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The influence of a teacher on the development of relationships with their region and homeland in pupils of a primary school

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THE INFLUENCE OF A TEACHER ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR REGION AND HOMELAND IN PUPILS OF A PRIMARY SCHOOL

The place where a man was born and grew up, where he has his relatives or ancestors is called homeland, country, or motherland. Patriotism is a relationship, love or loyalty towards one's homeland. It is an expression of pride in its past and present, and, likewise, an effort to protect its interests. Patriotism, besides, has to do with human rights, the well-being of society, its prosperity, justice, equality and the diversity of people, all of which are considered to be the basic values of the democratic system¹. A good attitude towards the homeland is a relationship with the people and local natural environment the nature, and the results of scientific-technological development². If a man loves his country, he will love and care about the people who live in his country. A positive attitude towards the motherland leads to a positive attitude to the natural environment of one's native country, to the places which belong to the homeland and leads to caring for their further development. A man will, then, appreciate its history and traditions. He will be proud of the personalities who lived there or were from his own country. Patriotism and love for the region are displayed in actions related to the building up and development of the country as well as in an interest in the task of maintaining the values and progress of the homeland. The building of positive relationships and attitudes belongs to patriotism and to the love for one's region.

The question of patriotism and education towards regional love in the conditions of the Slovak Republic is linked to many problems. On one hand, it is still perceived as one of the features of education during the period of socialism and, therefore, is perceived as the task of a party member. On the other hand, it is often misunderstood and taken to be nationalism. The root of this problem is that many people consider Slovakia to be small, the Slovaks few and, therefore, insignificant, thus causing it to suffer prejudice. One reason is due to the oppression the Slovak nation suffered, is still felt to be wronged and always has to

¹ R. Dostálová, *Civitas*, Praha, ISV nakladatelství 2001, s. 17–19.

² I. Krupová, *Rozvíjanie prírodovedno-technickej gramotnosti na 1. stupni ZŠ*. In Technické vzdelávanie a aplikovaný výskum, Banská Bystrica, FPV UMB 2008, s. 107–112.



fight against somebody. The above mentioned problems are, from time to time, an obstacle to the development of patriotic feelings and of some kind of patriotism.

The creation of a positive relationship with one's homeland belongs to the process of education. It is also a question of the impact of the family, of the school, and even of the surroundings in which a person grows up. If a child, from childhood on, lives in an environment where he meets with love and respect, where care is taken of his personal and social development, where the environment is open to social ties and he receives positive examples or role models, he will give back what was fostered within him and will act as a man with positive attitudes towards the values learned and, thus, towards patriotism as well. If the child develops positive relationships to people, he will have an interest not only for his own development, but for the development of other people as well.

The school, after the family, is another factor that also participates in the advancement of the child in the area of education in the appreciation of his region and country. It is a task to which it is necessary to pay attention right from a very young age in children and pupils. It belongs to the educational process and upbringing

We here introduce four approaches to the development of an education in regional and patriotic appreciation which are possible to realise on the lower level of the primary school.

SOCIAL SKILLS

This, the question of good human relationships and behaviours, is an ethical problem. In the school environment we find relationships on the vertical plane, that is, relationships between teachers and pupils; and on the horizontal plane, relationships between pupils and between teachers and parents. We therefore also find affective and emotional relationships on the social level. Both these play a big part in the development of a child's personality, a development which is a process of learning and cultivating good social skills which belong to the project of ethical education, but not, however, exclusively. A definition of social skills refers to the understanding of love in the concepts of some philosophers and psychologists. Good social skills, like love, require empathy and respect for personal freedom³.

