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Creative (Re)construction and Integration of Knowledge. The Tutoring Method as a Positive, Pro-development Education in an Emancipatory and Feminist Context

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Abstract

The method of tutoring adopted for the purposes of the study was taken into account due to the context of recognising it as an alternative and personalised form of education. It allows for both a developmental approach (involving both tutor and student) as well as a dialogical and processual approach. The perspective of emancipation is understood as the context of broadly understood change, broadening substantive knowledge, introducing new elements to it in order to expand the perspective. The idea of emancipation in education is expressed in an approach of a strongly individualised nature and methodical change. Contemporary feminist theories create a non-hierarchical space for critical thinking, which can be understood as an engaged co-construction of knowledge with others, motivated by a desire to understand and a need to exchange ideas. The problem of the study in the author's intention was framed as a research and teaching space with a process character. The aim of the issue in question is to present the educational practice of the tutoring method, which implements the idea of pro-developmental education embedded in an emancipatory and feminist context. The research issues concern: 1) the potential of tutoring in the management of education supporting development; 2) the essence of the feminist context; 3) educational practice showing the emancipatory potential of tutoring; 4) the creative essence of didactic and tutoring work and its results. The

research method is a case study of a tutoring project. The basis for the considerations is the author's own experience – a research and didactic employee of the university in the tutoring programme “Student as Researcher, Scientist, and Discoverer,” carried out in cooperation with the secondary school environment. The implementation of the tutoring programme allowed the students to explore their capabilities, develop their interests and passions. This provided an opportunity to create educational opportunities to demonstrate creativity in finding new, valuable and original solutions to problems through independent, critical thinking and collaboration. The implemented original research project allowed for creative (re)construction and integration of knowledge.

Keywords: tutoring, feminism, emancipation, education, positive orientation.

Introduction

The developed article was created in response to the call for papers of the editors of the *Przegląd Badań Edukacyjnych* [Educational Studies Review] to develop a text for the thematic issue in *Women in Education. Women about Education* series, whose theme is school education in a feminist perspectives. According to the assumption adopted by the editorial board, in research on education, the theoretical framework should be determined by feminist theories in the subjective and/or objective and/or methodological scope. The scientific objective of the developed issue is to show the educational practice of the tutoring method implementing the ideas of pro-developmental education embedded in an emancipatory and feminist context. The proposed research problem refers to the positive orientation (Caprara, 2009; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), which promotes the individual potential, abilities and creative resources of human beings. It is also associated with the strand of positive pedagogy or positive pedagogics, showing the possibilities of stimulating the personal qualities of the individual through educational activities (Kwieciński, 2022). The trend of pedagogical research, paying more attention to human resources, abilities and talents, creativity and life wisdom, on which education programmes can and must be built – constitutes a pedagogy of development or growth (Szmidt & Modrzejewska-Świgulska, 2013, p. 14). The creators of the positive idea are convinced that the future pedagogics, preoccupied with abilities, creativity and a good life, will soon develop into a new, important scientific trend of contemporary pedagogics. A positive

concept of the human being implies a creative realisation of one's resources, which contributes to the quality of life on a daily basis – well-being (Seligman, 2005; Czapiński, 2004; Trzebinska, 2008; Carr, 2009, Wróblewska, 2015, 2018, 2021). The perspective of emancipation is understood as the context of broadly understood change, broadening substantive knowledge, introducing new elements to it in order to expand the perspective. The idea of emancipation in education is expressed in an approach of a strongly individualised nature and methodical change. Emancipatory pedagogics can be defined as the concept of fostering development, upbringing and self-education through the formation of human critical consciousness, i.e. a kind of internally open orientation (Czerepaniak-Walczak, 1995, 2006). The method of tutoring adopted for the purposes of the study was taken into account due to the context of recognising it as an alternative and personalised form of education. It allows for both a developmental approach (involving both tutor and student) as well as a dialogical and processual approach. All this makes it possible to determine here the paradigm of creativity and creation, present in the pedagogy of creative activity (Wojnar, 2008). The problem of the study in the author's intention was framed as a research and teaching space with a process character. Tutoring work is a form of supportive relationship – a MEETING between student and master – based on the humanistic paradigm, which makes it empowering. The cognitive value and outcome of collaborative knowledge production is the discovery of new aspects of knowledge, the object of research, the research problem.

