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Collaboration: Teacher — Student — Parent. Dimensions of Educational and Upbringing Relationships

ABSTRACT

The teaching and learning process takes place in a unique environment, the character of which depends, to a great extent, on the quality of the interactions and relations which take place within it. At school, it is primarily the teacher who depends on the relationship between themselves and the student and between themselves and the parent of the student. Today, in schools there are some shortcomings in terms of the cooperation of parents. The purpose of the research presented in the article was to acknowledge the opinions of parents, teachers and students about their mutual contacts, and to introduce various forms of cooperation between parents and school, in order to draw some conclusions. The diagnostic survey method was utilized to this end. These studies were conducted among parents and teachers, and students in middle schools, from different towns in the Podkarpackie voivodeship. The analyzes show that the three-way cooperation in school depends, to a great extent, on the quality of the interactions and relations therein. Three-way cooperation at school should create a synergistic system based on the authentic, partner and subjective relationship of parents, teachers and students.

KEYWORDS

teacher, parent,
student, relations, coop-
eration, subjectivity

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Introduction

Education, including upbringing, is an important factor influencing the future of humanity. In the face of a huge transformation pace, an important yet complicated task of education is to prepare young people for the changes that they may face and for various challenges of modern times. The changing world generates new challenges for education, schools and teachers. The interdisciplinary knowledge of the world and man functioning in the new social reality is acquired through school, university and parallel education. In this respect, the modern school, and the teacher in it, must meet the new requirements and expectations of the society. Therefore, as Roland Meighan points out, it is important to appreciate the role of cooperation between the participants of the learning process in which each person is “both a learner and a source from which others learn”¹.

In the modern educational reality and upbringing practices, the need for cooperation between the school and the family in the teaching and upbringing process has been recognized. A democratic school respects the parents’ right to co-determine the process of education and upbringing of their children. This parents’ right stems from legislative processes which oblige school establishments to “consult parents on all matters related to the development of their children on a regular basis”, and thereby make “cooperation between teachers and parents become a daily interaction filling the school space”². Existing normative regulations, including the obligation to establish parents’ councils in schools, probably contribute to the clarification and expansion of cooperation between the school environment and the students’ parents. However, in Polish schools there are still a number of problems with cooperation between teachers and parents.

¹ R. Meighan, *Comparing Learning Systems: the Good, the Bad, the Ugly, and the Counterproductive, and Why Many Home-based Educating Families Found a Learning System which Fits for a Democracy*, Nottingham 2005, p. 82.

² I. Nowosad, *Nauczyciel-wychowawca czasu polskich przełomów*, Kraków 2001, p. 9.

Dimensions of Educational and Upbringing Relationships

The teaching and upbringing process takes place in a specific environment, the nature of which depends, to a great extent, on the quality of the interactions and relations therein. Upbringing and education are a matter of common concern of parents and teachers because parents begin the education process, instill values, awaken feelings and shape imagination, whereas school, by continuing education, develops and deepens the contents brought from home. It should be stressed that school is not only an institution, but above all the people forming it, who interact with each other with their personalities, attitudes and values. Members of the school community have specific relations and connections with one another regarding interdependence and roles they play. These relationships focus on the mutual relations among their participants which refer to positive or negative links between partners. At school, it is primarily the teacher who shapes the relationship between themselves and the student, and between themselves and the students' parents.

The upbringing relationship is most often understood as “an occurrence in a particular place and time, between particular individuals, based on a certain strategy of action”³. The upbringing relationship understood in this way can be considered in two aspects:

- static, which takes into account the upbringing relationship structure: pupil – educator – upbringing situation,
- dynamic, which analyses the considerations, place and time of the upbringing relationship⁴.

With this in mind, it can be concluded that the upbringing relationship is close to recognizing upbringing itself “as a process of assisting pupils in their development aimed at reaching full maturity in four basic areas: physical, psychological, social and spiritual”⁵. There are two people involved in this process (educator and pupil), who remain in a subjective relation with each other and cooperate in the implementation of the intended upbringing goals. Therefore,

³ M. Nowak, *Podstawy pedagogiki otwartej*, Lublin 1999, p. 156.

⁴ Ibidem, pp. 157, 433.

⁵ Z. B. Gaś, *Badanie zapotrzebowania na profilaktykę w szkole*, Lublin 2004, p. 1.

upbringing is no longer just about adapting the child to the standards and rules of conduct existing in a given society, but about developing and shaping the student's creativity and independence, as well as adapting to subjective functioning and taking responsibility for themselves in adult life.

Nowadays, one may say that education also comprises the upbringing process in the integration paradigm, because it occurs during upbringing, educational situations, in which a child and an adult or a pupil and an educator both participate⁶. The upbringing process consists of a number of upbringing situations, forming a set of interactions between the educator and the pupil, which is spread over a sufficiently long period of time. Therefore, in order to understand the essence of the upbringing process and its outcomes, it should be considered as consecutive upbringing interactions structured on a timeline.

