

Anna PIERZCHAŁA

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9529-5398>

Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa

e-mail: a.pierzchala@ujd.edu.pl

Developing social skills of pre-school and early-school children on the basis of transactional analysis assumptions. The characteristics of the *Little Professor University* programme

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Summary

The article presents the characteristics of *The Little Professor University* programme, whose aim is to support the development of social skills of pre-school and early-school children. The programme's assumptions are based on the theoretical constructs of transactional analysis. The main objective of the programme is the development of its participants' autonomy and preventing the use of passive strategies the way TA understands them. The text shows both a theoretical framework of the programme realization, its practical realisation, and a general evaluation analysis of the first meeting cycle.

Keywords: educational transactional analysis, social skills, autonomy, passivity.

Introduction

The assumptions of transactional analysis attribute a crucial role to the period of early childhood as the one affecting the way we function in our adulthood. The period of time from our birth to the age of 5–8 is the stage of human life when we develop the fastest and the structure of our personality is shaped in the most intense way. Some personality traits remain the same till our death. Based on

early conditioning (exercised both by parents and other important people in the child's surroundings), there develops a script, existential life position and a frame of reference (Berne, 2005, pp. 107-119). This article presents the characteristics of the original programme *The Little Professor University (LPU)* developing social skills of pre-school (aged 3-6) and early school (aged 7) children. It was developed on the basis of the assumptions of transactional analysis and implemented in the school year 2018/2019 in a Private Kindergarten "Skrzaty z Przyszłością" in Sosnowiec (Poland) and a Private Primary School no 5 in Sosnowiec. The author of the programme is also the author of this publication, however, the execution of the programme is factually supervised by the Educational Transactional Analysis Research Team and the dean of the Faculty of Education of Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa. The main aim of the programme is supporting the development of social skills of younger children in terms of communication, defining their feelings and emotions and other people's feelings and emotions (empathy), creating a positive image of oneself as well as the ability to solve problems.

Educational transactional analysis – foundation of the LPU programme

Educational transactional analysis derives directly from the basic assumptions of a superior concept, i.e. transactional analysis – a psychological concept initiated by E. Berne. It provides a psychological framework for explaining what happens in learning, how teacher and student roles interact, and illuminates why educational processes are, as Yousafzai claims, 'the only solution' to how individuals act to change the world (Barrow, Newton (eds.), 2016, p. 1). Transactional analysis itself, despite its psychoanalytic roots, is a strongly humanistic concept. Its main philosophical assumption is that people are naturally good. If we act in an evil way, it is caused by conditioning of the environment we grew in, choices we have already made and certain limitations of personality structures acquired in childhood and employed in a given situation. At the same time, it is assumed that all people have the ability to think and take the most advantageous decisions. As these decisions are autonomous, they are subject to change together with changing circumstances (Stewart, Joines, 2009, pp. 6–7). It is in accordance with the latest system and ecological approaches to human functioning and is reflected in upbringing recommendations deriving from the concept. Such an approach to upbringing favours the development of AUTONOMY in human functioning and limits PASSIVE BEHAVIOUR.

Autonomy is understood here in a slightly broader way than its traditional definition as the ability to be aware, spontaneous, and the ability to enter into intimate relations with other people (James, Jongeward, 2003, pp. 351–358). Awerness means perceiving oneself, other people and the world via all senses,

like it happens in reality, namely in the most objective way possible, and the ability to be here and now. E. Berne (1994, pp. 149–151) claimed that this is an innate ability, which is in most cases lost as time goes on. Spontaneity is expressed by our ability to respond to the world from all the levels of Self, drawing on one's resources. Thanks to such an approach, a range of possible behaviours, feelings and thoughts extends. Intimacy means being in a relation with another person in the closest and most open way, without playing any games, in complete trust and sincerity.

