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The Strategy of Lifelong Education in the Czech Republic

Jaroslav Vaculík

Drawing on research, the author describes the development of lifelong education strategy in the European context from the 1960s and 1970s till today.

Key words: lifelong education; strategy of education; situation in the Czech Republic

Lifelong education (LLE) forms a segmented, ambiguously defined complex. On the basis of an analysis of the current state of LLE development in the Czech Republic and its individual segments, strategic development directions which should be supported above all have been defined.¹

LLE represents a major conceptual change in the concept of education and its organizing principle, where all educational opportunities are seen as a single interconnected unit. Further education takes place after attaining a certain level of education. It can focus on a diverse spectrum of knowledge, skills and competencies essential for success in professional, civic as well as personal life.

LLE includes:

- 1) Formal education, which is implemented in educational institutions, usually in schools;
- 2) Informal education, which aims at acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies that can improve the social and employment potential of the participants.

Informal education is provided at employer's facilities, private educational institutions, government non-profit organizations and schools.

The requirement that a person should learn throughout his lifetime is not new. J. A. Comenius' work included the idea that education should take place in stages. LLE concepts were formulated by international organizations in the 1960s and 1970s. The current LLE concept has its foundations in the 1990s. The key change from the earlier concept of the 1970s is that less importance is now attached to school institutions and more to institutions outside the formal educational system.

¹ Strategie celoživotního učení ČR. Praha: MŠMT, 2007, p. 5.

The traditional strength of the Czech population is that the majority of people have completed at least the upper level of secondary education and only a small portion of people remain without professional qualification. The proportion of people who complete only the primary level of education is about 10%. The proportion of the population with secondary education in the CR (76%) is among the highest in Europe.

The proportion of the Czech population that has attained a tertiary level of education presents a very unfavourable picture. With its 13%, the Czech Republic is well below the EU average. The situation is improving in conjunction with the increasing capacity of public universities and the development of private universities and colleges. The development of Bachelor's degree programmes is particularly important, as other developed countries' offerings of these programmes are much more advanced than the Czech Republic and the number of graduates is much higher. Developing this level of tertiary education is important because of the growing demand of employers who – in addition to narrow specializations – increasingly require language and computer skills from their staff.

In connection with the phenomenon of population aging, the extension of the retirement age and subsequent longer presence in the labour market, it is important to address the qualifications of the older population. The educational structure is less favourable compared with the 25-39 age group. Older age groups are dominated by skilled persons, i.e. without the General Certificate of Secondary Education.

In comparison with other EU member states, the Czech Republic has a very low percentage of residents who speak English. Knowledge of other languages is also insufficient. In the Czech Republic, 67% of the population speaks at least one foreign language; in the EU, this figure is 86%.

So far, the Czech population has only partially captured the trends associated with the expansion of modern information and communication technologies. In 2005, the percentage of households in the Czech Republic with a computer and the Internet was still about one half of that in the rest of the EU (30% in the Czech Republic as opposed to 58% in the EU); the Czech population lags behind its European counterparts in the level of ICT skills. In terms of the ability to use the Internet for communication, Czechs' skill level is lower by about one third. The population over 55 uses the Internet only sporadically.

Major institutional changes have taken place in the tertiary sector since 1989. Six new universities have been founded since that time. Currently a total of 26 public and 2 state universities provide higher

education in the Czech Republic. A fundamental institutional change occurred with the adoption of the University Act in 1998, which enabled the establishment of private universities. Currently there are 43 private universities with 24,000 students (8% of the total number of university students). In 1992, the first higher vocational schools (colleges) were established. At the present time there are 171 of them, but they have only 30,000 students (9% of all students in the tertiary sector).

Universities also provide a range of LLE courses and programmes. They are intended for the general public as leisure time study, such as the University of the Third Age, but also for the professional public to complement or update previous training. In terms of the education of senior citizens, extensive activities of very good quality are offered by almost all public universities.

The Basic Operational Programme of the Czech Republic to support lifelong education until 2013 is represented by the Operational Programme Education for Competitiveness, prepared by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, to acquire funds from the European Social Fund (ESF).

On the History of Lifelong Learning in the Czech Lands

Kamil Štěpánek

This paper analyses selected milestones of lifelong learning in the Czech lands in the context of the development of andragogy as a science and research field, reflecting on the historical context.

Key words: *lifelong learning; history; Czech lands*

At present, we can observe increased interest in adult education and learning on the part of the state, politicians and the public. This interest is evident in the newly originating and growing andragogic centres at Czech universities, the subjects offered and activities of non-university institutions. At the same time, we are witnessing an ever-deepening differentiation and specialization of the field, documented by an avalanche of new specialized titles. An equally important prerequisite for further successful development of adult education is the ability to reflect upon the historical and cultural conditions under which educational activities developed in the past and upon the developmental milestones of andragogy as a science and research field. This paper studies some of the historic moments which preceded the current state of the issues at hand.

We can trace the origins of adult education in the Czech lands back to the 18th century. They are inseparable from such historical phenomena as the abolition of bondage and serfdom, the origination of modern bourgeoisie, the intellectual, business and working classes during the first two industrial revolutions and the national revival movement. The first promoters of education among common people were patriotic teachers, representatives of contemporary science, culture and policy, libraries and Sunday schools. Amateur theatre groups also played an important role.

The *Malice česká* (Czech cultural and educational organization) was established in 1830 as an important institution for science popularization and education; however, it originated in the era of Metternich's absolutism and thus its activities focused on the natural sciences and professional education of artisans and farmers. After the decline of Bach's absolutism and liberalization of civic and club life in the 1860s, a whole panoply of educational institutions emerged, such as the *Umělecká beseda* (Art's committee) or *Spolek pro veřejné populární přednášky Osvěta* (Popular

public lectures's society), and their lectures were also published. Similarly, periodicals were founded and led by prominent personalities of contemporary cultural life, and related folk calendars and almanacs were published.

A new women's education movement emerged. The writer Karolina Světlá and the ethnographer Vojta Náprstek founded a ladies' club in Prague, which developed educational activities such as popular lectures, discussions and counselling. It is fair to say that the Czech women's adult education movement in that period was a leader in the field in Central and Eastern Europe. Women's movement activities then led various ladies' educational clubs to establish headquarters, headed by the *Ženský klub* (Women's Association) founded in 1904. Educational activities were also organized as part of physical education movements such as *Sokol* (sports association) or its competitors, the Catholic *Orel* (sports association) and *Svaz dělnických tělocvičných jednot československých* (Union of Czechoslovak sports clubs for blue-collar workers), while working people gained significant educational support through the establishment of the Social-Democrat *Dělnická akademie* (workers' academy) in 1896. T. G. Masaryk, the future president, also participated in its foundation. Up until World War I, the national socialist party and its *Ústřední škola dělnická* (central workers' school) also left a distinctive mark on adult education.

Two complementary tendencies may be distinguished at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. In 1900, Svaz osvětový was founded with the goal of co-ordinating and planning educational activities. At the same time, system specialization and differentiation developed. As adult education expanded, individual institutions became specialized. Differentiation points to the impossibility of merging various interests and ideologies manifested in the work of individual educational institutions. Therefore, there was no large-scale workers' education, because only some workers' movements developed such activities.

An important change occurred with the founding of the Czechoslovak Republic. The newly emerged country had to justify its existence, develop a new identity and resolve a whole number of problems. Some of them were adopted from Austria-Hungary, e.g. nationality specific issues. Some were completely new – economic and social problems, caused particularly by the loss of raw material deposits and markets for the industry of the Czech lands. One of the paths taken in search of a remedy for these difficulties was adult education. Official state support for adult education was – on the one hand – financial and – on the other hand – anchored in legislation. In 1919, the parliament of the young state

approved its historically first law regulating adult education.¹ The new historic epoch also brought about new forms of general education activities and very diverse retraining curriculum at the community or higher community schools of the era. They were mostly of a charitable nature and intended particularly for the underprivileged. Political parties of the day also organized educational activities and they continued and expanded the range of pre-war activities. Another segment was corporate training, which had already existed and in which Baťa's system was profiled most markedly.² As a successful industrialist, Baťa was the first in the domestic environment to understand, in a complex way, the importance of increasing qualifications for higher labour productivity.³ Education of the minority population, particularly of the German nationality, also had an indispensable role. An important institution in this regard was the Masarykův lidovýchovní ústav (Masaryk's Institute for Folk Education), which attempted to co-ordinate education in co-operation with other educational institutions.

After the Communist coup in 1948, initiative was taken at first by the unions and – according to the Soviet bloc requirements for economic restructualization – they established schools of work. Another important era in the development of lifelong learning was the 1960s and 1970s, by which time enough funds had been accumulated and sufficient time had elapsed since World War II to allow for the basic recovery of the national economy. Czechoslovakia, similarly to Poland among the Communist bloc countries, participated in the battle between two political systems, which seemed inconclusive at the time. Domestic educational activities were also supported by influential international organizations⁴ which proceeded to develop various concepts of lifelong learning. Another, equally significant impetus was vast educational system reform in all developed industrial countries.

In 1963, Czechoslovakia established a co-ordinating body of the Central Commission for Education, working with the Ministry of Education and Culture, and in 1966 the Communist party and government decided, in connection with the preceding steps, to establish three types of educational institutions. The “factory schools” were complemented by

¹ Act No. 67 on Organization of folk civic education courses, dated February 7, 1919.

² Cf. GARLÍK, V.: *Baťovy závody organizace a řízení do roku 1939*. Prague 1990.

³ His Schools of Work had their successors after the end of World War II. It is interesting to note that the connection with the founder, Zlín businessman Tomáš Baťa and his family, was defamed also in propaganda in Communist state feature films. Cf. WALLÓ, K. M. (director): *Batostraj*. Československo 1954.

⁴ Council of Europe, UNESCO.

corporate technical schools and technical institutes.⁵ The educational policy of that period, more or less influenced by ideological objectives, adopted the concept of a need for education as a lifelong process. Institutionally, this fact was supported in 1971 by the establishment of the Czech Committee for Adult Education and, several years later, this form of education was incorporated into the education system.⁶

The study of education was first opened at Charles University in Prague and it dates back to the first post-war years. The field was originally titled Folk education (*lidová výchova*), later Education of the folk public (*lidová osvěta*). Then it was called Adult education. In 1968–69, it was renamed Adult training and education and then it metamorphosed into the current term, Andragogy. Charles University was soon followed by the establishment of departments at the Olomouc, Bratislava and Prešov universities, which still operate today. Masaryk University also joined these universities and since 2009/2010 the classic form of the field can be studied at the Faculty of Arts and special andragogy at the Faculty of Education.

The adult education system, which had been developed over decades, disintegrated in connection to the political changes after 1989 and it was gradually replaced by a great number of private educational institutions governed by market principles and responding to changing conditions. The Czech Ministry of Education responded to the new circumstances by establishing a department for further education.

To conclude, it is worth noting that future progress usually depends on an inspiring understanding of the past. In this case, it may be of some help in the development of a more efficient array of adult education programmes.

⁵ Government decree No. 264/1966 on Corporate education.

⁶ Cf. doc. *Další rozvoj československé výchovně vzdělávací soustavy*. Praha; MŠ, 1976.

University of the Third Age at Masaryk University as One Form of Lifelong Learning

František Čapka

The University of the Third Age, designed for seniors (members of the older generation), is part of a wide variety of lifelong learning programmes at Masaryk University in Brno. It was founded in 1990 and the number of applicants has increased from the original several dozen to more than 1,700. Education takes place primarily through lectures, seminars and excursions. This paper provides an overview of courses and examples of several topics offered. In conclusion, summary findings and reflections are presented, based on an analysis of the content of this programme's educational activities.

Key words: *Lifelong learning; Masaryk University; University of the Third Age; course; Academy; study*

Masaryk University in Brno considers it very important to promote and develop the field of lifelong learning with respect to all age and occupational groups of the population. The first lifelong education programmes were offered in 1990/1991; they were attended by only a few dozen students. Since then much has changed: lifelong learning has become a pan-European trend and Masaryk University has become a leading educational institution in this area. The University of the Third Age has become an integral part of the lifelong learning programmes offered by Masaryk University; in 2011/2012, it celebrates its 22nd year (since its founding in 1990). The array of educational activities offered for the older generation thus respond to the changing demographic structure of the population, which is reflected in the growing proportion of seniors.

As an **introduction** we will make two rather technical notes related to this topic.