An important aspect in the upbringing process is the compliance of the upbringing influences with the child's potential, resulting from the current level of his/her development and experience. A pupil's individual development, shaped by their experience, is connected with the passage of time, including, in particular, the course (history) of the upbringing relationship. The condition of this relationship significantly determines the individual's development, which in turn permeates the upbringing process⁷.

A child needs support and love of others as well as upbringing, which is a specific form of encounter and dialogue between the educator and the person being brought up, a process that assists its development and shapes its personality. In contrast, improper interpersonal relations in the upbringing and education process, mutual hurting, will lead to the deterioration of the relationship, shifting from each other and the development of a sense of misapprehension and lack of approval⁸.

⁶ E. Dryll, *Interakcja wychowawcza*, Warszawa 2002; J. Grusec, M. Davidov, *Integrating Different Perspectives on Socialization Theory and Research: A Domain-specific Approach*, "Child Development" 2010, no. 3(81).

⁷ J. Trempała, *Psychologia rozwoju człowieka. Podręcznik akademicki*, Warszawa 2011.

⁸ V. Kruczowska, *Komunikacja z nastolatkiem*, "Wychowawca" 2012, no. 7-8, pp. 2-9.

It is therefore reasonable to assume that the condition for the proper course of the education process is the situation of dialogue, which should be accompanied by a mutual desire to talk and listen to each other. A school (and thus a teacher) should prepare students for dialogue, as the skills developed through dialogue are essential both in the education process and in adult life. Dialogue is actually one of the best and most effective means of achieving a complete, authentic and genuine human-human encounter. Proper teacher-student dialogue enriches and diversifies the teaching and upbringing process. A dialogue teacher should treat a student as a unique and exceptional person who has an independent and fully autonomous structure. In addition, they should seek to find the student's potential which is worth being cherished and contribute to its development, since the role of a teacher/educator is to help in the development and to promote the pupil's potential⁹.

Any educational and upbringing activities should be considered in two dimensions:

- efficiency, expressed as the degree to which the intended goals are achieved;
- ethics, expressed as the degree to which the subjectivity and individuality of persons involved in the educational relationship is taken into account (teacher-student, student-parents, teacher-parent, teacher-teacher, teacher-head teacher)¹⁰.

The educational relationship in the above dimensions should be subjective, and interaction partners should have the opportunity to live up to their values, while respecting their partners' values and accepting their autonomy. Both dimensions are equally important for the quality of the educational interaction; they are mutually permeable and complementary.

Models of Cooperation Between Education Subjects

The success of didactic and educational work of a teacher with a student in a Polish school and its rules are significantly conditioned

⁹ J. Gara, *Pedagogiczne implikacje filozofii dialogu*, Kraków 2008, pp. 122–123.

¹⁰ A. Brzezińska, K. Appelt, *Tutoring nauczycielski – tutoring rówieśniczy: aspekty etyczne*, "Forum Oświatowe" 2013, no. 2(49), p. 14.

by the educational partnership, based on a community of mutual interaction of three basic educational subjects: students, teachers and parents. In some European Union countries (United Kingdom, Germany) a four-subject education model has been created, obligatorily adding another subject to the upbringing process structure, i.e. the local community. In Poland, cooperation between teachers and the local community involves activities intended to raise the effectiveness of the implementation of the school's upbringing and educational goals. It is primarily a matter of using the local community resources for the benefit of mutual development.

The essence of a person's subjectivity is their individuality, the right to be themselves in accordance with their own personality, abilities and experiences. It is a sense of personal empowerment, i.e. conscious activity, during which a person makes independent choices and takes decisions, becoming a kind of creator of situations and states, thus influencing the environment, their own behaviour and fate, taking over responsibility for their lives.¹¹ Recognition of the subjectivity of those participating in the upbringing process is possible thanks to the assumption that it is the process in which the educator, student and parent are the subjects. However, it should be stressed that the proper collaboration of people in such an upbringing interaction is determined by the attitudes of both the educator and the parent, as those being mature, informed and experienced.

In the three-way cooperation in education, it is important for the family to collaborate with the school, as they both have common goals that serve the proper development of the child. Students need the family and school's support, because it is the parents and teachers who help the child to explore and understand the world. Cooperation between the subjects mentioned above consists of common implementation of the intended goals as well as joint decision making. This cooperation may not, however, involve meeting both subjects' expectations, but it should mean searching together for the solutions

¹¹ M. Dubis, *Aktywność podmiotowa wychowanka w procesie usamodzielniania*, in: *Pieczka zastępcza: od wsparcia do usamodzielnienia*, ed. W. Kowalski, M. Dubis, Lublin 2015, p. 186.

to existing problems related to teaching, learning and educating the child¹².

Collaboration between the main subjects in the school background should be based on full, synergistic cooperation and full involvement of all the participants. It should be stressed that highly synergistic people are convinced that good collaboration with others ensures effective self-fulfillment, that the same action can bring benefits to both the individual and the group, and that social institutions support overcoming obstacles between the personal and the social. In addition, when collaborators complement each other, inspire each other and benefit from the fruits of joint work, the chances of achieving synergy are much greater. Both the school and the parents are the competent subjects capable of creating synergy systems by generating the principles of organization and collaboration with other people, institutions and different types of communities. Therefore, if a teacher working in a school is involved in the upbringing process, they can create a high level of synergy in the whole in-school and out-of-school community. At this level, righteousness, i. e. following social rules, is particularly valued.