The first requirement of the ethical dimension at school is the acceptance of the pupil by the teacher, that is, his sincere effort at cultivating all pupils in their totality without taking into account the families or social groups the pupils come from. It is an adherence to pedagogical ethics, tact and right communication. In this process the terms evaluation/elevation, the Pygmalion effect and empathy are very close to each other. The teacher, in his evaluation, shows respect for the pupil, he enhances his value and self-confidence. He is able to take the pupil's side,

³ G. Šarníková, *Život v spoločenstve – láska či prosociálnosť?* In Wójczyk, Lalíková E., *Edukacja, działania społeczne, rodzina*, t. III, Bielsko-Biała, WATH 2008, s. 40.



is open to him and tries to help him, and so the teacher can overlook any mistake, forgive; he is tolerant and has an interest in the pupil. A high evaluation of a pupil's work by the teacher means that he would not do anything that would hurt, harm, or humiliate the pupil. The teacher has a positive view of the pupil, he persuades him to improve, strengthens and positively influences him, and expects good results from him. This attitude can encourage the pupil's activity and the pupil will try to prove that the teacher is right (Pygmalion/Galatea effect). A good teacher shows, through his attitudes and action, that he is up to each pupil's development as well as to the progress of the school, region or country. He takes into account his own social behaviour during his teaching of social behaviour to the pupils. He leads the pupils to create a good atmosphere in their class, and he himself makes an effort in this and strives for the formation of a good atmosphere in the group of teachers. The teacher will also be a good leader and have the power to inspire the pupils in the development of their patriotism, when he respects certain rights while leading the group. This means: having an appreciation of others, an understanding of the needs of the whole class and a positive and personal relationship with all the pupils; a tactful attitude towards others – not only towards the pupils –; making a reserved use of power; having initiative, imagination and the art of encouraging; inspiring pupils through his own; and having a talent for organisation⁴. This social skill is not based on orders or prohibitions, but on showing the positive values contained in the project.

Social behaviour is closely linked to moral behaviour, which is an inseparable part of life in society. Its role is to acquire certain abilities necessary for the life of the individual and of society. The attitudes and abilities necessary for human relationships belong to this and include a *capacity for active listening and for open and truthful communication*. This principle is to help create the ability to build up optimal human relationships and thus facilitate the adaptations needed for the success of individuals and of society. It includes the way one looks at others, smiles, shows gratitude, asks questions, enters into dialogue, etc.⁵.

There are many possibilities and methods for training and practising this ability. One is that of having the pupils perform sketches or skits in small groups which the pupils prepare. They could be about expressing best wishes to grandparents, brothers, friends, teachers, famous Slovak singers, actors, presidents, some fictitious person from the past or to a literary character on his or her names day or birthday⁶. It is possible to choose a literary or historical character from a group that is suffering from prejudice in society, e.g., a character from among the Roma, Korean or Hungarian people living nearby. The pupils present themselves in the roles of those who express their best wishes as well as those who receive them. They prepare the different forms of congratulating others and also practise the

⁴ P. Tavel, Madarasová Gecková M., *Clovek medzi ľuďmi*. Pusté Úľany, Schola Philosophica 2008, s. 31.

⁵ R. Roche Olivari, *Eticcká výchova*. Bratislava, Orbis Pictus Istropolitana, 1992, s. 11–20.

⁶ M. Zelinová, *Hry pro rozvoj emocí a komunikace*. Praha, Portál, 2007, s. 45.



non-verbal manifestations (shaking hands, hugging and embracing). They perform in front of the whole class. The different groups take turns to perform. Then a reflection follows. The pupils and the teacher sit in a circle and discuss how it was to give best wishes, what constitutes it, what they forgot, and what was good or bad. They then speak about their feelings when they were giving their best wishes and on being congratulated. They listen to each other and realise what an obstacle for some and what is an encouragement for others. This activity could be performed by pupils from the first grade, or even by younger ones. Many games and techniques focused on verbal and non-verbal communication are available for the development of social abilities⁷.

Another ability is that of *acknowledging human dignity and self-respect*. This involves the acceptance of oneself, an understanding of one's own good and bad aspects, together with the recognition of others. The relationships between parents and children play a big role in this question⁸. Positive behaviour implies the need to be aware of the fact that all people have their faults and failings. However, it does not follow that they should be judged. Quite the contrary, it is necessary to seek out the goodness of others, their positive aspects, and to express appreciation of them through approval and recognition⁹. Part of the teacher's activity is to exercise the Pygmalion effect and to avoid the halo as well as the Golem effects¹⁰. The teacher and the pupils strive after the development of evaluation and enhancement. It is possible to employ many techniques and games to improve self-knowledge and positive affirmation.

