefs and goals are inconsistent with those of the organization. This is characterized by a lack of motivation, focus, dissatisfaction and gradual mental withdrawal (working at a minimum) or actively challenging the change through criticism/complaints.

Hostile phase – the person continues to operate old unreliable processes that are no longer part of the new situation. New processes are ignored or actively undermined.

Denial phase – lack of acceptance of any change and its impact on the individual. The person acts as if the change has not occurred, they follow old practices, ignore evidence or information that contradicts their belief system. “I can’t see it, so it doesn’t exist.”

Anger phase – people who have had the change imposed on them direct their anger outward, at other people who are blamed for the situation. Later, the anger moves inward and there is a danger that this will lead the person into stages of guilt and depression or anger for lack of knowledge or determination.

The complacency phase (King, 2007) – the person has survived the change, rationalized the events, incorporated them into their new system and become accustomed to the new reality. This is the sense that the person is back in their own comfort zone and does not encounter any event that is outside of their system of constructs. She knows what decisions are appropriate and can predict future events with a high degree of certainty. This is the phase of attending to other matters, where the completed change process is seen by the person as natural and unnecessarily arousing so much emotion.

The phases, as presented by Fisher, allow the person to find their current position in the change process and verify the status quo - do I want to be here? what's ahead for me?

Transactional analysis

Both Lewin's model and Fisher's proposal have been shown to resonate with the tenets of transactional analysis. Transactional analysis can provide a starting point and support for this work, and it can also be a reference point in terms of the attitudes and values it promotes.

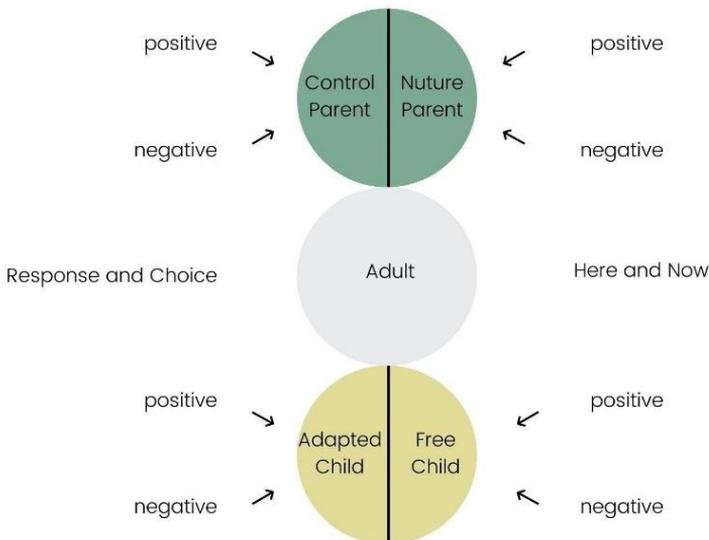


Fig. 3

A functional model of transactional analysis

Source: Stewart, Joines, 2016.

During the process we look at in this case study, transactional analysis was not named as an integral part of the planned and implemented activities, but

looking at the process in its context allows for interesting observations and questions.

At the core of transactional analysis is a model of ego states. The first-order structural model assumes 3 ego states: **Child, Parent, and Adult** (Stewart, Joines, 2016; Emmerton, Newton, 2004; Vos, van Rijn, 2021). Child state – behaviors, thoughts, and feelings, reproduced from childhood. Parent state – behaviors, thoughts, or feelings, copied from parents or persons with an adequate function. Adult – behaviors, thoughts, and feelings that are direct responses to the here and now.

Of particular relevance to the case study presented here is the functional model of Self states, which refers to behaviors and only describes behaviors.

The model remains uniform only at the level of the **Adult Self**, while the **Child Self** and **Parent Self** have their own sub-representations. The **Adult Self** is considered here to be any behavior that responds to current challenges (here and now), using all the resources of the adult.

The **Child Self** state includes both the Free Child and the Adapted Child.

State of Self – **Free Child** is a state in which a person engages in those childhood behaviors in which he or she does not benefit from parental commands and prohibitions.

The **Free Child Positive** (OK) is triggered in situations that are appropriate for such behaviors, e.g., fully engaging in a board game, venting anger in a controlled safe environment.

The **Negative Free Child** (not OK), on the other hand, is triggered when the behaviors are not appropriate, e.g., intense play on public transportation.

The state of the Self – the **Adapted Child**, which is responsible for finding oneself in norms and rules, but also in expectations from the outside, can manifest as:

The **Positive Adapted Child** (OK), whose behaviors respond to the expectations of the environment, such as following the rules of *savoir vivre*.

The **Adapted Negative Child** (not OK), whose behaviour is unfavourable both for the actors of the situation and for him/herself, e.g. taking offence instead of giving clear information, not taking action due to destructive beliefs about oneself or the world, e.g. “I am hopeless. I won’t even try.”

