

Wiktor Sawczuk
ORCID: 0000-0002-7238-722X
University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn

Activation of the Local Environment: from Theory to Practice — the History of an Educational Project

ABSTRACT

Contemporary social changes are affected in a crucial way by the activities of individuals and social groups. One can foster the active attitudes of such groups through education. Taking this into account, the Faculty of Social Sciences at UWM in Olsztyn launched an initiative to create a new specialization at the Faculty of Social Sciences called “Education and Activation of Local Communities”. The project was guided by numerous opinions, documents, guidelines, and expert advice. The analysis of documents indicated a real need for the implementation of the initiative, which provided additional inspiration in the planning and finalization of the entire project. Despite the enormous involvement and effort on the part of the organizers, the initiative was, and still is, a failure. The campaign carried out in the mass media, as well as the special academic conference, were of no help. The main reasons for the failure are as follows: 1. The apparent inertia of the most members of the young generation in the field of widely understood social activity, 2. The resulting low interest in subsequent calls for applications, 3. The lack of support on the part of local institutions, 4. The lack of reasonable, pragmatic programme for the academic conference promoting the new specialization. The confrontation between theory and practice indicates that even the best intentions might fail when confronted with reality.

KEYWORDS

local environment,
education, educational
project, higher
education, theory,
practice, barriers,
dilemmas, failure

SPI Vol. 22, 2019/1
ISSN 2450-5358
e-ISSN 2450-5366
DOI: 10.12775/SPI.2019.1.009
Submitted: 25.10.2018
Accepted: 20.03.2019

Introduction

The activation and development of local communities have a long tradition and rich literature of the subject. At present, the importance of this issue is noticeable due to the global social and economic changes. It is symptomatic that, in our country, the idea of the local community is more often associated with the particular place/region than with the sense of belonging to a particular society, and individuals usually fail to identify themselves with the local community, which results in the fact that responsibility for the common problems of the neighbours is blurred. Also, groups of inhabitants from a particular district, village or commune usually have no place in which they can meet and prepare the plans of efficient undertakings aimed at solving local problems, or just discuss on satisfying the specific local needs. A person who has been involved in social works (just like the author of this text) is aware of the fact that the biggest problem is to convince people that it is good to work on solving the common problems. When, after discussing a given issue, it is time to make specific decisions, it often ends with the statement: “let us get to work and let someone do that”. In such situations, the passive approach is very clear. People start to complain that they have no time to do anything or enumerate various obstacles related to more or less imaginary professional or family obligations. Is it possible to eliminate such attitudes from social life in a bottom-up manner? It seems that we can aim at this through constructive educational offers addressed to the young generation. It is such actions, as the attempt to answer the social need, that were taken up at the turn of the year 2014/2015 at the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, at the Faculty of Social Sciences. Those actions aimed at creating the new specialization of studies named “Education and Activation of Local Communities”.

Features of the new reality

Modern societies entered a new phase of civilisation development. It is characterised by a radical change in professional work and other areas of life. Functioning in a new reality requires the acquisition of new competences and skills. It forces people to change the

way of thinking about learning and gaining knowledge. It is easy to notice that, in the contemporary economic markets, knowledge and information are treated just like natural resources, capital, energy or workforce. At present, it is impossible to obtain a high income only as a result of producing goods and controlling the financial flow, as knowledge and information are an integral part of the process of generating wealth, including the wealth of social groups or the whole societies. Due to the social and economic development, the power of human muscles is being replaced with the power of human mind, and knowledge and information, as well as the ability to use them at the right moment and in the proper way, are becoming the foundation of the fortune of the contemporary communities. On the one hand, the civilization progress helps to work out the methods and means of overcoming the arising problems, and – on the other hand – it generates new, equally difficult problems. The people who shall enter the changing labour market and perform professions of the future, will face the difficult task of solving the future problems that are still unknown to us. It is interesting to analyse the current forecasts related to the mobility in the future labour market. For example, the American department of labour estimates that the contemporary student shall have worked in 10-14 places before he/she is 38 years old, and one in four employees shall work at his/her current employer's for less than a year. It is worth mentioning that the group of professions that are the most desirable now, did not exist a dozen or so years ago. At that time, nobody had even heard of such professions as an info-broker, a coolhunter, an energetic auditor, or a landscape architect¹. It seems that there will be more and more professions the names and competences of which we still do not know.