Number one: on the topic of Masaryk University. Masaryk University, founded on 28 January, 1919, is the second biggest public university in the Czech Republic and the biggest one in Moravia. Currently it has 9 faculties with more than 200 departments, institutions and clinics with over 42,000 students and employees. In recent years, it has had the highest enrollment of all Czech universities. Masaryk University was one of the first to introduce a structured three-tier study programme, based on a credit system. Major emphasis is put on international cooperation with

prestigious foreign universities and scientific institutions, which include the University of Wrocław.

Number two: The movement of Universities and Academies of the Third Age developed spontaneously in the former Czechoslovakia beginning in the early 1980s, following the trend of similar activities abroad. A proximate example of the establishment of the first Academies and Universities of the Third Age was the University of the Third Age in the Polish capital, Warsaw; it was headed by Halina Szwarcowa. In the Czech Geriatric and Gerontological Society (the field engaged in caring for the elderly), a Section on Universities and Academies of the Third Age was established; it issued guidelines subsequently respected by social organizations involved in seniors' education. The first Academy of the Third Age was founded in 1983 at the District Cultural Centre in Přerov and was co-founded by the Czech Red Cross. Organized education of seniors quickly spread via the Red Cross and within three years there were almost two dozen Academies of the Third Age, for example in Prostějov, Jihlava, Lipník nad Bečvou and Bechyně. The first University of the Third Age (U3A) began to operate in 1986 at the Faculty of Medicine at the Palacký University of Olomouc. Within five years, the movement of the Universities of the Third Age spread to almost all university towns in Czechoslovakia. The U3A in Brno was founded in 1990 and commenced its activities on 18 November, 1990 with a lecture given by Masaryk University Rector Milan Jelínek about the personality of the first Czechoslovak President, T. G. Masaryk.

The successful and long-lasting tradition of senior education, converging with the University's long-term plans, has been supported by seniors' continually high and ever growing interest in various forms of educational activities, as evidenced by several of the following figures.

In the 1995/1996 academic year, 261 candidates were involved in the U3A; at the turn of the century (2000/2001) there were 433 candidates, by 2005/2006 the number had already exceeded one thousand (1,040), and in the academic year 2010/2011, the number of participants reached 1,770.

Actual education in U3A courses takes place through different teaching methods in a variety of organizational forms with the support of information and communication technologies: lectures, seminars and excursions. Lectures are provided by instructors from various faculties of Masaryk University or external instructors. Lessons last 2 hours and take place once every two weeks from September to May. The aim of the courses is not only to deepen students' existing knowledge, but also to present new scientific findings in different fields and technologies that are otherwise little accessible to seniors.

Admission requirements: 1. Persons who have reached the age required for a retirement pension and have completed full secondary education with a General Certificate of Secondary Education may become participants in the U3A.

2. The participant is obliged to pay only an enrolment fee (for the 2011/2012 academic year, it was CZK 700); otherwise the educational programme is free. Upon completion participants receive a certificate of U3A graduation.

The U3A includes the following courses:

1. *Basic Course* – lasts 4 semesters, and focuses on a healthy and meaningful lifestyle in later life. Topics cover four basic areas: *Humans and Health; Humans and Nature; Humans and Art; and Humans and Society.*

2. *Follow-up Course* – is a continuation of the Basic Course; it also lasts 4 semesters, and only the graduates of the previous Course may enrol. The Course is multidisciplinary and its mission is primarily to stimulate student activity and provide information to facilitate practical use of the knowledge acquired.

3. The above courses are followed by four years of the advanced course *The Spiritual Dimension of Man – Living Theology*, which explore selected issues of theology and other disciplines dealing with the spiritual dimension of man. In addition to historical, biblical, dogmatic and moral topics it also discusses the mission of Christians in contemporary society.

4. In addition, courses *for U3A graduates* are offered, which are thematically composed of four areas: the humanities, health science, natural science and social science.

5. There are also two specific U3A courses:

The first one, entitled *From Prehistory to Early Middle Ages from the Perspective of Archaeology*, is held at the University Centre in Telč, and the second one, a one-year course entitled *Substitute*, is organized in cooperation with the Moravian Museum.

The U3A students can use – free of charge – a study room with wheelchair access, located in the Faculty of Social Studies building; there the seniors have four computers at their disposal, can read newspapers and magazines, or borrow textbooks, books, encyclopaedias, dictionaries and popular science publications; the titles thematically correspond with the content of lectures. The students can also use a computer laboratory located at the Faculty of Education, which is equipped with 15 computers, and can use – again free of charge – various libraries of Masaryk University. All participants are also

registered in the Information System of Masaryk University, by which they are involved in the university educational process.

An example of topics from the programme of individual courses follows.

1. *Basic course, year 1:*

- * History and Development of Masaryk University;
- * Intergenerational Learning: Grandparents, Parents and Children;
- * Global Ecosystems and Biotic Crises in the History of Earth;
- * Proper Nutrition and Us;
- * Education of Girls and Women in the 19th Century;
- * Are Pensioners Rich or Poor? What Is Their Perspective?

2. *Basic course, year 2:*

- * A Brief Look at the History of Architecture (taught by a member of our department, Kamil Štěpánek);
- * Democracy versus Non-Democracy;
- * Exercise and Mental Health;
- * Does our Planet Have Enough Water?
- * Cultural Values in the Territory.

3. *Follow-up course, year 1:*

- * Medicine and Law;
- * Appropriate Physical Activity for Seniors;
- * Useful Geography;
- * History of Encryption from Antiquity to the Present.

4. *Follow-up course, year 2:*

- * How to Consider Darwinism?
- * Obesity and Gout in Old Age;
- * The European Union: Who Governs It and How?
- * Protection of Architectural and Urban Heritage in the Czech Republic

5. *The Spiritual Dimension of Man – Living Theology*

- * Spiritual Maturation and Advanced Age;
- * Pathways to Understanding God from Creation;
- * Czech Seniors Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow;
- * Having an Old Person in the Family;
- * Man as a Unity of Body and Soul;
- * Orders and Congregations of Modern Times (lectured by a member of our department, Jiří Mihola);
- * The Modern History of Brno (lectured by a member of our department, František Čapka);

- * The Bible on the Creation of the World;
- * Czechs and Slovaks Yesterday and Today (lectured by F. Čapka);
- * The Inquisition – A Delicate Chapter of Church History.

6. *From Prehistory to the Early Modern Period from the Point of View of Archaeology*

- * Bohemia and Moravia in the High Middle Ages;
- * Extinct Medieval Villages;
- * The Emergence of Medieval Towns.

Course entitled *Substitute*

- * Mintage in Moravia;
- * Evidence of Historical Crafts in the Light of Museum Collections.

After this largely technical and organizational overview, let us mention a few considerations that arise from the analysis of the content of U3A educational activities:

- For example, information on students' motivation to study at the U3A is interesting; the prevailing view is that the courses are one way to help maintain a high quality of life in a "friendly and dignified manner", as the students themselves say. An important aspect for the seniors is their participation in social events, making contacts, or opportunities for voluntarism;
- Analyses of the composition of U3A groups repeatedly confirm that women are more interested in the U3A than men; the students are mainly from professions that required continual lifelong learning even during active professional life, such as teachers, doctors, public officials, etc.;
- The age of the participants ranges from 56 to 75 years; the average is 66–68 years. A rare curiosity is the participation of women and men aged 88–91.

In conclusion, we would like to make a more general view:

* The evaluation of the position of U3A activities at Masaryk University in the context of the current priorities of lifelong learning fully corresponds with the four pillars of a comprehensive document listing the fundamental directions for educational programming development at Universities of the Third Age in the Czech Republic, known as the *Long-Term Plan of Senior Education at Universities for 2008–2015*, as it was formulated by the Association of Universities of the Third Age in the Czech Republic in 2008; these pillars can be succinctly introduced as:

- To learn to *cognize*;
- To learn to *act* in connection with the dynamic development of technologies and their use in everyday life;

- To learn to *co-exist* within the intergenerational dialogue and build a positive intergenerational climate;
- To learn to *be useful* with the intention to contribute to social and, at the same time, individual development;
- * Education has become *an international theme* of the 21st century; even the senior population is in the centre of interest.

Motto: Learning is like swimming upstream; you pause for a while and slide back about a mile.

On the Issue of Further Education of History Teachers at the Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, and in the Czech Republic

Jiří Mihola

The aim of further education of history teachers at the Faculty of Education and other history departments in the Czech Republic, which is in line with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports' general plans for this area, is to provide primary and secondary school history teachers with the latest knowledge in the field, to draw their attention to changes in understanding some historical events and processes, especially after 1989, and to acquaint them with new trends in historical research. An integral part of these courses is information about hot topics addressed by current historical science or topics completely neglected in the past. Due attention is also paid to literature and to its didactic use in school history lessons, and last but not least to the use of audiovisual equipment.

Key words: Further education; history lessons; professional history seminars; summer history school; Czech-Slovak relations; service centres for schools

Introduction

Support and development of further education of teachers is one of the priorities of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic.¹ The Ministry's primary interests include education that directly or indirectly helps increase individuals' competitiveness, thus improving their position in the labour market and thereby increasing the productivity and competitiveness of the Czech Republic as a whole. One of the Ministry's aims is to bring about a change in the public's view of lifelong learning. Its intention is to cultivate a foundation for further education and to develop appropriate system resources that will foster motivation for and a sense of personal responsibility towards education in adulthood among all citizens.

¹ Compare: A Guide to Further Education in the Context of the Activities of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, elaborated by the Department of Further Education in 2010; available at <http://www.msmt.cz/file/11567>.

Further education of history teachers at the Faculty of Education of Masaryk University

Successful completion of the history program at the Faculty of Arts or Faculty of Education does grant the graduate qualification to teach history in secondary or primary schools, but the education of a newly qualified history teacher does not end here by any means.² An important prerequisite for a teacher's further professional and didactic growth is continuing self-education and – last but not least – participation in further and complementing education. The aim of further education is to provide history teachers in primary and secondary schools with the latest knowledge in the field, to draw their attention to changes in the understanding of some historical events and processes, especially after 1989, and to acquaint them with new trends in historical research. An integral part of these courses is information about hot topics addressed by current historical science or topics completely neglected in the past. Due attention is also paid to literature and to its didactic use in school history lessons, and last but not least to the use of audiovisual equipment.

There is an ample and varied array of available courses for further education of history teachers. They must be accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic. Another motivation for further education of teachers is that it is seen as an important feature of the career regulations currently under discussion. Departments accredited to provide further education should offer teachers a "certification" option under precisely specified conditions, which would be reflected e.g. in the teacher's salary and job position.

In some cases, the approach of the management of a given school remains a problem with respect to further education of teachers. Although the majority of accredited further education programmes take place during the holidays, at the end of the school year or in the afternoon hours, which means minimal or no disruption of the educational process in schools, it is often difficult for teachers to participate. The reason is often the financial aspect of further education; in some cases it even becomes a limiting factor. The school's profile or the number of history lessons may also influence whether further education of history teachers is supported or not; in some cases history lessons are only of peripheral interest.

² On the issue of education of future history teachers, compare, for example: HOMEROVÁ, M.: Výsledky evropské komparativní studie o přípravě budoucích učitelů dějepisu. *Učitel'ské noviny*, 30/2008, p. 16–18; *Oborové didaktiky v pregraduálním studiu*. Masaryk University, 14–15 September 2004, CD ROM.

Professional History Seminars for History Teachers of Primary and Secondary Schools³ at the Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, have a long tradition in further education of history teachers. The Department of History launched them in summer 1998. The day-long seminars take place at the end of the school year, after the conclusion of qualification processes at both school levels. From 1998 to 2006, the history seminars were dedicated to Czech history with special attention on the history of Moravia. In accordance with the concept of the new further education programme for teachers, the seminars offered – through lectures by renowned specialists from universities, archives or museums – the latest research findings and unconventional views on their use in school practice. Particular attention was paid to previously neglected topics (for example, ecclesiastical history, the history of culture, etc.), as well as myths and stereotypes present in school history lessons and historiography.⁴ Topics about everyday life, mentality and culture figured prominently. Although the seminars were primarily focused on historical subjects, the didactics of history was also present, specifically the issue of historical feature films and their use in school history lessons. Leading Czech archaeologists as well as foreign guests participated in the seminars *Moravia in Primeval Times*, *Old Slavic Moravia* and *Moravia from the 10th to the 13th Century*. The seminar *The Czech Lands in the 14th and 15th Centuries* topically responded to the outcomes of the International Hussite Symposium held in autumn 1999, which was attended by many Czech and foreign experts studying the life and work of Master John Hus.⁵ Some of them, e.g. J. Mezník, J. Válka, J. Kejř and Symposium General Secretary F. Holeček, presented papers to the extensive group of history teachers. Seminar participants were offered the discussions and presented papers (in extended or modified versions) with added illustrations, maps and tables in the proceedings, an option which was reflected in the participation fee.⁶ The University

³ Mihola, J.: Odborné historické semináře pro učitele dějepisu ZŠ a SŠ pořádané katedrou historie Pedagogické fakulty Masarykovy univerzity v letech 1998–2002. In: Sborník prací Pedagogické fakulty Masarykovy univerzity v Brně, řada společenských věd, No. 19, Brno, MIHOLA, J.: Odborné historické semináře pro učitele dějepisu 2003–2006. Sborník prací PdF MU, řada společenských věd No. 22, Brno, 2007, p. 233–237.