Similarly, the **Self-Parent** state, may be the **Normative Parent** or the **Caring Parent**, roles heard/observed in childhood, whereby, as Stewart and Joines (2016) point out, a distinction can be made:

Normative Positive Parent (OK) in whom the Parent’s directions/commands are driven by the protection or well-being of the other person, e.g. Please stop smoking, It’s not good for you.

The **Normative Negative Parent** (not OK), whose behaviors belittle the other person, e.g., “You made a mistake again,” “Is it really that hard to grasp?”

On the other hand, there remains the **Caring Parent**, a state in which the behaviors of the parents/caregivers from whom we experienced caring are reproduced. Here, too, a distinction can be made:

The **Caring Parent Positive** (OK), combining care and respect, for the person they care for, e.g. "If you need help, let me know."

The **Negative Caring Parent** (not OK) who cares while placing themselves above the person they care for while undermining the person's worth, e.g., "I see I have to help you again," which may be accompanied by taking over the task without getting the person's permission.

Jack Dusay (1972), who formulated the energy balance hypothesis, assumed that when one state increases its activity, the others are naturally withdrawn. Thus, if a person makes the decision and effort to use the state of Self – the Caring Parent more often, one of the consequences will be a reduction in the behavior of the Normative Parent.

The aforementioned theories and models provide a reference point for the presented case study. This paper does not presume to address each of their elements, but rather to illuminate certain relationships:

1. Decision-making model – **people decide their destiny and these decisions can be changed** (Stewart, Joines, 2016).
2. Influenced by experiences and observations, **we can change our own patterns of behavior**. Other people can put pressure on us, however, the decision – as to the choice of our behaviors or emotions – remains with us. At the same time, we actively decide to change (Stewart, Joines, 2016).
3. **Increasing the activity of one state, reduces the activity of the others** (Dusay, 1972).
4. **Taking care of a person in the happiness phase** allows the curve of the personal transformation process to flatten out (Fisher, 2012)

Case study

In October 2021, i.e. approximately 1.5 months after students returned to full-time schooling after the pandemic and summer vacation, teachers, parents, and students in the community of the Elementary School No. 6 in Września, western Poland drew attention to the intensification of disturbing behaviors and phenomena. Informal signals reported to the headmasters, teachers, psychologists and pedagogues during informal meetings, corridor talks, conversations with parents, concerned, among others, decreased motivation of students, intensified difficult behaviours, lowered level of learning and its results. These reported phenomena had occurred at the school before, but not in such intensity and not as commonly.

The first intuitive concept focused on the need for intervention among students. The school principal, Dariusz Andrzejewski, in consultation with the school psychologists and educators, decided to invite an external facilitator to look at the situation. The facilitator – author of this article, a psychologist and coach specializing in dealing with difficult situations – had already worked with the school and had an understanding of its resources and challenges. Finally, after the initial assessment, the school management decided on systemic actions based on inclusive leadership, i.e. a process of cooperation of the community of stakeholders, starting from the analysis of the situation and learning about it from different perspectives, to the development of countermeasures, their implementation and monitoring.

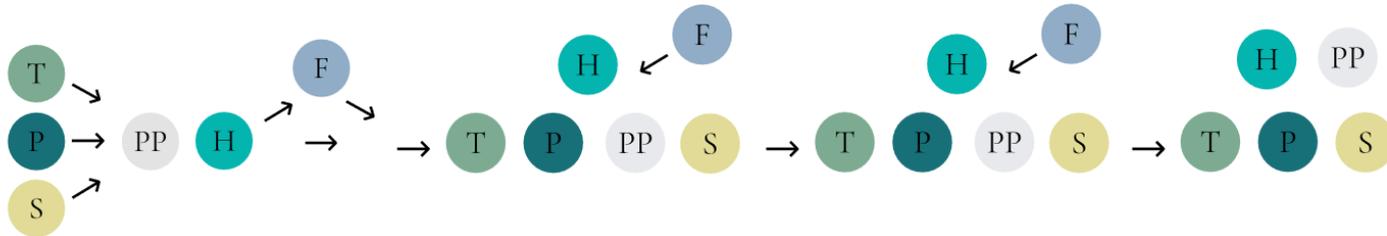
The school did not focus on interventions among students, but approached the problem systemically, despite the increased response time this way, because:

- a) students are only part of the situation. While it is their behavior that is normally subject to observation and evaluation, both teachers and parents, as well as other members of the school community, have important, sometimes crucial, influence over the working conditions and decisions of other groups, including students;
- b) the challenge itself stemmed from the general situation-it affected many schools that have struggled with pandemic, online, and hybrid learning in recent months. Knowledge of the prevalence of the problem came from conversations, experiences with other schools, and own research of the author. Systemicity, in this particular situation, involved preparing and implementing:
 - a) communication process, including all school stakeholders;
 - b) a way of working that engages and involves different points of view;
 - c) realistic and effective proposals that are acceptable to each group;
 - d) an effective system for monitoring the situation.