For example, there could be a big board in the classroom on which either the pictures of the wrapped gifts or the scale-models of the gifts, etc., are shown. The number of gifts will be that of the pupils in the class. If appropriate, there can be one extra gift for the teacher. At various times (e.g., once or twice a week), each pupil will receive as many small sheets of paper as there are classmates. He then writes what nice things he sees in each one of his classmates, what he wants to thank him for, what he appreciates in him, etc. At the end of the week, each pupil takes the notes he received and reads them. After reading them, they sit in a circle and speak about what surprised them, what they are thankful for, etc. The teacher takes notice if each has received notes during this activity. If opportune, he asks the pupils during the dialogue if it was difficult to write the positive evaluation, appreciation, etc., of others. If there are pupils from national minorities or ethnic groups, it is necessary to avoid difficulties. However, it is an activity that helps to develop positive evaluation and to increase pupil's confidence. This exercise is for children who know how to write.

⁷ R. Roche Olivar, ibid. s. 21–27.

⁸ Ibid. s. 28–35.

⁹ Ibid. s. 44–47.

¹⁰ Z. Vybíral, *Psychologie komunikace*. Praha, Portál 2009, s. 46, and Tavel P., *Vybrané kapitoly ze sociální psychologie*. Olomouc, UP 2009, s. 23.



It is possible to modify and update the game according to the themes being taught, e.g., during the art class, the pupils, following the modelling of different dishes from clay, could talk about the fragility of the dishes and apply this to people. Afterwards each of them could keep his own dish and put his or her mutual appreciations into it. If the children cannot write, they can put some small things that please others into it. Before Christmas they could write and hang the evaluations on the Christmas tree as decorations.

Other abilities required in social behaviour are: the creativity and initiative necessary for problem-solving, knowing how to make decisions and analyse situations. This is the principle of creative and thoughtful problem-solving. It is necessary to develop perception, the capacity to observe, imagination, concentration, flexibility, original thinking, etc.¹¹.

To make progress in this ability it is possible to use many games and methods in the school environment during almost all subjects. The pupils can read a story, in which the main character faces a problem he needs to solve. It could be a problem of relationships between friends, parents or classmates. The pupils are given the task to help the main character solve the problem. An appropriate method would be brainstorming. If the game is to be focused on patriotic education, the teacher can make up the story and the main character can be the representative of a national minority. The story could be about a real person from the region and the pupils would then attempt to suggest some solution to problems this person had encountered in childhood. Brainstorming can be adapted for use in classes of the natural sciences, maths or language if it is necessary to solve a problem in these areas. Among other methods for development there are: a mind maps, Socratic dialogue, the heuristic methods, etc. Some activities can be used when the pupils are supposed to bring up ideas on the basis of their own imagination, reasoning or fantasy, e.g., in language, literature, art, dancing or music classes.

Tact and courtesy, as well as the *ability to express one's feelings* in a proper way, are the next requirement of social behaviour¹². *Empathy* as the capacity to put oneself into the place of other people in their feelings and thoughts belongs to this area¹³. It is necessary for the pupil to be aware of his own feelings and to be able to express them. It is important for the pupil not to be ashamed of the way he lives or of his life experiences

Simple activities for the development of the above mentioned abilities could be the alternative forms of the game of blind man's buff. The pupils get into pairs. One is blind-folded, the other not. The blind-folded person is lead around the classroom. At first he can be led by the hand in silence, then by giving instructions

¹¹ R. Roche Olivar, ibid. s. 54–67.

¹² Ibid. s. 81–83.

¹³ Ibid. s. 94–102.



with or without contact¹⁴. After the game the pupils talk about their feelings when they were led by the hand or just by verbal instructions. They report if they experienced fear and worry or courage and peace, etc.

An important component of the development of the person is his *assertiveness*. It is necessary to overcome passive and aggressive reactions, and to learn to resolve conflicts¹⁵. The assertive person is able to achieve the goals set without harming the others or to refuse if there are some demands beyond his strengths or abilities are placed on him. If the pupil learns how to be assertive, he will extend his self-confidence and avoid making enemies of others. If assertiveness is linked to other social skills it can help to develop the region and the country.