The term *passivity* was mentioned for the first time in the literature concerning transactional analysis in the article "Passivity" by Jacqui L. Schiff and Aaron W. Schiff (1971). They paid attention to the fact that during one's life, a man is constantly confronted with problematic situations. A problematic situation is each situation that forces an individual to take a decision (Stewart, Joines, 2009, p. 173). Passivity, on the other hand, is a way of thinking and behaving which lets an individual avoid their autonomous reaction when facing a given difficulty (Schiff, 1975, p. 10). It is significant that contrary to the traditional understanding of passivity, where it is associated with doing nothing and lack of action, transactional analysis sees it as a situation in which an individual stops performing certain actions or performs them in an ineffective way (Schiff, 1975, p. 5). It means that a passive person can perform certain activities but they are ineffective from the point of view of set objectives. Passivity understood in this way can be reflected in particular strategies (behavioural manifestations): doing nothing, over-adaptation, agitation, incapacitation and violence. The starting point in eliminating passive behaviours must be understanding the nature of the problem that an individual faces – getting out of the so-called discounting and taking responsibility for one's own feelings, thoughts and actions.

During the conceptualisation of the programme's assumptions I was guided by the thought that the main aim of education in the light of transactional analysis is "the development of the child's personality and its development within the social framework of reference" (Emmertson, Newton, 2004, p. 283). It means that while working with young people, one should equally concentrate on their personal development (building a realistic image of oneself, the ability to define one's resources, and above all, understanding oneself and one's feelings), and practising skills that are necessary from the point of view of co-existence in society (effective communication, group work, developing satisfying interpersonal relations, solving problems, etc.). Moiso wrote about it (1998, p. 7), pointing to the fact that "Transactional analysis may, therefore, help promote the healthy integration of autonomous individuals within their cultural and political groups, developing healthy individuality with the capacity for belonging, intimacy and social responsibility." Education in this approach is realised by naturally following the child and concentration on its physis (Barrow, 2016, p. 14). It is possible only and solely by creating and maintaining a close, mutually engaged, intimate relationship between the teacher and their students. At the same time, it should

be remembered that educational transactional analysis is a concept promoting development based on resources and lack of focus on the child's weaknesses. "Part of the relational turn being generated by TA educators is the 'turning' of concepts from descriptions of pathology or deficit, well intentioned as this might be, towards a resource focus. By investigating healthy normal development and the factors that promote it, by asking how can we talk about 'well-being', rather than 'remedy', we talk up divergence, individuality, interdependence and human capacity" (Newton, 2016, p. 33).

Practical realisation of the assumptions of transactional analysis in the *Little Professor University* programme

Educational practice in the light of TA has always been based on the contractual approach. A contract is an explicit commitment of two or more individuals to realise particular goals together (Pierre, 2016, p. 123). On the one hand, using the contractual approach makes one establish their goals in cooperation with another person, and, on the other hand, it conditions co-responsibility for the process that takes place. The liability of both parties should be certainly adjusted to developmental competencies of lesson participants. This is also one of the LPU programme assumptions. The whole series of lessons was preceded by a contract prepared in its written form or with the help of pictures. It was prepared bearing in mind the assumption that it should contain both rights and obligations of all meeting participants, including the teacher. Establishing the assumptions of the contract activated the Adult ego state in the participants in an exceptionally strong way. Their engagement in this activity and referring to particular points of the contract during subsequent classes shows how important the whole process of cooperative work was to them. The contract points included, among all, the possibility to resign from completing particular exercises provided that reasons were given and efficient realisation of the task by the rest of the group was guaranteed. This rule seems to be particularly important to children as it shows their responsibility and voluntary participation in the classes.

The main aim of all organised meetings was developing the Adult ego state in participants within the framework of self-awareness of experienced feelings and emotions, and further on, defining feelings and emotions of other people. It was realised with reference to the Free Child ego state, via play and based on the intuition of the Little Professor. "Empathy enables us to develop the ability to understand others and to accept and share feelings. We learn to bond with others, to cooperate and to play, which means sharing attention and intention. Through bonding and play we begin to create meaning expressed in rituals" (Bellah, 2011, pp. 34). The decision to realise the meetings in this way was based on the research conducted by me in Polish schools, concerning the extent to which students use

passivity the way it is understood by TA (Pierzchała, 2013, pp. 378). One of two main conclusions deriving from this research was the one pointing to significant discounting of their own experiences by Polish teenagers, which results in a large scale of passivity use, especially in the area of over-adaptation. Lack of ability to deal with difficult situations displayed by students of Polish schools is caused to a large extent by lack of self-awareness in the area of experienced emotions and their own resources. Hence, the first step towards developing autonomy in human functioning should be – in my opinion – working on one’s self-awareness and appropriate image of oneself.