⁴ RAK, J.: Bývali Čechové. České historické mýty a stereotypy. Jinočany 1994; Stereotypy a mýty v dějepisném vyučování na českých a slovenských školách. Ústí n. L., Univerzita J. E. Purkyně 2008.

⁵ DRDA, M. – HOLEČEK, F. J. – VYBÍRAL, Z. (edd.): Jan Hus na přelomu tisíciletí. Sborník husitského muzea. Tábor 2001.

⁶ KLÍMA, B. (ed.): Morava v Pravěku. Rozšířené texty přednášek ze semináře pro učitele ZŠ a SŠ. Brno 1998; KLÍMA, B. (ed.): Staroslovanská Morava. Rozšířené texty

newspapers regularly provided feedback on the seminars, which were considered open symposiums by many presenters.⁷

Tab. 1: *Overview of Professional History Seminars organized by the Department of History of the Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, in 1998–2009.*

	Name of professional history seminar	Held in
1.	Moravia in Primeval Times	1998
2.	Old Slavic Moravia	1999
3.	Moravia from the 10 th to the 13 th Century	2000
4.	The Czech Lands in the 14 th –15 th Century. The Luxembourgs, the Hussite Revolution.	2001
5.	The Czech Lands between 1434 and 1620. From Lipany to White Mountain.	2002
6.	The Czech Lands in the 17 th and 18 th Century. Baroque Period, Society and Culture.	2003
7.	The Czech Lands in the “Long” 19 th Century (1790–1918)	2004
8.	Czechoslovakia 1918–1945	2005
9.	Czechoslovakia 1945–1992	2006
10.	Brno through the Ages I	2008
11.	Brno through the Ages II	2009

přednášek ze semináře pro učitele ZŠ a SŠ. Brno 1999; KLÍMA, B. (ed.): Morava v 10.–13. století. Rozšířené texty přednášek pro učitele ZŠ a SŠ. Brno 2000; MIHOLA, J. (ed.): České země ve 14. a 15. století (Lucemburkové, husitská revoluce). Syllaby přednášek odborného historického semináře pro učitele dějepisu základních a středních škol. Brno, Masarykova univerzita 2001; MIHOLA, J. (ed.): České země 1434–1620. (od Lipan k Bílé hoře). Sborník příspěvků odborného historického semináře pro učitele dějepisu na ZŠ a SŠ. Brno, Masarykova univerzita 2002; MIHOLA, J. (ed.): České země v 17. a 18. století. (Barokní doba, společnost a kultura.) Sborník příspěvků odborného historického semináře pro učitele dějepisu základních a středních škol. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2003; MIHOLA, J. (ed.): České země v „dlouhém“ 19. století. Sborník příspěvků odborného semináře pro učitele ZŠ a SŠ. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2005; MIHOLA, J. – VACULÍK, J. (eds.): Československo 1918–1945. Sborník příspěvků odborného historického semináře pro učitele ZŠ a SŠ. Brno: Masarykova, 2005; MIHOLA, J. – VACULÍK, J.: Československo 1945–1992. Sborník příspěvků odborného učitelského semináře pro učitele dějepisu ZŠ a SŠ. Brno: Masarykova univerzita 2007.

⁷ Univerzitní noviny No. 6/2002; Univerzitní noviny No. 2/2003.

Following on these seminars, the Department of History and the Brno City Archive organized seminars entitled **Brno through the Ages I** and **Brno through the Ages II** in 2008 and 2009. The assumption was that most of the participants of the previous seminars were from Brno and South Moravia, and they repeatedly visited Brno with their pupils and students on excursions and to attend special exhibitions, etc. The aim of this seminar, however, was not to present a detailed chronological history of Brno, but rather to offer selected thematic units that could be easily used for incorporation of regional history or for excursions, and also to approximate chapters that had been omitted or ideologically modified in publications dealing with the history of Brno, the city beneath the Spielberg Castle, before 1989.⁸

In 2003, as part of extensive preparations for the 200th anniversary of the 1805 Battle of Three Emperors at Austerlitz, the Department of History organized a seminar on general history specifically for primary and secondary school history teachers called **The Great French Revolution in Relation to Science, Pedagogy, Religion and Culture**.⁹ The papers read at the seminar significantly expanded common textbook presentations of the history and personalities of the Great French Revolution and related events. Particular attention was paid to the relationships between the Revolution and the Catholic Church, Enlightenment Society in Moravia, education and the formation of Louis XVI as a personality, as well as a historical feature film on the period.

Teachers of history and other social sciences were also the target group of a one-day seminar entitled **Education to Establish a Relationship to Cultural and Historical Heritage**, which was organized in 2008 in cooperation with the History and History Didactics Department of the Faculty of Education of Charles University. At this seminar presentations were made not only by university instructors but also by primary and secondary school history teachers, who participated in a project of the same name supported through European Social Funds.¹⁰

⁸ Presented papers included topics such as religious life in Brno and Brno as a pilgrim destination. Great emphasis was placed on culture (Baroque Brno, Functional Architecture in Brno); the medieval period and monuments were covered by a paper comparing the construction of the Spielberg Castle and the Veveří Castle. The most famous contemporary Brno historian, Milana Flodrová, also gave a speech at the seminar. Compare: MIHOLA, J. et al.: Brno v proměnách staletí. Vybrané kapitoly z dějin města pod Špilberkem. Brno, Masarykova universita 2011 (in press).

⁹ MIHOLA, J. (ed.): Velké francouzská revoluce ve vztahu k vědě, pedagogice, náboženství a kultuře. Sborník příspěvků z odborného historického semináře pro učitele ZŠ a SŠ a pro studenty PdF MU. Brno, Masarykova univerzita 2005.

¹⁰ Two main publications arose from the project: FOLTÝN, D. et al.: Prameny paměti. Sedm kapitol o kulturně historickém dědictví pro potřeby výchovné praxe. Praha: Univerzita

A course with a long-standing tradition, **What the History Textbooks Left Out**, ran from the late 1990s until recently and was very popular with teachers. The lectures in this course were given only by regular History Department instructors who, based on their professional specialization, offered for accreditation some topics that had been strongly affected by the ideology before 1989 or had not been paid due attention (church history, the history of culture). Later, emphasis was placed on topics which do not typically fit in history books for various reasons (regional history, issues of foreign minorities, Slovak history, archaeological themes, etc.). The didactics of history also played an important role in these courses, particularly the incorporation of active learning formats into lessons, use of historical feature films, etc.¹¹ Participants often included former graduates of the History Department at the Faculty of Education of Masaryk University. A number of small, monothematic publications created as an indirect follow-up to this seminar series were published by the Academic Publishing House CERM and made available at very reasonable prices.¹²

Some of the Department's instructors also participated in further education programmes for teachers organized by the Service Centres for Schools¹³ and other institutions, for example Descartes, etc.¹⁴

The History Department also provided further education for history teachers through public events, for example a lecture series at the Moravian Museum (Religious Orders and their Monasteries in the Czech Lands; Pilgrimage in the Czech Lands in the European Context).¹⁵

Karlova 2008; *Výchova ke vztahu ke kulturně historickému dědictví. Metodická příručka*. Praha 2008.

¹¹ A programme of seven courses was gradually developed, consisting of 8–10 day-long thematic seminars, which took place during the school year.

¹² For example ČAPKA, F.: *Významná mezinárodní jednání a smlouvy v českých dějinách*. Brno: CERM 1998; the same: *Politické strany první republiky*. Brno: CERM 1999; the same: *Nástin vztahů Čechů a Slováků*. Brno: CERM 2000. ŠTĚPÁNEK, K.: *Exkurze do světa antických Římanů*. Brno: CERM 2000; the same: *První evropská válka*. Brno: 1999; MIHOLA, *Byzantská říše*. Brno: CERM 2000; etc.

¹³ Service Centres for Schools in Brno, Zlín and Uherské Hradiště were involved. In most cases these Centres chose thematic areas from the course *What the History Textbooks Left Out*.

¹⁴ <http://www.descart.cz/index.php>

¹⁵ MIHOLA, J.: *Ke spolupráci katedry historie Pedagogické fakulty Masarykovy univerzity s Moravským zemským muzeem v Brně v období 2002–2007*. Sborník prací Pedagogické fakulty MU, řada společenských věd, No. 22. Brno: Masaryk University 2007, p. 228–229.

Examples of further education of history teachers in the Czech Republic

Some other university and non-university history departments in the Czech Republic also carry out similar activities aimed at further education of teachers. The History and History Didactics Department of the Faculty of Education, Charles University, organizes **Summer Schools for Historians**, focusing mostly on issues of modern Czech history in the context of other social sciences¹⁶. The Faculty of Science, Humanities and Education of the Technical University of Liberec traditionally offers – also in summer – multi-day seminars entitled **Czech-Slovak Relations** for history and civics teachers, historians and archivists. This seminar was established in 1991 when the fate of the common state of Czechs and Slovaks was an issue of concern. The seminar survived the break-up of Czechoslovakia and has become the longest-standing professional Czech and Slovak forum. Speakers at the seminar include Czech and Slovak historians and the presentations are published in the Czech-Slovak History Yearbook published under the auspices of the Czech-Slovak Commission of Historians.

The Faculty of Philosophy at Palacký University of Olomouc offers a two-semester refresher course on history in a combined format. Lectures and seminars focus primarily on 19th and 20th century history and content is chosen to enable its direct application to school lessons.¹⁷

Further education of teachers is also promoted by the extensive activities of the ASUD (History Teachers' Association of the Czech Republic), Pedagogical Museums (Prague, Přerov) and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, which make these organizations' knowledge and practical experience available to participating history teachers.¹⁸

¹⁶ Compare, for example: KOHNOVÁ, J.: Evropská integrace a otázky českých dějin. XI. letní škola historie. Sborník textů a přednášek. Praha: 1999; the same: Nejnovější československé dějiny v kontextu obecných dějin. Vybraná témata od roku 1938 do poloviny 50. let. Praha 2002; the same: Výuka dějepisu a současná proměna světa. XX. letní škola historie. Sborník textů a přednášek. Praha 2008; the same: Dějepis a občanská společnost. XXI. letní škola historie. Sborník textů a přednášek. Praha 2009; etc.

¹⁷ Katedra historie. Informační příručka. Olomouc 2007. Further cf: <http://historie.upol.cz/dvud.php>

¹⁸ Didaktické a metodické inspirace. Dějepis ve škole II. Teorie, výzkum, praxe. ASUD 2002; BENEŠ, Z. (ed.): Historie a škola IV. Dějepis a mezipředmětové vztahy. Praha 2008; BENEŠ, Z. (ed.): Historie a škola VI. Klíčové kompetence a současný stav vzdělávání v dějipse. Praha

Preparation of Parents for Child Education as a Specific Lifelong Education Method (Selected Problems)

Stanislav Střelec – Lenka Procházková

This paper discusses the broader context of parental preparation for education of children, considering two groups of problems: 1. What is the current interpretation of the importance of family as an educational environment in the Czech pedagogical literature? 2. What basic framework of topics and content for preparation of potential and existing parents for education of children in the process of lifelong education should exist?

Key words: family, education of children, preparation of parents, research findings, innovated concept, lifelong education

One of the parental roles in life is to educate children. A father's or mother's educational influence is just as important as their professional life or contribution to provision of other material, social or cultural family needs. Despite the importance which is generally attributed to their parental roles as educators, they are not given systemic preparation for this important and demanding activity. Essentially it is left to their own discretion to decide whether they are satisfied with what they already know, believing that one day they will somehow manage to educate their children, or whether they will act as their parents had, or whether they will try to go beyond the limits of their own experience and look for parenting skill support that draws on the expertise of pedagogics, psychology and other fields researching family life.