The optimal three-way cooperation is based on the following assumptions:

- a three-way partnership requires being harmoniously co-created by parents, children-students and teachers;
- a sincere partnership can be achieved when it is based on the parity of humanity and equal rights in relations among parents, children-students and teachers;
- co-partners should accept (recognize) each other unconditionally;
- the cement that binds parents, children-students and teachers in terms of family-school relations, regardless of their naturally designated status or social convention, should include upbringing in the spirit of universal values, i. e. values that can be accepted by individuals regardless of their differences;

¹² M. Dubis, *Trójpodmiotowość w szkole a profilaktyka zachowań ryzykownych młodzieży*, in: *Obraz rodziny i szkoły w ujęciu interdyscyplinarnym*, ed. O. Zamecka-Zalas, I. Kiełtyk-Zaborowska, Piotrków Trybunalski 2016, p. 48.

- participants of the family-school relations are engaged in a continuous interhuman dialogue, which replaces arbitrary decisions made by either side (especially by adults) and strategically understood ways of interacting;
- three-way relations in school are based on the empathic mutual understanding and at least expressing the willingness to experience such understanding;
- successful continuation of the three-way partnership increases immeasurably when its participants, apart from being focused on talking, negotiation and dialogue, are characterized by the ability and willingness to compromise¹³.

The implementation of such a three-way cooperation model is connected with balancing the family and school status, and complementing the personal dimension of the relationship by a child-student.

Good functioning of a modern school requires the development of an optimal model of the harmonious, integrated cooperation concept. Among the existing models of family-school cooperation, Andrzej W. Janke lists:

- a three-way partnership model, which is considered to be the most favourable for cooperation. It assumes a balanced cooperation between parents, teachers and children-students, who participate in the cooperation to the best of their abilities and taking into account the differences resulting from their roles. The child is an authentic fully-fledged partner for adults. This model fosters a greater involvement of children and adults (mainly parents) and creates the space for individual activity;
- a formal-bureaucratic model, which assumes the need for cooperation between adults, resulting from the obligation to educate the child. In this model the child is an excuse, and not a participant of the family-school relation;
- a formal-bureaucratic model that is made more ethical, which assumes cooperation between parents and teachers for the best interest of the child, but without the child's participation.

¹³ A.W. Janke, *Trójpodmiotowy model partnerskich stosunków rodziny i szkoły*, in: *Pedagogika rodziny. Obszary i panorama problematyki*, ed. J. Brągiel, A.W. Janke, S. Kawula, Toruń 2009, pp. 225–226.

The best interest of the child is the basis of the parents' and teachers' duties and the integration of their actions;

- an agency model, which emphasizes adult cooperation through the child-student. Therefore, it is not possible for parents and teachers to have full interpersonal relations without the presence of the child;
- a quasi-partner model, which assumes little participation of the child in the family-school cooperation. It can be claimed that the child is partly responsible for the meaning of the cooperation, taking the role of a kind of "under-represented partner for adults"¹⁴.

To the above models of cooperation Maria Mendel adds:

- an educational partnership model, in cooperation between the family, school and municipalities, which takes into account collaboration within the community in territorial, social and institutional aspects. This cooperation is based on partnership and autonomy with regard to the right of community independence. This contributes to shaping the attitude of responsibility and involvement in the development of the individual and the community. In this model, less space is dedicated to the individualisation of contacts and pursuit of personal interests¹⁵.

In educational reality, the models are unlikely to occur in their pure form. We most often deal with mixed models which have diverse and mixed characteristics.

Bogusław Śliwerski suggests a subjective, and thus inherently personalistic, approach to cooperation in school. The author indicates the need for democratisation in school. In the democratic school, mutual relations between educational and upbringing subjects are based on the autonomous participation, openness to individual needs

¹⁴ A.W. Janke, *Transformacja w stosunkach rodziny i szkoły na przełomie XX i XXI wieku*, Bydgoszcz 2002, pp. 89–92.

¹⁵ M. Mendel, *Rodzice w szkole. Program budowania partnerstwa rodzina – szkoła – gmina*, in: *W poszukiwaniu partnerstwa rodziny, szkoły i gminy*, ed. M. Mendel, Toruń 2000, p. 69.

and formal legal equality, as well as respecting them in the system of cooperating subjects¹⁶.

As Czesław Banach emphasises, “the development of self-governance and democracy in schools requires that teachers, young people and parents are provided with reliable information on the condition of the school reality and also on the plans and actions being taken up, and that they are developed in cooperation with all the educational subjects”¹⁷.

Parents should, therefore, have the opportunity to co-determine the shape of their children’s school, the most important matters of the school, in various fields of its work. Therefore, it is desirable to ensure the parents’ participation in the process of preparing (including planning) the school’s tasks and concepts, and in their implementation¹⁸.

