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Integration of Environmental Potentials for Promoting a Positive Model of Education Open to Diversity. The Context of Academic Tutoring

Abstract

The issue addressed in this paper concerns integrating the school's and academic environments' potential in favour of a positive education model open to diversity and its promotion through the animation of joint activities. The context is tutoring as a qualitative change and a personalised form of education. The tutoring programme "Student as Researcher, Scientist, and Discoverer" aims to strengthen cooperation between higher education institutions and secondary schools by enabling students to conduct scientific research under the supervision of a tutor – a research and teaching staff member. The synergy of the mutual potential of the secondary school and university educational environments fits into education management, supporting students' individual development, creating conditions for developing interests, talents, and passions, and promoting their achievements. The implemented project fits into the perspective of Education of Tomorrow – seen as a multifaceted, innovative, and prospective process.
Keywords: integration, potential, positive model of education, diversity, tutoring.

Introduction

The text was developed in response to an invitation to discuss education for diversity, equality, and integration (Ainscow, 2016, 2020; Corsino, Fuller, 2021)

from an academic, scientific, but also integrated, multidisciplinary perspective. The issue addressed concerns the integration of the school and academic environments in favour of a positive[1] education model open to diversity, which promotes individual potential, abilities, and creative human resources. The issue fits into the perspective of Education of Tomorrow – seen as a multifaceted, innovative, and prospective process. The context is tutoring as a qualitative change and a personalised form of education. It constitutes an in-depth form of individualised educational work based on the tutor-pupil relationship, which has gained
a permanent place in the universities of Western Europe and the USA (Ragonis, Hazzan, 2009, pp. 67–82). The tutoring method can respond to the paradigmatic change "from teaching to learning" (Barr, Tagg, 1995). Studies show that mentoring is essential in promoting diversity, equality, and integration, as this practice connects mentors and mentees who collaborate to achieve this goal through creativity, authenticity, and networking. Mentoring success results from active and respectful listening and willingness to learn and accept personal development possibilities. (Marshall, A. 2022). Diversity of thoughts, perspectives, and environments ensures stronger teams and more effective outcomes (Ainscow, Miles, 2011). The basis of the discussion is the author's personal experience as a research and teaching staff member at the university in the tutoring programme "Student as Researcher, Scientist, and Discoverer," which was implemented in cooperation with the secondary school environment. The tutoring program aims to strengthen cooperation between the university and upper-secondary schools, students with specified passions, interests, and scientific talents by enabling them to conduct scientific research under the supervision of a tutor – a research and teaching staff member of UwB. The implemented project fits into the area of education open to diversity and its promotion through the animation of actions to synergistically utilise the mutual potential of the academic and educational environments. Cooperation concerns: (1) creating environments that facilitate the learning process and gaining new experience spaces, (2) managing education supporting individual student development, (3) creating conditions for the development of talents, interests, and passions, and (4) promoting student achievements. Learning in cooperation constitutes

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[1] Caprara, G.V. (2009). Positive orientation: Turning potentials into optimal functioning. *The Bulletin of the European Health Psychologist, 11*(3), 46–58, Ryan, R.M., Deci, E.L. (2000b). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52*, 141–166; Seligman, M., Csikszentmihalyi M. (2000). Positive Psychology. *American Psychologist, 55*, 5–14.

an educational strategy used to promote diversity. The added value of the project is its innovativeness.