The process involved 5 stages:

- I. First signals;
- II. Initial situation analysis and strategy development;
- III. Consultation with stakeholders:
 - A) determination of spheres of influence of individual groups;
 - B) definition of problem sources from the perspective of each group;
 - C) formulation of needs of each group from the perspective of each group;
- IV. Conclusions and recommendations:
 - A) formulation of proposals for supporting actions;
 - B) consultation of proposals;
- V. Implementation, monitoring and evaluation:
 - A) implementation of the proposal in classes 7–8 with the prospect of extending it to other groups;
 - B) monitoring and evaluation.

I. first signals II. preliminary analysis of the situation and development of the strategy III. consultations with stakeholders IV. conclusions and recommendations V. implementation, monitoring and evaluation



S - students (7th, 8th grade), T - teachers, P - parents, PP - psychologists and pedagogues, H - school headmaster, F - facylitator

Fig. 4
Planned and implemented process structure
 Source: own study.

Communication of current activities was an important element at each stage of the process.

Ad I. First signals

Informally reported observations appeared from the end of September. They were heard and taken into account due to 2 types of premises:

- 1) intensity (severity and the fact that they also affected students who had been coping well with difficulties so far);
- 2) the school's previous experience in working with the community. The school has been active for several years, both locally and thematically, nationwide, with an emphasis on increasing the proficiency of students and teachers by developing their competence in new technologies. Of particular importance here is the school's participation in the Code for Green project of the Social Initiatives Forum Foundation¹, where students, based on the Design Thinking method and C4G methodology, develop locally implemented environmental protection solutions. As part of the project, both the school headmaster and some staff members develop soft competencies, including excellence in building a supportive community.

Ad II. Initial situation analysis and strategy development

Letter to parents of students (e-mail):

Among students of grades 7 and 8 of our school we observe an increase in fatigue, problems with motivation to learn and difficult behavior. These are currently common phenomena and occur in many schools in the country. Some of them are the result of the intense and multidimensional impact of pandemonium and, above all, of being closed and living online. These include reduced motivation to learn, unstable social lives, a reduced sense of security, and thoughts of an increasingly unclear future. This is compounded by uncertainty about how the situation will develop further.

In such conditions the sense of security can be shaken in everyone, both adults and children.

That's why we have taken preventive measures – we have already started working with the teaching staff and now we invite you to take a look at the situation together and identify the areas that we – as a school and you as parents – can influence.

During the meeting we will present to you the effects of the teachers' work, but also invite you to think together about what further steps we can take.

¹ <https://ffis.edu.pl/>

Letter to students (e-mail):

The situation we have been living in for a year and a half (pandemic situation, online) is different from what we have known. We are only now seeing what consequences it brings. And we are only now learning to deal with those consequences – to anticipate them and respond to them with care for ourselves and others.

That's why we've taken precautions – we've started working with teaching staff and parents, and now we're inviting you to look at the situation together and identify areas where we can make an impact.

During the meeting we will invite you to work together.

In order to gather signs of change, the school director invited an external expert with knowledge of the school to collaborate. A preliminary strategy was developed and implemented. The school manager invited an external expert to work with him and an initial strategy for further action was developed and implemented. The core and goal of the process has been defined and communicated, but the management has also conducted an ongoing evaluation and has continuously monitored the needs and signals regarding the subject matter and the support process.

Ad III. Stakeholder Consultation

Interested groups and individuals were invited. (teachers, parents, psychologists, pedagogues and students of classes VII and VIII). The process of analysis began, organized by the school principal, with a series of short meetings during which each group of school stakeholders: had the opportunity to present their own perspective. Implemented were:

- online meetings with teachers;
- online meeting with parents;
- hybrid meeting with psychological-educational staff;
- hybrid meeting with students.



Fig. 5

Project participants

Source: own study.

The director communicated and supported the process at all stages. Prior to each meeting, the target group received an email with information about the topic, purpose, and context of the meeting.

Each person had the opportunity to individually:

- present their picture of the situation,
- present their needs,
- propose solutions,
- refer to the worked out proposals for solutions,
- monitor the situation,
- raise comments and doubts.

The first one and a half hour online meeting with teachers was attended by 45 people, i.e. more than half of the school staff. Teachers were informed about the purpose of the meeting and its agenda. Due to high activity of the participants, the agenda items that were not accomplished during the first meeting (spheres of influence and proposals) were discussed on the next date. Before the second meeting, the results of each group's work were organized into categories.

This material was the starting point for the second online meeting with teachers, which was focused on identifying spheres of influence and directions for seeking solutions to the areas that they felt they had influence on.

