

Educational Strategies Based on Conflict in Intercultural Education

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Summary

The article focuses on the concept of conflict as a core for several educational strategies in the framework of the so-called conflict positive school. The strategies are analyzed from the point of increased achievement and productivity, creative problem solving, growth in cognitive and moral reasoning, increased perspective-taking ability, although the main emphasis is laid on developing students' pluralistic democratic values, inter-culturality and citizenship.

Two branches of educational strategies working on the basis of conflict are presented: non-fictional and fictional, with several examples (academic controversies, drama strategies). The factors of creating a learning environment respecting diversity are discussed with the consideration of the process of implementing the strategy into common practice in schools.

Keywords: diversity; conflict; non-fictional and fictional strategies; implementation.

The aim of this contribution is to present the issues of **conflict-based educational strategies for schools with diverse student population (diversity in language, ethnicity, etc.)**. As research has shown (an overview of research in Johnson, Johnson, 1999, or Kasikova, Strakova, 2011), these strategies have many positive effects: increased achievement and productivity, creative problem solving, growth in cognitive and moral reasoning, increased perspective-taking ability, although in relation to this the main emphasis is laid on interacting and working with peers from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and on developing students' pluralistic democratic values and citizenship. Our paper is oriented primarily towards the last two effects, even if we consider

it important to mention the interconnectedness of all these effects.

We would like to illustrate the educational potential of strategies based on conflict using the example of **strategies from two basic areas – those used in fictional and non-fictional situations**. To shape democratic values through these strategies means to give them space in education: therefore we designated factors that assist in the implementation of these strategies into the common practices of schools. Both as potential educational strategies, as well as implementation processes, this however relates to more general factors. Lasting or productive changes do not occur only if we change the instructional practices or curriculum. The changes

appear only when we change the entire conceptualization of the “educational encounter”. In the first part of the paper we will therefore introduce the basic moments of changes to the educational context, in which strategies based on conflict can achieve their sense and purpose.

Educational context

Changing the curricular position

Which model of curriculum is most favourable for valuing educational strategies based on conflict?

Current reflections on changes to the curriculum, which is oriented to social change and social justice, connect to the ideas of the 1960’s and 1970’s. The social situation at this time in Western Europe and North America allowed the schools to make a commitment to the progressive concept of social equity, whilst the theories of Dewey, Piaget, Maslow and Bruner were mobilized in the field of knowledge. Significant are also the ideas of Basil Bernstein regarding the importance of the control of knowledge, which states that the methods in which the educational system selects, classifies and hands over knowledge “reflects the distribution of power and principles of social control.” (Bernstein, 1971, 74) Changes in the curriculum concern its basic orientation: *child – centred curriculum* gives greater importance to the life of the child whom the teacher teaches, it admits for the authority of children’s curricular selection, which helps to minimize the sharpness of the boundaries between what the child learns as school knowledge and what is their everyday experience outside of school. The criticism of this impersonalized curriculum, in which this experience is incorporated, is accompanied with a pressing question: *What is the importance of power over knowledge? Or similarly: Does the curriculum concern knowledge that must be gained or knowledge possessed of its own?* Focus is placed on the classroom environment where it is explicitly connected to the knowledge in and outside of schools, where the child can legitimately expect that his thoughts, values and feelings will be incor-

porated in the realm of school knowledge, and will bring with it not only a movement towards subjective knowledge, content integration based on children’s needs and interests, but also changes in the perception of the mutual position of the two actors in this environment.