About twenty years ago, we conducted a research survey and asked 465 parents of primary school pupils the following question: What has influenced you most in the education of your children? (Who has most influenced your opinions on family education, parenting styles and the methods you apply to influence your children?)

Most parents (58%) stated that they mostly apply the same means and procedures to educationally influence their children that their parents had applied on them. Another group of respondents (17.5%) particularly appreciated the experiences they had acquired through the influence of school, teachers, instructors and other educators. Some 14.1% of the

respondents mentioned the educating practices of friends, relatives, acquaintances and co-workers as an important source of pedagogical inspiration. Pedagogical literature, books, articles on family education of children in newspapers and magazines, and radio and television shows focusing on family education of children were, in this sense, significantly appreciated by 9.3% of respondents; and films and television programmes portraying educational issues by 1.1% of them. The respondents' answers proved an anticipated fact, namely that respondents with higher education (graduates of secondary schools with a school-leaving exam (*maturita*) and of universities less frequently admitted that their parents' educational practices had influenced them than respondents with primary education and vocational training. Data obtained from respondents with secondary and university education also showed that this group of parents used pedagogical literature, specialised articles and awareness-raising articles in newspapers and information from television as sources of inspiration for their parenting methods.

The research also investigated to what extent parents felt the need to look for information and their level of certainty that they acted correctly when educating their children. 54.9% of respondents stated that they sometimes had doubts about what to do in a given situation or which educational methods to apply. 30.7% of respondents stated that they were always sure that they had chosen appropriate educational means. 14.4% of parents admitted that they usually did not think about education and, when necessary, took the measure which suited them most at the given moment. The answers also indicate that respondents with higher education (secondary and university) usually think about and doubt their educational methods more often than respondents with primary education and vocational training.¹

These data should be considered merely as indicative empirical findings that serve to introduce our topic. They do not entitle us to draw any final conclusions, in part because they provide no information about the quality of educational influence, which is a decisive factor in assessing the level of family education of children. It would certainly be interesting to compare this data to current data and knowledge, which would reflect social, economic and cultural changes in family life during the past twenty years and their influence on family education of children. Unfortunately, we do not have such data at our disposal.

¹ STŘELEČ, S. – MARÁDOVÁ, E. – MARHOUNOVÁ, J. – ŘEHULKA, E.: *Kapitoly z rodinné výchovy*. Praha: Fortuna, 1992, p. 71.

In our study, which focuses on the broader context of parental preparation for education of children, we consider two groups of problems:

1. What is the current interpretation of the importance of family as an educational environment in the Czech pedagogical literature?
2. What basic framework of topics and content for preparation of potential and existing parents for education of children in the process of lifelong education should exist?

How does contemporary Czech pedagogical literature interpret the importance of family as an educational environment?

Family is usually characterised as a fundamental element in the structure of human society. A specific feature distinguishing family from other social groups is its polyfunctionality. The main functions of the family are economic (provision of economic support), biological-reproductive, emotional-protective and educational-socializational functions. Family functions are viewed as tasks which the family performs in relation to its members and society. The pedagogical (and psychological) aspects of family influence are seen particularly in the education and socialization of children, in the formation of appropriate personality traits and character, emotional and cognitive prerequisites, knowledge (normative) and experience for a child's desirable development in the family, for his/her successful school education and other professional and general prosperity in life. In this sense, family is considered a factor and an institution that through its educational influence – which includes the family's lifestyle – enables conveyance of cultural (social) patterns and preservation of the continuity of cultural (social) development of the family and society.

Tendencies in current family transformation

The complex and ever-evolving conditions of life in a society are also conditions for family life and, likewise, the society is influenced by the conditions of the family life of its citizens. The interconnection of existential ties between family and society leads every society to strive for a certain level of cohesion between family and social interests. Many researchers think that European society and family are moving from an industrial to a post-industrial (neoliberal) period in which traditional family ties are losing their original meaning. The post-industrial society (and

family) are characterised by a number of other features. For example, the most important heritage that parents give to their children is not property or social status, but education. The most precious values of man in this society include individual freedom, the freedom to choose, personal development and realization of personal potential. The post-industrial society is also characterised by the fact that the state, its organizations or non-governmental institutions gradually take over some family competences. Attention is drawn to some of these and other changes in the educational context by e.g. Singly, Možný, Matoušek, Kroftová, Havlík – Kóta and others.²

The following trends have emerged in recent decades in connection with family life in developed European countries:

- lower nuptiality and birth rates;
- higher ages at first marriage;
- a growing number of families with a single parent taking care of a child;
- a growing number of households consisting of one person only;
- a growing number of people having children without officially getting married;
- a growing number of unmarried couples without children;
- a continuously growing number of divorces;
- a decreasing number of people re-marrying after divorce

Development of these tendencies in the Czech Republic (in comparison with trends in other European countries) is presented in detail in studies by Možný and Rabušic.³ Updated statistical data on individual years is periodically published by the Czech Statistical Office.

Most of the mentioned tendencies also directly touch the psychological and pedagogical aspects of influence in the family environment. From the viewpoint of healthy child development, the educational and socializational factors, e.g. natural family structure (including the influence of a mother, father, siblings and grandparents) and the inner (emotional) stability of the family are considered important. It remains a question how family life and society will be influenced by the more frequent occurrence of families with a single child, children without

² SINGLY, F. D.: *Sociologie současné rodiny*. Praha: Portál, 1998; MOŽNÝ, I.: *Sociologie rodiny*. Praha: Slon, 1999; MOŽNÝ, I.: *Česká rodina pozdní modernity: Nová podoba starého partnera a rivala školy*. *Pedagogika*, 54, 2004, No. 4, pp. 309–325; MATOUŠEK, O. – KROFTOVÁ, A.: *Mládež a delikvence*. Praha: Portál, 1998; HAVLÍK, R. – KÓTA, J.: *Sociologie výchovy a školy*. Praha, Portál 2002.

³ MOŽNÝ, I.: *Česká rodina pozdní modernity: Nová podoba starého partnera a rivala školy*. *Pedagogika*, 54, 2004, No. 4, pp. 309–325; RABUŠIC, L.: *Kde všechny ty děti jsou?* Praha, Sociologické nakladatelství 2001.

siblings, parenting of stepchildren, higher age of parents, etc. Psychologists have already started studying the psychological aspects of these specific family constellations.⁴ Adequate and systemic attention by educators, focused on educational issues arising from these family life trends, has not emerged in the Czech Republic so far, either in relation to the needs of children or in relation to parents.

On the educational and social functions of family

The educational and socializational influences of family, along with its emotional and protective tasks, are considered to be the most important components of family influence on a child, particularly in early childhood, pre-school and young school age. Education is mostly characterized as the intentional influencing of a person's personality aimed at achieving positive changes in his or her development. Socialization is understood mainly as an individual's process of discovering human society and taking an appropriate position in the social division of tasks and activities. The process of socialization, or "finding one's place" or "incorporation" into society, thus requires the individual to constantly make, develop and expand social contacts within the socio-cultural system as a prerequisite for permanent changes in personality and relationships with the person's surroundings.⁵

Family usually contributes significantly to both interconnected processes (education and socialization), which each individual undergoes during his or her life. An important component of education and socialization is personalization (development of personality). Primary and secondary socialization are distinguished as stages within a child's socialization process. A child's primary socialization occurs in the family. Starting in the early development stages, the child forms his or her first social experiences and first social behaviour habits through family interactions, especially interactions with parents. However, as the child develops, family influence gradually changes. The child becomes independent and his or her approach to reality starts to be influenced by other factors, with school and other institutions playing an important role. Therefore, a child's secondary socialization period is usually more associated with school than family. In this stage of a child's life, direct and indirect educational influences from the family environment are still significant, in particular, by motivating the child to learn and by creating

⁴ SOBOTKOVÁ, I.: *Psychologie rodiny*. Praha: Portál, 2001; MATOUŠEK, O. – KROFTOVÁ, A.: *Mládež a delikvence*. Praha: Portál, 1998.

⁵ ŘEZÁČ, J.: *Sociální psychologie*. Brno: Paido, 1998.

suitable conditions for school education. Issues relating to parental involvement in school education and a child's socialization have been studied by e.g. Štech.⁶

In summary, we can draw several general conclusions concerning the position of family in relation to other factors influencing a child's education:

- a) parents are the most important educators, and all other educators can only complement the parents' educational efforts;
- b) the time which parents dedicate to their children's education is not a value with a positive influence of its own; the influence of this value depends on many cultural, moral and pedagogical factors;
- c) parents are usually responsible not only for their children's education within the family, but for their education as such;
- d) the most important prerequisite for successful family education is a good lifestyle shared by parents and children;
- e) good education basically consists of organizing opportunities for valuable contacts, experiences and activities for children and this organization is primarily the responsibility of the family;
- f) indirect education – as regards family – is usually more important than direct education; indirect education means creating positive conditions for children, i.e. in which the acquired experience allows for formation of a moral, diligent and capable individual.⁷

In developed societies, family bears the main responsibility for education of children. This responsibility is based on these societies' historical and cultural traditions and is anchored in their laws. The overall and long-term consequences of these processes fall on the family. School and other educational institutions are always responsible only for a part of a child's education, and even so their partial responsibility is not absolutely autonomous. The decisive point regarding family is not (and probably will not be in the future) the specific forms family transforms into, but to what extent it fulfils its functions. The main functions, which cannot be replicated by institutions outside the family, include emotional-protective and educational-socialization functions. These, as well as all functions of the contemporary modern European family, are now much less influenced by conservative traditions and much more by repeated and some new human needs.

⁶ ŠTECH, S.: *Angažovanost rodičů ve školní socializaci dětí*. Pedagogika, 54, 2004, No. 4, pp. 374–388.

⁷ BREZINKA, W.: *Familie ist Zukunft*. Bonn: Bouvier, 1989.

What basic framework of topics and content for preparation of potential and existing parents for education of children in the process of lifelong education should exist?

In the past two decades, I have had several opportunities to meet with groups of primary school teachers teaching Family Education. From the debates in these seminars and discussions on education of children, some disturbing facts emerged, which are historically related to recent and, to a certain extent, persisting conditions surrounding this subject. Based on these experiences from practice, I have found that:

- family education is taught mostly by non-certified teachers (often merely to complement their teaching load);
- family education teachers often feel overwhelmed by the complexity of this subject's contents and focus, which by its very concept and scope exceeds not only the framework of family life, but also of a single school subject;
- topics of family education overlap with civic education;
- the lack of teachers' experience, suitable textbooks and other methodological materials leads to a mostly informative and formal concept of family education;
- an insufficient time allocation (1 hour per week) and official Ministry of Education guidelines regarding class organization (no division of pupils in family education classes) actually prevent the classes from focusing on pupils' acquisition of practical skills for family life;
- conflicts between teachers and pupils' parents are not uncommon in the context of family education.

An outline of several empirical findings brings up two questions: where to look for the causes of these phenomena, and what chance is there that family education could become more stably anchored in the curriculum of primary (or secondary) schools? This subject used to carry the expectation that it would serve as a systemically organized foundation for pupils (for the whole population), on which their further lifelong parental education would be based. The causes of problems connected with teaching family education can be seen in some historical, conceptual, practical-implementation as well as terminological circumstances.

Concept of education for family life

In our opinion, one of the obstacles to resolving this topic is the term "family education" itself, which is commonly used to mean several

different things. Pedagogical theory predominantly characterizes family education as the interactive and long-term influence of parents, the family environment and a family's lifestyle on the children living in a given family. In pedagogy, family education is considered on the same level as (or compared to) school and out-of-school education. However, in practice, we often come across a broader definition and interpretation of the term family education. Generally, the most commonly encountered approaches are those in which the term family education includes knowledge related to family life, education on partnership, marriage and parenthood, family education in a more narrow sense (i.e. parenting of children in the family), sexual education and other topics as well. Until recently one of the subjects taught at primary schools was also called family education. This ambiguity of terminology and content does not benefit pedagogical theory or practice. Our proposal of a concept called Education for Family Life is an attempt to resolve this situation, as it indicates more aptly – by its title and concept – the breadth of topics of the suggested contents. Education for family life is an integrating notion which expresses the synthesis of pre-marital education, education for marriage and education for parenthood and parenting of children in the family. Some other authors have adopted a similar approach to this issue.⁸ From an interdisciplinary point of view, the contents of education for family life are also characterized as a coherent complex of selected knowledge from psychology, pedagogy, sociology, ethics, sexology, law, economy and other sciences which deal with issues related to partnership and marital and family coexistence. We believe that a modern concept of primary and secondary education for family life should include at least five interrelated and converging components:

1. The sociological and psychological basis of family life, including selected knowledge on the history and conditions of formation and function of family, interpersonal relationships and their meaning for human life, partner requirements and means of getting to know a potential partner, psychological aspects of marriage and parenthood.
2. The biological and health basis, including selected knowledge on genital anatomy and physiology, intimate hygiene, sexual life before marriage and in marriage, conception, pregnancy and childbirth, contraceptives and abortion, risks of sexual promiscuity, sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS.