Tutoring as a Qualitative Change in Education.
Diversity as Potential Management

Diversity is addressed from an educational perspective and in management sciences as a foundation for building organisational potential and managing human capital (Jastrzębska, 2016; Szaban, 2003). Social diversity in education is considered in terms of culture, worldview, age, ethnic differences, and gender. The idea of tutoring represents a form of personalised and individualised education (Brzezińska, 2009, 2012; Dziedziczak-Foltyn, 2020a; Karpińska-Musiał, 2016, 2018; Kaczorowska, 2007). In higher education, tutoring, coaching, and mentoring reflect the need to institutionalise methods and professionalise competencies (Dziedziczak-Foltyn, 2020b). Personalised education responds to the changing perception of the teacher's role and the educational process, moving away from the "teaching" paradigm toward a "learning" paradigm (Barr, Tagg, 1995). In the context of career planning and supporting and developing future competencies, tutoring as a form of education fits into the assumptions of Education 4.0 (Wach, Furmańczyk, 2024). It represents a qualitative change in education due to its focus on possibilities, successes, and students' strengths (Czekierda, 2009). Tutoring is a method of individual care based on the master-student relationship, which, through an integral view of human development, seeks to develop its potential (Czekierda, 2015) fully. From tutors, there is a demand for the ability to design a scientific-developmental environment for their tutees to develop their strengths and talents. The practice connects tutors and mentees who collaborate to achieve this goal through creativity, authenticity, and networking. The success of tutoring comes from a willingness to learn and accept development opportunities, both personal and social, and to realise what is most important in education – meeting people on the path of development (Kaczmarek, 2013). Tutoring also requires continuous improvement and self-education of tutors by analysing their work methods, achieving results, and eliminating mistakes and failures (Arends, 1994, p. 56). A fundamental condition for a practical and ethical tutoring relationship is – according to the self-determination theory by Richard Ryan and Edward L. Deci – that it allows both the tutor and their students to satisfy all three basic psychological needs: (1) the need to maintain positive relationships with others, (2) the need for autonomy, and (3) the need for competence (Ryan, Deci, 2000, 2008). Considering these aspects in action can contribute to more effective and ethical use of tutoring in educational practice (Brzezińska, 2013, p. 13).

Main Assumptions of the Tutoring Programme "Student as Researcher, Scientist and Discoverer"

As part of the tutoring program "Student as Researcher, Scientist, and Discoverer" the University of Białystok offers: 1) tutor supervision by a research and teaching staff member whose research interests align with those of the student; 2) implementation by the student of their own research or scientific project under the supervision of a tutor; 3) participation in tutorials during which the student and the tutor will formulate, discuss, solve research problems, present progress in their work, formulate new problems, and set further research and development goals; 4) the opportunity to participate in instructional classes in a selected subject taught by the tutor under regulations in force at the faculties; 5) free access to the faculty's infrastructure (e.g., rooms, laboratory, equipment under the rules in force at the faculty) under the supervision of a tutor and the collections of the University Library necessary for the realisation of the student's research project; 6) support in disseminating and popularising the results of the student's research work through journals, seminars, conferences, exhibitions organised by UwB; 7) support in planning an individual path of scientific development.

In terms of the tutor's responsibilities: 1) supporting the development of knowledge, skills, and individual interests of the student; 2) setting goals together with the student, consistent with their interests and predispositions; 3) establishing an individual research programme and a schedule of tutor meetings with the student; 4) supporting the student in planning and implementing their ideas and research or scientific projects; 5) monitoring the student's work and progress. Graduates of the tutoring program undertaking studies at the University of Białystok have the right to 1) continue their research from the first year of studies under the supervision of a tutor; 2) carry out scientific and research projects with scientists from the faculty (from the first year of studies); 3) apply for an individual study programme under the rules defined in the UwB Study Regulations.

Previous Outcomes of the Tutoring Programme "Student as Researcher, Scientist, and Discoverer"

In the first pilot programme, "Student as Researcher, Scientist, and Discoverer", at the University of Białystok, 21 students from the Podlaskie Voivodeship participated. They were supported by 16 tutors – staff members from seven different UwB faculties: the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Physics, the Faculty of

Education Sciences, the Faculty of Philology, the Institute of Sociology, and the Faculty of Biology. The outcome of the pilot tutoring programme "Student as Researcher, Scientist, and Discoverer" implemented at the University of Białystok was 21 scientific and artistic projects. In June 2023, the young researchers and their tutors summarised the results of several months of collaboration during the First Tutoring Forum. Its primary purpose was for students to present the results of their completed research work independently. Their research topics were highly diverse, covering issues in the social sciences, humanities, and math-natural sciences. In the second edition of the Tutoring Programme "Student as Researcher, Scientist, and Discoverer" at the University of Białystok, aimed at talented upper-secondary school students and science enthusiasts, eight faculties, 17 scientists were involved, and more than 30 topics were offered for selection. Recruitment started in November 2023, and work in the programme began in December 2023. Students met with their tutors for half a year during the tutoring to implement the selected research projects. The students presented the results of their work during the university's Second Tutoring Forum in June 2024.