Also, it is clear that the amount of knowledge is rapidly increasing, and that it is getting old equally fast. At the same time, in many aspects, knowledge loses its validity. It was especially visible in the period of the intensive development of technology which took place in the years 1970-2000. In that period of time, the resources of human knowledge increased eightfold. At present, it is estimated that, in a week, the most popular magazines provide more information than a person living in the 18th century heard during their whole

¹ A. Sabat, *Przedsiębiorczość akademicka: poradnik*, Lublin 2012, p. 1.

lifetime. Another significant indicator that illustrates the dynamic processes in question is the fact that in the contemporary English there are about 540 thousand words, i. e. five times more than during Shakespeare's life. Also, an average citizen is not aware of the fact that about 4 thousand books are published every day. It refers to books on many different topics. For example, 6 million books on medicine are published every year. It means that if the doctors were to read two articles a day – not necessarily on their specialisation, reading all the books published in a year would take them 82 centuries². The analysis of scientific literature of the last quarter of a century indicates that the resources of knowledge are doubled every eight years, and they become invalid every ten years. However, in the disciplines such as IT, telecommunication, nanotechnology or genetic engineering, knowledge is getting invalid even faster. It is estimated that the double increase of knowledge in technical information takes about two years. In such a situation, the educational effort of universities trying to provide their graduates with the necessary knowledge is ineffective. It is impossible for such schools to provide the graduates with the knowledge that would be satisfactory to them and that would meet the social expectations and features of the rapidly changing world. In practice, it means that a half of the knowledge to be learnt by the students during the first year becomes invalid in their third year of studies. The research presented in the American literature shows that the modern employee willing to maintain the proper level of knowledge has to extend his/her knowledge 12 times in their lifetime in such a way as if they learnt a new profession. Thus, today, lifelong learning is not just a postulate, but a professional “be or not to be”³ for the vast majority of employees. Peter Drucker claims that, at present, only those people are truly educated who have learnt how to learn for the whole life⁴. Therefore, the success of all the actions that are being taken up depends on the access to knowledge and information, as well as the ability to use them. In the modern society

² A. Zając, *Cywilizacja informacyjna na język kultury, wiedzy i edukacji przelotowa*, “Kwartalnik Edukacyjny” 2013, no. 4(75), pp. 14–15.

³ Ibidem, p. 15.

⁴ P. Drucker, a fragment of the e-book: *Menedżer skuteczny. Efektywności można się nauczyć*, <https://www.legimi.pl/ebook-menedzer-skuteczny-efektywnosci-mozna-sie-nauczyc-peter-f-drucker,b237065.html> [access: 17.10.2018].

of knowledge, which is based on such mechanisms, the fundamental role is played by the ability to learn for the whole life understood not only as the process of obtaining information, but also as the ability to react to all the dynamic changes that are taking place. That is why, what is needed or even necessary is to educate a group of people who would be able to help others function in the changing reality, to motivate them⁵ and to solve the problems that shall occur in future. Such a group of people would be able to constructively implement and reinforce changes, but also to prepare a further project of changes, i. e. carry out the process that permanently influences the improvement of social life.

Necessary arrangements and assumptions (not only terminological ones)

According to the definition of activation, it is “intensifying, re-viving an activity – based on the Latin *activus* – active”⁶. Andrzej Siciński claims that activation is “conscious and purposeful action aimed at changing the lifestyle”⁷, where lifestyle means the “the scope and forms of everyday behaviours of individuals or groups, specific for the social situation, i. e. manifesting the social position and perceived as typical of such position, so enabling broadly understood social location of other people”⁸. In the above approach, activation is considered in an individual dimension, and - in sociological categories - activation and development of local communities is a relatively new compilation of ideas that appeared in sociology in 1980s of the 20th century, along with the restitution of localism.

While analysing the issue of activation and development of local communities, Zbigniew T. Wierzbicki, concluded: “the activation

⁵ M. Pasterski, *10 sposobów na nieograniczoną motywację*, <https://michalpasterski.pl/2008/06/10-sposobow-na-nieograniczona-motywacje-2/> [access: 28.09.2018].

⁶ W. Kopaliński, *Słownik Wyrazów Obcych i Zwrotów Obcojęzycznych*, Warszawa 1985, p. 20.

⁷ *Styl życia w miastach polskich*, ed. A. Siciński, Wrocław 1988, p. 26.

⁸ A. Siciński, *Styl życia – problemy pojęciowe i teoretyczne*, in: *Styl życia. Koncepcje – propozycje*, ed. A. Siciński, Warszawa 1976, p. 15.

and development of local communities is the activity of people living in a given area, who – with the common effort – try to satisfy their needs and improve the conditions of their life and the life of the local group, mainly through the creation of new structures. In the process of creating them, the members acquire new skills, attitudes and views”⁹.