Tutoring as (pro)qualitative change in educational practice. Theoretical basis for research

The idea of tutoring is a form of personalised and individualised education (Borkowska, 2018; Brzezińska & Rycielska, 2009; Brzezińska, 2012, 2013; Czekierda, 2009, 2015; Fijałkowski, 2009; Karpińska-Musiał, 2018a, 2018b; Opaliński, 2011; Sarnat-Ciastko, 2015; Witkowska-Tomaszewska, 2011). Tutoring, coaching and mentoring in higher education reflects the need to institutionalise methods and professionalise competences. Personalised education is a response to changing perceptions of the role of the teacher and the teaching process, moving away from a “teaching” paradigm towards a “learn-

ing” paradigm (Barr & Tagg, 1995). In view of the need to develop lifelong self-directed learning skills, to learn about one’s resources in the context of career planning and to develop and support future competences, tutoring as a form of education therefore fits in with Education 4.0. It constitutes an experience through which self-awareness is built and reflection on further development – professional, academic, personal and social – is undertaken (Wach & Furmańczyk, 2024). Tutoring is a qualitative change in education due to the reversal of the educational process. This is because, in this case, the tutor is focused on the learner’s abilities, successes, and strengths, which he or she wants to further develop, rather than searching for weaknesses and demonstrating ignorance (Czekierda, 2009). The teacher’s task is to provide and design an environment adapted to the students’ abilities, serving the learning process, supporting the development of their competences, strengths, and talents. Tutoring is a method of individual care for the mentee, based on a master-student relationship, which, through an integral view of human development, strives for the full development of a person’s potential (Czekierda & Fingas, 2015). The tutor is required to be able to design a research and development environment for their tutees so that they can develop their strengths or talents and become what they want to become – to realise their potential. The practice brings together tutors and mentees who work together to achieve this goal through creativity, authenticity, and networking. The success of tutoring stems from the willingness to learn and the acceptance of opportunities for personal and social development, because it emphasises what is most important in education, namely the meeting of people on a journey of development (Kaczmarek, 2013). Tutoring also enforces the necessity of continuous improvement and self-education of tutors, by analysing their way of working, the results achieved, and eliminating mistakes and failures occurring in the educational process. A basic prerequisite for an effective and at the same time ethical tutoring relationship is – according to the *self-determination theory* of Richard Ryan and Edward L. Deci (2000) – that, when used optimally, the tutoring method allows both the tutor and his or her student to satisfy all three of the basic universal human psychological needs: (1) the need to maintain positive relationships with others; (2) the need for autonomy; and (3) the need for competence. Satisfying these needs is the foundation of good, sustainable development and determines the education and main-

tenance of such competences as: the ability to self-determination, the ability to act on the basis of sustainable autonomous motivation, the ability to be creative and productive in action, maintaining well-being and mental health. Becoming aware of and incorporating these aspects into action can contribute to a more effective and ethical use of tutoring in educational practice (Brzezińska & Apelt, 2013)

Problem and objective of the study

As indicated in the introduction, the aim of the developed issue is to show the educational practice, which is the method of tutoring implementing the idea of pro-development education embedded in an emancipatory and feminist context. The research problem is expressed in the form of the following questions:

1. What is the potential of tutoring in the management of education supporting development?
2. What constitutes the essence of the feminist context ?
3. How does educational practice show the emancipatory potential of tutoring?
4. What is the essence of creative teaching and tutoring and its results?

Research method. Case study of a tutoring project

The basis for the considerations is the author's own experience – a research and didactic employee of the university in the tutoring programme “Student as Researcher, Scientist, and Discoverer,” carried out in cooperation with the secondary school environment. The aim of the tutoring programme is to strengthen the cooperation of the university with secondary schools, students with specific passions, interests and scientific talents by enabling them to conduct scientific research under the supervision of a tutor – a research and didactic employee of the University of Białystok (hereinafter: UwB). Individual tutoring was provided to a second-year secondary school student who showed an interest in the area of research being carried out by a university teacher. The responsibilities of the tutor include: 1) supporting the development of the student's knowledge, skills, and individual interests; 2) set-

ting goals together with the student, consistent with the student's interests and aptitudes; 3) setting an individual research programme and a schedule of tutor meetings with the student; 4) supporting the student in planning and implementing his/her ideas and academic or research projects; 5) monitoring the student's work and progress.

Analysis of research problems

Emancipatory potential of tutoring in educational practice

The implemented project is part of the area of education open to diversity and its promotion by animating activities in order to synergistically use the mutual potential of the academic and educational environment. Cooperation concerns: (1) creating environments that foster the process of learning and gaining new spaces of experience; (2) managing education supporting students' individual development; (3) creating conditions for the development of talents, interests and passions; (4) promoting students' achievements. Collaborative learning is an educational strategy used to promote diversity. The added value of the project is its innovation.

