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Let's work or play game! The teachers' lounge in the light of transactional analysis theory

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to analyse the school space of the teachers' lounge from the perspective of students in the context of transactional analysis. The research was based on the concept of time structuring in TA. The research method was a survey conducted using a questionnaire and mapping techniques. This allowed for the identification of places preferred by students for structuring time in particular forms. The research was conducted in three high schools in Częstochowa, where 781 completed questionnaires were collected for analysis. The results indicate that the teachers' lounge is perceived by students primarily as a space for formal work and transactional games, while it lacks elements of pastime, fun and intimacy, which influences the perception of this place as a confined, inaccessible zone. This may hinder the establishment of sincere, empathetic, open and accepting relationships between teachers and students. Analyses emphasise the need to consciously shape (physically and relationally) the space of the teachers' lounge as an open place for cooperation and dialogue, which would foster trust, positive relationships and reduce tensions in the school community. This may contribute to improving the school climate and increasing the effectiveness of educational processes.

Keywords: the teachers' lounge, teacher-student relations, time structuring, transactional analysis, school culture

Space of the teachers' lounge

Space, together with time, constitutes a frame of reference for contemporary social relations (Pawelczyńska, 1986). School, as a building in which an ed-

ucational institution is situated, is composed of several spaces. These spaces are the centres of activity, defined with the application of three parameters: a place, a typical standard of behaviour and also a location on a timeline. As an example, the school classroom can be referred to as one of the centres of school activity in which the given manners of students' and teachers' behaviour at a particular time (e.g., in the course of lessons or breaks) are determined. Other such centres are the corridor, cloakrooms, gym, school secretary's office, head's room or the teachers' lounge. These places can be characterised in the aspect of behaviours manifested in them. This proxemics of school is demonstrated as a collection of social correlations connected with using the physical space of this institution (Sztejnberg, 2007). An interesting proposal of connecting the principles of the proxemics of E. T. Hall (cf. Hall, 2003) with the time structuring of E. Berne was developed by Jarosław Jagieła, claiming the existence of a temporal-spatial model of school transactions and depicting four meeting places between a teacher and students in time and space. These places are composed of three significant elements: a determined form of time structuring and existing spatial distance and also a particular manifestation of their mutual behaviours. The author of the model is of the opinion that, by means of analysing the particular places of school transactions, it is possible to observe certain patterns, conduct the analysis of them and, finally, interpret them (Jagieła, 2011).

Most frequently, two kinds of places: public places (open) or private (confined) are differentiated, with various ways of restricting access to either. In a school building, part of the space is an open place, accessible to every individual entering from outside (for example, space behind the main entrance to school, the corridor on the ground floor, usually leading to the school secretary's office), whereas part, in turn, is a confined one (Pawłowska, 2020). According to A. Nalaskowski, 'students find themselves in a space which is entirely public [...], whereas teachers can enjoy the privilege of building their own, private and intimate space' (Nalaskowski, 2002, p.35).

While analysing the private (confined) spaces of school, it is possible to differentiate four kinds of their confined character. The confined space of the first kind are the remaining corridors, school canteen (if there is one in a given school), cloakrooms, restrooms on the ground floor and school day-room. These are accessible to all the employees of school, students, parents and guardians. The confined spaces of the second kind can be defined as including the restrooms on the higher floors, classrooms, library, nurse room and school counsellor's room. These are places accessible to teachers, janitor, the remaining members school staff (in the case of need), students in the course of lessons and, sometimes, also in the course of breaks and parents in the course of collective meetings with teachers. As to the next group, it is possible to refer to the confined spaces of the third kind, including the teachers' lounge and also head's

room and deputy head's room. The teachers' lounge is accessible, first and foremost, to teachers. As a matter of principle, this space is not made available to parents, apart from extraordinary situations or emergencies. Conversations or consultations with teachers are conducted in dedicated classrooms or in the school corridor (frequently, in front of the closed teachers' lounge). The confined space, constituting the fourth and the last kind of it, is the school secretary's office, from which the head's room is entered (Pawłowska, 2020).

Authority hidden in the school spaces of the third kind is most visibly demonstrated, among others, in the teachers' lounge, serving as the place in which teachers rest from the presence of students and hide from them; it serves as a place of isolation between the two parts of school community. It is the only part of the school premises equipped with a door handle only on one side of the doors, namely, the internal one and entering it frequently requires entering a pre-set code on an electronic lock panel. The fact that there is no door handle on the external side of the doors or the presence of a special lock makes it impossible for intruders, i.e. students, to gain access to it because they have no key to this 'sanctuary'; nor do they know the access code to it. It is a frequent practice of teachers staying inside the teachers' lounge in the course of breaks not to react to knocking at the doors. In this very manner, adults (class teachers, head and teachers) make their contacts with students formal (Nowak-Dziemianowicz, 2014; Pawłowska, 2020). Locked doors or the necessity to enter a code to enter the teachers' lounge are the examples of the school culture of distrust towards students in action. Such a behaviour symbolically demarkates the places of both of these groups in the school space life as the members of one of them have to patiently and obediently await being called if they wish to experience a meeting with the representatives of the dominating group. That may lead to a certain ghettoisation of school space because, in many schools, such a practice is a part-and-parcel of daily reality, which exerts influence on the shape of the school culture dominating a given institution (Dudzikowa, 2010). A significant importance for the culture of school is, first and foremost, of its participants, who construct it and then live according to its code. Their mutual relations determine the mutually-permeating dimensions: of the teachers (the culture of the teachers' lounge), of the students (the culture of breaks), of the parents and also staff not employed in teaching capacity (Czerepaniak-Walczak, 2015, Czerepaniak-Walczak, 2018).