Actions are constructive if particular tasks and problems are solved in a creative and productive manner. It should be the same with the actions taken up to the benefit of a broadly understood social structure, including the local communities. Within this context, it seems that we should specify the terms *productivity* and *creativity*. Productivity may mean a lot of things. It may refer to the collection of someone’s products – an artistic or creative output¹⁰. The second dimension – creative output, was historically associated with productivity for the longest period of time. The concept is not very clear, but everyone knows what it is about as perceiving it is intuitive. Creative output is quite a broad idea and it includes some ambiguity. It is, at the same time, a process in the mind of a particular artist, and the product of this process. Productivity is connected with creativity. Being productive means being creative¹¹. There is also a certain problem with the idea of creativity – actually, we know what it means, but the term is perceived in many different ways. Creativity may have various connotations. In the basic case – dichotomous ones: creativity as something good, and creativity perceived in a negative manner. Taking into account the above considerations, creativity is quite a clear term from the linguistic point of view, but we have to admit that it is vague¹². Thus, some questions appear: what is/is not creativity? Who – taking into account the previous considerations – may be treated as a creator? Does the term “creator” refer only to an artist, a poet, a painter, a composer, or an inventor – or perhaps, in our case, can it refer to the team of people working on the fulfillment of an educational project aiming at the creation of a new specialization

⁹ Z.T. Wierzbicki, *Aktywizacja i rozwój społeczności lokalnych*, in: *Aktywizacja i rozwój społeczności lokalnych*, ed. Z.T. Wierzbicki, Wrocław 1973, p. 20.

¹⁰ *Słownik języka polskiego PWN*, vol. 3, Warszawa 1999, p. 518.

¹¹ A. Murzyn, *Wokół Kena Robinsona kreatywnego myślenia o edukacji*, Kraków 2013, p. 75.

¹² E. Nęcka, *Psychologia twórczości*, Gdańsk 2005, pp. 11–12.

within pedagogical studies at a university? The answer is included in the assumptions of the humanist psychology as this direction clearly determines that creativity is immanently related to human nature. And if it is so, we should assume that all people deserve it, irrespective of the kind of their activity¹³, so it also refers to the team of people working on the fulfillment of a particular educational project at a university. Such a team may be clearly perceived as the creator and producer of the university's reality. Such activity, as a process, should lead to a new product which is accepted as useful for a particular group after a certain period of time has passed¹⁴. For example, the productivity of a team preparing a new specialization should – according to the adopted canons – be characterized by the ability of its members to produce something new, meaningful and socially useful. The criteria of being new, meaningful and socially useful, i. e. the criteria of productivity understood in a classical manner were important for the team preparing the project, for the academic teachers, the local society, and – as the authors of the initiative assumed – for the candidates who could possibly be interested in such a specialization, especially during the first recruitment when the applicants for the studies were obliged to declare studying the specialization: “Education and activation of local communities”. In the next years, due to the change in the criteria of the selection of specialization, the students did not choose a specialization until the completion of the first semester, after informative meetings during which the faculty authorities presented all the specializations offered within the pedagogical studies. In this situation, a problem appeared: both in the next and further recruitments, when a specialization was to be selected according to the modified principles, the students were not interested in the specialization in question. Only few students chose it. It is difficult to say why. Perhaps it is related to the change of ethos that, not so long ago, was typical of the majority of students. Such a change is reflected in the academic reality (which I also experience): the features such as high moral level, good manners, broad interests, respect for others, and high cultural level, have been pushed to the

¹³ Ibidem, pp. 22-23.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 17.

background¹⁵. It is visible in everyday attitudes and behaviours of the majority of students for whom activeness in the public life is not very important or even meaningless.