In the search for model parent-teacher relations, two basic approaches can be distinguished:

- concepts that highlight adult cooperation, i.e. between parents and teachers, acting for the benefit of children, without the child/student participation in this process¹⁹;
- concepts that are based on the subjective education paradigm, emphasising the three-way parent-student-teacher relations, based on genuine partnership of the cooperation participants with the child/student participation as the developing upbringing subject²⁰.

The most important thing in creating mutual cooperation is the integration of interactions. Referring to Werner S. Landecker, four

¹⁶ B. Śliwerski, *Możliwości rozpoznawania sensu współdziałania szkoły, rodziców i uczniów w społeczeństwie wolnorynkowym*, in: *Nauczyciele i rodzice. W poszukiwaniu nowych znaczeń i interpretacji współpracy*, ed. I. Nowosad and M. J. Szymański, Zielona Góra – Kraków 2004.

¹⁷ Cz. Banach, *Szkoła przyszłości – szkołą uczącą się i doskonalącą*, “Kierowanie Szkołą” 2003, no. 3, p. 2.

¹⁸ T. Wolan, *Uczestnictwo rodziców w życiu szkoły*, “Nowa Szkoła” 1996, no. 3, p. 8.

¹⁹ B. Śliwerski, *Nowe konteksty (dla) edukacji alternatywnej XXI wieku*, Kraków 2001.

²⁰ A.W. Janke, *O nową jakość stosunków rodziny i szkoły*, “Wychowanie na co dzień” 1996, no. 7–8; A.W. Janke, *Transformacja w stosunkach rodziny i szkoły na przełomie XX i XXI wieku*, op. cit.; A.W. Janke, *Trójpodmiotowy model partnerskich stosunków rodziny i szkoły*, op. cit.

levels of integration can be distinguished: cultural integration, i.e. the conformity of behaviours of individuals with cultural patterns centred around recognized values and, at the same time, shaping the awareness of the common goal; normative integration, taking into account the conformity of behaviours of individuals with social groups norms; functional integration, consisting in the conformity of behaviours of individuals with their organizational role and other participants' roles, which means mutual interdependence in the upbringing work process; communicative integration, necessary for understanding each other²¹.

An integral nature of upbringing interactions should include assisting the student/pupil in order to achieve the full development of their personality²². With the integration of subjects, "educational interactions should be integral, reach out to all types of personality in order to develop the ability of the pupils to integrate thoughts, actions, words, and provide a complete vision of the world and of the human"²³.

It should be noted that there cannot be full, valuable integration of cooperating subjects without shaping the young person's identity. Measures promoting the development of young people's identity should primarily aim at deepening the young people's self-knowledge and shaping a hierarchical system of values. Therefore, it becomes reasonable to determine the principles of upbringing interactions that foster social identity and the implementation of values in the upbringing process. These principles include:

- the principle of subjects integration with regard to harmonizing the attitudes of the whole school community in terms of upbringing goals, tasks and situations as well as upbringing results;

²¹ J. Turowski, *Socjologia. Małe struktury społeczne*, Lublin 2001, pp. 130–131; W. Jacher, *Integracja społeczna*, in: *Małe struktury społeczne*, ed. I. Machaj, Lublin 1999, pp. 65–66.

²² A. Rynio, *Integralne wychowanie w myśli Jana Pawła II*, Lublin 2004; K. Chałas, *Wychowanie ku wartościom wiejskim jako szansa integralnego rozwoju wychowanka*, Lublin 2007; K. Chałas, *Wartości w programie wychowawczym szkoły służące integralnemu rozwojowi i wychowaniu ucznia*, Warszawa 2017.

²³ K. Chałas, *Wartości w programie wychowawczym szkoły służące integralnemu rozwojowi i wychowaniu ucznia*, op. cit., p. 7.

- the principle of subjects activation aiming at conscious choices of values and active participation in tasks leading to the implementation of the selected values and involvement in the determination of upbringing tasks;
- the principle of school activity levels integration by synchronizing overall school upbringing actions with those of individual teachers and parents;
- the principle of upbringing goals and contents integration with the family and local community values;
- the principle of upbringing process complementation with the problems of development opportunities and threats to humans²⁴.

It is worth adding that, due to the growing migration of the population, attention is increasingly being paid to ethnic identity, which is one of the forms of social identity.

Educational Partnership

In view of the unity of the mutual interaction of the three educational subjects, their relationships, dialogue, interactions, negotiations, solidarity, upbringing and educational activity, and approach to teaching and upbringing as an interactive process, we can speak of the principle of educational partnership.

Educational/upbringing partnership is a kind of specific relationship between the three subjects: a pupil, an educator and parents, who have a common and mutually approved goal, positive emotional attitudes towards one another, mutual respect, cooperation and co-responsibility²⁵. The principle of educational partnership consists of the implementation of the common goal in multilateral relations, voluntariness, equality, aid and accountability, and it also requires the definition of responsibilities, areas and framework of cooperation. This model of cooperation is based on the idea of “together with the

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 24.