In theoretical approaches that try to capture these changes, Bernstein formulates the conception of the so-called **curricular code** (Bernstein, 1967), which compared to the curriculum where there are sharp, strong boundaries between subjects (*collection code*) is a curriculum with open and shifting borders (*integrated code*). Change in the curricular integrated code brings about a deregulation of knowledge. Among other things it allows for a stronger educational position for the student, on whose needs the curriculum is established, as well as a stronger educational position for the teacher who is not bound by the generalizations of the subject about what and how he/she is supposed to teach; just the opposite, they can increasingly determine the curriculum together. This code gives the teacher much greater space and allows for a significant variation, because what is taught in one class is significantly different from teaching in another. Changes in the integrated code are according to Bernstein inherently subversive, “... this *cancelling of the classification of knowledge leads to the cancelling of the existing structures of authority, the existing educational identity and concept of ownership.*” (Bernstein, 1967, 244)

We consider the theoretical approaches to be significant for our theme which determines three **curricular positions** important for the analysis of teaching and classroom strategies and of asserting the influence of actors in the learning process: according to Miller and Sellar (1985) these are **transmission** – a one-way transfer of knowledge, skills, and values from the teacher to the students, **transaction** – places stress on solving problems through a process of dialogue between the student and the teacher and **transformation**. Transformation is a position which is on the whole holistic and humanistic and takes into account students’ overall cognitive, aesthetic, moral and spiritual needs. It is connected to social and political changes as well, which creates **a society on a more evidently cooperative basis, a basis for equal opportunities.** (Miller, 1988, 6)

In our paper we analyze educational strategies based on drama; we therefore present a similar approach to that of Dorothy Heathcote, whose reflections on the significance of contemporary education and its changes long ago extended beyond the field of dramatic education out of which they originally emerged (Heathcote, 1984). In the first position we will consider *transmission*, in the second *inquiry*, and in the third position a *dramatic framework*. Generally speaking, in these three curricular positions the teacher contributes and participates, and the children work together with the participating teacher, as well as they can, to take part in the process of explaining the world to one another. The classroom in this case works as a laboratory, in which the “laboratory of workers” – the teacher and students – take over the control of the ongoing processes and knowledge – in the true sense of the word – and make it their own. Compared to Miller and Seller, in which the transformation is seen as an inclusive model that absorbs the previous one, Heathcote states that the two previous positions are synthesized in the third position: in a new, social work the position is oriented to knowledge (*knowledge-oriented*), that is, it is directed to strengthening the knowledge and understanding of the world and at the same time has a humanistic perspective – and at its centre is the student (*student-centred*).

Valuing diversity

How to come to terms with diversity in the educational environment, as well as coming to terms with the fact that the actors in this environment are diverse from the standpoint of demographics and from the standpoint of personality and abilities for learning? Is diversity a phenomenon that we will suppress (for example through segregation and selectivity in the school system), or accept – if in working with it we establish basic elements of education for optimal learning of all and for social justice?

Diversity can have both positive and negative results – it depends on the structure of the entire social situation and the competence of people who are incorporated into the situation. Successful results of working with diversity in the educational environment have been presented in the introduction of

the text. If we consider this issue from a pedagogical perspective, then we consider it primarily from the viewpoint of the following question: **In what way should educational approaches be oriented in order to minimize the potential negative effects of diversity and on the other hand to make the most of its positive potential?**

The basic components of this approach are considered to be (Johnson, Johnson, 1999):

1. Value diversity as a source of optimizing education and learning (to know about its potentials and dangers, to understand under what conditions it can cause positive results and on the other hand under what conditions it can have negative effects)
2. Create a cooperative context in which teaching and learning takes place (learning in the simpler and more complex cooperative structures)
3. Consciously work to reduce cognitive barriers (stereotypes, prejudices, etc.)
4. When learning about the identity of individuals, stress the unifying identities (for example European)
5. Work to reduce internal group barriers (against the rigid division into “we” and “they”)
6. Focus on the processes of acceptance (focus on a climate of acceptance, respect etc.)
7. Learn to manage conflict constructively (conflicts of ideas or interests)
8. Systematically work on internalizing pluralistic values.

Approaches that work with constructive managing of conflict are therefore important approaches, yet they are tied to a wider context and are effective together with the other aforementioned approaches.