Developing the participants’ self-awareness and empathy was realised here in accordance with thoughts included in the publications of G. Barrow (2007) and T. Newton (2016). They draw the reader’s attention to the fact that E. Berne, while developing the concept of ego state structure, intuitively placed the Parent on top of the diagram, because, as he believed, this way of thinking occurred naturally at all times and in all nations (Barrow, 2007, p. 206). However, the abovementioned authors postulate that the model should be reversed and the Child is placed on top. They show how it is going to change our perception of the world, understanding of human experience and interpersonal dynamics. Of course, the Parent’s crucial role is maintained here and becomes the source of bond building, and – as in the case of the LPU programme – it supports play and learning. Indeed, all meetings with the participants of the programme were realised via play oriented towards supporting the Free Child ego state and developing the Adult ego state. Meanwhile, parental caring instincts developed in children, and they were directed towards themselves and other participants, functioning also in a broader social dimension. The Controlling Parent ego state was indirectly supported too, but always in relation to the Adult. To a large extent, the children shaped the rules functioning during their meetings and were careful to comply with them. More information about this will be provided below in the part concerning the evaluation of the programme.

However, now it has to be mentioned that the engagement of all Ego states of the participants was inspired by the concept of *Functional Fluency*, which undeniably points to the value of the integrated Ego-state model and balanced use of all its areas. The author of the concept, S. Temple (1999, 2002, 2004) explains the way to attain autonomy, using for this purpose the concept of functional fluency signifying cohesion in the area of the Ego-state structure of an individual. A man who uses their Adult ego state shall function fluently, taking into account their experience of the Parent and the Child in all their functional aspects, both positive and negative. Thanks to this, there is a smaller possibility that they shall initiate or respond to occurring symbiotic transactions which constitute the basis of passivity in the light of transactional analysis. On the other hand, they shall be able to make efficient use of their resources present in all areas of the ego states.

A very important aspect of the meetings was care to take into account relational needs in the educational process listed in the concept of transactional analysis and described by Erskine (2002, pp. 5–9). “Relationships are essential for good education. But how can we recognize a good relationship in the educational process? The concept of ‘relational needs in educational context’ enables us to observe and understand how all participants in the education process, students and educators, create and recreate their relationships in the way they need them in a specific moment. Like in a dance, they regulate closeness and distance, autonomy and the need for impact from the other, the need to feel accepted, or maybe the need to appreciate the other and to express it. So we can understand how we shape the relationships during our education” (Miljkovic, 2016, p. 68). Among these needs, the highest attention should be paid to the following ones: safety, belonging, influence, and similarity, on the one hand, and differentiation, on the other hand. The question of satisfying relational needs seems to me, the author of the *Little Professor University* programme, particularly important. This focus directly derives from the results of the research conducted by me. Relational needs of Polish students are usually satisfied to a very small extent. The students are able to directly show deficits in this area, whereas the teachers quite often do not recognize these needs in themselves and in their students (Pierzchała, 2013, pp. 194–215; 265–275). Miljkovic (2016, p. 74) points to the fact that the education process is marked with moments of one’s exposure to the public, evaluation, failure and the feeling of shame. What is more, education means change, and this process is always accompanied by the feeling of uncertainty. Therefore, creating and providing the participants of this process with the feeling of safety is crucial for their healthy and effective functioning. Yet, what is important, the feeling of safety does not only refer to one’s relations with their educator, but with other group members and people having an influence on the realised curriculum (Principal, other teachers, institution employees).