In this phase of the process, the purpose of the meetings with teachers was to view the current situation and prepare to build strategies to support male and female students, and indirectly, teachers and parents. A similar online meeting was then conducted with the parents of the students. They were attended by 280 parents of students in grades VII and VIII.

In both groups, the agenda included:

1. A brief introduction of the context of the meeting and the process – school principal.
2. Outline of context and reference to research, reports and situations in other schools – facilitator leading the workshop.
3. Working in subgroups (5–6 people). Each group recorded their conclusions and indications in an online sheet. The entries on the sheet were anonymous. A few participants decided to sign their conclusions. The participants' task was to work on identifying students' problems/challenges, needs, and sources of difficulties. It was also important to point out difficulties which the participants identified as new, ones they had not encountered before. The work in both groups was summed up by discussing the developed content on the forum, making additions and announcing further developments.
4. The group of teachers also focused on the areas of influence:
 - what I have influence on, what I don't have influence on,
 - that the school, but more importantly, I can and am willing to take steps to help myself, other teachers, parents, and students,

- preliminary recommendations – which of the proposed actions I can/we can realistically implement,
 - what do we need for this.
5. During each of the meetings, the facilitators spent a few minutes discussing the context of those difficulties that were reported particularly often. The participants were initially introduced to the report *Teenagers 3.0* (2021). Particular attention was paid to fragments of the survey indicating discrepancies between students' and parents' perceptions of the rules of technology use.

Wyzwania:

ORGANIZACJA

- przygotowanie do egzaminu E8 przy widocznych zaległościach wynikających z nauki zdalnej (trudności w samodzielnym tworzeniu wypowiedzi pisemnej i problemy z zapamiętywaniem słownictwa) **chęć udzielenia pomocy, PRACE PISEMNE WYKONYWANE PODCZAS LEKCJI**
- duże braki w wiedzy i umiejętnościach **chęć udzielenia pomocy w razie potrzeby** **CHĘĆ udzielenia pomocy**
- przemęczenie uczniów "dobrych" po lekcjach zajęcia dodatkowe, korepetycje- brak czasu na odpoczynek
- brak czasu na utrwalenie materiału
- **ANALIZA ZAKRESU MATERIAŁU DO EGZAMINU E8- WYRZUCENIE ZBĘDNEGO MATERIAŁU**
- powtarzanie najważniejszych treści, zapoznanie z typem zadań, które pojawiają się na egzaminie,
- **SKUPIENIE SIĘ NA PODSTAWACH**
- **INDYWIDUALIZACJA PRACY**
- **ZAPOZNANIE RODZICÓW Z AKTUALNYM STANEM POZIOMU WIEDZY I UMIEJĘTNOŚCI**
- **EGZAMIN A OCENY (DLA RODZICA NADAL WAŻNA JEST TYLKO OCENA)**
powtarzanie najważniejszych treści materiału, okrojenie treści tylko do niezbędnych na godzinach wychowawczych opracować i przedstawić techniki uczenia się
 - ograniczenie treści na przedmiotach których nie ma na egzaminacyjnie do niezbędnych
 - jasne określenie, co uczeń musi umieć na poszczególne oceny - dokonuje wyboru - na ile i czego chce się uczyć

NORMY

- problem z przestrzeganiem norm lekcyjnych (dużo rozmów, mówi bez zgłaszania, picie i jedzenie na lekcji- przekąski pod ręką) - **USTALENIE JASNYCH GRANIC I ZASAD ZACHOWANIA NA LEKCJI, NIE LEKCEWAŻYĆ niepożądaných ZACHOWAŃ UCZNIÓW (OMAWIANIE SYTUACJI TRUDNYCH, WAŻNY PRZEPŁYW INFORMACJI MIĘDZY NAUCZYCIELAMI)**
- nieprzestrzeganie zasad zachowania na lekcji (picie, jedzenie podczas zajęć)
- aroganckie odpowiedzi do nauczycieli - **spokojna reakcja nauczyciela**
uświadomienie uczniowi niestosownego zachowania
- **USTALENIE NORM, DO KTÓRYCH SIĘ ODWOŁUJEMY**
- **ustalenie wspólnie zasad zachowania nie tylko na lekcjach, wyrabianie dobrych nawyków**

Fig. 6

Review material – records of teachers' workshop work

Source: own study.

In most homes, there are no rules in place to limit the amount of time a teen can use the Internet or rules regarding the selection of content they can access. **The most common form of “parental control” is talking whenever a child reports a problem** (teens – 17.2% vs. parents – 56.7%). Preventive talks to prevent risks are declared by about 7% of teenagers, while at the same time about 60% of parents and guardians declare conducting such activities.

The next group was composed of school psychologists and educators who compared their experience, their own knowledge about the current situation of students and teachers with the information gathered during meetings with teachers and parents.