⁸ For example ROZINAJOVÁ, H.: *Pedagogika rodinného života*. Bratislava: SPN, 1988; TURECKIOVÁ, M.: *Školní forma přípravy pro rodinný život*. (Dissertation) Praha: FF UK, 1995.

3. The ethical and legal basis, including selected knowledge on the moral aspects of marriage and parenthood, family law and civil, penal, labour and administrative law related to family life.
4. The basics of family pedagogics, including selected knowledge on the importance of the family environment for a child's personality development, goals, conditions and means for a child's education during different developmental stages, resolution of conflicts between parents and children and family-parent relationships, leisure time and its utilization in the family.
5. The basics of family economy, including selected knowledge on establishing, managing and maintaining a household, family budget and work and technical household operation issues, including cooking, sewing, cleaning, caring for bedding, household and other textiles, furniture and the like.

Questions and inspiration

A number of methodological questions arise from the suggested contents of the Education for Family Life concept. For example, which knowledge should be part of all pupils' education at the primary school level and which should be taught at the secondary school level? Which other school subjects should be included in the education for family life curriculum, with which supporting topics, in what proportions, etc.? What should the institutional basis be for post-graduate, lifelong education for family, building on the primary and secondary school levels? Which institutions should participate in this preparation, and how should the preparation be divided between them? Some of these questions indicate how complicated education for family life (or parenting in the family) is.

If education for family life focused mostly on acquiring theoretical knowledge, as is the current practice in the "remnant" of the subject of Family Education, it would lose its justification to a great extent. The inhibited and diffused state of Family Education in our country contrasts to the concept of education for family life in other developed countries. For example, Sweden and Norway have rich experience with education for family life. The Swedish and Norwegian school systems have attended to preparing 7 to 17 year old pupils for partnership for several decades. Schools have the necessary facilities and equipment for classes on this particular subject, such as specific tools and classrooms (practice flats, kitchens, home workshops, hobby rooms) where students learn the basics of family life. How to make ends meet on a family budget in various income categories, how to take care of a baby a few months old, how to

cook a meal, which wallpapers go well with particular types of furniture, how to court a girl/boy, when to start with sexual life, how to protect oneself against unwanted pregnancy and venereal diseases – these and other essential topics are taught to both boys and girls in several (3-6) classes each week. As these subjects rely predominantly on interactive educational methods and practical activities, they are usually very popular with students and the overall social prestige of these subjects is also high. We see a potential solution to the difficult situation of family education in Czech primary and secondary schools in a similarly designed education for family life curriculum, focused rather in one (main) school subject complemented by subtopics in some other subjects. Of course, we cannot expect that the position of family education in our primary and secondary schools will change radically in the foreseeable future, even though there is no doubt that efficient education of students for family life is needed.

Conclusion

The example of family education as a school subject draws attention to a considerable number of serious facts which also merit consideration when assessing other lifelong education initiatives. This experience shows e.g. that:

- our primary and secondary education systems are quite full of programming and stabilised and adopt new incentives (programmes, subjects) with reservations;
- each major change in the primary and secondary education concept must be thoroughly prepared as regards its promotion, contents, material, personnel and processual aspects;
- issues of education for family life (family education) are not systemically supported in the Czech Republic, either in the general education programmes of primary and secondary schools, or (with some exceptions) other related institutions (non-governmental organizations, civic associations, foundations and other agencies with a potentially beneficial influence on family life);
- there is a whole range of accelerated social problems (toxicomania, sexual promiscuity, criminality, AIDS pandemic, child abuse and others) whose primary causes are connected to destabilization of family life; they have only recently begun to find a stable position in the preventative influence of educational institutions and particularly in child parenting.

Lifelong learning and teachers of gifted students

Miroslav Janda – Jan Štáva – Gabriela Věchtová

The readiness of Czech schools to work with talented pupils in the educational process is still not at the level of legislative support, as reflected by teachers themselves. This article responds to the real situation and offers a current view of the issue of talented pupil registration and teachers' readiness to work with these children in school.

Key words: talented pupil, science of education for gifted children, child development, research, pedagogical – psychological advisory service, knowledge, Czech schools, diagnostic

Introduction

All of us have heard time and again information from various lectures, programmes, articles or entire books which have attempted to resolve the problems of recoverability and unrecoverability of various resources necessary for humanity and for its sustainable development. We believe that children are the most valuable resource and neglecting their care can result in overlooking their potentiality. Extremely talented and talented pupils may be somewhat forgotten because parents and even schools tend to prefer to address disciplinary issues and other problems in children's education. Thus, even today, cases in which a teacher fails to take action in regard to a talented child are no exception.

This study is dedicated to our present efforts to resolve the issue of gifted pupils and the educational approach to them. The research indicates the number of talented children identified and the number of teachers who have studied this topic. The research was conducted across the entire Czech Republic. Even an extremely talented pupil is not able to fully develop his or her talent without the proper approach by the teacher. Teachers should attend extended teacher education courses or programmes offered by departments of education dedicated to this topic. In addition to addressing average pupils and those with learning disorders, teachers' interest should extend to talented pupils. In today's world, talent represents enrichment and signifies a gift not only for the gifted child but also for teachers and all of society.

An example from ancient cultures is useful here. These cultures typically omitted the role of women's education, but young boys were gathered by the rulers in their palaces and kept under the supervision of the most intelligent individuals in their empires. For example the book of Daniel in the Bible provides some examples in the passages describing the yard of the emperor of Babylon. The most talented individuals were chosen from the conquered nations and the best of these talented ones became the governor.

Over time a human encounters the physical, psychological and social differences between individuals and groups of people. We see quantitative and qualitative differences in how different people do the same task. For centuries people have noted the fact that some people are able to do certain tasks faster and better, and these abilities enabling extraordinary results from a given activity were long considered "God's gift". At the same time people tried to explain this fact in different ways, on a level corresponding to their level of knowledge and to the level of societal development in which they lived (Hříbková, p.14). The earliest opinions on education and thoughts on developing abilities and individuals are found in the writings of the ancient philosophers. Their philosophical ideas can be classified into various schools of thought. These schools emphasized the development of the individual and support of learning (in ancient times the school of Isocrates focused on rhetoric, Aristoteles' Lyceum focused on the sciences and Platon's Academy supported mathematics, metaphysics and politics). Aristoteles preferred balance and refused extreme subjectivity along with insufficient application of pupils' abilities. Aristoteles emphasized an individual approach to pupils, which rendered him an important philosopher for the 20th century authors who developed the science of education for talented pupils and elaborated it to suit contemporary conditions.¹

Lewis Madison Termen, American founder and pioneer of the talented pupil movement

The American scientist L. M. Termen is considered by many experts as the founder and pioneer of the movement "for the support of talented pupils". L. M. Termen (Stanford University) examined a number of children on the West Coast using Binet intelligence tests and based on the results he formulated development norms. In 1916 he and his colleagues published the Stanford Revision of the Binet – Simon Intelligence Scale, which is still used in a revised version today. At that

¹ HŘÍBKOVÁ, L. *Nadání a nadaní: pedagogicko-psychologické přístupy, modely, výzkumy a jejich vztah ke školské praxi*. Praha: GRADA, 2009, p. 27–28.

time L. M. Termen also took over the Index of Intelligence, which had been developed in 1914. The German psychologist William Stern is considered to be the founder of this index. As already mentioned the quotient expresses intelligence as a proportion between mental age and chronological age. According to John F. Feldhusen, L. M. Termen made the most important contribution to the issue of talented pupils. L. M. Termen examined 1,528 extremely talented pupils (IQ 135–200) in 1921. He published the research findings in five volumes. He monitored the development of these individuals till they reached middle age. The sample of examined individuals included many successful people, who published many books.²

Modern powers are also aware of the value of talented and educated people, and thus we see a phenomenon called “buying brains”, but in this case the individuals are adults who have already been educated. We must acquire the ability to detect a gift or talent in early age. According to Dr. Linda Silverman, director of the Gifted Development Center, the ideal age for testing for talent is between 5 and 8 years of age. Dr. Silverman has published many works dedicated to talented children issues.

Readiness of teachers

Another objective of our research was to assess teachers' readiness to address the issue of talented pupils. We were interested in how many teachers work in schools and how many of them have studied this topic (whether professionally, in courses, occasionally, etc.). We sought to compare the readiness of the studied teachers with their counterparts abroad by comparing our research results to statistical data on the number of talented pupils in the U.K. and in the U.S.A., in order to find out whether the percentage of talented pupils in schools in these countries is the same or comparable to Czech schools.

Approaches to talented pupils around the world

During our research it became evident that while in the Czech Republic it is no exception to find a school in which not a single talented pupil has been diagnosed, the situation abroad is different. Very often up to 10% of the entire school pupil population is classified as gifted.³

² Laznibatová, J. *Nadané dieťa: jeho vývin, vzdelávanie a podporovanie*. Bratislava: IRIS, 2003, p. 13–14.

³ KUPCOVÁ, M. a kol.: *Vzdelávání nadaných dětí a žáků*. Přehled základních dokumentů. Praha: VÚP, 2010. http://www.vuppraha.cz/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/Nadani_prehled.pdf.

One example of this approach is the United Kingdom, where there is one specialised teacher in every state school charged with identifying and supervising talented pupils. This teacher keeps records on gifted and talented pupils. This list of pupils is not constant; rather the number of gifted pupils corresponds to their development. The development of children varies over time and the need for a special approach can disappear after a certain time. Many children's development is faster during the first years in school, while later their development may become comparable to others.

In the U.K. there were 679,870 pupils registered as gifted and talented, which corresponds to 10.3% of the total number of pupils.⁴

British organizations supporting gifted and talented pupils include:

- Young Gifted and Talented Programme
- National Association for Gifted Children
- Music and Dance Scheme

Among other countries outside of Europe, the U.S.A. has a similar system to the U.K. in which almost every school has one specially educated teacher supervising talented pupils.

The quantity of identified gifted and talented pupils in specific countries varies noticeably from 5 to 20% of the total population, which is a remarkably higher percentage than in the Czech Republic.

It is notable that the U.S.A. has among the fewest pupils excelling in mathematics up to the age of fifteen. Countries such as Switzerland, Belgium, Finland and even the Czech Republic have at least five times more mathematically talented pupils than the U.S.A.⁵ This reflects the different viewpoints used in the process of identifying talented pupils – IQ measurement or knowledge of the field of logics and mathematics. The low total number of talented pupils in the Czech Republic juxtaposed with the relatively high number of talented pupils in mathematics shows that other areas of talent are being omitted.

Research methods, tools and organization

Research can be assessed quantitatively or qualitatively. "Quantitative research deals with numbers. It tries to find out the amount, extent or frequency of appearance of phenomenon, its level. Numerical data can be mathematically processed. In contrast, qualitative research states

⁴ MONAGHAN, F.: *Gifted and Talented Statistics: PLASC data and EAL*. Open University. Available at WWW: <http://www.naldic.org.uk/docs/members/documents/NQ5.1.11.pdf>.

⁵ Davidson Institute for Talent and Development. April 2009. http://www.davidsongifted.org/db/Articles_id_10398.aspx.

findings in words. It is a description, an apt description, vivid and detailed.”⁶

According to P. Gavora⁷ the most frequently used quantitative research methods include:

- observation
- scale
- questionnaires
- interviews
- content analyses of texts
- experiments

We used a quantitative method of research in this study. We used a questionnaire as a research tool to identify the number of talented pupils in elementary schools and the number of teachers specially trained to work with talented pupils. Research questionnaires were returned by 50 schools, where they had been filled in by qualified school staff, e.g. headmaster, deputy principal, school adviser. The questionnaires were filled in during October 2010.

Overview of monitoring criteria

In respect to our need for a general overview, we selected key criteria relating to talented pupils and to teachers' professional readiness. Our main criterion for specification of talented pupils was Pedagogical Psychological Advisory Services expertise (PPAS), which is based on Act No. 561/2004 Coll. on Pre-school, Basic, Secondary, Tertiary Professional and Other Education. This pinpoints the important role of the teacher, who should have this type of special expertise (or at least awareness) to help guide work with talented pupils. This relates to our second crucial research aim, which is assessment of teachers' readiness to find and work with talented pupils in schools and their approach to them.