The teachers' lounge is an informal heart of school performing many functions: is a place of rest, having conversations and collaborating between teachers. It is the subject of many a joke circulating among students, resulting from their reluctance to enter it (Wileczek, 2022). If a song by Pink Floyd *Another Brick in The Wall* is recalled, it is a good idea to close your eyes and think also about the video clip coming with that and using a metaphor of a factory to present

school. The video clip begins with a certain image, showing teachers leaving the teachers' lounge formed in ranks as if they were a shooting squad, holding registers in their hands as if these items were rifles (Jaskulska, 2014). The teachers' lounge is for them a 'fortress', in which they can allow themselves to be frank and open for a short moment and engage in a discussion with colleagues sharing similar convictions. In this room, teachers can vent their frustrations and find confirmation for their own vision of reality, different from the one officially seen as 'supreme truth' (Babicka-Wirkus, 2019, pp.200-201). However, why is it so? In school, it is possible to differentiate between the dominating and opposing aspects of the culture of school. The first ones are the components of blocking cultures: appearances, avoidance and distrust/suspicious mindset, whereas the second ones are the components of liberating cultures: laughter and war (Czerepaniak-Walczak, 2015). The culture of fortress is situated on the borderline between the two. According to A. Babicka-Wirkus, 'its position is conditioned by the duality which is the inseparable part of its nature. On the one hand, it symbolises the walls separating the school space life reserved students (restrooms, *cul-de-sacs* of the corridors) and teachers (the teachers' lounge). On the other hand, it is an expression of struggle and a stronghold of values represented by the culture dominating and the culture of resistance' (Babicka-Wirkus, 2018, pp.65-66).

Therefore, the teachers' lounge is the space in which the conscious and unconscious narrations of the faculty are dominating; the place of resistance against change smoulders (Knowles et al., 2009). For teacher, the teachers' lounge is, first and foremost, a space of work, being the 'area of contacts between teachers, exchanging views, experiences and daily interaction and also the place in which the meetings of teachers' body, important from the school's point of view, take place' (Tomczak, 2012, p.84). It may as well be a place at which emotions generated by the daily reality of school are expressed, particularly, before the next lesson is commenced, when it is not yet really known what the future holds. E. Goffman refers to that with a certain dose of exaggeration, claiming that 'students leaving for a break during which they behave as they please and impolitely, are frequently not aware that their teachers withdraw to the teachers' lounge, in which they will use bad language and smoke, availing themselves of a freedom of a similar kind' (Goffman, 2008, pp.159).

However, the teachers' lounge, which should be a place of rest and support, at times is for many teachers only 'a kind of cloakroom and a place in which to use the Internet, photocopy teaching aids and leave a register' (Papugowa, 2010, p. 70). Frequently, entering the teachers' lounge, one may initially think that each and every of the teachers were there alone and only to meet their own needs. The presence of a glass curtain, fragile and invisible, hanging in the air which is not conducive to establishing closer contact and becoming familiar

with each other can be felt (Borukała & Kiciński, 2012). The practices of claiming for oneself the space of the teachers' lounge that are meant to provide places to relaxation, rest and meet the needs of isolation or affiliation can be noticed (Nowotniak, 2011). Frequently, numerous divisions can also be seen, among others, between those who know each other very well, who are united by the fact of working in the same team of teachers of the same subject or the same project team, or division into 'greenhorns and young teachers' and also those who 'have learnt all the ropes of working at school' (Borukała & Kiciński, 2012). What is also visible is the differences in the aspect of prestige between teachers, being the basis of the hierarchy of the teachers' lounge. Most frequently, that hierarchy is dependent on the length of service and the importance of a subject taught. However, the determinants of a holding a high position may be different from those which are relevant, for example, to contacts with students' parents.