We can train in this skill in the classroom, e.g., by the technique of the worn-out record without lowering standards while adhering to the ethic. The pupils write down their real desires which they can fulfil in the class group team. One pupil is chosen to express his desire; another is chosen to fulfil the desire. The pupils together evaluate the way the desire was fulfilled. Likewise, they learn how to say no to some demands and to defend or protect themselves if they feel threatened.

One of the means of education is imitation, right from early childhood. It is natural for the human to imitate whom he likes, whom he wants to measure up to, etc. It is important during education to know how to choose *positive role models*. Since children come across role models mainly through the media, it is necessary for them to learn how to *judge the media critically*. In this case, there is the question of attitudes and the expression of opinions¹⁶. Pupils are very much influenced by the actions of fictional and virtual characters. The teacher, therefore, should find some real examples from the past or from the present. Today there are some young people among sportsmen, singers and scientists whom we can place before the pupils as role models or examples. We can also discuss with the children the topic of why some celebrities are not good examples for life.

Other activities include discussions, reading articles, making some cuttings, watching video clips about people who are role models. In the classroom it is possible to discuss role models where the pupils find pro-and-con arguments. This is also the time and place to highlight examples among ethnic groups as well as the time and place for the teacher to help in the search for real role models and examples in one's own nation. The first role models should be parents and close relatives, not excluding teachers. The teacher has to be an example in everything he asks of the pupils, which includes the area of morals as well as the rational, professional and social areas.

¹⁴ M. Zelinová, ibid.

¹⁵ R. Roche Olivar, ibid. s. 111–120.

¹⁶ Ibid. s. 131–143.



Providing physical help and service, and giving the gift of joy could be put under the heading of abilities such as cooperation (although in the case of cooperation one of the parties can acquire certain advantages as there is no absolute equality between the effort put in and the result achieved, which is necessary to learn), sharing (this requires the person not to be attached to what he has, he learns to give up something for the benefit of another; the person loses something but gets pleasure from giving). Help does not seek to see the fruits but is concerned with the good of the other. It is selfless aid to others, even to unknown people in their everyday life (helping elderly people and casualties of accidents). *Friendship and unity* as permanent attitudes, as well as selfless behaviour for the benefit of another, can be included)¹⁷.

There are many activities through which this ability can be trained in the classroom. There are some different alternatives of cooperative and group education, as well as the tasks that the pupils are supposed to realize outside the school environment, e.g., helping a neighbour with the shopping, visiting a sick classmate, asking grandparents what help they need, etc. This activity will be evaluated at school through a common dialogue¹⁸.

The last ability to be dealt with in social behaviour is *to be sensitive to the needs of society, to go beyond one's own aims*. This is a *collective and complex social behaviour*. It entails education in various groups and communities, especially in the family and at school¹⁹. This ability is very important for the development of one's relationships with the region as well as the development of the region itself. If the teacher uses his own empathy and assertiveness he can organise the collection of waste for recycling, community services and collections for various groups. Besides this the pupil learns to perceive the global problems of the whole world and to respond to them (e.g., natural disasters, diseases etc.)

DEVELOPMENT OF COGNITIVE ABILITIES

This concerns the advancement of intellectual learning and putting knowledge to use. A basic requirement is that of knowing and mastering one's native language. This is principally the task of the teachers of the language, but is also that of the teachers of other subjects. It is necessary to cultivate a love for and pride in the language in the pupil. It is also important to look for its beauty and to be aware of melody. It is important to use the standard language with the correct articulation, pronunciation, melody, rhythm and dynamic. However, the native language also includes dialects. The current attitudes toward teaching the Slovak language are positively inclined to the use of dialects in the school environment.

¹⁷ Ibid. s. 149–160, and Tavel P., Madarasová Gecková M., *Clovek medzi ľudmi*, ibid., s. 145–147.

¹⁸ Ibid. s. 161–161.

¹⁹ Ibid. s. 172–181.



However, it is necessary to know when to use the dialect and when not to.²⁰ The dialect is also a part of history and of the present. It is part of verbal folklore literature, not only in literature but in music. It is important for the children not to be ashamed of their dialect as well as not to be put to shame by others when they use it.