⁶ GAVORA, P. *Úvod do pedagogického výzkumu*. Brno: Paido, 2010, p. 21.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 24.

Table no. 1.

Consecutive number	Number of pupils	Talented B/G	Number of teachers	W/M	Professional study W/M	Courses W/M	Occasionally W/M	Other study W/M
1.	338	0/0	25	21/4	1/0	1/0	1/0	0/0
2.	585	0/0	36	31/5	0/1	0/1	0/0	0/0
3.	130	0/0	10	8/2	0/1	0/0	0/0	0/0
4.	200	0/0	22	20/2	0/1	0/0	0/0	0/0
5.	404	0/0	26	21/5	1/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
6.	307	0/0	15	11/4	6/2	0/0	0/0	11/4
7.	667	0/0	53	26/27	1/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
8.	410	0/1	28	23/5	23/5	0/0	0/0	0/0
9.	382	0/1	26	21/5	0/0	2/0	0/0	0/0
10.	433	0/0	31	28/3	0/0	2/0	0/0	0/0
11.	359	0/0	32	25/7	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
12.	613	0/1	68	51/17	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
13.	180	0/0	16	12/4	0/0	0/0	3/2	0/0
14.	331	0/0	25	21/4	2/0	0/0	2/1	0/0
15.	257	0/0	20	17/3	2/0	0/0	13/2	21/4
16.	466	0/0	33	27/6	1/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
17.	406	1/0	34	31/3	2/0	29/3	0/0	0/0
18.	106	0/0	6	5/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
19.	668	7/0	44	38/6	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
20.	102	0/0	6	6/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
21.	654	0/12	43	39/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
22.	663	0/0	41	31/10	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
23.	423	0/0	42	10/32	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
24.	265	0/0	23	20/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
25.	154	0/0	10	8/2	1/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
26.	475	0/0	36	30/6	0/0	0/0	1/0	0/0
27.	508	6/0	31	25/6	0/0	0/0	2/0	0/0
28.	360	0/0	30	25/5	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
29.	178	0/0	13	10/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
30.	122	0/0	16	15/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
31.	354	0/2	26	20/6	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0

32.	421	4/0	30	26/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
33.	265	0/0	25	22/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
34.	240	7/0	25	23/2	0/0	4/0	3/2	2/0
35.	331	6/4	37	34/3	0/0	1/0	3/0	0/0
36.	424	2/0	28	22/6	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
37.	572	0/0	29	28/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
38.	339	0/0	26	22/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
39.	731	0/7	31	26/5	0/0	1/0	0/0	2/0
40.	192	0/0	13	9/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
41.	160	0/0	10	8/2	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
42.	535	4/2	41	35/6	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
43.	186	0/1	17	14/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
44.	381	0/1	31	27/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	PPP
45.	458	1/1	32	25/7	7/1	0/0	0/0	PPP
46.	22	1/0	3	3/0	1/0	0/0	0/0	PPP
47.	111	1/0	10	9/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	PPP MENSA
48.	69	0/0	5	4/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	PPP
49.	325	0/0	30	27/3	0/0	0/0	0/0	PPP MENSA
50.	254	0/0	37	34/3	12/0	0/0	1/0	PPP
Total	17,516	40/33	1,327	1,074/253	59/11	40/4	26/7	43/10
						200		

Note: Values in table were obtained from students' semester research studies.

Finding I.

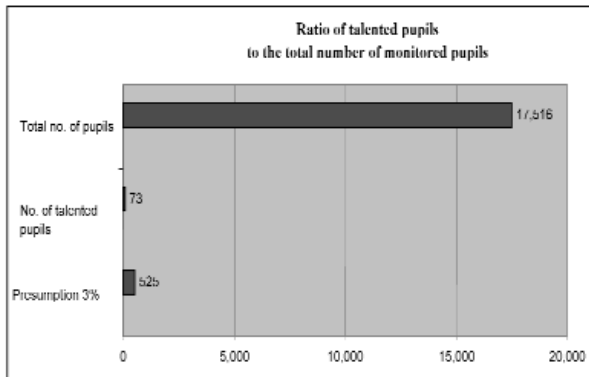
Schools do not meet the expected talented pupil level of 3% in Czech elementary schools.

We set the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1:

There are pupils that are registered as talented in the selected Czech schools, but the number of these pupils is lower than in the U.K. and the U.S.A.

Chart no. 1



A total of 17,516 pupils attended the 50 monitored elementary schools, which are located in different regions of the Czech Republic. According to talented pupil education experts, the percentage of talented individuals in the population is 3–5%. To strengthen the validity of an affirmative finding, we assumed a minimum presumption of 3% in our empirical research.

Our finding shows a very severe handicap for Czech pupils. Based on our talented pupil presumption limit of 3%, there should be 525 talented pupils out of the total number of 17,516 pupils. Our finding showed only 73 talented pupils (40 boys and 33 girls – see Chart no. 2), which is 0.416% statistically expressed.

Chart no. 2

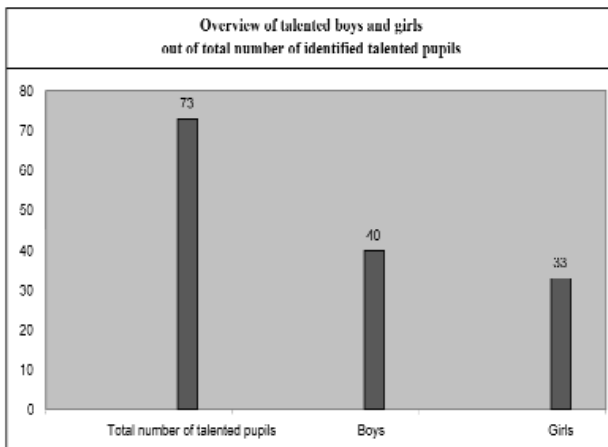
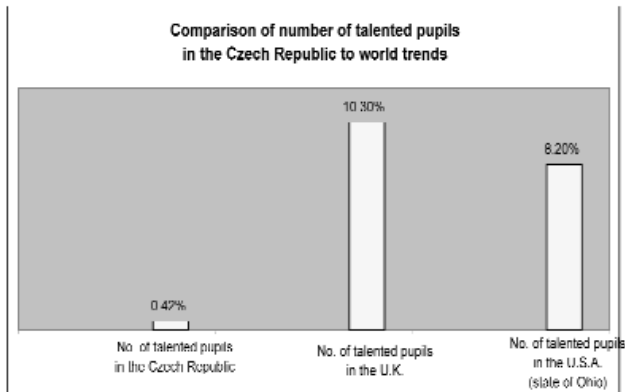


Chart no. 3

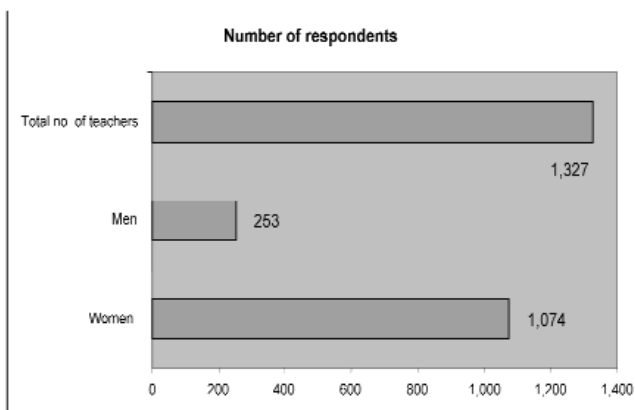


Our hypothesis was confirmed. We found that we have fewer registered talented pupils than the U.K. and the U.S.A.

Finding II.

Hypothesis 2: Czech schools lack experts/teachers educated to work with talented pupils.

Chart no. 4



On average 15.00% of the teachers had completed a course or study programme about education of talented pupils. Closer analysis of the types of study programme shows that the largest group of teachers have

Chart no. 5

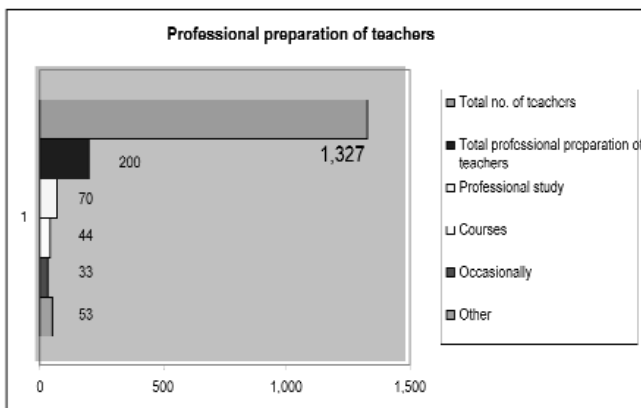
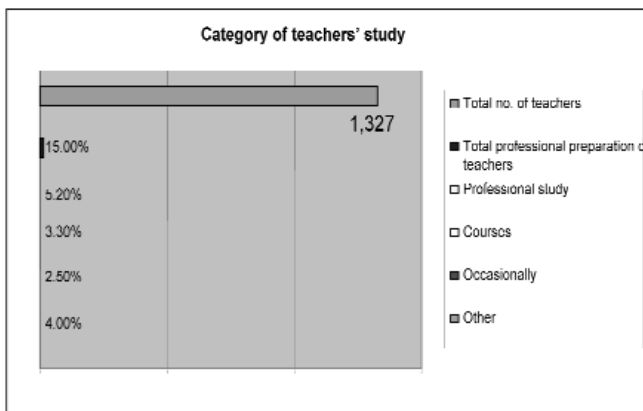


Chart no. 6



studied professionally. Even the low number of professionally trained teachers (70 out of 1,327) is positive in that teachers look for a professional sphere and institution which guarantees qualified and professional readiness. In the “other” category, the Faculty of Education, PPAS and Mensa were the most frequently mentioned institutions (see detailed description in Table no. 2).

Teachers who have studied talented pupil education

Table no. 2

Category of study
Seminar about education of gifted pupils
Self-education through special literature
Material on methodology by the PPAS
Special periodical
Extended education programmes for educators offered by the Faculty of Education
Information from a pedagogical conference
Training session organized by the PPAS
Extended teacher education for pedagogical and psychological qualification
Further education for teachers: Mensa - Specific aspects of work with extremely gifted pupils in school
Mensa: Education of talented pupils
Centre for talent – Mr. and Mrs. Fořtík
Conference for gifted pupils (Zlín)

Among the respondents there was only a small percentage of teachers trained in this field through courses not further specified by content or quality.

The research results indicate that training about this topic is insufficiently coordinated and irregular in the Czech Republic, whereas there is one teacher in almost every school in the U.K. and the U.S.A. who is an expert in this field. Based on this knowledge we believe that improving the training of Czech teachers in this field would increase the number of identified talented pupils.

CONCLUSION

Identification of gifted pupils is directly proportional to the quality of teachers' preparedness in this field

Based on his own and others' research, Vladimír Čermák⁸ surmises that the ability to develop an intellectual gift can be expected in at least

⁸ ČERMÁK, V. – TURINOVÁ, L.: Nadaní žáci. Ústí nad Labem: UJEP, 2005.

10% of the population of children during the first grade of elementary school. These children's approach to higher levels of education is based on their abilities and results. Čermák supposes that these pupils should reach the highest level of education. Yet the author supposes that the highest number of unidentified talented pupils is in elementary schools. This failure to identify talented pupils rests on many factors: insufficient identification and support by these schools – instead of supporting these children in their development, they are led to accept mediocrity as an acceptable value for them. According to Čermák, this insufficient support is particularly caused by teachers' unpreparedness in the area of talented pupils.

In this work we have examined whether there are talented pupils, and the level of preparedness to address the issue of gifted and talented pupils.

We have found that Czech teachers are less prepared in comparison to their counterparts in the U.K. and the U.S.A. We therefore recommend improving this situation in the following manner. Based on the findings from the questionnaire on the number of teachers educated in this field and based on the statistics from the U.K. and the U.S.A., we recommend that every Czech school choose one teacher from the school to be educated in this field and to follow developments in this field in future.⁹

Each professionally trained teacher would act as an instructor to his or her colleagues, which would reduce costs for teacher education and also increase the level of training of the entire school staff. This training could be part of regular teacher meetings or could be conducted through teacher consultations, which would reduce some raised outlays for training.