Conflict as a structural element of the educational paradigm

In relation to this we must mention approaches that evidently connect to the **cognitive and social movements**, socio-cognitive theories of education and learning (Bertrand, 1998). Conflict is the central element of an entire paradigm of learning – Constructivism. Constructivism as a paradigm works on the

basis of disharmony; it intensifies primarily the **socio-cognitive conflict** as a basis for learning (Kohlberg, Turiel, Doise, Mugny etc). The significance of the learning process as an auto-socio-construction (GFEN – the French group of New Education) is based on the foundation of disagreement; disagreements between lay pre-conceptions and newly emerging concepts, and disagreements between pre-conceptions within the learning group (social constructivism). The phase of constructivist approaches cannot avoid the so-called diversification – the presentation of diversity of pre-concepts and its variable interconnection with the context. We assume that full respect for this diversity can more successfully teach children or adults about tolerance than a carefully prepared lecture on the theme of tolerance. Why is that so? Acceptance of diversity and acceptance of conflict of ideas (that is, of the fact that at the moment I see things one way and others see them differently) are anchored naturally into the process of learning, which is the basic function of living in the school environment.

Strategies that emerge from constructivism have a strongly positive message: it is possible to build on diversity; it is possible to educate through disagreement and conflict, while own learning activities are evaluated in the group (Reiforth, Kugelmass, 2003). It is a message that concerns the school environment as well as the external environment – connecting it with the wider social life.

Cooperative context for learning

A part of the new paradigm is the organization of social relations that supports the constructivist learning and assists the creation of a safe environment for learning. Compared to the individualistic or competitive organization of relations of the individual, there exists in a task situation an increased cooperation as a positive interdependence of people (Deutsch). The basic means for creating a cooperative context is cooperative learning of all actors involved (Johnson, 1997).

The significance of cooperative learning for heterogeneous classrooms was supported by extensive research supplemented with empirical evidence (an overview, for example, in Cohen, 1994 or Johnson,

Johnson, 1989). The following issues are important for our theme:

a) A greater effort to succeed: higher performance and greater productivity of all students (the so-called excellent, average and those with learning difficulties), long-term learning memory, development of internal motivation, motivation oriented to tasks and results, perseverance in tasks, development of higher thought processes (critical and creative thinking)

b) Relationships among students more favourable for learning (an atmosphere of community, being engaged with others and care for others, support for general and social learning, accepting diversity as valuable, group cohesion)

c) Stronger psychological health (psychological adaptability, strengthening “the I”, developing the social I and social competence, self-confidence and the ability to manage social aversion and stress).

The thesis of reconciling conflict and cooperation, as well as support of cooperation with conflict and evaluation of conflict through cooperation has not been fully accepted. **The strategy, which is presented in the following part of the paper, is based primarily on both of these elements: cooperation and conflict.** It is in relation to this that the potential for learning is revealed, and not only for education in the schools and for the schools, but also for education that has the possibility to influence the societal reality (Kasikova, 2001, 2005)

Educational strategies based on conflict

In this paper we focus more specifically on the strategies in two areas – fictional and non-fictional. As an example of the latter (non-fictional) strategies we will mention the strategy of academic controversy.

Academic controversy

The strategy of academic controversy belongs to the more difficult, more complex structures of cooperative teaching. It was described and thoroughly studied from the standpoint of effectiveness (Johnson, Johnson 1985, 1995) for various educational areas. The effects are – identically to the effects of the entire system of cooperative learning – described in the areas of per-

formance and results, motivation for further learning, formation of social skills and psychological health. Learning is achieved through controversy, which is not anything new in education. What is new, however, is the incorporation of conflict into the cooperative context, in which conflict takes place in the process of learning; this connection then helps advance the learning in two areas – educational and social.