In many cases, teachers deciding to engage in effective communication with their students' parents feel the disapproval of their colleagues, who see a parent as a *sui generis* intruder in school and do not treat him or her as one of the members of school community possessing equal rights (Smak & Walczak, 2015). This is the vision of a sullen version of the teachers' lounge, in which teachers are mainly interested in the activities of others, of a place in which it is best not to stand out, not to show more dedication or appear to possess more knowledge, of a place in which it is best to confine to bare minimum (Molenda, 2010). In this manner, 'the teachers' lounge frequently becomes a place that hinders all kinds of activity. Intimidation, lack of self-confidence and fear of appraisal kill initiative, making one inclined to listen rather than to speak' (Skorecka, 2009, p.138). The teachers' lounge is a place for open and also of a more subtle and camouflaged, criticism of other teachers. Such a form of negative assessment, even though it is apparently to serve the purpose of solving problems, contributes, in a matter of fact, to rising tensions and making the ambience among the teaching staff unbearable (Zubrzycka-Maciąg & Kirenko, 2023; Piotrowska, 2006; Pyżalski, 2008; Papugowa, 2010; Zubrzycka-Maciąg, 2011). These antagonistic attitudes emanate beyond the circle of teachers and are noticed by students. What results from that, is the appearance of many internal dividing lines in school. Because of that, it seems to be important to undertake actions building the unity of teachers as this very unity, in turn, exerts influence on the effectiveness of teaching and upbringing young people and also on the ambience at workplace (Maliszewski, 2017). Non-constructive criticism, commenting on events and the students' (and fellow teachers') behaviours in a scornful manner, laughing at the current and past experiences of school life is what can frequently be observed in the teachers' lounge. An example of that can be the words of D. Chętkowski, who writes that before his 'contact with young people brought fruit, he had become disgusted with conversations in the

teachers' lounge, giving reasons to think he was surrounded by miserable dim-wits and morons' (Chętkowski, 2007, p. 130; Łukasik, 2011).

As it is well known, faculty and students, constituting a community of a given school, spend there a lot of time, however, not always are the existing forms of staying in this institution conducive to establishing closer relations. It is currently becoming a standard to isolate within one's milieu, which is contributed to by an inappropriate design of school buildings' layout. On the premises of this institution, confined areas (for example, the teachers' lounge and the head's room) are dominating. In spite of the fact that teachers and students spend relatively a lot of time in school, the system of habits and also school buildings' layout, prevent them from more frequent, direct, frank and open interpersonal contacts (Brzozowski, 2013). It goes without saying that positive teacher-student relations ensure that educational processes are conducted in school in a proper and effective manner. In school conditions, relations are entered into and maintained, mainly in the space of classrooms and in the presence of a group of students, or in the head's room, in the presence of a student and their parents. They may have an individual character as well, taking place between particular students, teachers, teachers and students, for example, in the course of a break, in the corridor, in the teachers' lounge or on the school playground (Węgrzyn-Białogłowicz, 2017).

Depending on the place in which a relation exists, each and every of them may be set in a different emotional context, which becomes positive or negative. B. Dusza's analyses indicate that 78% of the teachers participating in the survey declared that individual meetings with a parents or parents are conducted by them in classrooms. The place for such conversations are also: the teachers' lounge (27%) and backoffice or equipment room (22%). The fact that nearly every 20 percent of respondents declare that such conversations are held in the school corridor, which undeniably is not a circumstance conducive to conducting a normal conversation, not to mention solving a problem, reaching a consensus or raising personal and difficult matters is disturbing (Dusza, 2018). Other studies, concentrated on the feeling of safety of students in the physical school space, indicate that the most dangerous spaces (in students' opinion), apart from the cloakroom and restroom, are the classrooms and the teachers' lounge. It can be presumed that it is in these very two places that various forms of violence take place for part of teachers. If teachers resort to violence in the classroom and in teachers' lounge, or acquiesce to it, school becomes a place of modelling such behaviours and they, with time, become something natural (Kosowska, 2024).

As it is indicated by A. Kopcińska, teachers in relations with students behave despotically, conduct conversations in a bizarre manner, exert influence with the application of orders or threats, *ipso facto*, discouraging students from in-

dependence and resourcefulness, that would allow the latter to formulate their own opinions and express it. Students frequently do not treat such teachers as partners for conversation because they are afraid that their feelings, convictions and opinions will not be accepted. A skillfully-conducted dialogue makes communication more effective and one of its aims is also to understand an interlocutor as well as to accept them unconditionally (Kopcińska, 2018). A conversation with a teacher whose principle is to understand and to accept may be, for a student, immeasurably significant and formative. Undertaking a dialogue with such a teacher becomes, therefore, a *sui generis* reward, honour or a token of recognition and evidence of fondness for a student (Holeksa, 2011). Unfortunately, school communicational situations still bring to mind the imbalance of rights and decisive power to the detriment of young peoples' interest, the fact that the teachers' and students' positions in communication are opposite (Bochno, 2004). Part of the faculty seems to have come to terms with the fact that an absence of understanding between a teacher and a student is an unremovable fault. All that they strive to achieve is to minimise the effort, costs and losses, the risk of which results from this perpetual confrontation. The mutual lack of interest and sometimes downright hostility, displayed towards each other, is not conducive to developing appropriate interpersonal relations between teachers and students. Each of the parties blames the other one for this state of the matters (Holeksa, 2011). Even though it is most frequently a student that expects 'external initiative in the aspect of communication, which a student willingly joins and even takes it from the other interlocutor', it is, unfortunately, teachers themselves that manifest 'little care for the quality of communication' with their students (Bochno, 2004, p.133, 172).