The feeling of safety is directly related to another need mentioned by the author, namely belonging. If the meetings – in this case lessons within the framework of LPU – are conducted in a good and safe atmosphere, the feeling of community and belonging to the group develops in all participants. Taking into account the programme assumptions that particularly emphasised defining and analysing one’s emotional states, these two needs mentioned above seem particularly important. They were strengthened by being directed towards satisfying the need of influence. As it has been already mentioned, the children had an opportunity of co-organising and defining the direction of realised lessons. The programme assumptions also referred to the fact that we should strengthen one’s individuality on the one hand, and, on the other hand, show similarities. The ways of experiencing and perceiving various events from the perspective of particular participants were analysed to show individuality of particular feelings and strengthen the participants’ empathy skills and their ability to look at things from someone else’s point of view.

The importance of the participants' age in relation to the main concept

The period of children's development covered by the programme (ages 3–7) is a period of very intense changes, both physical and mental. It is a moment when periods of relative calm, focus on cooperation and learning are quite rapidly followed by periods of rebellion, anxiety, feeling of threat (Ilg, Ames, Baker, 2007, pp. 36–49). At the age of 3, a child begins to intensely manifest the need to give vent to their emotions. It is a time when things like ticks, blinking, nail biting, masturbation or coming back to thumb sucking occur for the first time (ibidem, p.40). It is caused by the necessity to defuse tension which the child is not able to understand yet. The specificity of this developmental period underpins the decision on the most favourable moment of initiating prophylactic activities within the framework of the LPU programme. At the same time, its assumptions took into consideration the need to move, act and test oneself pertaining to children aged 3–7. It is worth remembering that it is a period of intense development of a young persons' sense of identity. Starting at the age of 3, the child gradually leaves the period of unconditional egocentrism to build a community and describe oneself against its background. Social contacts are more meaningful, which constitutes a foundation for developing empathy.

Taking into account the assumptions of transactional analysis, it should be remembered that pre-school and early-school children particularly value activities directed towards the development of particular competencies rooted in their identity structure. It is assumed here that selected areas of our ego states develop from the moment of birth till the child turns 8 (the so-called Controlling Parent ego state, Nurturing Parent ego state, Adapted Child ego state, Free Child ego state). These areas are of a fundamental importance for human functioning also in adulthood. Using appropriate techniques of working with a given child, we are able to practise auto-analytical skills so that emerging records in the ego-state structure are conscious, can be matched in the future with a current situation and used effectively. It is about self-awareness and the ability to reflect on one's own feelings, thoughts and actions (adjusted to the child's developmental abilities). At this early stage of development, creative thinking and acting skills based on child's intuition (Little Professor) are developed as well. It is the best moment to shape the foundations of a creative approach such as: divergent thinking, tolerance for ambiguity, creative imagination, expressing oneself in public, resilience to criticism and independence in thinking and acting.¹

¹ More information on the relations of the personality structure with the creative approach in the light of transactional analysis can be found in: D. Gębuś, A. Pierzchała (2016). *Twórczy nauczyciele, pomysłowi uczniowie. Osobowościowe korelaty kreatywności nauczycieli w perspektywie analizy transakcyjnej*. Częstochowa: Wydawnictwo im. S. Podobińskiego Akademii im. J. Długosza w Częstochowie.

Apart from analysing the records in the Parent and the Child ego structures, the LPU programme also pays attention to the foundation of the emerging Adult – the only area of the Ego-state model which is subject to modifications during the whole period of human life and which is responsible for objective and rational perception of reality, surroundings and one's own person. Maintaining early-child potential of the Free Child is a crucial element in the development of a young person as it is linked with the ability of unreserved emotional reaction and play, certainly together with the ability to adjust one's behaviour to current circumstances (in TA terminology – in contact with the Adult).

Report from lesson realisation

The first round of the lessons within the *Little Professor University* programme was realized from the beginning of October 2018 to the end of June 2019, in the Private Kindergarten “Skrzaty z Przyszłością” (Tiny tots with the future) in Sosnowiec (Poland) and the Private Primary School “Twoja Przyszłość” (Your future) no 5 in Sosnowiec. 46 children took part in the meetings – 10 of them from the youngest group (aged 3–4), 14 of them from the older pre-school group (aged 5–6), and 32 from the first grade of primary school (aged 6–7).² The meetings were organised in each group once a week. The first graders were divided into 3 groups, and therefore the number of children at a given meeting did not exceed 12 (for the first graders) and 14 (for older pre-schoolers). Detailed relations from the lessons were uploaded on the website of the project after each lesson (<https://eat.ujd.edu.pl/ump>, access: 04.10.2019). Altogether, each group had about 30 meetings, 45 minutes each.