As part of the tutoring programme UwB offers: 1) tutoring by a research and teaching staff member employed at UwB, whose research problems coincide with the student's interests; 2) implementation by the student of his/her own scientific or research project under the supervision of the tutor; 3) participation in tutorials, during which the student will, together with the tutor, formulate, discuss, solve research problems, present the progress of previous work, formulate new problems, and set further research and development goals; 4) the possibility of participation in classes in a selected subject taught by the tutor according to the principles specified in the rules binding at faculties; 5) free access to the infrastructure of a given faculty (e.g. rooms, laboratory, equipment according to the rules in force at the faculty) under the supervision of a tutor and to the collections of the University Library necessary for the realisation of the student's research project; 6) support in dissemination and popularisation of the results of the student's research work in magazines, seminars, conferences, or exhibitions published/organised by UwB; 7) support in

planning an individual path of scientific development. Graduates of the tutor programme undertaking studies at UwB have the right to: 1) continue their research from the first year of study under the supervision of a tutor; 2) carry out scientific and/or research projects with scientists of a given faculty (from the first year of study); 3) apply for an individual study programme according to the rules set out in the University of Białystok Regulations.

The first pilot programme “Student as Researcher, Scientist, and Discoverer” at the UwB was attended by 21 students from the Podlaskie Province: Białystok, Łomża, Sokółka and Grajewo. They were substantively supported by 16 tutors – staff from seven different UwB’s departments. The result of the pilot tutor programme “Student as Researcher, Scientist, and Discoverer” implemented at the UwB resulted in 21 academic and artistic projects. In June 2023, the young researchers and their tutors summarised the results of several months of collaboration at the 1st Tutoring Forum. Its main goal was the independent presentation of the results of the research work carried out by the students. The subject of their research was very diverse; it concerned issues in the field of social sciences, humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. Eight faculties, 17 academics, and more than 30 topics of choice participated in the second edition of the UwB’s “Student as Researcher, Scientist, and Discoverer” Tutor Programme aimed at gifted secondary school students and science enthusiasts. Recruitment began in November 2023 and work on the programme began in December 2023. As part of the tutoring, students met with their tutors for six months to carry out selected research projects. The results of their work were presented by the students at the University’s 2nd Tutoring Forum in June 2024.

Tutoring work and its outcomes. Creative (re)construction and integration of knowledge

In the pilot edition of the tutor programme, the submitted original issue was: *(Un)common Minds. The role of talent and passion in the biographical experiences of outstanding artists.*

Developed in cooperation with a general secondary school student, the research project addressed two main problem areas:

Area 1: The life and work of William Shakespeare (Shakespeare) (1564–1616) – poet, playwright, and actor – as seen through the lens of the concept of integrated personality: IVDICIO PYLIUM, GENIO SOCRATEM, ARTE MARONEM (*Pylos in judgement, Socrates in genius, Maro in art*).

Area 2: *Between the hardship of existence and the passion for development.* The role of the integrated personality in the light of the assumptions of the concept of Kazimierz Dąbrowski (1978). Context of the analysis of the biographical experiences of an outstanding artist (William Shakespeare).

(Co)creating, reconstructing, and giving new meanings to knowledge as a goal of the project showed the emancipatory potential of tutoring. The essence of this phase of the project was to combine different approaches that condition and complement each other. As a result, they have created a new, scientifically justified quality – INTEGRATION IN SCIENCE. An understanding of integrity as internal coherence (cohesion) can be found in self-actualisation theories (Maslow, 1990). Representatives of the humanistic and existentialist trend identified achieving integration with a fully developed person or with self-realising people who fully deserve to be called mentally healthy. They are characterised by such traits as: adequate perception of reality, efficient collection and processing of data, acceptance of self, others and nature, spontaneity, simplicity and naturalness, ability to focus on a problem, need for privacy, autonomy, continuous freshness of judgement, and many other traits (Maslow, 1990). One of the most well-known ways of presenting integrity is proposed by the authors of cognitive-developmental theories, according to which the main mechanism of development is the structuring and restructuring of individual experience. In this case, individual experience must be understood as a set of mental phenomena that are both a subjective record of life events and a subsequent reflection on them (Tyszkowa, 1988; Przetacznik-Gierowska & Tyszkowa, 1996). Consideration of the concept of integrity in development is provided by the theory of Positive Disintegration by Kazimierz Dąbrowski¹ (1979). In his authoritative conception of personal