²⁵ *Pedagogika. Leksykon*, ed. B. Milerski, B. Śliwerski, Warszawa 2000, p. 144.

child” and “in the best interests of the child”. This means living and acting “together with the child” to the maximum extent possible²⁶.

Partnerships between education subjects should take into account the welfare of the child and its educational and life success. To this end, these relationships must be maintained in the competence of the teacher, the students and the parents. Only then can a system of mutual (unilateral, bilateral or multilateral) relationships between the teacher, the parents and the students create an environment that truly stimulates the development of all the subjects.

In the implementation of the educational partnership principle Jolanta Karbowniczek emphasizes the need to pay attention to:

- “dialogue, cross-communication, sharing experiences,
- the establishment of goals and clear rules of cooperation,
- the knowledge of competences,
- collaboration in diagnosing students;
- needs and expectations of the students, teachers, parents and the local community,
- building the atmosphere and creating conditions for partnership;
- common course of interactions, which determines shaping proper attitudes, behaviours and system of values of the young generation,
- openness in partnership,
- equality, mutual trust and understanding;
- systematic and active collaboration,
- attractive and competent meetings, etc.,
- innovative forms of partnership contacts,
- consultancy, moderation of activities, social support,
- the vision of success,
- improvement and evaluation”²⁷.

²⁶ A.W. Janke, *Transformacja w stosunkach rodziny i szkoły na przełomie XX i XXI wieku*, op. cit.; A.W. Janke, *Trójpodmiotowy model partnerskich stosunków rodziny i szkoły*, op. cit.; A.W. Janke, *Trójpodmiotowe partnerstwo w stosunkach rodziny i szkoły. Model „wspólnie z dzieckiem”*, in: *Nauczyciele i rodzice. W poszukiwaniu nowych znaczeń i interpretacji współpracy*, ed. I. Nowosad, M. J. Szymański, Zielona Góra–Kraków 2004.

²⁷ J. Karbowniczek, *Zasada partnerstwa edukacyjnego*, “Edukacja Elementarna w Teorii i Praktyce” 2016, vol. 11, no. 2(40), pp. 81–82.

The authenticity of personal relationships and dialogue-oriented attitude of the teacher are also important. Sharing knowledge and ideas, systematic support, allocation of work, swapping roles and the opportunity to reflect on the activities of all the educational partners raise awareness of the potential of the community's multifaceted activities. Participation in the activities is the most beneficial system of connections between the elements of the educational and upbringing environment.

Relevant literature indicates the importance of the participation of educational subjects in a variety of school functions. In this respect, emphasis is placed on the need for school democratisation²⁸, students involvement in school matters²⁹, participation of students, parents and teachers in school life³⁰, activities of school councils³¹, student self-governments³² and implementation of projects for students' active social participation³³.

However, "the emergence of teachers, students and parents, the free subjects in the educational system structure, with their right to participate in matters essential for the quality of the educational and upbringing process and their ethical involvement in the educational process, still raises concerns among the representatives of the ministry

²⁸ B. Śliwerski, *Klinika szkolnej demokracji*, Kraków 1996.

²⁹ A. Fazlagić, *Marketingowe zarządzanie szkołą*, Warszawa 2003; M. Chrabąszcz, *Partycypacja uczniów w zarządzaniu szkołą*, in: *Przywództwo i zmiana w edukacji. Ewaluacja jako mechanizm doskonalenia*, ed. G. Mazurkiewicz, Kraków 2012; M. Tędziągolska, I. Konieczny, *Analiza danych dotyczących wymagań "Uczniowie są aktywni", czyli o aktywności uczniów i nauczycieli w szkołach*, in: *Jakość edukacji. Dane i wnioski z ewaluacji zewnętrznych prowadzonych w latach 2010–2011*, ed. G. Mazurkiewicz, Kraków 2013.

³⁰ J. Kołodziejczyk, *Partycypacja uczniów i rodziców w zarządzaniu szkołą*, in: *Ewaluacja w nadzorze pedagogicznym. Refleksje*, ed. G. Mazurkiewicz, Kraków 2011.

³¹ M. Mencil, *Rada szkoły*, Kraków 2009.

³² A.M. Geller, *Samorządność zaczyna się w toalecie. Raport z badań samorządów uczniowskich wykonanych dla Koalicji na rzecz Samorządów Uczniowskich*, <http://www.ceo.org.pl/pl/samorzad/news/samorzadnosc-zaczyna-sie-w-toalecie-raport> [access: 13.09.2018].

³³ Civic Polonus Foundation, *Szkola Obywateli. 10 projektów zachęcających uczniów do aktywności społecznej*, Warszawa 2007.

of education or pedagogical supervision, who are accustomed to being superior to them”³⁴.