Further we suggest that these specially educated teachers keep records on gifted children identified by the teacher or with the aid of family members, fellow students and other teachers and work with them according to the teacher's deliberation, even without contacting the PPAS. In some cases a gift is difficult to prove or qualify. Nowadays many gifted pupils do not fit the criteria established by the PPAS. In other cases pupils fulfil the PPAS gifted pupil criteria but preparation of an individual educational plan encounters administrative complications at the school. These pupils are not presented as gifted even though the school provides them with individual care.

There is still one remaining question, and that is whether our school system is ready to work with gifted individuals. Firstly teachers who are in direct contact with gifted pupils must receive quality preparation and

⁹ MONOGHAN, F.: I. c.

training. In regard to the fact that diagnosing a gift is a long-term matter, this issue should become part of teachers' general education. Elementary school teachers do not consider this as an important or topical problem. Whether this is the result of insufficient interest by the Ministry, teachers or parents is a question. Only coordinated efforts can ensure success.

Generally speaking, gifted pupils in Czech schools still receive insufficient and unsatisfactory care. Inclinations to change this situation are appearing, but there is a long and difficult path ahead. Training future teachers about education of gifted pupils during their university studies would be a welcome beginning to this long path. This field is as important as other issues which we are addressing these days, namely special education, dyslexia and dysgraphia. Further post-graduate education of employed teachers should also include talented pupil education. A wide array of such programmes is offered by various educational institutions, both for schools as a whole and for individual teachers. Very often teachers themselves can take the initiative. Information about gifted children, their education, potential problems, their needs and support are widely available today. Organizations such as the Centre for Development of Gifted Children and the Association for the Gifted and Talented consider talented children, disseminate information and knowledge and provide courses and an advisory service for parents, teachers and psychologists. Special literature is also more available today. Many research studies have been carried out to clarify this topic and improve information about and the quality of gifted pupil education. The future and education of our children and the development of every talented pupil's gift represent the future of the entire globe. A very gifted pupil from one of our elementary schools could one day solve the problem of the ozone hole, come up with a replacement for diminishing unrenewable energy sources or solve our countries' environmental problems. Surely we can glean knowledge from abroad, where gifted pupils and individualization of education are critical issues. We must hope that our educational system will also make progress in upcoming years and that our children's gifts will be developed by teachers specially trained in this field. We hope that these teachers will be supported by the state system and at the same time by their own schools. We hope there will be teachers demonstrating boundless interest in the education of gifted pupils and that teachers will stimulate the development of every individual's gift while minding the importance of their work with an awareness of its assets for society, country and also the individual.

Epilogue

Additional open questions in the questionnaire

Two open questions were added to the questionnaire to obtain a better understanding of the problems connected to our topic. We received some interesting opinions from the open questions in the questionnaire. We have summarised the content of these questions as follows:

What are the main reasons that schools present low numbers of gifted pupils?

Ad.1 The respondents stated the following as the main reasons:

- nobody is interested in this topic
- small town
- financial conditions
- caring for problematic pupils, pupils finishing first level leave to start high school
- administration connected with individual plans and visiting pedagogical – psychological advisory service
- necessity of sending the pupil to the PPAS
- pupils are supported by the teacher through an individual approach

What do you believe would help and how can these low numbers of pupils be changed?

Ad 2. Respondents stated that the following could help:

- creating tests to identify gifted pupils (for example a test structured towards understanding the gift)
- detailed knowledge about education of extremely gifted pupils
- government regulation No. 72/2005 Coll. on the provision of counseling services in schools and school counseling facilities, and Decree 73/2005 Coll. on the education of children, pupils and students with special educational needs and children, pupils and students who are exceptionally gifted
- financial resources to pay for courses (about this topic) for teachers, paying for a substitute teacher during a teacher's participation in the course
- simplification of administration connected to processing of individual plans and visits to the PPAS.

Is it a Friendship or Is it Love? An Attempt to Interpret Correspondence between Edith Stein and Roman Ingarden

Andrzej Ładyżyński

A correspondence provides an invaluable insight into people's biographies, their thoughts, experiences and feelings. That displayed in an article constitutes a dialogue between a pair of eminent phenomenologists: Edith Stein and Roman Ingarden. Letters from the period of more than twenty years render the atmosphere of the scientific milieu they moved in, provide information about their work and private life. This confidential correspondence in substantial degree reveals the story of remarkable friendship, and even emotional intimacy identified as an infatuation as well as ability to cope with unfulfilled love.

Key words: *Edith Stein; Roman Ingarden; biografy; correspondence; friendship*

Introduction

Approaching Edith Stein's post directed to Roman Ingarden is intimidating. I excuse myself for this "intrusion" into the private life of Edith Stein and R. Ingarden with the fact that these letters have been published and read for years¹. The indiscretion lies in their publication. Owing to their publication, we discover E. Stein as a woman able to involve herself in a close relationship and we are able to recall her experiences, feelings and reflections². They are presented in an effort to trace the uncommon relationship between these two phenomenologists. For a pedagogue investigating the phenomenon of family, Stein's biography is an utterly interesting one because of her profound concern for the relationship between man and woman, the roles of husband and wife as well as parenthood³. It is not insignificant that Edith Stein desired to live in an exclusive relationship, in a marriage, the yearning for which is unveiled to the reader in the analyzed correspondence.

¹ Stein, E.: *Autoportret z listów III, Listy do Romana Ingardena*, Kraków 2003.

² Gerl-Falkovitz, B.: *Wprowadzenie*, in: E. Stein, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 7.

³ Stein, E.: *Kobieta i jej zadanie według natury i łaski*, Tuchów 1995.

1. Characterization of Edith Stein's correspondence

This correspondence has an interesting origin. After the death of Roman Ingarden (1970), who considered publishing these letters, his sons donated them to the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw and copies of them to the Carmelitans in Kraków. They were used in Edith Stein's beatification process⁴. The analyzed anthology of letters is one of three found and published to date⁵.

E. Stein was a prolific correspondent. She was in contact with many people. The anthology of her writings includes many letters and postcards. Her correspondence constitutes evidence of her commitment and efforts to maintain relations with her friends. Many different points imply the genesis of her letter writing to Ingarden. E. Stein started writing letters after Roman Ingarden left Göttingen. It would seem that both of them used letters as a tool to relieve their fierce urge to communicate with each other. Subsequently, letters served as a way to declare love and eventually to build a platform for dialogue between this pair of friends.

The letters addressed to Roman Ingarden date from 1917 to 1938. The anthology comprises 162 numbered letters and postcards. Despite the amazing abundance of this correspondence, it is incomplete. The content of the letters indicates that there were other postcards and letters, which are irretrievable and remain undiscovered.

These letters contain exceptionally rich data, which enable multifaceted analysis. My main concern is the motif of the process of moulding friendship, which endured despite many difficult moments. The correspondence approximates the many-sidedness of the author's character. She was a perspicacious reader of scientific works and a reviewer of R. Ingarden's and other philosophers' works, simultaneously practical and realistic and thus invariably helpful. Stein's love for her homeland, Germany, can be clearly traced in a reading of her letters. Her interest in politics is fervent, making her personally involved in the affairs of the day. The first letters were written in 1917–1918, a period full of turbulent, historic events.

The binding element of E. Stein's and R. Ingarden's correspondence was their teacher, Edward Husserl, which is an extremely significant fact. They started to write to each other immediately after meeting at his seminar and their intimacy developed fervently as indicated in the letters, the last of which contains information about Husserl's death.

⁴ Gerl-Falkovitz, B.: *Wprowadzenie*, in: E. Stein, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 9.

⁵ Stein, E.: *Autoportret z listów I*, (1916–1933), Kraków 2003; E. Stein, *Autoportret z listów II*, (1933–1942) Kraków 2003; E. Stein, *Autoportret z listów III...*

It is almost impossible to classify Stein's letters because of their considerable diversity. The content of the letters is varied, and the writing style changed as different stages of friendship developed. In the early years of their relationship, her letters amassed a great intensity of emotions and attention was lavished on her feelings and their relationship. In the next set of letters, the content is more balanced and pragmatic. Apart from letters there are many postcards, which are more eclectic. The unique character of this post was influenced by the censorship imposed on correspondence during the war period.

2. The author of the letters

Intriguing as they may be, the factors shaping Stein's views and beliefs are worth analyzing in regard to their inextricable connection to her life and experiences. The first consideration is her family, which comprised a large community with strong financial status that enabled education of children. The second important factor moulding her personality was her Jewish descent. Her father's unexpected death also affected her profoundly. Owing to her remarkable intelligence and its efficient application to the development of her future scientific career, she achieved everything that a contemporary woman could have possibly accomplished. Her dynamic and brilliant scientific development was impeded, without any substantial reason, as a result of historical vicissitudes (anti-semitic legislation passed by the Nazi government forced her to resign from her position as lecturer in 1933). Her insistence and determination to fight for women's rights opened the way for women to attain academic careers. The last significant and extremely difficult experience in her biography was her conversion to Christianity.

Edith was closely bound up with Wrocław, where she grew up. After leaving her hometown, she would return every year to spend the summer holidays at her mother's house. As a result of an exceptional coincidence, she was seen at the railway station in Wrocław on 7 August, 1942 for the last time, two days before her death⁶. This city constitutes one fundamental element of symbolic value encompassing her entire life.

Edith passed her high school exam outstandingly well and in 1911 enrolled at a university, scarcely ten years after educational reform enabling women to study had been passed. She studied a wide range of subjects including German language, history and philosophy, but she

⁶ Davies, N. – Moorhouse, R.: *Mikrokosmos. Portret miasta środkowoeuropejskiego, Vratslavia – Breslau – Wrocław*, Kraków 2007, pp. 383, 429.

was exceptionally engrossed in studying psychology⁷. During her studies in Wrocław she was closely involved with a Pedagogical Group, which brought together students who felt the need to deepen their knowledge and implement it in practice to further their own development as future teachers⁸. Fascinated by Edward Husserl's phenomenology she moved to the University of Göttingen, where she made many friends. There she entered into a relationship with Roman Ingarden, with whom she kept corresponding for many subsequent years. In 1916 she defended her doctoral thesis, developed under Husserl's scientific guidance, and became his assistant, a post which she held till 1918. She tried unsuccessfully to obtain a PhD and tenure at the University of Wrocław by presenting scientific dissertations as habilitation theses. She met with very difficult obstacles, based on long-standing gender stereotypes, and which probably included displays of anti-semitism⁹.

3. Biographical quotations from Edith Stein's letters

Analysis of Stein's correspondence allows us to trace her development path and, as indicated by H. B. Gerl-Falkovitz, the distinct and particular phases in the lives of a pair of friends¹⁰. The examined set of epistemological writings enables deduction of the initial stage of the relationship following the period of shared phenomenological studies, subsequently isolating the "stage of love" with a love declaration constituting the climax and initiation of friendship as well¹¹. The last stage of their relationship is evident in another letter, written in an emotional, angry tone stemming from rejection of Edith's feelings, in which she took the best wishes of luck directed to her, but also requested Roman Ingarden to maintain their friendship¹². Another letter that was the ultimate turning point in their lives was one in which she comments on the news of her friend's marriage. She wrote it after a nine-month break in their communication: 'First and foremost, my best wishes on the occasion of entering a new path of life. The news surprised me to such an extent in that you have never mentioned a word about your wife. As a matter of fact, I had always realized that you would eventually start a new life and if it will bring you what I expected, there will be no one more content than me. It obviously doesn't change anything

⁷ Fermin, F. J. S.: *Edyta Stein*, Część 1: *Życie*, Poznań 2009, pp. 27–29.

⁸ Stein, E.: *Pisma*, T.I., Kraków 1982, p. 79.

⁹ Fermin, F. J. S.: *Edyta Stein*, pp. 32–34, 41–43.

¹⁰ Gerl-Falkovitz, B.: *Wprowadzenie*, in: E. Stein, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 25.

¹¹ Stein, E.: Letter no. 65, from 16.IX.1919, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 178.

¹² Stein, E.: Post card no. 13, from 27.III.1917, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 67.

in the amicable feelings I have for you as a friend¹³. These words concerning Ingarden's marriage and her acceptance of it parallel her best wishes for the recipient of the letter and her declaration of friendship to him. Edith was then faithful to this promise for many years.

Focusing on Edith's life, we see her in many professional roles. Her work with Edward Husserl was a prominent period in her career, which was comprised of different periods such as working as Husserl's assistant, the stage of scientific realization and searching for truth in science, then working as a teacher and eventually time spent in a convent. The last three letters in the anthology refer to the period in a nunnery, indicated by the signature she used then: "Your Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross"¹⁴. In every stage Stein appears as an inquisitive and also amiable critic of scientific works.