¹ Kazimierz Dąbrowski (1902–1980) was a true renaissance man. After finishing secondary school in Lublin, he studied at the Universities of Poznań, Warsaw, Geneva, Vienna, Harvard, the Sorbonne, and Baltimore. He explored both the medical sciences and

development, the representative of Polish humanistic psychiatry, referring to his own clinical practice and to the biographies of artists, shows that difficult experiences and the mental pain associated with them can bring an increase in sensitivity, empathy and a deeper understanding of oneself and the world. Integrity means the inviolability of the totality of mental development. However, inviolability does not mean immutability, for change is the basis of development. In integrated development, it is impossible to change a part without changing the whole. In any area of human functioning, there is a change, it does not affect other areas of his life (Jankowski, 1978; Jourard, 1978). Disintegration processes are an opportunity to transcend a state of developmental impasse; they create the need to deal with a disruption of integrity. The internal struggle caused by crises and conflicts “[...] creates a new balance, a new type of compromise, new conditions for the development of personality” (Dąbrowski, 1979, p. 16). As a result, disintegration can lead to secondary integration, which is the highest stage of personal development, the realisation of a person’s developmental potential, which includes the possibility of forming an identity and personality.

Feminist context and its essence

The research project developed together with the student also covered one more problem area:

Area 3: The role of gender in the realisation of talent and passion – using the example of the lifelong work and biographical experiences of the eminent artist William Shakespeare. (Whole)life creativity as the need for (self-)realisation of the human being in his/her development. Making sense of one’s own experiences and life choices.

the humanities – Polish studies, philosophy, and theology. He has received scholarships from a number of foundations, including Rockefeller, Ford, UN, Centre Nationale des Recherches Scientifiques, and Council of Canadians. He was a philosopher, psychiatrist, neuropsychiatrist and neurologist, child doctor, clinical psychologist, psychoanalyst, educator, and lecturer. He was particularly strongly associated with the interdisciplinary theory of mental hygiene, crystallising in the early 20th century in the USA. In 1935, he founded the Institute of Mental Hygiene in Poland.

The humanist paradigm of creativity creates space for creative development in the broadest sense, seen as a set of competences of the subject that foster self-realisation. Self-actualisation, perceived as a meta-need identified with self-actualisation, means the best use of subjective possibilities in specific living conditions.

Contemporary feminist theories go beyond dualism, binarism, or gender. They are characterised by a broadening of the understanding of the scale and multidimensionality of mechanisms of oppression (intersectionality), a redefinition of the category of femininity, a recovery of the idea of community, solidarity (also with other beings), the recognition of experience, or an emphasis on the role of collaboration between theory and practice. The feminist research field has broadened and complicated bringing new forms of protest and critique, new concepts and new alliances that require rethinking and redefinition (Adamiak & Derra, 2005, 2020). In contemporary feminist theories, a non-hierarchical space of critical thinking has very clearly been created, which can be understood as an engaged co-creation of knowledge with others, motivated by the desire to understand and the need to exchange ideas (Haraway, after Adamiak & Derra, 2020, p. 10)². A critical reflection on humanism and its associated anthropocentrism is the driving force behind critical post-humanism. This “re-evaluation of values” has led to the need to search for non-anthropocentric ways of thinking and to redefine who is human and what is human. The re-evaluation takes place by changing the relationship between the subject and the object of knowledge. Reflecting on causality, responsibility, interdependence, and care is also a critical discussion with the legacy of humanism (Rogowska-Stangret, 2022). The humanist limitation of the category “human” is one of the keys to understanding how the post-humanist turn came about in the first place (Braidotti, 2014, p. 65). Feminist attribution of responsibility requires that knowledge resonate rather than fit into the dichotomy. Gender is a field of structured and structuring difference (Haraway, 1988, p. 18). Feminism relies on the teachings of

² Donna J. Haraway is an American philosopher and biologist, one of the leading ecofeminists and critics of the Anthropocene, who develops an ecofeminist practice in the context of its inclusive critical pedagogy of difference, which focuses on respecting the differences between all beings, human and nonhuman (2015, 2016).

a multifaceted subject with a dual vision and on a critical vision consistently pursuing the critical positioning of a non-homogenous and gendered social space. Feminist embodiment does not allow for fixation. It is insatiable in its curiosity for a network of diverse positions. There is no such thing as a single feminist point of view. Science is at stake for better stories about the world. Rational knowledge is a process of continuous critical interpretation (Hara-way, 1988, p. 21).