The preliminary recommendations developed by teachers and parents were communicated to the other groups (online tools, meetings) with an invitation for consultation, questions, comments and concerns.

Following step was a meeting with students, which took place in a hybrid format during one lesson. Each class of VII and VIII, under the supervision of teachers, stayed in classrooms, while the instructor connected with online groups. The workshop was preceded by a short introduction – an outline of the situation, a reference to the context and activities so far, as well as an invitation to participate in decisions concerning their own near and tangible future. Most of the students signalled their awareness of the process. In the next step, each class (using coloured stones) drew one of the three roles (pupils, teachers, parents) which they were to play and discuss and answer questions from that perspective:

1. What challenges does this group have, what is difficult for them right now?
2. What would this group need?
3. What can I do to respond to these needs?

Pupils worked in groups of 4–5, wrote down their proposals and then a group of delegates presented the results of their work on the forum. The meeting ended with an outline of further work and an invitation to actively participate in consultations.

The meetings resulted in a series of recommendations, which were then consulted. In addition to an opportunity for individual feedback and comments, the school management also organized a meeting with representatives of the school council to discuss the planned particularly intensive changes concerning the use of telephones on school premises. Parents and students were informed about the conclusions of the work during meetings with teachers. Due to radical decisions concerning homework and the rules of tests, the teachers met once again so that everyone had a chance to ask questions and share doubts.

What can the teacher do about it? Manage the amount of material and the way it is distributed (timing, volume of material, review method) so as to leave space for other student activities.

How students use this time is up to them and their parents. For some it will be time to build relationships, for others it will be time to learn (however), and for others it will be time to sit at the computer.

This is not the teacher's sphere of influence.

3. How to give minimum content in subjects i.e. math.

Recommendation: This is an issue to be worked out. It will be addressed by the school mathematicians.

Developed solutions and recommendations for particular groups:

Recommendations for teachers (selected)

1. Challenge – overloading students:
 - a) no homework for Christmas break;
 - b) to give 2 questions for a test/quiz for a pass mark or to give a full set of questions for a test/quiz;
 - c) no homework on weekends until the end of the semester;
 - d) cooperation of teachers within 1 class - following the rules and regulations regarding the number of tests/classes per week;
 - e) no tests in some classes.
2. Challenge – giving students a break from the media:
 - a) limit phone use on school grounds;
 - b) additional preparation of school space for activities other than phones during breaks (corridors with spaces for differentiated activities inviting interaction with others and building relationships, common room with board games, quiet corner, kinect, classroom type games drawn on the floor) within 24 hours.
3. Challenge – Support:
 - a) re-establish assessment as feedback;
 - b) support from the teacher (not shaming, not commenting, rather talking to the student individually, offering support if possible, or discussing why there is a difference in grade.

Recommendations for Parents

1. Parents-teachers one goal

Cooperation with teachers in supporting children. Lack of cooperation between adults does not help children, it can encourage attempts to take advantage of the situation, which sometimes works against the interests and benefits.

2. Physiological needs

Supporting children to maintain a healthy daily rhythm, i.e. adequate sleep, meals at specific times such as breakfast. Lack of a maintained daily rhythm and hunger can result in difficulty concentrating. And definitely during the period of online learning some children have this rhythm of the day disrupted. Expecting children in this state to concentrate and pay attention is an impossible expectation.

3. Clear rules online

In a nationwide study “Teenagers 3.0. Report from a nationwide pupil survey”, published in October 2021, there is a significant difference in how children and parents perceive the time they spend on the computer. It’s a difference of several times. Let’s check to see if we know how much time your child is using technology.

4. Adequate expectations

Inadequate, i.e. too low or too high expectations towards the child (and oneself), but also misguided expectations, e.g. about getting excellent grades in subjects the child is not interested in, are not beneficial neither for us nor for our children. Your child may get a great grade for the here and now, but the information for the future: your abilities and interests are not important to me. Do we want to say that?

5. Supporting independence

It is clear that a child’s difficulty sometimes presents a temptation to do the task for the child. As a result, the child may get a better grade, but a. doesn’t learn, b. learns that he or she can’t do it alone. Not worth it.

6. Appreciation

Appreciating your child is an important part of building his/her self-esteem. Don’t wait “for something big – until he/she deserves it”. Appreciate efforts, plans and goals. Failure is a part of life and the information that mistakes are also valuable, because you can learn from them, can be a valuable lesson for our children.

Recommendations for Students

1. Plan and revise your daily schedule

We deal with planning differently. Some of us don’t plan at all and need help in this area, others plan too much and then are frustrated that they didn’t succeed. That’s why it’s worth thinking about **WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT FOR ME**, then write down 3–4 tasks for the day (no more) and focus on them.