Reality of the academic life and the new specialization

Academic reality can be perceived in four dimensions that are being fulfilled in different contexts. They include: academic teachers, administrative employees, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, as well as students – the benefactors of the above entities. While preparing the new specialization, the project team mainly took into account the fact that studying should be perceived as development that changes the students for better. Thus, such development should not only be aimed at transferring knowledge, but also at other added values, such as better understanding of oneself, others and the surrounding world. Thus, the new specialization was to be interdisciplinary. However, it is worth mentioning that, in their everyday reality, universities experience different attitudes of students – committed, offensive ones, as well as passive, defensive approaches. Offensive and creative behaviours are characterized by: active participation in the classes, preferring active learning methods (e. g. problem-solving), independent searching for information, preferring the contents that extend one's knowledge, overcoming obstacles, and the willingness to continue to learn. This group of students clearly indicates that it follows the rule: if you want to do something well, there are no shortcuts. And the students who prefer defensive, imitative behaviours are passive watchers of the classes, like less creative learning methods (e. g. lectures), use the information given by the teacher and give up their own exploration, choose the contents strictly related with the specialization of studies¹⁶, give up in the face of obstacles, and have no plans regarding further education. Such attitudes may result from the fact that university education has become mass and fashionable, not elite,

¹⁵ J. Kwaśniewski, *Postrzeżenie marginalizacji oraz strategii i środków kontroli społecznej*, in: *Kontrola społeczna procesów marginalizacji*, ed. J. Kwaśniewski, Warszawa 1997, pp. 227–228.

¹⁶ T. Bauman, *Uniwersytet wobec zmian społeczno-kulturowych. Casus Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego*, Gdańsk 2001, p. 142.

and the vast majority of the youth seems to just drift in the academic reality, treating the period of studies as a kind of authorization to become adult and take up professional work¹⁷. Taking into account the above conditions – not only those that seemed beneficial, and meeting the challenges of the contemporary reality, we have taken the initiative to establish the new specialization that was described in the introduction. We were thinking about two-year 2nd-level complementary studies in a full-time and part-time cycle at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn. It is worth emphasizing that the people who took such decision first of all cared about the future and condition of the young generation which lives and functions in local communities – including those from the Warmia and Mazury voivodeship. Also, the decision to open a new specialization was made on the basis of the reflections connected with the upbringing functions of a university which include purposeful shaping and modifying the students' systems of values, life objectives, attitudes, beliefs, and needs. In order to fulfill its mission, a university should form such a basis that would warrant – within the current integration processes – mutual complementarity of national, local and regional educational systems. Referring to the postulates of Jacques Delors, all those actions are to be based on four pillars of education: study to know, to act, to live together and to be¹⁸. The universities are still obliged to prepare educated intelligentsia to play a creative role in the society and the country, including the lowest levels of those structures – local communities. Within such scope, the team preparing the new specialization took into account the tasks the positive fulfilment of which is, in a way, a part of the adequate evaluation of functioning of a university. These tasks include several scopes. The first one refers to transferring the heritage of science and culture, tradition, and knowledge of the past, to the presentation of people's achievements in the development of scientific thought in all the areas of knowledge, and to the presentation of the output of the material culture. The second scope is related to preparing the employees with the highest qualifications and it is them who shall

¹⁷ See *Fabryki dyplomów czy universitas?*, ed. M. Czerepaniak-Walczak, Kraków 2013.

¹⁸ J. Delors, *Edukacja: jest w niej ukryty skarb*, Warszawa 1998, p. 85.

determine the level of development of the societies and countries. The third scope refers to creating knowledge through scientific research, as well as didactic activity and educating human resources. Another scope refers to the culture-forming functions of universities. The fifth scope concerns different expert obligations – counseling, giving opinions, etc. Thus, “(...) a university is obliged to shape the so-called instrumental dispositions in the students, i. e. it is to provide them with knowledge and develop particular skills and abilities, as well as shape their so-called directional dispositions which specify the man’s attitude towards others, oneself, the world and values”¹⁹. Taking this into account, higher education institutions – through their graduates – should influence the rest of the society in order to introduce the desired changes, which, both in the global and local scale, is a huge educational challenge today and in the future.

While preparing the above mentioned educational project, its creators also took into account different documents that indicated the possible and real frames of the initiative of the project team, and constituted an additional inspiration for the team members. The basic documents to which the team referred were: the Act of 27th July 2005 – Law on Higher Education²⁰, Resolution no. 187 of the Senate of the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn of 26th March 2013 concerning the educational effects for the levels and profiles of education in the specializations taught at the University²¹, as well as the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 2nd November 2011 on the National Frames of Qualification for Higher Education²².

It is important that, while preparing the new specialization, its creators followed the mission of the university specified in the

¹⁹ M. Łobocki, *O systemie wychowawczym w szkole wyższej*, “Życie Szkoły Wyższej” 1986, no. 4, p. 65.

²⁰ Journal of Laws 2005 No. 164, item 1365, as amended, <http://isip.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20051641365> [access: 25.04.2015].