The analysis of areas of cooperation and mutual relations between teachers and parents shows that the basis for good contacts between teachers and students’ parents is a positive approach of the teacher to the parents, an open and friendly attitude, willingness to share his/her knowledge about the student and to listen to the parents’ ideas, expectations and thoughts. Schools are interested in what expectations parents have towards the school, the teachers and the educators. Parents emphasize that the scope of their real influence covers primarily four areas: safety at school (66%), organization of events in school (e. g. competitions, festival, social events - 58%), children’s free time management (e.g. organization of extra-curricular activities, leisure time, trips - 54%) and helping children with their school work (49%). Approximately 33% of the parents engage themselves in the school life at least several times a year and 61% - at least once a year. The largest areas of parental involvement overlap with the areas of their real influence: 45% of parents participated in the organization of school events (competitions, festivals, social events) at least once a year, and one third of the parents assisted in the children’s free time management (organization of extra-curricular activities, leisure time, trips). Moreover, 21% provided the school with extra financial support³⁵.

In the context of the above considerations, it is worth quoting the research by Maria Dudzikowa, carried out in a group of higher education students evaluating their school experiences. The research has shown that teachers rarely offer students the conditions for subjective functioning in the school. They also occasionally take measures to encourage the development of cognitive skills or independent activity³⁶. As a result, students learn passive subordination and schematic thinking.

³⁴ B. Śliwerski, *Szkola, środowisko rodzinne i lokalne*, “Nowe w Szkole” 2003, no. 3, p. 22.

³⁵ K. Hernik, K. Malinowska, *Jak skutecznie współpracować i komunikować się z rodzicami i społecznością lokalną Poradnik dla nauczycieli i dyrektorów*, Warszawa 2015, pp. 34–40.

³⁶ M. Dudzikowa, R. Wawrzyniak-Beszterda, *Doświadczenia szkolne pierwszego rocznika reformy edukacji. Studium teoretyczno-empiryczne*, Kraków 2010,

However, the analysis of the results of the external evaluation of schools, taking into account the aspect of cooperation between parents and teachers, leads to the conclusion that the parents' aspirations are not always approved by the schools. While 72% of the parents declare that they have a say in decisions affecting the school life, only 19% of them participate in consultations, 13% - in talks, trainings and courses offered by the school, and 14% of the parents share their knowledge and skills. Cooperation between parents and the school in co-organising school events and celebrations seems to be slightly better: 58% of parents actively participate in such ventures, approximately 35% help to prepare these events and 22% participate in actions that integrate the local community³⁷. Therefore, it can be concluded that parents have a limited influence on the school, as they only have a supportive function.

A similar conclusion can be reached from the results of the research carried out in the "School of Cooperation" project. The school is often not open to parents' initiatives and their active involvement in the school. It should be stressed that a lot depends on the attitude of the head teachers - whether the parents will be treated as partners in the school development planning process, and whether the parents' representatives will find a suitable place in the school to build the school's social capital together with the teachers and the students. The research carried out within the above-mentioned project confirmed that the parents' activeness and involvement in the school is determined by a good atmosphere, trust and social capital³⁸.

Authentic cooperation between the educational subjects is appropriate and gives the desired effects only when it is based on common upbringing goals, a favourable attitude of the subjects towards cooperation, and proper organisation of such cooperation, taking into account the needs, conditions and forms. Each of the above mentioned subjects should have the opportunity to express their opinion on the planned projects, as everything that is achieved by their joint efforts will be of particular value to them.

pp. 178-179.

³⁷ J. Kołodziejczyk, *Partycypacja uczniów i rodziców w zarządzaniu szkołą*, op. cit., pp. 190-192.

³⁸ E. Nerwińska, *Współpraca z rodzicami impulsem rozwoju szkoły*, Warszawa 2015.

Bearing in mind the quality of educational activities and, above all, the best interests of all participants in the educational process, it is necessary to strive for mutual relations to achieve a high level of collaboration. This is only possible if both subjects follow certain principles. These include:

- the principle of mutual trust, which implies getting to know each other and building an atmosphere of mutual goodwill. It is crucial to build bonds based on mutual trust, respect, openness and consideration in contacts;
- the principle of positive motivation, which assumes voluntary participation in the cooperation. Both subjects have to feel allied and be equally motivated to act. It is about making sure that everyone is aware of the cooperation as well as its benefits;
- the principle of partnership, which emphasizes the educators and parents' equal rights and obligations. Neither subject should feel less valuable than the other so that neither subject would feel superior to the other. Equal partners should create a type of community whose members relatively equally participate in decision-making, and together bear responsibility for their implementation;
- the principle of unity of interactions, which reminds of the necessity for the school and the family to achieve coherent goals in their educational work. In addition to the compatibility of goals, it is also important to establish common methods and forms of their implementation so that they serve the pupils' development;
- the principle of active and systematic cooperation, which consists in active and ongoing teacher-parent, teacher-teacher and parent-parent communication in order to exchange information and confront observations. Two- and multidirectional exchanges of opinions are particularly beneficial in this respect, as they make it possible to address all the relationship subjects in the discussion³⁹.