All the lessons were based on the same scheme. At the beginning, there was a round with emotion cards³, during which the participants (together with the teacher) analysed the emotions they were experiencing then or in non-distant past (last week). The conversation run from the Adult level aimed at properly defining named emotions and their compatibility with a described situation. Certainly, as time went on during the realisation of the programme, the children's analyses became broader and more profound.⁴ The participants were better at distinguishing emotions, their description, gradation and justification. More or less in the

² During the school year, there was a certain fluctuation concerning the number of children in groups. Specially big changes were noted in the group of older pre-school children, where the number of children at the end of the school year was 18. However, taking into account the participation time of new group members, it was decided to ignore this fact in general statistics.

³ The original programme with the use of drawings by Gustavo Mazali coming from a book by J. Moore-Mallinos, G. Mazali (2018). *Tak wiele we mnie uczuć*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Piętko.

⁴ In the group of the youngest children we named basic emotions only.

middle of the lesson round, it was necessary to change the lesson formula and limit a given participant's talking time to maximum three cards as the children's activity grew and they were more willing to share their experiences. Undoubtedly, it should be regarded as a positive outcome of lesson participation. Nevertheless, as the author wanted to realise the whole programme, she was forced to introduce those talking time limitations. It goes without saying that this modification was introduced with the consent of all the participants, once its benefits were analysed together.

The rest of the lesson was devoted to various exercises thanks to which the children broadened their knowledge of emotions, practised expressing them assertively, analysed their importance for themselves and others in their surrounding, created stories with the use of particular emotional states, compared them to their own experiences, etc. All the lessons were realized with the use of play, in the way that enabled to cathexise all ego states of the participants. The main aim was here the integration of the ego-state structure. As it has been mentioned earlier, it constitutes the basis of autonomy development in human functioning and limits passive behaviour.

The round of the lessons within the framework of the programme was finished by conducting interviews with all the participants. Counting on the children's bigger interactivity in group work rather than during their individual performance, the interviews were partly-directional, of a group character, focused on an issue, implementing both opening and confrontational and checking questions (Rubacha, 2008, pp. 140–151). The children perceived the meetings in a very positive way. All of them stated that if they had an opportunity, they would take part in the lessons once again. Obviously, the implemented methodology made it impossible to determine the effectiveness of the realised programme with more accuracy. Yet, it was not the aim of the research. The interviews were supposed to show the author of the programme and its supervisors (the Educational Transactional Analysis Research Team) the legitimacy of the procedures used, the way in which they are perceived by the meetings' participants, and conclusions they draw from them. Therefore, the evaluative research in use was directed towards a general analysis of the way the programme was realised. It can constitute a foundation for further, more advanced analyses, which shall be carried in a systematic way within the framework of the next series of meetings. The results presented here are solely of an approximate nature and their aim is to determine the direction of further research and possibilities of evaluation.

Below, there are selected responses of the participants to particular questions posed during the interviews.

Table 1. shows that the biggest number of responses that can be considered characteristic comes from the first graders. It derives, of course, from their ability to analyse, draw conclusions and generate a longer utterance, which develops with age. It does not mean though that younger children did not give feedback

concerning their participation in the lessons. Yet, their responses were often quite general. For example, answering the questions "What were the lessons about?" and "What did you learn?" the group of the youngest children started to list emotions that had been analysed during the whole school year. Thus, the following responses occurred: *about sadness; about happiness; about anger* (original words); *that we're ashamed; that we can be proud; there were songs: angry, happy, scary... but the best if not angry!* These responses were not placed in the table, but it should be emphasised that the children in all age groups referred in their feedback of the lessons to emotions, their differentiations and identification. They paid attention to a variety of feelings and expressing emotions.