Therefore, students fill their school life with relations with others (students and teachers). These relations may have a positive or negative profile and also a conditional or an unconditional one, depending on an interpersonal recognition and form of support which is provided by a person to others and which is received from them. One of the methods of the temporal conceptualisation of interpersonal relations dominating in different institutions, including the educational ones, is time structuring in transactional analysis (Motyl, 2020). The manner of spending time has a psychological dimension here and consists in determining closeness in contact. The forms of time structuring were arranged on a continuum from those associated with least involvement and keeping a person farthest from others to those most intimate, most open and frank (Pierzchała, 2015). School and in particular, a diversified space of its building, is a perfect place for researching this area of transactional analysis. In various places in school, students enter into diversified forms of time structuring such as withdrawal and also intimacy. It seems to be interesting what forms of time structuring in the teachers' lounge are declared by students. J. Jagieła ascertains even

that no one needs to be persuaded that the teachers' lounge is a true horn of Amalthea of transactional games (Jagięła, 2004) even though other forms of time structuring also occur in this place. Therefore, the aim of this article is to analyse the school space of the teachers' lounge within the scope of the level of the forms of time structuring observed there from the perspective of students.

Time structuring in transactional analysis as the theoretical basis of research

Jadwiga Staniszkis refers in her texts to the need to ontologise time and that means, to treat this phenomenon as the part of existence. The researcher postulates adopting a new definition of time, the result of which would be recognising that various areas of human activity are governed by different forms of time structuring of the phenomena occurring within its frontiers (Staniszkis, 2004). The postulate hereinabove was met in transactional analysis and its reflection may be found in the concept of time structuring. Time structuring is one of the four complementary areas of analyses in the theory developed by E. Berne, apart from: personality structure analysis (transactional studies on *ego*), transactional analysis (referred to, in other words, as a proper analysis) and also script analysis (hidden scenario of the life of individuals and collective personalities) (Jagięła, 2012a). Its fundamental premise is the assumption that relations with other people are this part of life which allows to meet important needs of every human being. This is also the reason why every human being fills their life with such relations, which vary in their intensity. Depending on the quality of this interaction, it is possible to differentiate between 6 manners of time structuring: withdrawal, rituals, pastime, work, games and also intimacy (Stewart & Joines, 2016; Pankowska, 2010); this set has relatively recently been complemented by adding the seventh form, i.e. play (Cowles-Boyd & Boyd, 1980; Mokrzycka, 2015). The further part of this article is a succinct attempt to characterise all the above-mentioned forms.

For transactional analysis, **withdrawal** is an excessive, borderline case, in which human beings openly not communicate (Berne, 2008). It consists in a human beings isolation by means of taking refuge in the realm of own thoughts and focusing entirely on own thoughts (James, Jongeward, 1994). Withdrawal, even though is not a transaction between two individuals, frequently occurs in social structures (Harris, 2009). Fulfilling the need of solitude, engrossing in own thoughts, creating distance to other people allows to avoid many conflicts, worries and much suffering. However, there is a danger of too frequent a withdrawal resulting in the reduced ability to establish contact with a milieu and deprive one of the opportunity to receive support, which is significant for each and every

human being (Rogoll, 1989; Jagieła, 2012a; Jagieła, 2012b). Mental withdrawal frequently transfers one to the world of dreams, filled with violence or makes them indulge in uncontrolled pleasures, creative imagination, learned fears or the expectations of disasters (James & Jongeward, 1994).

Rituals, regarded in the light of transactional analysis as the safest kind of social behaviours, are more or less formal methods of communicating, relying on a particular style of communication, which may transform into ceremonies having a predictable course (Berne, 2008; Jagieła, 2012b). Ritual is a socially-planned manner of using time in which everyone agrees to do the same. It is a safe form of time structuring because it does not require entering into any relationships or undertaking commitments towards other people. The end is predictable and possibly pleasant if someone keeps up with others and behaves correctly (Harris, 2009; Jagieła, 2012a), or unpleasant if one of the persons involved fails to follow the pattern of an expected and stereotypical behaviour, which fact may be perceived as a failure to recognise (the value of others) or as an act of belittling (Pankowska, 2010). Similarly to withdrawal, rituals keep a human being at a distance from others. Rituals are to occupy a group of people for some time, without it becoming necessary to enter into closer relationships (Harris, 2009). They amount to a stock-in-trade maintained in relations with others, which is formed from stereotypical transactions. Thanks to rituals, it becomes possible to establish new contacts with other people, which do not require much commitment (Rogoll, 1989). The course of rituals is determined by the canons of traditions and social customs (Berne, 2008). For transactional analysis, rituals become a category of the analysis of human behaviours on the microscale (Motyl, 2014).

Another form of time structuring is **pastimes**, i.e. a kind of social sounding-out, in the course of which someone wants to acquire information about new acquaintances in a manner not obliging them to enter into closer relationships and not creating possible problems (Harris, 2009). These are simple transactions encountered in the course of a conversation on various trifle matters (Rogoll, 1989), exchanging quite general views and opinions, reporting past events or gossiping (Pankowska, 2010). This involves relatively safe and, simultaneously, polite, conversations, which people who do yet know each other well are willing to conduct (Rogoll, 1989). It allows them to become familiar with each other, so as to find, in the further course, a partner for a game, work or sharing intimacy (James & Jongeward, 1994). Pastimes provide more, usually positive, strokes than rituals even though they are less predictable (due to the increased risk of receiving negative strokes) (Pankowska, 2010).