2. Review your goals

The first step you can take to help your children with the current situation is to support them in setting their own goals – e.g. a goal for the coming day/week/month or term. Once you name the goal, it’s easier to keep moving

towards it. Here we can use a “progress bar”, i.e. a scale from 0 to 10 on which the child indicates where he/she is today in terms of his/her goal and what he/she can do to get one step further (e.g. moving from 4 to 5).

3. Take responsibility for your own learning

Taking responsibility for yourself is a skill, not a trait. Therefore, this skill can be developed. How to do it? The method of small steps – start with a small responsibility, then develop it.

4. Appreciate mistakes

Appreciate your efforts, plans and goals. Failure is a part of life and the information that mistakes are also valuable, because you can learn from them, can be a valuable lesson for you.

5. Diversify activities

In order to maintain mental health it is ESSENTIAL to diversify activities, e.g. if I sit in school or in front of a computer for 6 hours, after that time it is worth going for a walk/workout/ walking the dog. If we don't have such a possibility – let's find an activity which is beneficial for us and different from the one we used to do that day.

6. Appreciate yourself and others

Inadequate, i.e. too low or too high expectations of yourself, but also misguided expectations, e.g. for excellent grades in subjects you are not interested in, are not beneficial. If you are not sure why you are learning a particular material, ask how it might be useful or look it up yourself. Look for elements that interest you in the material your school provides. Appreciate yourself for it ;)

Ad V. Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

The ongoing process of introducing changes is subject to ongoing evaluation. Actions taken are verified both at the level of assumptions and implementation.

The presented case study is a description of a real intervention in relation to a challenge identified by the community. Looking at the process in the context of transactional analysis can help to enrich the process, optimize it, but also prepare for further relevant situations.

Due to the intensity of the intervention, this study focuses on a few selected aspects that we have found to be crucial in this setting. These are:

1. Decision model – **people decide their own destiny and these decisions can be changed** (Stewart, Joines, 2016).
2. Influenced by experiences and observations, **we can change our own patterns of behavior**. Other people can put pressure on us, however, the decision – as to the choice of our behavior or emotions – remains with us. At the same time, we actively decide to change (Stewart, Joines, 2016).

3. **Increasing the activity of one state, reduces the activity of the others** (Dusay, 1972).
4. **Taking care of the person in the happiness phase allows for the flattening of the curve of the personal transformation process** (Fisher, 2012).

Ad 1. Decision model – people decide about their destiny and these decisions can be changed

The starting point of the process to which the school community was invited was the grassroots signals of the community indicating little difficulty at the time. Those reporting had a willingness to:

- observe and analyze community life;
- respond to situations they felt needed to be addressed;
- share knowledge, and they knew where to go to do so effectively.

Their willingness was based on previous positive experiences (source – in-depth interviews, self-reported research) and trust that their initiative would be met with an adequate response to help deal with the problem.

The culture of this particular school invites such behavior because community members know that it is effective, it is a confirmation of their impact on reality.

In the next step, when the community was invited to look at the situation and work together to deal with the difficulties in work that took time, required effort, and sometimes exposure, almost the entire staff, working with students in grades VII and VIII, 280 parents, and students in grades VII and VIII participated. Although the students' meetings were organized during lessons, attendance was guaranteed, but activity was no longer. Nevertheless, the students held a discussion and shared their conclusions. The facilitators ensured that before the students started, the situation they were participating in – participatory management – was named.

After each step, the community participants could (still can) make comments and suggestions to the developed conclusions in the forum or anonymously. These are made public, analyzed and taken into account where possible.

Each group – students, teachers, parents, the team of psychologists and educators works in its own sphere of influence. This is one of the most important and emphasized pieces of information from the beginning of the process. By being aware of the spheres of influence, the danger of ineffective inter-group “complaining” (teachers about parents and students, parents about teachers and students, students about teachers and parents, etc.), which is often a tradition in schools, is reduced. In this tradition, there is a place for a specifically understood decision-making and causality, characteristic of communities in which there are 3 main actors, and each group casts itself in the role of the Rescuer or the Victim, the other roles of the dramatic triangle being proposed to the subsequent groups.

An interesting element here is the observation of the participants' reactions to the next steps of the process, e.g., proposals for e.g., no homework for Christmas appeared in the students' and parents' statements. Including this demand in the proposed solutions and taking it into account evoked a reaction of surprise and greater involvement.

Ad 2. Under the influence of experiences and observations, we can change our own behavior patterns. Other people may exert pressure on us, but the decision – as to our choice of behavior or emotions – remains with us. At the same time we actively decide about the change.

At the beginning of the consultations the group of parents and teachers, although both groups worked diligently on the change, heard few voices of the traditional school script described above:

Why didn't they (teachers) just do it when they can do it now. On the other hand: Parents want to have their cake and eat cake. They want the kids to have peace of mind now and pass their exams brilliantly later. So here we have the Normative Parent: This is not how it should be, you have to act differently. or But some parents will not want there to be no work over the weekend, that is the "game of but" presented by the Adapted Child: I am doing my best to please you.