²¹ Appendix 40 to the Resolution No. 187 of the Senate of UWM in Olsztyn of 26th March 2013, Appendix 41 to the Resolution No. 187 of the Senate of UWM in Olsztyn of 26th March 2013, <http://bip.uwm.edu.pl/node/3177> [access: 25.04.2015].

²² Journal of Laws 2011 No. 253, item 1520, <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20112531520> [access: 25.04.2015].

Programme of Development of the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn within the years 2012–2020²³, and the objectives established by the Rector of UWM – Prof. Ryszard Górecki PhD who, in the speech given on the inauguration of the academic year 2012/2013 emphasized the need to create new specializations and adjust them to the requirements of economy and local communities – not only in Warmia and Mazury. At the same time, the Rector clearly said that the university’s proper functioning shall depend on the good cooperation with the key self-government and local organisations, which should ensure the dynamic development of our region²⁴. The suggested specialization was strictly related to the strategic objectives mentioned in the Programme of Development of the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn within the years 2012–2020, related to the introduction and fulfillment of high quality educational standards adjusted to the needs of the external environment, with the particular emphasis on the region of Warmia and Mazury.

The candidate for the studies in the specialization “Education and Activation of Local Communities” should (according to the assumption) have the proper pedagogical and psychological knowledge gained during the previous 3-year studies of the first level. Those 3-year studies should make the candidate competent enough to take up studies in the above mentioned specialization. After the additional 2-year master’s studies, the graduate should have a general pedagogical, psycho-pedagogical, sociological and psychological knowledge necessary for understanding the psycho-social context of education, with the strong emphasis on the context resulting from the specific features of local environments. It was assumed that in the process of studying the above mentioned specialization, the graduate should master the following skills:

- making rational and intended transformations including the changes in various areas of social and cultural life;

²³ *Programme of the Development of UWM in the Years 2012-2020*, strategic objectives p.1.1, <http://www.uwm.edu.pl/universytet/program-rozwoju-uwm-latach-2012-20> [access: 25.04.2015].

²⁴ *Inauguration speech of Prof. Ryszard Górecki – Rector of UWM*, 01.10.2012, <http://www.uwmfm.pl/news/126/czytaj/716/przemowienie-inauguracyjne-prof-ryszarda-goreckiego-rektora-uwm.html> [access: 25.04.2015].

- inspiring the activities of local communities understood as teams acting for the common good aimed at improving the conditions of life;
- acting to the benefit of the common tradition, culture and history through the creation of, e. g. theme villages, educational paths, small museums and heritage parks;
- inspiring the activities of local communities, including those related to social economy, through the creation of, e. g. associations, groups of local activity, small social enterprises, and professional counselling offices;
- cooperation with the local self-government, non-government organisations, and local companies;
- the obtainment of financial resources for the need of the local groups of activity, non-government organisations, informal social groups and associations;
- creating the methodology of constructing projects for the needs of the local social groups;
- diagnosing the needs of local communities in the social, cultural and economic area;
- coordinating the activities related to local projects;
- managing social groups, organisations, informal groups;
- working with the use of the project method;
- acting for the promotion of the region and the creation of local tourist products;
- carrying out the activities related to focusing on individual needs, taking into account professional counselling and knowledge of professions;
- social communication, negotiation methods, different forms of group work;
- leading/managing local social groups, organizations and associations in legal, economic, social and cultural terms;
- the knowledge of a foreign language at the level B2 of the European System of Describing Linguistic Education of the European Council, and the ability to use specialist language necessary for doing a given job;
- lifelong learning and constant upgrading of knowledge related to a given profession, taking into account the context of the local community's everyday life.

The emphasis was put on the graduate's ability to introduce rational and intended transformations including the changes in different areas of social and cultural life, including encouraging the activity of local communities understood as the teams acting for the common good. Such a pro-social approach is highly desirable, especially in the society which has only recently started to get involved in such activities. The previous Polish political system indubitably left a trace in many people's awareness which makes it difficult for them to understand and properly evaluate the pro-social behaviours of some groups and environments. In their basic assumptions, the suggested studies were, first of all, to be the good basis for gaining reliable preparation for efficient activation of local communities, taking into account the specific features of the local labour markets. Second, they were to make it possible for the graduates to develop reflective evaluation concerning the activity of such communities related to social economy. Third, they were to teach young people how to manage the professional activity of social groups, organisations and associations in legal, economic, social and cultural terms.