Table 1

Examples of the programme participants' opinions after the end of a lesson cycle

Question in the interview	Sample statements	Sex of the participant (B – boy, G – girl) and programme group
What were the lessons about?	<i>"That we named different things, e.g. feelings."</i>	B, YP
	<i>"About sadness, jealousy, happiness."</i>	B, OP
	<i>"About how we feel and how others feel."</i>	G, OP
	<i>"How we feel emotions."</i>	G, YP
How did you benefit from these lessons? What did you learn? (the question was not directed to the youngest group)	<i>"That one has to be nice to their friends. And we talked about feelings."</i>	B, OP
	<i>"What is an emotion, sadness."</i>	B, OP
	<i>"I learned about jealousy."</i>	G, OP
	<i>"How to express sadness and secrets. How to give a vent to sad emotions."</i>	B, PS 1
	<i>"[...] They helped me in many things. Because sometimes I didn't know when I expressed a given emotion, which one it was."</i>	B, PS 1
	<i>"I learned that when someone loses, they don't have to take offence."</i>	G, PS 1
	<i>"We have to listen to everyone when they want to say something."</i>	G, PS 1
	<i>"When we have to say something very difficult, we can tell e.g. our teacher and then one feels better."</i>	G, PS 1
	<i>"These lessons helped me in life. When I am adult, I'll know how to talk about emotions."</i>	B, PS 1
	<i>"I learned to help." "That it's important to help."</i>	B, PS 1 B, PS 1

Table 1

Examples of the programme participants' opinions after the end of a lesson cycle (cont.)

Question in the interview	Sample statements	Sex of the participant (B – boy, G – girl) and programme group
How did you benefit from these lessons? What did you learn? (the question was not directed to the youngest group)	<i>"That there are many, many more emotions."</i>	B, PS 1
	<i>"That one has to analyse different things and Draw conclusions from that."</i>	G, PS 1
	<i>"How to express emotions and feelings."</i>	B, OP
	<i>"It's talking."</i>	G, OP
	<i>"That one talks about their feelings and emotions."</i>	G, PS 1
What do you associate transactional analysis with?	<i>"Talking about how we feel and thanks to that one feels better."</i>	G, PS 1
	<i>"When we analyse what happened to us during the week."</i>	G, PS 1
	<i>"That we talk about feelings."</i>	G, PS 1
	<i>"With playing and emojis."</i>	B, PS 1
	<i>"We analyse something like action."</i>	B, PS 1
	<i>"Lessons linked with play."</i>	B, PS 1
	<i>"The best lessons in the world."</i>	G, PS 1
	<i>"Add two more cards – jealousy and pride."</i>	B, OP
	<i>"The analysis should be every day because I have new emotions every day and I have to wait till Monday to talk about them."</i>	G, PS 1
	<i>"That there is no transactional analysis on Saturday and Sunday."</i>	G, PS 1
What could have been done better during those lessons?	<i>"We had to wait so long for the lessons."</i>	B, PS 1
	<i>"We should have been less naughty."</i>	B, PS 1
	<i>"That we don't talk all the time, that we don't talk when others say something. That others don't shout when we talk."</i>	G, PS 1
	<i>"I'd like to behave better during lessons. I'd like to improve it."</i>	B, PS 1
	<i>"I'd like everyone to be nice."</i>	G, PS 1
<i>"It would have been great if we'd been less naughty."</i>	G, PS 1	

Table 1

Examples of the programme participants' opinions after the end of a lesson cycle (cont.)

Question in the interview	Sample statements	Sex of the participant (B – boy, G – girl) and programme group
What could have been done better during those lessons?	<i>"The teacher is too good and so calm and we lose analysis."</i>	G, PS 1
	<i>"More games."</i>	B, PS 1
	<i>"We'd like an app for a tablet. Sometimes I'd like to play."</i>	B, PS 1
	<i>"I would have given at the beginning such half-pictionary to show emotions, not only cards."</i>	G, PS 1
	<i>"The round at the beginning was a bit boring."</i>	B, PS 1

YP – younger pre-school group

OP – older pre-school group

PS 1 – the first grade of primary school

Source: own research.