Work (procedures, activities) occurs as another form of time structuring. This is the most common, convenient (in transactional terms) and utilitarian form of it, set on developing a plan of action in the realm of social world. By

participation itself in productive or creative work, a human being can find enormous satisfaction, or bring about receiving conditional strokes (Harris, 2009), positive or negative, depending on the final result of activities and its assessment by others (Pankowska, 2010). It is through this form that we can release ourselves of internal strain and anger. It protects us from boredom and keeps us alive in physical, mental and spiritual aspect. However, excessive workload may reduce opportunities to engage into other forms of time structuring, for example, to the detriment of experiencing intimate relationship with family, for example, due to frequent business trips (Rogoll, 1989; Jagieła, 2012a; Jagieła, 2012b). Therefore, although this form of time structuring, similarly to withdrawal and rituals, from the perspective of emotions does not determine strong interpersonal relations (Harris, 2009), however, it may become a very good opportunity to become familiar with each other (Pankowska, 2010). It is worth indicating that, while one activity (work) is in progress, sometimes other forms of time structuring, namely, rituals, pastimes, games and even intimacy, are engaged in (James & Jongeward, 1994).

Play, as a form of time structuring, was added to the other six forms by Laura Cowles-Boyd and also by Harry S. Boyd (Mokrzycka, 2015). It is defined as a series of transactions in which it is mainly positive strokes that occur, with the result constituted by positive emotions. Their feature is unrestricted creativity, expression and spontaneity, which ensure that congruent emotions such as joy and spontaneity at a social level, are experienced (Cowles-Boyd & Boyd, 1980; Jagieła, 2012b). They also cause many a pleasant experience, for example, phantasing, celebrating, engaging into sports and hobbies (Jagieła, 2012a; Jagieła, 2012b).

Games (intrigues) is a series of complementary transactions concealed and leading to a clearly determined result, decided about in advance. They constitute a periodical, frequently repeating set of transactions, which seem not to be driven by a hidden motive (Berne, 2000; Jagieła, 2012b). They have nothing to do with primary child's plays, but rather are a result of concealed transactions, which superficially seem the right things to do, however, in fact, are means to achieve hidden, insincere and constantly repeating goals (Rogoll, 1989). People engage in them unconsciously and that makes this kind of time structuring rather unpredictable and results in a lot of risk involved; however, in spite of that, they are engaged in not to obtain tangible benefits (they provide each other with very intensive strokes, mostly negative, but, at certain stages, positive as well) (Pankowska, 2010, Jagieła, 2012a). Each and every game is, by assumption, dishonest and its result is bound to be dramatic (Harris, 2009). Games are conducted to provide negative support, reduce cordiality and familiarity and also to maintain various substitute feelings (Rogoll, 1989). Games destroy relationships between people and cause suffering. However, they require quite a lot of involvement and familiarity with the participants (Harris, 2009).

Transactional analysis has developed as well its own understanding of **intimacy**, which will be the most attractive form of social contact (Berne, 2000) (as the borderline manner of time structuring (Berne, 2008)), in which giving and taking occurs without mutual exploitation (Rogoll, 1989). It will be understood as an interpersonal relationship which is open, honest and involving mutual sharing without exploitation (Berne, 2008), empathy, affectionateness and the feeling of emotional proximity (James & Jongeward, 1994) while not using games (Berne, 2008) and expressing true feelings, thoughts and experiences of those involved. Intimacy may exist between different people at different ages and vary in intensity (Rogoll, 1989). This can be a source of unconditioned positive strokes (conveying each other the feeling of love, friendship or deep sympathy) and the negative ones (speaking openly about is hurtful, annoying, or instilling fear in a mutual relationship). However, even when negative feelings are observed, these transactions still bring gratification because of mutual emotional proximity and trust. Intimacy provides highly-intensive strokes and is the least predictable manner of time structuring, therefore, it is frequently perceived as the most risky one (Berne, 2008; Jagieła, 2012b).

Method

The objective of the conducted research was to identify the occurrence level of the forms of time structuring in the teachers' lounge's space according to students' opinion. By means of the analysis and interpretation of received results, it was attempted to answer the following research question: To what degree are, in the teachers' lounge, particular forms of time structuring manifested by students?

In the conducted research, the research method was constituted by a diagnostic survey with the application of a questionnaire. Another technique in use was mapping (treated as one of the techniques of diagnostic survey). Mapping, not very popular in scientific research, was proposed by A. E. Clark and determined as a situational analysis. As it was presumed, such research should produce a more in-depth description, presentation and explanation of the individual, collective, organisational, institutional, temporal, geographical, material, discursive, cultural, symbolical, visual and historical aspects of situation. The objective of mapping is to understand the complexity and heterogeneousness of individual and collective situations, discourses and interpretations of situations. Its analysis aims to shed light on and explain, the processes of changes and constant patterns and also permanence in a situation being researched. The author, referring to Clifford Geertz and (introduced by him) category of thick description, proposes an analogical 'thick analysis' (Clarke, 2003; Clarke, 2005),

which will be the result of the application of situational maps, i.e. conducting data analysis by means of constructing cartographical diagrams.