³⁹ M. Łobocki, *Współdziałanie nauczycieli i rodziców w procesie wychowania*, Warszawa 1985; M. Jakowicka, *Potrzeba metodologicznych podstaw oceny relacji nauczyciel – rodzice*, in: *Nauczyciele i rodzice: w poszukiwaniu nowych znaczeń i interpretacji współpracy*, ed. I. Nowosad, M.J. Szymański, Zielona Góra–Kraków; P. Kowolik, *Dialog i współdziałanie szkoły z domem rodzinnym*,

Optimal cooperation between teachers and parents also requires taking into account the specific conditions that determine its effectiveness. These include: an adequate frequency of parents-school contacts, engaging the family in the implementation of comprehensive tasks related to the school's curriculum, and not only single and immediate tasks, which provide the appropriate atmosphere of cooperation and organisational and financial conditions, familiarizing parents and teachers with their rights and obligations, supporting parents in developing their competences necessary for understanding and raising a child.

Teacher – student – parent collaboration: the author's own research

The research results presented below have been collected using the diagnostic survey method. In order to identify the assumed issues of teacher-student-parent cooperation, a self-designed survey questionnaire for teachers, parents and students was used as a basic tool. The aim of the research was to get to know the current state of cooperation between educational subjects, its real picture and the perception of the educational and upbringing process subjects.

The research used for collecting the empirical material was conducted in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. The research encompassed 606 people, including 283 parents, 40 teachers and 283 secondary school students from grades 1-3. There were 52.3% of boys and 47.7% of girls among the respondents. The age distribution of students participating in the research was between 13 and 17 years old. It should be emphasized that there could be children of different ages in one class, which resulted from the age of starting school, but also from repeating the year due to school failures.

These were pilot studies and the presented analysis of the research results is of an exploratory nature. The answers provided by the respondents are of a declarative nature, which means that they may or may not reflect the reality.

in: *Współprzeźnienie edukacji*, ed. M. Nyczaj-Drag, M. Głazewski, Kraków 2005; K. Gawroński, *Potyczki prawne dyrektora szkoły: Rola prawa w wybranych obszarach zarządzania szkołą*, Warszawa 2010.

One of the first issues raised in the study concerned how important the three-way cooperation in school is for the teachers, parents and students. The research results in this area have been presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The importance of cooperation according to teachers, students and parents

Importance attached to cooperation	Teachers N-40		Students N-283		Parents N-283		Total N-606	
	L	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
High (3 points)	24	60.0	89	31.4	104	36.7	217	35.8
Medium (2 points)	13	32.5	137	48.4	108	41.7	258	42.6
Low (1 point)	3	7.5	57	20.2	71	21.6	131	21.6
Arithmetic mean of the assessment points	2.5		2.1		2.1		2.2	

Source: The author's own research.

Taking into account all the respondents, it can be stated that 42.6% of the respondents give an average priority to cooperation (the arithmetic mean of 2.2 points). A group of 21.6% of respondents indicate a low importance of the three-way cooperation. The research results are differentiated depending on belonging to a given group: the teachers (60%) pay more attention to communication than the parents (41.7%) and the students (48.4%).

The aim of the study was to identify the forms of three-way cooperation in the surveyed schools. The measures in this area have been presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Areas of three-way cooperation in the surveyed schools

Cooperation Cooperation subjects	In the financial support for the school		In the activities to organize free time in the school		In the organi- zational forms of coopera- tion, e.g. the Parents' Council, Self-Govern- ment		In the educational process		In the upbringing process	
	L	%	L	%	L	%	L	%	L	%
teacher-parent	23	57.5	18	45.0	9	2.3	21	52.5	38	95.0
teacher-student	–	–	11	27.5	22	7.8	40	100	40	100
parent-teacher	210	74.2	179	63.3	28	9.9	140	49.5	198	69.9
parent-student	–	–	95	33.6	4	1.4	26	9.2	49	17.3
student-teacher	–	–	140	49.5	6	2.1	250	88.3	112	38.6
student-parent	–	–	76	26.8	–	–	27	9.5	96	33.9

Note: due to the possibility of multiple answers, the percentages do not add up to 100.

SOURCE: The author's own research.

From the obtained empirical research concerning the areas of the three-way cooperation, it can be stated that from the teachers' perspective, cooperation with the parents most often refers to the upbringing process (95%) and financial support (57%). Therefore, the teachers most frequently expect support from the parents in solving upbringing problems of the students and reinforcement of the school's upbringing effect. The teachers seem to underestimate the parents' potential to improve the teaching process. These results correlate with the results obtained by Danuta Waloszek, who stated, on the basis of the interviews with the teachers, that the teachers do not expect cooperation from parents in terms of teaching, as they believe that it is the teacher's prerogative⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ D. Waloszek, *Czy szkoła może być miejscem wzajemności porozumienia się nauczycieli-rodziców-uczniów?* in: *Współprzestrzenie edukacji: szkoła – rodzina – społeczeństwo – kultura*, ed. M. Nyczaj-Drąg, M. Głazewski, Kraków 2005, pp. 129–141.