Various language games and literary works can be found among the activities linked to the development of language. The pupils from different regions can employ their knowledge of other dialects in these games. They can write texts in the dialect, create dictionaries of the dialect, translate songs into the standard Slovak language, etc. Activities which include the use of dialect can be put on a par with other forms of entertainment.²¹

Learning the history of the country during history and literature classes is a component part of cognitive development. Information about the history of the nation and its culture can be given in the music and art classes and if there are some important personalities or discoveries they can be spoken about in the science classes. Religious education also deals with the question of history.

Besides the educational methods during traditional classes, knowledge of history can be acquired through excursions and field trips. The younger the pupils are, the more difficult it is to prepare for excursions. It is up to the teacher to prepare it in an interesting way. Excursions to gain knowledge of history can include visits to castles, manors, open-air museums, museums, etc. If we go on a trip to some castle or other historical place the pupils should receive some knowledge in advance at school. In addition to this, the pupils can be given some interesting tasks to be rewarded with some prize for their accomplishment. The tasks can be concerned with historical facts, interesting points, etc. If we travel by bus, part of the journey can be used for a quiz which will be evaluated. Following arrangement with the operating staff, the children can play some games or create some model situations in the rooms of the buildings which can help them understand the past and better remember some facts. The games can be realized as role-playing (the role of the lord and lady of the castle, the subjects, etc.), as dramatic plays (the children perform some part of an historical event), or as theme plays (e.g., the play of the war of the roses - the fight between two lineages) as well as of contest (different ‘treasure hunts’, games in groups, etc.). The evaluation of the games can be carried out immediately in the place or when the pupils get back to school.

²⁰ It concerns functional usage of non-standard language. To use dialect in daily life and thus at school, too is justifiable. See Palenčárová J., Kesselová J., Kupcová J., *Učíme slovenčinu komunikačne a zážitkovo*. Bratislava SPN, 2003, s. 124–123.

²¹ The pupils at a grammar school in Prešov created a German – Šariš – Slovak dictionary which was well received. Even pupils at primary school can be guided towards similar activities when learning a humans and unbelief also foreign language.



Gaining knowledge of history is not the only purpose of going on a field trip. It is also for the purpose of *learning about the richness of nature in the region and country*, and to find out about *discoveries in the different sciences*. Excursions to forests, mountains, caves and botanic gardens can be organized for the purpose of learning about nature. The pupils can go to businesses, factories and different institutions to get to know the application of the knowledge of the sciences in the working place.

Various competitive and creative games can be used during these types of excursions. If there are pupils in the class from different regions, they can be given the task of creating projects in which they can introduce specific historical or natural heritage as well as famous personalities who contributed to the development of the country. Nowadays, there are many schools attended by the children of immigrants, and so the children have an opportunity to compare their countries to ours when doing their projects.

LEARNING ABOUT ONE'S OWN CULTURE

This is a question of getting to know about *art, traditions, customs and religion*. This issue permeates the whole educational process and it is an inseparable part of education in patriotism. Many schools organise activities associated with feast days and seasons of the year. The pupils prepare for Christmas and Easter. This preparation includes learning the facts of the feasts and carrying out activities connected to them. It includes making Christmas tree decorations, making Christmas cards, decorating rooms, singing carols and performances for parents and the public. Before Easter they decorate eggs and, in some places, the Easter season is related to the tradition of welcoming spring. Various events that concentrate on the development of the kinetic abilities of the pupils, singing, manual skills, etc., can be organised.

In Slovakia there are some areas of human activities which belong to tradition, but they are in decline²². Creative workshops and discussions offer a good opportunity for pupils to learn about what belongs to authentic nature of their nation. Folk artists, who are not widely known but who are a great boon for the development of culture and art, can be invited to the school. These are people who pursue craft-work in wire, lace making, weaving, carving, beekeeping, making ginger bread, etc. They can talk about their art and introduce some of those attending to some of the simple techniques or even set up groups of common interest.

Learning about the past, customs and traditions is a means of creating respect for our ancestors.

²² I. Krupová, *Rozvíjanie regionálneho povedomia žiakov 1. stupňa ZŠ so zameraním na využívanie tradičných ľudových remesiel*, In Dimenzie a perspektívy rozvoja osobnosti jednotlivca v súčasnej škole II. Ružomberok, PF KU 2009. s. 277–283.



RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER NATIONS, NATIONALITIES AND ETHNIC GROUPS

If there are pupils from different nations in the class they can introduce their traditions and customs; they can talk about personalities from their history or of the present. The pupils can prepare some projects and introduce the natural and technical wealth of the country. In the class, the pupils can write some multilingual dictionaries according to the area they come from. They can learn some dances, songs, use some techniques from the art of other nations. Through games and methods which belong to social behaviour they will learn mutual respect for and admiration of their countries. The teacher can use the presence of pupils from different countries and cultures in a positive way for the confirmation of national pride in each pupil. The difference can be the basis for establishing respect for each country.

Many internal and external factors influence the process of formation in patriotism. The family and school are influenced by a great variety of factors, such as the political and economic situation of the country. If the members of the political ruling parties are not examples of a good attitude towards the country then the people, the citizens, lose their interest in public affairs. If there is a bad economic situation in the country, if the means are becoming the goals and the goals are becoming the means, you get a negative impact on the development of the person and of the issue.²³ If the government places the question of education and health services in last place in the hierarchy of values the standard of the country declines. If legislation is not good or if the law is constantly ignored in the state, if injustice and criminality are on the increase, the fear and distrust of other people increase and all patriotic feelings are weakened. Patriotism and love for the region are affected by the cultural conditions, that is, by morality, art, science and religion. A child perceives these problems – be it in his own way, with adults or mainly through them. These difficulties interfere with education in the school environment. Teachers face the problems and are confronted by a not very easy task. It is necessary to make greater efforts to implement teaching skills and mastery in order to persuade the pupils that it is worth fighting for justice and the development of their own country, despite existing defects.

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²³ Means and aims have interchanged e. g. in the case of work and money. Both work and money should constitute the means fostering the human development and consequently development of the country. Nowadays money has become the aim for many people and politicians as well. See: P. Skrzyplewski, *Ekonomia czy ekonomika?* In *Człowiek i państwo*, Lublin, Fundacja Lubelska Szkoła Filozofii Chrześcijańskiej 2006, s. 223.



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SUMMARY:

The influence of a teacher on the development of relationships with their region and homeland in pupils of a primary school

The concept patriotism and of the relationship with one's region is linked to the question of human relationships and love. It is, above all, a question of education in the family as well as a task to be fulfilled in the educational process and in extra-curriculum activities. Patriotism is linked to people and places which a person loves, to his feelings of security and confidence, to his respect, freedom and regard for his own rights as well as those of other people. In this article we will deal with some requirements and possibilities found in educating children to patriotism and a favourable relationship with their region within the school environment while taking into account the multicultural society.

Key words: human relationships, role models, love, respect, regard for rights, social behaviour, activities in the school environment.

STRESZCZENIE:

Wpływ nauczyciela na rozwój patriotyzmu i relacji wobec regionu u uczniów szkoły podstawowej

Zagadnienie patriotyzmu i relacji wobec regionu łączy się z kwestią relacji międzyludzkich i miłości. Chodzi przede wszystkim o kwestię wychowania w ro-



dzinie. Patriotyzm łączy się z ludźmi oraz miejscami, które człowiek lubi, z poczuciem bezpieczeństwa oraz pewności, z szacunkiem, wolnością, poszanowaniem praw swoich oraz innych. W artykule omówiono wyzwania oraz możliwości wychowania patriotycznego oraz relacji wobec regionu w kontekście społeczeństwa wielokulturowego.

Słowa kluczowe: relacje międzyludzkie, wzory do naśladowania, miłość, poszanowanie praw, zachowanie prosocjalne, działalność w środowisku szkoły.



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TRAINING AND EDUCATION OF ROMANI CHILDREN IN SLOVAKIA

INTRODUCTION

A child comes to the world without any opportunity to choose a country, parents, siblings and he/she cannot choose a level of socio-cultural backgrounds. Innocent of his/her own reasons he/she comes to the conditions in which he/she has to exist and develop. It is a great pleasure if the child is healthy and his/her backgrounds fulfil all assumptions for successful growth and development of