As part of the research conducted by me, I used two original research tools: questionnaire collecting data relevant to the forms of time structuring by secondary school students in school. It consisted of a number of statements on which a student could express their opinion, by means of ticking next to each statement and on a five-point Likert scale the degree of accuracy (relevance to themselves). The second questionnaire was constituted by a map in the form of a typical school building plan, on which places where a given form of time structuring was most frequent were to be marked by a student.

The research was conducted in three general secondary schools in Częstochowa, with the participation of students, who filled in the questionnaire in the course of classes. The classes were chosen at random; in each of the general secondary schools, classes representing a particular year took part in the research. Altogether, 781 questionnaires were collected.

Analysis and interpretation

The first analysis performed in this part of the research will be comparing the results within the scope of the occurrence of particular forms of time structuring in school space throughout the entire school year. As it is shown by Diagram 1, reading room (33% choices) and restroom (45%) are conducive to withdrawal, which level is the lowest in the corridor and also in the classroom, in which, however, the dominating form will be that of rituals (39%). The latter ones were also noticed in the library (32%), at the entrance to the school (36%), in the cloakroom (27%) and next to the school shop (34%). Pastimes are seen in the corridor (48%), on stairs (37%), in the cloakroom (29%) and changing room (28%), whereas their level will be the lowest in the teachers' lounge, school secretary's office and the head's room. Those three spaces will be typical for work (the teachers' lounge 40%, school secretary's office 44% and head's room 37%), with the lowest level observed, in turn, at the back of the school building. Plays are the most frequent in the gym (38%) and least frequent in the teachers' lounge, school secretary's office and head's room. For the three latter spaces, a high level of the occurrence of games (the teachers' lounge 19%, school secretary's office 18%, head's room 22%) will be observed; these are not seen in the corridor and on stairs, in the restroom and also in front of the building. The last forms, intimacy, is typical for area in front of (30%) and behind the school (28%) and also in the changing room (22%), whereas it does not generally occur in teachers' lounge, school secretary's office or the head's room.

The analysis confirms that school, as an educational environment, is divided into spaces varied in emotional and social profile, which determine the dominating forms of time structuring. In private and intimate spaces, withdrawal is dominating, in the formal ones work and games are, whereas shared and open spaces are dominated by rituals and pastimes conducive to building social ties and integration, whereas play is more frequent than any other form in the gym. Such a distribution shows potential challenges, for example, excessive withdrawal or the presence of transactional games, which may make interpersonal relations significantly more complex; that emphasises the significance of designing, organising and managing school space so as to make it conducive to effective communication and positive teacher-student relations.

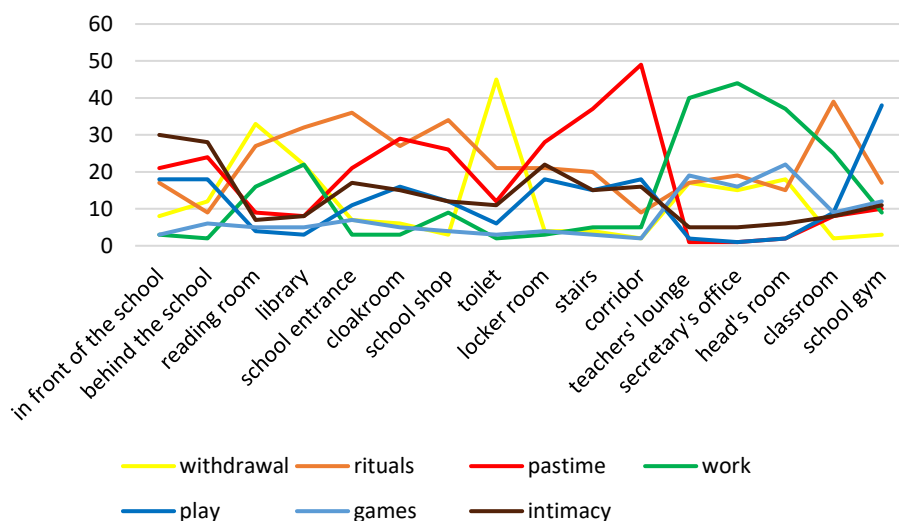


Diagram 1

Graphic interpretation of the frequency of the occurrence of forms of time structuring recorded in particular school spaces throughout the entire school year (N=781)

Source: own research.