Cooperation between the teachers and the students is typically related to the teaching (100%) and upbringing (100%) process. The 100% indicator of cooperation between the teachers and the students in the studied areas possibly results from the teacher's priority tasks at school, i.e. teaching and upbringing.

From the parents' point of view, cooperation with the teachers in the surveyed schools consists mainly in financing the school (74.2%) and support in upbringing (69.9%). The answers of the surveyed parents indicate that the teachers inform them that the school needs financial support and that the raised funds will be spent on the school's (students') needs. This is primarily about payments to the Parents' Council (other donations are also welcome). Cooperation between the parents and their own children/students, concerning school, is usually limited to helping in the organization of free time management.

The analysis of the students' research results demonstrates that cooperation with the teachers most often concerns the process (88.3%) and organisation of free time (49.5%). No indications of the cooperation with the teachers can be found in almost 13% of the students in the teaching process and over 60% in the upbringing process, which may result from a different understanding of cooperation. However, this is worrying, because teaching and upbringing are basic aspects of the school, and poor cooperation between the students and the teachers in this respect most likely affects the teaching results. The students notice the help of their parents in organizing free time (26.8%) and support in upbringing by the school (33.9%).

In this context, the evaluation of cooperation in school, performed by the surveyed subjects, seems interesting. 61% of all the respondents describe the level of this three-way cooperation as good, whereas 18.2% of the respondents are not satisfied with it. Taking into account particular groups of the respondents, the students (51.2%) are most satisfied with the three-way cooperation in all areas, followed by the parents (50.2%), but the teachers do not manifest such enthusiasm - only 38.2% are satisfied.

The teachers point out that a significant number of parents do not want to cooperate and only limit their activity to being at the meetings with the teacher. Moreover, the teachers emphasize the fact

that the parents develop demanding attitudes towards the school and the teacher.

More than half of the surveyed parents express the need and willingness to cooperate with the school. They count on receiving information on the child's progress and possible problems before they occur. They expect guidance and expert assistance in the event of educational or upbringing problems and, above all, understanding and support, and not blaming for problems. These parents want to feel that they have an influence on what happens to their child. They expect teachers to be open to their suggestions and requests regarding the functioning of the class and the school.

Conclusions

Nowadays, there is a great deal of emphasis on the multifaceted cooperation between the parents and the school, covering different areas. The research results presented above are fragmentary and do not allow for generalisations, but may serve as an inspiration for further consideration and promotion of the three-way cooperation.

Cooperation between family and school should encompass a genuine partnership and subjective relationship of parents, teachers and students. In order to develop self-governance, parents' councils should be promoted as bodies that provide a space for cooperation and involvement of the whole school community in building the school's position in the local community. Although the parents' awareness of their rights at school has increased significantly in the recent years, they do not always take advantage of them. Both those who vote for the parents' council and those who are elected sometimes lack the courage and ability to express their views, which makes dialogue impossible. Thus, it is advisable to give the parents' council proper importance, enabling it to have a real influence on the school life, and not just a consultative and opinion-making function.

It is advisable to expand the area of parental activity (not only the three class representatives or the parents' council), with a clear emphasis on the fact that both parents and students are important to the teacher, and that a discussion on matters concerning the organisation of the educational and upbringing process, and the functioning of the school, can only facilitate the functioning of their children at

school. It is therefore necessary to develop a model of cooperation with parents where the cooperating subjects would have the feeling of co-deciding in all the matters crucial for the children's upbringing and development.

It is desirable to have an individual approach to each family, rather than treat everyone collectively in the same way and discussing "everyone's problems in front of everyone".

It should be deemed indispensable to improve teachers' knowledge and skills in building educational partnerships and in developing competences to facilitate the three-way cooperation.

Although cooperation between the school and the parents requires the involvement of both subjects, it is the school, i.e. a professionally organized institution with appropriate resources, that is the subject responsible for fostering parental involvement. An important aspect of improving the quality of the school-home relationship is to increase the number and diversity of communication forms. Klaudia Błaszczuk emphasizes that "teachers neither care about the variety of mutual contacts, nor find them important. Instead, they only exchange the information about the grades and fees to be paid with the teachers. They do not wish to have their students' caregivers involved in the school life, except in the area they designate, i.e. preferably the one that is the most connected with their work for the school."⁴¹

Today, there are shortcomings at schools in terms of the cooperation between parents and the school. Both teachers and class teachers, as well as parents, highlight this reality. We are even faced with mutual accusations and suspicions of ill will in the educational institution activities, and, on the other hand, parents are accused of developing demanding attitudes. An effective solution to this problem is the suggestion to establish synergistic cooperation in the context of interpersonal parent-school relations, which would take account of the upbringing and educational dimensions. The proper relationship between educational subjects is an opportunity to develop a common course of action and to create optimal conditions for the full and harmonious development and education of a child.

⁴¹ K. Błaszczuk, *Miejsca rodziców szkolnej przestrzeni edukacyjnej*, in: *W stronę przywództwa edukacyjnego. Relacje podmiotów (w) lokalnej przestrzeni*, ed. M.J. Śmiałek, Poznań-Kalisz, 2009, p. 327.

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