The tutoring programme helps co-create (create) an environment conducive to learning and gaining new experience spaces in a higher education setting. The synergy of the mutual potential of the secondary school and university educational environments fits into education management, supporting students' individual development and creating conditions for developing talents, interests, and passions. It contributes to promoting student achievements and, as a result, to planning and choosing further educational and vocational paths for the students.

Academic Tutoring as a Space for Supporting Learning. Education Open to Diversity

The work of tutoring provides the opportunity to expand acquired knowledge and discover new areas. The synergy of the mutual potential of the academic and school environments creates a creative environment, which stimulates the development of a creative attitude and activates creative abilities. A creative attitude manifests in recognising problems requiring solutions, positively relating to them, and the readiness and ability to solve them. It fosters a climate for creativity (Craft, 2001; Kettler, 2017; Herbert, 2010; Hanson, 2021). Managing education that supports individual student development involves going beyond learning and constructing knowledge at school (how to act competently) – to create conditions for understanding and describing a person functioning in the modern world and coping with its complex problems. The matter

involves identifying the potential, intellectual resources, emotional strength, values, strong points, and positive dispositions of students (positive diagnosis) (Richards, 2007): maximising potential, motivating development, and engagement. The engaged life – is one of the components of well-being (Seligman, 2005, 2011). Creating conditions for developing talents, interests, and passions involves creating educational opportunities to recognise one's potential and develop cognitive, emotional, skills, and personality strengths (Caprara, 2009).

In the pilot edition of the tutoring programme, the proposed author's topic concerned the issue (*Non*)*ordinary Minds. The Role of Talent and Passion in the Biographical Experiences of Outstanding Creators.* A female student in the second year of general secondary school showed interest in this research area. The jointly developed research project concerned two problem areas:

(1) The Life and Works of William Shakespeare (1564–1616) – poet, playwright, and actor – from the perspective of the concept of an integrated personality: *IVDICIO PYLIUM, GENIO SOCRATEM, ARTE MARONEM,* (Pylos in judgements, Socrates in genius, Maro in art) and (2) Between the Struggle of Existence and the Passion for Development. The Role of an Integrated Personality (the concept of Kazimierz Dąbrowski) – in the context of analysing the biographical experiences of an outstanding creator (W. Shakespeare). The essence of the project was the combination of different approaches, which are mutually conditioning and complementing each other, creating a new, scientifically justified quality – INTEGRATION IN SCIENCE.

In the second edition of the tutoring programme, the research project topic was: *Life Goals and Plans of Youth Concerning Their Future in the Perspective of the Global World.* Tutor supervision was provided to three female students in the second year of secondary school who were interested in the submitted topic and were willing to collaborate on a joint project. It concerned two problem areas: (1) Future Competencies and Skills Expected in 2030[2] and (2) Archipelago of Youth. Typology of Attitudes and Lifestyles of the Young Generation. HOW TO PLAN THE FUTURE TO FULFIL ONE'S DREAMS?

The knowledge society era is becoming increasingly complex and requires new competencies. Therefore, equipping individuals with appropriate competencies, also known as 21st-century or future competencies (European Commission, 2007)[3], is crucial. They are also defined as STEAM competencies 4 C competencies (*communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity*).

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[2] Retrieved from: https://content.mycareersfuture.gov.sg/6-future-skills-that-will-change-our-lives-by-2030/

[3] Komisja Europejska, *Kompetencje kluczowe w uczeniu się przez całe życie – Europejskie ramy odniesienia,* Wspólnoty Europejskie (European Commission, Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Reference Framework, European Communities), Belgia 2007; retrieved from: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32006H0962&from=LT/

The youth's concepts about their life concern primarily the following areas: education, profession, work and family life. The creation of a concept by young people about their own lives is related to developing the so-called future orientation during adolescence (Nurmi, 1991). It enables them to define themselves in the future, create goals and life plans, and prefer certain future lifestyles. It also enables young people to create a general concept about their lives. A growing young person, creating their system of life projects in the context of culturally and socially defined tasks creates their subjectivity. Creating a concept by young people about their own lives is a process of self-creation. Self-creation is a person's co-creation of their life path and personality (Czerwińska-Jasiewicz, 2005).