The analysis referred to hereinabove gives rise to the conclusion that the dominating forms of time structuring among students in the space of the teachers' lounge are: work and also games. The research indicates that students perceive the teachers' lounge (and also the school secretary's office and the head's room), first and foremost, as places dominated by work in the transactional view of the notion, i.e. the activities of professional, formal, utilitarian and task-focused profile. That mean that they see these spaces as areas mostly dedicated

to performing official duties, planning activities, making decisions and dealing with administrative matters. This instrumental form of using time suggests that students perceive these places as rather inaccessible, formal and serious, associated with completing tasks and not with moments of an open dialogue or a private conversation. That may influence the feeling of distance and also conviction that this space is not accessible to students, especially, that the teachers' lounge is one of the confined spaces of the third kind. Students may perceive this space as connected solely with formal and pragmatic relations rather than with the emotional ones. In this manner, work may not be conducive to spontaneous contacts or building close interpersonal relationships with teachers. That may also be connected with perceiving the teachers' lounge as a not very friendly place, what, in turn, may be reflected in restricting, for the part of students, initiatives relevant to establishing and / or maintaining relations in that place.

In the context of the analysis of time structuring in school space, the presence of games in the teachers' lounge acquires a particular meaning and requires a more in-depth reflection. On the basis of the collected data, it is possible to ascertain that students notice there specific interactions, which may be understood as complex, marked with hidden manipulation mechanisms, full of domination or avoiding a congruent and open dialogue. From the perspective of students, the teachers' lounge appears, therefore, as a place in which a specific dynamics of teacher-student relations is observed, the one which is not directly visible for the latter ones, but the presence of which can be felt as a kind of school theatre, in which relations are unclear, disturbing, dishonest, frustrating and frequently humiliating. That may evoke in students the feeling of distance, danger or distrust towards teachers, treated as a group which is closed and which uses the internal codes of communication, deliberately not explained to students. In turn, among teachers such games may constitute informal and sometimes risky, forms of competition or building own positions in the hierarchy of the school faculty, which may hinder a transparent and congruent exchange of information, particularly, in the situations of conflicts or such as requiring support. For students, the presence of games in the teachers' lounge may also symbolise the lack of openness and accessibility in the case of this space, which might find reflection in the feeling of being excluded from major decision-making processes relevant to the life of school. Perceiving teachers as participants in transactional games in the isolated place makes the frontier between the world of adult decision-makers and the world of students, whose activity is ruled by these very decisions, even more visible, which may weaken relations based on trust, frankness, openness, acceptance and safety (i.e. transactional intimacy). Such a situation constitutes an educational challenge because the presence of games in the space of teachers' work, which is the teachers' lounge, proves the need to reflect on the culture of a given school, communicational

practices among faculty and also on the degree to which behaviours and relations manifested by teachers exert influence on the ambience of school and perceiving teachers' role by students. Reducing this form of time structuring and replacing it by more congruent and constructive forms of relations with a fellow human being may contribute to building a better educational environment, conducive to openness, understanding and mutual respect.

In contrast to the domination of work and games, the forms of time structuring which are not present in the space of the teachers' lounge are pastimes and plays. From the perspective of students, the absence of pastimes in the teachers' lounge may prove that they perceive this place as serious and deprived of freedom, which is not conducive to relaxation and informal relations. For students, the teachers' lounge is not a place in which teachers rest, enjoy short conversations or engage in activities which are the source of joy. The teachers' lounge is a space where attention is focused on duties, work and also on the actual tasks of school. Such a lack of entertaining profile may also result in perceiving the teachers' lounge even more as a confined zone, not accessible to students and isolated from their world; the zone in which there is no a cat in hell's chance for students to enter into relations of more relaxed and open kind. That, in turn, may strengthen their feeling of distance and also restrict the possibility of perceiving teachers as individuals with whom it is possible just to talk like with other people on various topics (not only related to school). As a result, students may feel that the teachers' lounge is a hostile space and an excessively serious one, which makes it difficult to build more personal and congruent relations. Moreover, the absence of pastimes in such a place may also reflect students' opinion that teachers while they are in the room in question do not seek relaxation or try to unwind after work, which may make young people even less inclined to establish contact and consolidate the perception of teachers as always serious, formal, official and keeping distance. In the context of school, in which positive teacher-student relations play a particular role in educational processes, such a profile of space is rather conducive to distance and maintaining the formal bearing of teachers, instead of open, partnership-based, frank communication. The lack of pastimes in the teachers' lounge, in students' eyes, may, therefore, indicate the need to reflect on how the space in question could be made more open and friendly not only to students, but also to teachers.

In turn, the lack of play in the teachers' lounge, in students' opinion, may be interpreted in many ways. Students, observing the teachers' lounge as a space dedicated, first and foremost, to adults, associate it with seriousness, professionalism and the formal duties of teachers. In their (students') eyes, this is a workplace and venue of discussions related to it, therefore, it seems inadequate or even downright illogical to expect spontaneity, reactive mindset or joy, which are the features of play. Moreover, from the perspective of students, the

ambience prevalent in the teachers' lounge may be seen as aloof, serious and, at times, even creating a distance, which naturally excludes ease and freedom typical in the case of play. The lack of play in this space may also reflect generation gaps and social roles; students see teachers as adults in charge of order and meeting educational goals and not as partners in collective, spontaneous, creative activity that brings joy. That, in turn, may strengthen the feeling of distance and formalism, which results in reducing emotional proximity and empathy in teacher-student relations. The lack of play in the place in question may also confirm the perception of this space as a confined zone of adults' workplace, far away from daily joys and freedom, which students find on the school playground, in the gym or other, less formal places within school premises, instead. That may indicate a clear frontier between the worlds of students and of teachers in the aspects of the function of particular school spaces, which is of importance for the quality of mutual relations and communication in school.