Using her correspondence, we are able to outline the image of a woman yearning to fulfill her lifetime ambitions: firstly as a young scientist, she wanted to develop a relationship with a man that would result in marriage. This plan didn't work out with Ingarden or with other men, as can be inferred from her other letters. She experienced a failure in the scientific field, being unable to fulfill her desire to obtain habilitation, which would have been a motivating element in her university career. Her conversion from Judaism to Christianity and subsequently selected profession as a teacher are gently portrayed in her correspondence.

4. Letters written by a friend or by a woman in love?

Edith Stein's letters are mainly addressed with the form "Dear Mr". Polite forms such as "Mr" are used prevalingly. Edith used the expression "My beloved one" in only one of the letters, dated 24 December, 1917, and solely once "My dearest friend". In all the other letters and postcards she addresses him as "Dear Mr" and subscribed in various ways: "My best regards", "Best wishes – Yours". The closings "Plenty of greetings" and "Yours sincerely" are used only rarely. Her letters were typically signed with her first name and surname or with her initials: E.S.

4a. Correspondence of Edith "in love"

E. Stein encouraged her addressee to use the privilege of uncensored letters and to write about events in Poland more liberally. Encouragement to maintain correspondence is abundant, such as: "I am looking forward

¹³ Stein, E.: Letter no. 53, from 10.X.1918, *Autoportret z listów III...*, pp. 153–154.

¹⁴ Stein, E.: Letters: no. 160, from 5.V.1934; no. 161 summer 1937; no. 162, from 6 V 1938, *Autoportret z listów III...*, pp. 376–382.

to hearing from you”¹⁵ or “Please, write to me only if you want to write, not from a feeling of obligation. Obviously, I will be happy if you want to write to me soon”¹⁶.

The frequency of letter-writing during the first two years of their acquaintance is very high when compared with correspondence from the ensuing years. In the beginning of 1917, when the exchange of letters between the pair of phenomenologists begins, at the age of 26 Edith is a young woman ready for a relationship. In her letter of 28, January 1917 she says about her superior: “I have to stay with him until I get married. I am allowed to marry a man who would also be his assistant. Because if the possibility of me finding someone who wouldn’t be afraid of getting into a relationship with me is not beyond the sphere of likelihood (*et vice versa*), naturally I think that the idea of a man becoming his assistant is excluded”¹⁷. R. Ingarden wasn’t an assistant, but this utterance can constitute, if not coquetry, a subtle suggestion to the addressee of the letter.

In the period I call “the love phase” she delicately expresses her emotions: “This hovel, Freiburg, feels honoured that you miss it, I would like to say that it will try as hard as possible to make your life more enjoyable”¹⁸. Writing about the German government she adds a few words about herself, excusing herself for her behavior: “I do not feel tired at all, I am full of happiness, which cannot be disturbed by any >>human<< mood changes. I am writing about it to you, because you saw me so upset the entire evening, the memory of which still causes me embarrassment”¹⁹. In one of the first letters the recipient received correspondence with the following content: “I beg you please, make your heart learn to obey you. We are going to Switzerland to celebrate the signing of the peace treaty (!), we cannot allow the moody muscle to disrupt our stay. And so on”²⁰. There are many themes dealing with emotions in their letters: “Whenever fate will take you, my cordial wishes will be with you”²¹.

In the most intimate letter, the emotionally touched Edith, under the influence of unsettling experiences, declares her love for him and excuses herself for her behavior. This letter, written on Christmas Day 1917, appears as the culmination of the philosophers’ relationship. Edith turns to her friend in a very direct way: “My beloved one, this evening I

¹⁵ Stein, E.: Letter no. 10, from 7.III.1917, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 66.

¹⁶ Stein, E.: Post card no. 13, from 27.III.1917, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 67.

¹⁷ Stein, E.: Letter no. 3, from 28.I.1917, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 47.

¹⁸ Stein, E.: Post card no. 8, from 19.II.1917, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 61.

¹⁹ Stein, E.: Post card no. 5, from 1.II.1917, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 52.

²⁰ Stein, E.: Letter no. 6, from 3.II.1917, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 56.

²¹ Stein, E.: Letter no. 19, from 22.VI.1917, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 84.

would like to be right beside you to tell you everything for which I owe you an explanation. (...) I did not have enough strength to conceal my pain from you and in this way I added to your life one more shadow of melancholy instead of brightening it with a little glimmer of hope”²².

In the succeeding letters she disapproves of his “peculiarly hollow” letters, which are “depraved of genuine, spiritual commitment” to conclude by confessing: “that distance was unbearably painful for me – though I always had to restrain myself, by writing to you, from falling into an impassioned commitment – that is why I wanted to wait to see if, maybe someday, I would receive that earnestly awaited letter”²³.

Simultaneously, the author cheers her friend up: “I do not dare persuade you to prolong your stay at Freiburg, but you should arrive at exam time, if only you can without risking your health. You should not worry about preparation. I do not think anyone has ever managed to deal with it”²⁴. This care seems to be mutual. After the suicidal death of one of their friends Edith expresses it intensely, and this sharing of confidential details from their lives bears evidence of the strong intimacy between the pair of phenomenologists. She remarks: “I would like, my dear friend, to make a request to you that may seem infantile to you. You have also been trifling with thoughts about committing suicide. I have never taken them as serious remarks but I am bothered merely by even thinking about it. I plead you to promise me you will never do it. Though life cannot be so unbearable if you know that there is someone else for whom your life is more profound than his own existence”²⁵.

Edith expresses care for her friend: “I do not approve of your undertaking any task until you feel better and improve your health”²⁶.

E. Stein esteems R. Ingarden as an intellectual: “I was wondering how we should arrange the Philosophical Society (...) In this case I would rely on my intuition, but without your approval I would not proceed to analyze the details on my own. There is no one with whom constructive cooperation would be feasible except for you”²⁷. In the letter that can be specified as a “love letter”, apart from excusing herself for her behaviour, she notes her appreciation for him: “You undoubtedly know that I expect a lot from you, considering your scientific capabilities”²⁸.

²² Stein, E.: Letter no. 25, from 24.XII.1917, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 94.

²³ Stein, E.: Letter no. 32, from 12.V.1918, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 113–114.

²⁴ Stein, E.: Letter no. 10, from 7.III.1917, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 66.

²⁵ Stein, E.: Letter no. 38, from 5.VII.1918, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 129.

²⁶ Stein, E.: Letter no. 9, from 20.II.1917, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 62.

²⁷ Op.cit, p. 64.

²⁸ Stein, E.: Letter no. 25, from 24.XII.1917, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 94.

A few letters reflect a desire to spend time together. This desire is most frequently mentioned in early letters from 1917: "I have no doubt that due to earnest conversation and the willingness for mutual understanding there would be the possibility of reaching an agreement, which is why I would like to be with you for some time"²⁹.

It is not a widely known fact that E. Stein wanted to learn Polish, which she mentions in a few letters: "I have read some simple books and I am trying to become familiar with Polish grammar. Anyway, many people have learned Polish in an intensive course and I promised to ask you to recommend some easy novels for beginner reading"³⁰.

4b. Epistolary correspondence between a pair of friends.

After two years of emotional turbulence, their correspondence underwent a change. R. Ingarden's marriage to another woman led to a stabilization of their friendship. At this time the exchange of letters was not very intense. Edith wrote about novelties in the world of science and proofread his works in regard to linguistics and content. She sent him postcards with greetings on his birthday. Their letters were used to exchange their outlooks on life and philosophical thoughts³¹. Edith repeatedly invited Roman to visit her³². She offered to cover all the travel expenses to Germany³³. A meeting occurred only once, in 1927, from which they both appear to be satisfied. She wrote: "You want me to share my impressions from our last meeting: I think it was better than I expected. When, after ten years of not seeing each other and living in extremely different conditions, people are able to talk sincerely and freely with each other, there is nothing more that can be said"³⁴.

Edith portrayed issues that were significant and difficult for her, including conversion to Christianity. In one of the letters she wrote: "I am actually going through a very difficult time right now. My mother treats my conversion as the most despicable act I have ever done to her. It is horrible to see her upset by it, I couldn't find any consolation"³⁵.

The recipient avoided writing about his family or his wife and refused to send pictures of her and their children, about which Edith kept asking

²⁹ Stein, E.: Letter no. 10, from 7.III.1917, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 66.

³⁰ Op. cit., p. 67.

³¹ Stein, E.: Letter no. 85, from 19.VI.1924, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 235.

³² Stein, E.: Letter no. 65, from 19.IX.1919, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 17.

³³ Stein, E.: Letter no. 102, from 28.XI.1926, p. 275; Letter no. 106, from 22.XI.1927, *Autoportret z listów III...*, pp. 275, 282.

³⁴ Stein, E.: Letter no. 115, from 8.XI.1927, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 295.

³⁵ Stein, E.: Letter no. 78, from 15.X.192, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 215.

incessantly³⁶. He didn't even reveal his children's names. After his first son was born, she wrote: "You don't seem to be a depraved father. You will certainly find a man in Zakopane to take a photograph of your family. I would be immensely pleased if you sent me such a photograph"³⁷.

The two friends are completely frank with each other. Writing about her situation at work she confesses: "I feel completely unimportant inside and I am easily influenced by any criticism."³⁸.

5. Consequences of Edith Stein's correspondence to Roman Ingarden

The fragments of correspondence presented show Edith Stein from an uncommon perspective. These letters complete the gaps in her biography. The picture that emerges is of a complete woman writing about her life, experiencing her emotions to the fullest, talking about her desires. Edith herself admitted that her correspondence with Roman Ingarden was exceptional: "Sometimes I think that I bear a semblance to you as a person prone to exaggeration and whims. Not without reason may you think so. To diminish this impression I can only indicate that you are the sole victim of this whole recklessness which lies in me, for I am extremely wary to the rest of the world. Cautious to such an extent that my letters would probably be considered feigned"³⁹. In conclusion, we should make an effort to answer the fundamental question posed in the title of the article. A synthetic answer would be aligned with their friendship: lasting, faithful, with many fluctuations, based on the common passions and interests of E. Stein and R. Ingarden. An answer corresponding to a deeper layer of feelings, including Edith's personality which emerges from the letters, especially from the years 1917–1918 and her declarations, desires and feelings show the writer as a person in love. The conclusion that can be drawn from the "one-sided" letters is that her declaration and affection were not reciprocated. The way that she transitioned from the "phase of infatuation", which couldn't be fulfilled through love, to turn this bond into friendship without rejecting the object of her affection, astonishes with its maturity. This friendship is moulded as a mature, supportive, development-enhancing affinity and is a transformation into a relationship which is in fact unfulfilled but still full of love.

³⁶ Stein, E.: Letter no. 79, from 11.XI.1921, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 217.

³⁷ Stein, E.: Letter no. 71, from 9.X.1920, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 196.

³⁸ Stein, E.: Letter no. 80, from 13.XII.1921, *Autoportret z listów III...*, p. 221.

³⁹ Stein, E.: Letter no. 38, from 5.VII.1918, *Autobiografia z listów...*, p. 129.

Undeniably, the most interesting question concerns the unrequited love emanating from the letters Edith wrote. The question why this relationship did not lead to marriage lies in the sphere of hypotheses. E. Stein and R. Ingarden were a pair of exceptionally sensitive people with common interests, who were amazingly supportive of each other. Despite their similarities, many disparities can also be easily noticed between them. He, slightly younger than her, of Polish nationality and she, a Jewish woman, as R. Ingarden himself called her, a "Prussian patriot". Disparate opinions and different views concerning the policies of their countries are noticeable in their correspondence. They have their own, national points of view. He is a Catholic, a fact she pays attention to; she, a Jewish woman who gradually discovers Christianity. She comes from a family in which her mother was fervently religious. He appears to be a contestant of ideological matters. In one of her early letters from 1918 Edith writes: "I am not sure if you were able to deduce from my earlier remarks that I have come to terms with Christianity, ending with a positive attitude"⁴⁰. Paradoxically, subjects concerning philosophical outlooks on life were much more frequently undertaken by Edith as she searched for her own way of life.

From the letters directed to R. Ingarden, a portrait gradually arises of an extraordinarily sensitive friend, one who reveals her desires, a conscientious co-worker, a remarkable friend, supporting with her intellect, working for the benefit of her family and friends, and unsparing in her efforts to help her friend financially to achieve his ambitions.

⁴⁰ Stein, E.: 53, from 10.X.1918,

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