(Co)creating and giving new meanings to knowledge

Developing scientific thinking is an important educational task to support the harmonious development of the child as early as pre-school age. We should create conditions for children to learn the basics of scientific mechanisms (Kos, 2019), diagnose the manifestations of children's wisdom, and support predispositions and mechanisms of development (Płóciennik, 2018; Wiśniewska, 2021). A lot of myths, misunderstandings and controversies have arisen around students' creative thinking (Klus-Stańska, 2008; Klus-Stańska & Nowicka, 2014). What is important in knowledge integration is the quality of the content (Klus-Stańska & Nowicka, 2014, p. 240–247), which must meet certain conditions: “novelty, scientific, problematic and exploratory [...]. Only their co-occurrence provides the opportunity to integrate knowledge [...].” (Klus-Stańska & Nowicka, 2014, p. 247).

Participation in the tutoring programme first and foremost helps to (co-) create an environment that is conducive to the learning process and new spaces of experience in a university setting. It represents a kind of synergistic use of the mutual potential of the educational environment of the secondary school and the university. It fits perfectly into the area of educational management supporting the individual development of students, while creating the conditions for the development of talents, interests, and passions. It contributes to the promotion of students' achievements but also, as a result, to the students' planning and selection of a further educational and professional path.

Summary

The potential of tutoring in developmental education management

The implementation of the tutor programme has provided insight into the students' abilities, interests, and passions. The tutoring process required a personal, individualised approach. There is an expectation that tutor and student should share a bond of trust to foster the intellectual, emotional, and social development of both. This requires didactic, communication but also organisational skills in the planning and running of the tutorials. Tutorials, i.e. individual sessions and meetings, their way of organising and conducting required first of all preparation, and then sharing the tutor's own knowledge and experience in a skilful way, giving feedback, listening to students, and asking questions. During individual meetings with the student, the tutor uses many activating methods such as discussion, conversation, brainstorming, or practical exercises. It is also about encouraging students to explore science on their own, to deepen the knowledge they have acquired and to be open to finding new knowledge in designing a joint research work with the tutor. In this way, both the tutor and the students update and revise their knowledge while expanding it. The tutoring process requires motivation to develop various scientific topics. It is necessary to adapt to the needs and developmental possibilities of the student. Tutoring fosters a reflective attitude and self-awareness. It is extremely important to motivate students to complete tasks, as well as the tutor's own motivation and degree of involvement in the tutoring process. The role of the tutor is essentially that of a supportive teacher (master) who advises, inspires, motivates and encourages one to think. In a broader perspective, it is an approach of development work with the other person and assisting in the (self-)development process. With tutoring in a university setting, the student is in a different role to that assigned by the school. Learning becomes a kind of "adventure or intellectual journey" and tutoring is an intellectual pleasure, where the tutor's task is "to make the learned area of knowledge enjoyable, give satisfaction and joy, because passion is one of the key factors of life success" (Czekierda, 2015, pp. 26–27).

As already mentioned, the tutoring programme is part of the field of educational management that supports the individual development of students,

while creating conditions for the development of talents, interests and passions. It is worth noting that currently human abilities are becoming a rare resource not only educational, but also economic. This is an important perspective on the new challenges in Tomorrow's Education, supporting the potential of developmental resources. From the point of view of the authorial projects implemented so far in the interdisciplinary area of development, creativity and education, I prove that the perspective of (pro) capacity resources determines a positive model of human development (Wróblewska, 2022; 2023; 2024). Experiences from implemented projects in the area of diagnosing and stimulating the development of creative abilities and talents in the educational process³ indicate that the use of the project method allows for the creation of many educational opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their creativity in finding new, valuable, and original solutions to problems through independent, critical thinking and cooperation.

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³ Active participation in the work of the Team for the identification and care of talented students as part of the project activities: *Białystok Talents of the 21st Century* (4 Editions) financed by the President of the City of Białystok in cooperation with: Center for Continuing Education (CKU), University of Białystok, Białystok University of Technology (PB), Medical University of Białystok, and Białystok Science and Technology Park. Member of the team implementing project tasks: *Start-Up Academy* under the Operational Program Knowledge Education Development, Priority Axis III Higher Education for the Economy and Development, Action 3.1 Competences in Higher Education (2018–2020) (2 editions).

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