Transactional analysis is associated by the children above all with a dialogue. It is crucial that during this school year we did not define the term "transactional analysis" in detail, and the children associated it mainly with the name of the lessons placed in the official timetable of a given institution. Taking into account the relational and communicative character of the concept, it is worth noticing that intuition did not fail the participants of the meetings. Transactional analysis is also associated with expressing emotions, which is the result of the topics discussed.

It was particularly important to me to analyse the children's responses to the question what could have been done better. This topic was treated seriously during the interviews, and the children's responses were more developed. This necessity derived from the fact that initially the children could not point to any areas that needed improvement. There were responses showing their complete satisfaction with the realised round of the meetings. Yet, they were asked to analyse the issue more deeply. It was interesting to observe the activation of the Adult ego state. They pointed to the fact that they did not always behave in accordance with the rules set in the contract at the beginning of the meetings. At the same time the first graders reached the conclusion that, as a result of their bad behaviour, they did not benefit from a part of exercises not realised. We conducted such analyses a few times, finishing particular meetings. The conversation was directed towards the participants drawing conclusions independently, concerning the influence of their behaviour on lesson realisation. Such a remark showing their awareness of the consequences seems valuable. At the same time, they tried to shoulder re-

sponsibility for not realising a given lesson to the teacher (*The teacher is too good and so calm and we lose analysis*), leaving the Adapted Child ego state. This response was analysed in more detail during the meeting so that the participants could feel more strongly how they affect the form of the meetings.

The comments coming from one olderpre-schooler also seem very valuable. They pointed to the lack of some emotion cards used at the beginning of each lesson. They justified their response with a statement that they experience more emotions than the ones displayed on the cards. This remark definitely came from their well-developed Adult ego state. At the same time, there were certain improvement suggestions. A first-grade girl said that the round at the beginning of each lesson could be realised by expressing emotions. It means that children notice different possible forms of expressing and experiencing emotions, which also seems to be a positive outcome of these lessons.

Conclusion

The paper presents the theoretical basis, the way of realisation and the outcomes of the first cycle of the *Little Professor University* programme. The main aim of the programme is to support children's competencies in the area of identification and constructive expression of emotions. The assumptions of the programme were based on the theoretical constructs of transactional analysis. The choice of the base concept seems right from a certain perspective. Making use of methods consisting in activating the Adult ego state in children, caring about the Self structure integration, and using all its resources brought about desired effects. On the one hand, the participants' self-awareness in the area of analysing their own emotions increased. The children recognised and named many emotional states and referred them appropriately to a given situation. On the other hand, there was an effect in the form of decentralisation understood as improving the ability to analyse other people's emotional states. The lessons were received positively both by children and their parents. Based on outcome observation and due to the obtained feedback, a decision was taken to continue the programme. The realisation of the second cycle began in October of the school year 2019/2020. Based on former experiences, the plan for the second cycle includes a more advanced analysis of the programme effectiveness in the light of developing its participants' autonomy and their giving up the use of passive strategies.

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Rozwijanie kompetencji społecznych dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym i wczesnoszkolnym w oparciu o założenia analizy transakcyjnej. Charakterystyka programu *Uniwersytet Małego Profesora*

Streszczenie

W artykule przedstawiono charakterystykę programu *Uniwersytet Małego Profesora*, którego celem jest wspieranie rozwoju kompetencji społecznych dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym i wczesnoszkolnym. Założenia programu oparto o konstrukty teoretyczne analizy transakcyjnej. Naczelny celem programu jest rozwijanie autonomii w funkcjonowaniu uczestników oraz zapobieganie stosowania przez nich strategii pasywnych zgodnie z rozumieniem AT. W tekście zaprezentowano teoretyczny fundament projektu, jego praktyczną realizację a także ogólną analizę ewaluacyjną pierwszego cyklu spotkań.

Słowa kluczowe: edukacyjna analiza transakcyjna, umiejętności społeczne, autonomia, pasywność.