Conclusion

The conducted analysis indicates that the teachers' lounge, as one of the most specific school spaces, is extremely interesting due to the forms of time structuring observed there. From the perspective of students, this space is frequently seen as a place of isolation and supervision, which, by means of restricted access and also exclusivity, makes the division between 'we' and 'they' more lasting and permanent. Such a spatial segregation leads to creating a specific school culture, in which the mechanisms of distrust and distance dominate and which, *ipso facto*, makes it difficult to build open and congruent interpersonal relations. The conducted research, based on students' opinions on the forms of time structuring in various spaces of schools, indicate a clear domination, in the teachers' lounge, of the two main forms: work and also transactional games. This space is seen, first and foremost, as the place of strenuous work, in which teachers organise their professional duties, exchange experiences and also make significant decisions on the functioning of school. Simultaneously, the teachers' lounge sees many games which may support the existing hierarchy, make the distance more lasting, result in the feeling of injustice and being not understood and also cause tensions and conflicts in teacher-student relations. It is accurately presented in a short form by a female student whose words were collected in the course of the conducted research: 'In the teachers' lounge, I feel ignored and inferior. As if I had to ask for a moment of attention'. It is worth indicating that the researched students do not notice the presence of pastimes or plays in this space. The lack of those forms of activity proves the limits of the space in question in the context of creating the ambience of free

and creative expression or positive emotions, which are significant for building trust and openness and also peculiar emotional hygiene, important in the work of a teacher.

The research indicates the need to reflect on the functioning of the teachers' lounge as a space not only of work, but also of collaboration, communication and building good relations. The domination of work over games, accompanied by the simultaneous lack of pastimes and play, may exert a negative influence on the development of positive teacher-student relations and also make it difficult to build the ambience of trust and mutual understanding. It is worth indicating that changing this state of the matters requires a conscious shaping of educational space and also the culture of school based on a dialogue and openness. Making it possible to introduce the elements of pastime and play, if in no other form, but as moments of integration and positive interactions, may contribute to 'tearing down the walls', reducing tensions and also strengthening social bonds, which is crucial for the effective and harmonious functioning of the entire school community.

Attention should also be paid to a low level of intimacy in the teachers' lounge, understood as relations which are congruent, frank and based on mutual trust. This space, rather than being conducive to openness and individual contacts based on understanding and also empathy, becomes the arena of formal behavioural interactions, in which distance and a certain kind of emotional reserve dominate as well a place where dishonest and harmful transactional games are in use. Understanding the teachers' lounge and engaging there in these forms of time structuring which, from the perspective of students (but also of teachers) are positive and beneficial may constitute a significant step towards the modernisation of school communication practices and also improving school ambience and changing its culture. This space changed into the forum of open collaboration might become a space for constructive teacher-student relations, conducive to becoming familiar with each other, understanding and acceptance. In this manner, the teachers' lounge would acquire a new and positive function in the structure of school.

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Pracuj albo graj! Pokój nauczycielski w świetle teorii analizy transakcyjnej

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest analiza szkolnej przestrzeni pokoju nauczycielskiego z perspektywy uczniów w kontekście analizy transakcyjnej. Przeprowadzone badania oparto na koncepcji strukturalizacji czasu w AT. Metodą badawczą był sondaż diagnostyczny realizowany za pomocą ankiety oraz techniki mapowania. Pozwoliło to na identyfikację miejsc preferowanych przez uczniów do strukturalizacji czasu w określonych formach. Badania przeprowadzono w trzech liceach ogólnokształcących w Częstochowie, w których zebrano 781 wypełnionych kwestionariuszy. Wyniki wskazują, że pokój nauczycielski jest odbierany przez uczniów przede wszystkim jako przestrzeń formalnej pracy i gier transakcyjnych, natomiast brak w nim elementów rozrywek, zabawy i intymności, co wpływa na postrzeganie tego miejsca jako zamkniętej, nieprzystępnej strefy. Może

to utrudniać nawiązywanie szczerych, empatycznych, otwartych i akceptujących relacji między nauczycielami a uczniami. Analizy podkreślają potrzebę świadomego kształtowania (fizycznej i relacyjnej) przestrzeni pokoju nauczycielskiego jako otwartego miejsca współpracy i dialogu, które sprzyjałoby budowaniu zaufania, pozytywnych relacji oraz redukcji napięć w społeczności szkolnej. Może przyczynić się to do poprawy klimatu szkoły oraz podnieść efektywność procesów edukacyjnych.

Słowa kluczowe: pokój nauczycielski, relacje nauczyciel–uczeń, strukturalizacja czasu, analiza transakcyjna, kultura szkoły.