Therefore, the new pedagogical specialization was to prepare the students for multifaceted and multidirectional activation of local communities. Also, it was the answer to the demand for the professional staff competent in activation and proper management of the development of local communities. The above assumptions were exemplified in the suggested four groups of subjects directly related to that specialization²⁵. They were as follows:

1. The group of economic-business subjects:
 - Basics of economy
 - Labour market and unemployment
 - Obtainment of external resources for the activity of the non-government sector
 - Selected forms of marketing
2. The group of managing-psychological subjects:
 - Diagnosing the needs of local communities
 - Social communication and negotiations

²⁵ It is important that, apart from the team preparing the new specialization, other academic employees of the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Law and Administration of UMW in Olsztyn were also involved in creating the curriculum of particular subjects and syllabuses.

- Activation of local social groups
 - Leaders of local initiatives
 - Techniques of group work
 - Project coordinator's working tools
 - Techniques of voluntary work
3. The group of administration and self-government subjects:
- Selected issues concerning the activity of non-government sector
 - Issues concerning administration and local self-government
 - IT technologies in the activity of the non-government sector
4. The group of pedagogical-historical/regional subjects:
- Regional education
 - Transboundary education
 - Counselling and consulting for the disabled
 - History and development of organisations and associations
 - Cultural heritage of Warmia and Mazury.

Taking into account the trends in the labour market, the regulations issued by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, and the adoption of the “National Strategy of Regional Development 2010-2020: Regions, Cities, Rural Areas” by the government on 13th July 2010 (the strategy specifies the objectives of the policy concerning the development of the country in particular territories and determines the principles of the fulfilment of particular policies)²⁶, as well as the analyses included in the document: “Evaluation of the Strategy of the Social-Economic Development of Warmia and Mazury up to 2020 – Final Report”²⁷, the graduates of the specialization: Education and Activation of Local Communities would be able to work in almost all sectors of economy and areas of social activity

²⁶ National Strategy of Regional Development 2010-2020: Regions, Cities, Rural Areas. Documents of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development, https://www.mir.gov.pl/rozwoj_regionalny/polityka_regionalna/ksrr_2010_2020/strony/default.aspx [access: 25.04.2015].

²⁷ *Evaluation of the Strategy of the Social-Economic Development of Warmia and Mazury up to 2020 – Final Report* (PDF version), Institute of Structural Research, Warszawa, https://www.mir.gov.pl/aktualnosci/...rozwoju/.../KSRR_13_07_2010. [access: 25.04.2015].

related to the functioning of local communities, i. e. in the government, non-government and local government sector.

Taking into account the above classification, a graduate of the specialization in question would be able to work in the broadly understood sector of government administration, broadly understood sector of non-government organisations, and broadly understood sector of self-government organisations. An additional, strong advantage of the specialization in question is the fact that, during the studies, the students were to participate in pedagogical apprenticeships in educational institutions, as well as care and upbringing establishments. On this basis, such a graduate would have proper pedagogical qualifications which might turn out to be necessary in his/her professional career.

Dilemmas and necessary decisions – an absolutely crucial commentary

One of the areas that was necessary in creating the curriculum of any subject of the new specialization was really interesting. The assumptions referring to this area had to be compliant with the National Frames of Qualifications. It is worth to carefully analyse this area, i. e. social competences, which are one of the key competences for the new pedagogical specialization. But how can we verify whether a student shall become competent in this area? How – after 15 or 20 hours of classes (in extramural studies – only 10 hours of classes), can we empirically check whether the student adequately implements into his/her thinking and acting a social competence, which, for example, is included in the sentence: “He/she is aware of their responsibility for maintaining the cultural heritage of the region, country, Europe and the world”²⁸. I shall repeat: these are key competences for the newly created specialization. Obviously, the syllabus shall endure everything; it shall accept each requirement and guideline. However,

²⁸ Appendix No. 41 to the Resolution No. 187 of the Senate of UWM in Olsztyn of 26th March 2013 concerning the modification of the Resolution No. 916 of the Senate of UWM in Olsztyn of 27th April 2012 concerning the specification of educational results for the levels and profiles of education conducted at the University, <http://bip.uwm.edu.pl/node/3177/revi-sions/7974/view> [access: 25.04.2015].