The implementation of the tutoring programme allowed the exploration of students' diversity of interests and passions. The tutoring process required didactic, communication, and organisational skills in planning and conducting tutorials, i.e., individual sessions and meetings. The goal was to encourage students to independently explore scientific research, deepen acquired knowledge, and open up to seeking new areas in research project design. The tutoring process requires motivation for developing various scientific topics. Adjusting to the mentee's needs and different developmental possibilities is necessary. Tutoring fosters building a reflective attitude and self-awareness. It is essential to motivate students to perform tasks, as well as the personal motivation of the tutor and the extent of their involvement in the tutoring process. The tutor's role is essentially that of a supporting teacher (master) who advises, inspires, motivates, and encourages thinking. From a broader perspective, this approach to developmental work with another person assists in self-development in a space open to diversity.

Summary

Education is synonymous with change, both regarding the need to adapt to a changing world and seek alternative, qualitatively new forms of education. The School and academic environment fulfils the mission of education, which creates conditions conducive to human development, enabling it to meet the complex challenges of the modern world. Introducing tutoring into the educational process is both a possibility and a challenge. It represents a cognitive and organisational effort and the necessity for commitment and responsibility. The tutoring programme "Student as Researcher, Scientist, and Discoverer" fits into the area of education management, which creates conditions for the development of talents, interests, and passions – implemented in the conditions of higher education. Human abilities are becoming a rare resource not only in education but also economically (Wróblewska, 2015, 2018a, 2018b). It is an essential perspec-

tive on new challenges in the Education of Tomorrow. It is favoured by the idea of a new look at the nature of abilities and talents (Runco, 2005, 2006; Sternberg, 1996, 1999, 2028). The author's experiences from the projects implemented so far in the area of diagnosing and stimulating the development of abilities and talents in the educational process[4] indicate the possibilities of creating many educational opportunities to creatively find new, valuable, and original solutions to problems through independent, critical thinking, and collaboration.

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[4]   Active participation in the work of the Team for the identification and care of talented students within the project *Białystok Talents of the 21st Century* (2014–2017) (4 editions) funded by the Mayor of Białystok in cooperation with the Center for Continuing Education (CKU), University of Białystok (UwB), Białystok University of Technology (PB), Medical University (UM) and Białystok Science and Technology Park. Member of the team implementing project tasks: *Start-Up Academy,* under the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development, Priority Axis III Higher Education for the Economy and Development, Action 3.1 Competences in Higher Education (2018–2020) (2 editions). Organisation and implementation of the II Educational Module: *My Own Start-Up – From Idea to Implementation* developing universal competencies and skills in creativity and innovation. Organisation and implementation of the IV Educational Module: *About Supporting the Talents and Abilities of Children* – classes for parents, developing educational and social competencies.

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Integracja potencjału środowisk na rzecz promowania pozytywnego modelu edukacji otwartej na różnorodność. Kontekst tutoringu akademickiego

Streszczenie

Problematyka opracowania dotyczy zagadnienia integracji potencjału środowiska szkolnego i akademickiego na rzecz pozytywnego modelu edukacji otwartej na różnorodność i jej promowanie poprzez animowanie wspólnych działań. Kontekstem jest tutoring jako zmiana jakościowa i forma spersonalizowana w edukacji. Celem programu tutorskiego „Uczeń jako badacz, naukowiec i odkrywca" jest wzmacnianie współpracy uczelni wyższej ze szkołami ponadpodstawowymi poprzez umożliwienie uczniom prowadzenia badań naukowych pod opieką tutora – pracownika badawczo-dydaktycznego. Synergia wzajemnego potencjału środowiska edukacyjnego szkoły średniej i uczelni wpisuje się w obszar zarządzania edukacją wspierającą rozwój indywidualny uczniów, tworzącą warunki dla rozwoju zainteresowań, uzdolnień i pasji, promującą ich osiągnięcia. Realizowany projekt wpisuje się w perspektywę Edukacji Jutra – widzianej jako proces wielostronny, innowacyjny i prospektywny.

Słowa kluczowe: integracja, potencjał, pozytywny model edukacji, różnorodność, tutoring.