This is also evident in the children's statements, where one finds several repeated phrases, probably heard, indicating the condition of the Adapted Child: (when asked what is the problem:) *emotional disturbance, lack of high academic performance, lower level of learning, (what is needed?) to be nice and active.*

Here it is noteworthy that there were only a few such student statements in the face of a whole pool of factual concrete information indicating a high level of confidence and clear judgment. Most of the students' statements indicate thinking from the Adult Self state, which de facto encourages us to think about levels of adaptation. To what extent is the Adult Self state what it appears to be, and to what extent does it represent a high level of adaptation and response to social expectations. Since the facilitator asks explicitly for honesty, reinforcing the request with information about the joint participation of all groups in the activity and, moreover, about its real impact on students' functioning, does she encourage the adoption of the Adult Self or the Adapted Child? It is likely that the situations are different and the students have made decisions according to both schemes, but the difference makes us stop and think about the implications for further action.

Another interesting element worth mentioning is the workshop form of work, which allowed for discussion in groups of 5–6 people. Working in smaller teams made it possible to give vent to emotions in a casual, only slightly structured conversation, i.e. realize the need for expression of the Child and the Parent, leaving space for constructive, organized conclusions. All groups met after

their work in an open forum document in which the results of each team's work were visible anonymously. Each person could add to the document at any time (also anonymously) or verbally add to previous findings. During each of the meetings the participants used this opportunity to raise additional questions, doubts or proposals.

Ad 3. Increasing the activity of one state limits the activity of others

Enabling members of the school community to participate in key decisions with a very quick return in the form of concrete implemented solutions, resulting from joint transparent communication work, allows for a redefinition of the sense of one's own influence and agency, regardless of age or position.

This activity can strengthen the position of the Adult or encourage the transition from negative to positive states in the position of the Child and Parent. And so, in the process presented here, all of the participant contributions that were made were listened to. The only element of exclusion was the lack of attendance at the meetings, although those who were absent had the opportunity to refer to the solutions worked out anyway, some of them took advantage of it by submitting their postulates after the meetings. Some of them took advantage of this opportunity by voicing their opinions after the meetings. All such comments were either taken into account or responded to in the summary materials.

Of course, this paper can only refer to the content that was submitted and reached the facilitators or school management. It is obvious that participants between and after the meetings have these discussions. However, we observe that the more transparent the process, the less content is circulated.

As a counterbalance, it is worth looking at the scenario that the school did not follow, which is often the first and only one in similar situations. A popular attitude in response to problems at schools is to "fix the kids" as the only participants of the school system, who are subject to notorious evaluation by a large group of metric adults, starting with the subject teacher (1), through teacher (2), parent(s) or guardians (3), potentially other teachers (4), principal (5), psychological and pedagogical team(6). If increasing the activity of one condition limits the activity of the others, then the Adapted Child, who does not necessarily have a say in what is happening to him and around him, and he has to make himself up to the expectations of others without having his own, would come to the fore.

Ad. 4. Taking care of a person in the happiness phase allows the curve of the personal transformation process to flatten out

And the last point, although not from transactional analysis, correlates with the previous one. In the happiness phase, the person sees hope for change, and at the verbal level the contents appear: *Finally something is happening, Maybe*

at last something will change. This is a key moment in the change process. The more you manage to make people feel safe by anticipating successive phases of change, which by their very nature will be neither equally acceptable to everyone nor easy to implement, the easier it will be for a person to find his or her way in the subsequent stages of the process.

In our case study, we took care of the sense of security primarily at the level of knowledge, informing from the beginning:

- what kind of work we are inviting you to;
- what is the source of this work;
- in what form it will take place;
- at what stage is the work;
- what is the current state of arrangements;
- how to make comments.

It was not possible to inform from the beginning about such details of the process as e.g. the calendar of meetings, due to the fact that activities were flexibly adjusted to the situation and reported needs.

At this stage, depending on the state in which the person begins, participation in the process had the opportunity to confront them. Those who started the process from the state of the Caring Parent had the opportunity to take care of their concern, to take care of the welfare of the community members. From the state of Normative Parent - they had an opportunity to share their opinion working in groups and during conversations with educators. Those in the Adapted Child position were able to complete their tasks, while the Free Child had plenty of options to express concerns, raise ideas formally and informally.