while creating the syllabuses, the team seemed to be in a maze with no way out. Thus, we were creating syllabuses knowing that, to some extent and in some cases, we were producing and reinforcing a kind of fiction. Unfortunately, this is one of the dimensions of introducing new principles of creating particular subjects. Obviously, one does not have to acknowledge the mistakes, dependencies and conditions I have just mentioned. It seems that such a point of view is adopted by the decisive and supervisory bodies at particular universities. One may even think that everyone is satisfied – especially the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. It is because bureaucratic requirements resulted in specific procedures – both in creating the syllabuses and in their practical fulfillment. Separate, but important problems of those who create the syllabuses (in particular the team preparing the new specialization) include the questions: why do some subjects have 2 ECTS points, others – 1.5, and yet others – 4 points? Therefore: on what basis some subjects are given higher score, while others are graded lower? It seems that most people who create the syllabuses do not really analyse this issue. While working on the establishment of the specialization in question, the team creating the syllabuses, in most cases, had to take into account the arbitrary decisions of the university authorities as for the assignment of points to particular subjects, and – in other cases – to balance in such a way that the sum of all ECTS points was 120. Obviously, it resulted in numerous logistic problems and solving them required crazy compromises, such as deducting the points from leading subjects and adding them to, e. g. some subjects that complemented the suggested specialization. In some situations, which boiled down to the mathematical calculation of points, there was no other way. It is worth mentioning that such decisions resulted in particular tensions between different levels of the university administration controlling and evaluating the progress of work at particular stages and the team working on the new specialization. That is why, we had to take into account numerous remarks, suggestions and corrections so that the suggested specialization was accepted and compliant with the expectations of the senate commissions. In many areas we managed to reach a compromise and all the necessary documents were finally submitted.

Conclusion

Despite the huge effort and amount of work of the team preparing the specialization, the project failed. We tried to implement an efficient promotional campaign which included: information published in the local press, radio, TV; leaflets distributed during the Open Days at UWM in Olsztyn on 17th March 2015; a scientific conference: “Education and Activation of Local Communities” which was held at UWM in Olsztyn on 26th March 2015 (more than 300 participants); information on the new specialization included in the informative booklet of UWM; and publishing a report from the conference of 26th March 2015 on Youtube. The recruitment for the specialization was carried out in each consecutive academic year: 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18, and recently - 2018/19. It seems that this educational offer is going to “die a natural death”, which results in the fact that the time for keeping the offers of studies at UWM shall soon expire. In this situation we can conclude that the confrontation of theory with practice indicates that – while faced with the reality – even the best intentions are doomed to fail. The list of the main reasons for such failure includes: 1. Inertia of the vast majority of young people, especially in the area of broadly understood social activity; 2. Related low interest in recruitment for the specialization; 3. No support from the local institutions – apart from declarations no actual support was provided; 4. The agenda of the Conference of 26th March 2015 was not prepared in a meaningful and pragmatic manner. Let me make a short comment on this. At the beginning of the conference a few lectures were given on theoretical, unsupported by empirical research, reflections on the importance of activating local communities. It was a mistake, as these lectures did not present anything new, but delayed the presentation of the assumptions of the new specialization. It is worth mentioning that the decision on such order of presentations was not taken by the project team. It would be better if the assumptions of the new specialization were presented at the beginning, as – at that time – there were a lot of young listeners in the room. Later, in the middle of the conference, when the assumptions of the new specialization were presented, a half of the participants had already left. It probably resulted from the intention to take part in the previously planned activities. However, we

can also suppose that the listeners were not interested in theoretical considerations presented at the beginning. Perhaps young people were waiting for some specific information that would give them an idea of the practical aspects of the specialization. Unfortunately, they were not given such information. This way, we lost the opportunity to present the assumptions of the new specialization to a large group of listeners.

Nevertheless, we can look at the failure of the above-mentioned educational initiative from another perspective. It is because each failure can teach us something and help us draw conclusions for the future. In such situations it is important not to give up or yield to defeatist moods. We should rather realize that failure opens the way to change, which may facilitate further actions and bring a new value – especially as for the way of approaching a particular project or task so that, in future, its fulfilment can end with the desired success.

Bibliography

- Bauman T., *Uniwersytet wobec zmian społeczno-kulturowych. Casus Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Gdańsk 2001.
- Fabryki dyplomów czy universitas?*, ed. M. Czerepaniak-Walczak, Oficyna Wydawnicza "Impuls", Kraków 2013.
- Delors J., *Edukacja: jest w niej ukryty skarb*, Stowarzyszenie Oświatowców Polskich, Warszawa 1998.
- Drucker P., A fragment of the e-book: *Menedżer skuteczny. Efektywności można się nauczyć*, <https://www.legimi.pl/ebook-menedzerek-skuteczny-efektywnosci-mozna-sie-nauczyc-peter-f-drucker,b237065.html> [access: 17.10.2018].
- Dziennik Ustaw 2005 Nr 164, poz. 1365, z późniejszymi zmianami, <http://isip.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20051641365> [access: 25.04.2015].
- Dziennik Ustaw 2011 Nr 253 poz. 1520, <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20112531520> [access: 25.04.2015].
- Ewaluacja Strategii rozwoju społeczno-gospodarczego województwa warmińsko-mazurskiego do roku 2020 – Raport końcowy* (PDF file), Instytut Badań Strukturalnych, Warszawa, https://www.mir.gov.pl/aktualnosci/...rozwoju/.../KSRR_13_07_2010 [access: 25.04.2015].
- Kopaliński W., *Słownik Wyrazów Obcych i Zwrotów Obcojęzycznych*, Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 1985.
- Krajowa Strategia Rozwoju Regionalnego 2010–2020: Regiony, Miasta, Obszary Wiejskie. Dokumenty Ministerstwa Infrastruktury i Rozwo-

- ju, https://www.mir.gov.pl/rozwój_regionalny/polityka_regionalna/kssr_2010_2020/strony/default.aspx [access: 25.04.2015].
- Kwaśniewski J., *Posrzeganie marginalizacji oraz strategii i środków kontroli społecznej*, in: *Kontrola społeczna procesów marginalizacji*, ed. J. Kwaśniewski, Interart, Warszawa 1997, pp. 197–233.
- Łobocki M., *O systemie wychowawczym w szkole wyższej*, „Życie Szkoły Wyższej” 1986, no. 4, pp. 65–75.
- Murzyn A., *Wokół Kena Robinsona kreatywnego myślenia o edukacji*, Oficyna Wydawnicza “Impuls”, Kraków 2013.
- Necka E., *Psychologia twórczości*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2005.
- Pasterski M., *10 sposobów na nieograniczoną motywację*, <https://michalpasterski.pl/2008/06/10-sposobow-na-nieograniczona-motywacje-2/> [access: 28.09.2018]
- Program Rozwoju UWM w latach 2012–2020*, Cele strategiczne p. 1.1, <http://www.uwm.edu.pl/universytet/program-rozwoju-uwm-latach-2012-20> [access: 25.04.2015].
- Przemówienie inauguracyjne prof. Ryszarda Góreckiego – rektora UWM*, 01.10.2012, <http://www.uwmfm.pl/news/126/czytaj/716/przemowienie-inauguracyjne-prof-ryszarda-goreckiego-rektora-uwm.html> [access: 25.04.2015].
- Sabat A., *Przedsiębiorczość akademicka: poradnik*, Fundacja “Fundusz Inicjatyw”, Lublin 2012.
- Siciński A., *Styl życia – problemy pojęciowe i teoretyczne*, in: *Styl życia. Koncepcje – propozycje*, ed. A. Siciński, PWN, Warszawa 1976, pp. 15–32.
- Słownik języka polskiego PWN*, vol. 3, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1999.
- Style życia w miastach polskich*, ed. A. Siciński, Zakład Narodowy im Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1988.
- Wierzbicki Z.T., *Aktywizacja i rozwój społeczności lokalnych*, in: *Aktywizacja i rozwój społeczności lokalnych*, ed. Z.T. Wierzbicki, Zakład Narodowy im Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1973, pp. 17–73.
- Zajac A., *Cywilizacja informacyjna na język kultury, wiedzy i edukacji przelotna*, “Kwartalnik Edukacyjny” 2013, no. 4(75), pp. 14–26.
- Załącznik 40 do Uchwały Nr 187 Senatu UWM w Olsztynie z dnia 26 marca 2013 roku, Załącznik 41 do Uchwały Nr 187 Senatu UWM w Olsztynie z dnia 26 marca 2013 roku. <http://bip.uwm.edu.pl/node/3177> [access: 25.04.2015].
- Załącznik 41 do Uchwały Nr 187 Senatu UWM w Olsztynie z dnia 26 marca 2013 roku w sprawie zmiany Uchwały Nr 916 Senatu UWM w Olsztynie z dnia 27 kwietnia 2012 roku w sprawie określenia efektów kształcenia dla poziomów i profili kształcenia na kierunkach prowadzonych w Uniwersytecie, <http://bip.uwm.edu.pl/node/3177/visions/7974/view> [access: 25.04.2015].



CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

Wiktor Sawczuk
University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn
Faculty of Social Sciences
e-mail: wiktor.sawczuk@uwm.edu.pl