Summary

It is how the teacher behaves, not what the teacher knows, that is perhaps the most important issue during the teaching-learning exchange (Webb 2009). The teacher's behavior with/at the student, but also in situations that the student observes does not so much set patterns as it shows options, and at the same time verifies them. A slightly different role is played here by processes in which teacher and student experience together (e.g., a field trip, a game, a break), and yet another by processes like the one presented in the case study, in which groups meet on the ground where, although they still remain in their roles, the structure of the situation is changed. There is no teacher-student-parent relationship. Each group is a partner in the situation. An example is the pupil-teacher match. Pupils are still pupils, teachers are still teachers, but on the playground they are players, subject to the same rules, with the same rights and obligations.

One of the pillars of the activities of the presented process is the recognition that the teacher's task is to support the individual development of the student by, among other things, complementing deficits or improving strengths. (Pickett, 1986, p. 241) The phrase 'supporting individual development' was used deliberately rather than 'teaching', where teaching is defined as purposeful work with students in an organised form, e.g. a lesson, a lecture, a consultation, an interest circle. We treat teaching as an important, but not the only and often not the most important part of a teacher's job.

The presented process of leading a school through a difficult situation was possible thanks to openness and readiness of all parties. Each of the participants at each stage had the opportunity to make decisions. These decisions were influenced by internal factors (emotions, beliefs, worldview, experiences, relationship history) and external factors (circumstances in which communication took place, accompanying people, significant others who also participated in the process).

Regardless of their starting position, participants had the opportunity to confront their attitudes in overt communication and, as Stewart and Joines (2016) hinted, invited more or less consciously moved to intimacy at the moment of switching, descending from their hunched positions into constructive dialogue. It would be naïve to think that the individuals in each group entered the process without having already thought through, and probably discussed many times, the topics that constituted the goals of the collaboration. They therefore entered the process with a particular mindset and their own agenda. Inviting them to work together, which would not be based on the presentation of positions and positions, was the only chance to develop solutions that could respond to such different expectations. Because everything points to the fact that the nature of today's school results in a difference in the interests of students, teachers and parents. For dialogue and consensus to be possible, empathy is needed, that is, the ability to see the needs of the other side. Effort is not seen in the finished elegant laminated announcements. You can only see it in open communication, from behind which a monolith does not look at us, but a person in the full range of his or her doubts.

The process described above took place in a situation that was new to everyone involved. Usually, someone is an authority in a given field, has experiences and insights to share. Meanwhile, no one had yet gone through the pandemic and its associated online and hybrid learning. Schools have faced the unfamiliar challenge of facing the consequences of such structured work. And when there are no certainties, everything is an experiment and perhaps the most comfortable thing to do would be to hole up in the state of the Child, take no responsibility for anything and just react. Meanwhile, the community of the John Paul II Self-Governing Primary School No. 6 in Września not only dared to make the

attempt, but also went through it with care and openness. We do not know how the process will go on. Certainly the community has done much to take care of its members.

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Skuteczna szkoła w kryzysie COVID-19. Angażowanie społeczności szkolnej w radzenie sobie z wyzwaniami szkolnymi w oparciu o model Lewina i Fishera, w kategoriach analizy transakcyjnej

Streszczenie

Niniejsza praca stanowi *case study* radzenia sobie z wyzwaniem zmiany w Samorządowej Szkole Podstawowej nr 6 im. Jana Pawła II we Wrześni od października do grudnia 2021 r.

U podstaw opisywanej w *case study* pracy interwencyjnej leżał model wprowadzania zmiany w organizacji, zaproponowany przez Kurta Lewina (Bhayangkara, 2020) oraz podejście do indywidualnego radzenia sobie ze zmianą Johna Fishera (Fisher, 2012). W niniejszym artykule przyglądamy się procesowi z punktu widzenia edukacyjnej analizy transakcyjnej.

Celem procesu było podniesienie poczucia bezpieczeństwa psychicznego i merytorycznego społeczności klas VII i VIII w okresie od grudnia 2021 roku.

W procesie aktywnie wzięło udział 630 osób. Analiza oparta została o badania jakościowe w 5 grupach członków społeczności szkolnej: nauczyciele (N = 45), uczniowie (N = 300), rodzice (N = 280), grupa psychologów i pedagogów (N = 3) oraz dyrekcja szkoły (N = 2). W ramach procesu zastosowano: obserwację, wywiady pogłębione, pracę w grupach i dyskusję. Uczestnicy mieli również możliwość indywidualnej analizy wypracowanych w trakcie procesu wniosków i propozycji.

W wyniku podjętych działań zaproponowano kompleksowe rozwiązania i rekomendacje, które aktualnie są komunikowane i wdrażane w społeczności klas VII i VIII, wśród uczniów, nauczycieli i rodziców. W niniejszej pracy wskazujemy, że (i z jakiego powodu) dla przeprowadzenia zmiany w szkole konieczna jest równoległa praca ze wszystkimi głównymi grupami interesariuszy.

Słowa kluczowe: wprowadzanie zmiany, model Lewina, systemowe rozwiązania, szybki system reagowania.