The strategy is structured in several steps: after stating the original opposing viewpoints (for example, *Euthanasia should be allowed vs. Euthanasia cannot be allowed*), several phases of this strategy are conducted in cooperative groups in the classroom where a joint position is arrived at, which then documents the movement of knowledge of the entire group. This joint position, however, is not a simple agreement in the sense of summarizing knowledge of one group and the other (“you know this and we know this, so we will classify them together”), but is negotiated on the basis of critical arguments of both opposing parties; it is an exchange of positions from which the participants look at the given problem. The students learn that the problem has more dimensions and that there are more perspectives: basically, this is to **learn from conflict existing on more sides, from a multiplicity of sides, in an environment that respects diversity** of students’ personalities and opinions. We learn to not only accept ideas of others, if they are based on reasonable argumentation, but also to cultivate disagreement which respects the personalities of others, and we learn according to the rules of disagreement with others’ opinions.

Through its structure the strategy (a process of learning in phases) teaches the values of plurality and diversity, that is, the democratic values. To emphasize these values means to carefully **choose the essence of this academic controversy – its content and its initial insight based on two opposing standpoints**. Examples of academic controversy of this type are: 1) *Teachers cannot be members of extremist parties vs. Teacher can be a member of any party allowed by the state*; 2) *The symbols of religion (such as the headscarves of Muslim women) do not belong in schools vs. Schools should respect religious symbols of various religions in their environment etc.*

These strategies can be practiced in the school curriculum not only as the subject of civic educa-

tion, but also can be at the core of a holistic curriculum in the sense we discussed in the first part of this text. We mentioned the effectiveness of this strategy but our research has shown several problems in the **phase of implementation into everyday practice of the schools**. We shall look at this problem through an example of one type of academic controversy. It deals with, in our opinion, one of the most interesting academic controversies – the controversy on the issue of diversity itself (Johnson, Johnson, 1999). It arises out of two opposing viewpoints, of which the first is based on the thesis that *diversity is a source that has many positive influences*, the second on the opposed thesis – *diversity is a problem that has many damaging influences*. We applied this strategy in practice primarily in the university environment (students in the field of educational sciences, social education, teacher-student groups in pre-graduation and teacher groups in further education) and during the education of teachers and lecturers addressing intercultural education. The following reflection on the given strategy in aforementioned environment compared with observation in school practice (Kasikova, 2003) indicates: **the key element of this strategy (learning through conflict) is at the same time one of its most difficult elements**. We present several pieces of information in the given strategy, which we formulated on the basis of comparing our observation when teaching with the following questionnaire of the participants.

The participants in these strategies similarly experienced the discussion phase as difficult and presented a low level of skills in discussing the basics of initially opposite viewpoints. Furthermore, dealing with conflicts often lead them to positional argumentation (to defend their position at all costs, without recognizing arguments supported by the evidence of the other side). The transformation of controversy (conflict of ideas) into a conflict of interests (who beats whom) prevented, according to them, listening and analysis of the presented arguments.

The phase of taking the opposite position was also difficult (later in the strategy, after arguing my own position, I defend the opposite position, and I do so on the basis of convincing arguments and evidence). According to research, however, (Johnson,

Johnson, 1995) this other perspective is one of the most important supports of progress in learning.

Teachers' conviction that after being trained in the strategy it is worth applying it in school practice was at the same time accompanied by fear of managing this strategy, primarily in the phases where the conflict is evident (discussion and switching of positions) or in the closing phases, where on the basis of conflict a common position may be reached.

The structure of the strategy and its many effects clearly support the thesis that on the basis of disharmony and disagreement, a managed learning conflict will clearly improve the learning. However, the implementation into everyday practice is not easy, as is the case in other educational innovations. The result of this difficulty is its low application in practice. On the basis of monitoring the area of elementary schools and secondary schools, we can see that it is used minimally. In practice we have not recorded it in our monitoring and the questioned university students also came to the same conclusions based on their experiences at elementary school and high school. (If students mention the strategy based on a learning conflict, then it is the strategy of the so-called Debate Leagues, which also works through having an opponent. This is, however, a structure on a more competitive basis and the participants are mainly the so-called "high achievers" – therefore it does not intentionally apply to student diversity).

Drama strategies

We start this part of our text by quotation: "We use music, texts, drama, visual arts and new technologies as tools to open sensibility for personal and societal dilemmas, to get knowledge about chosen content through many sources and languages (especially from the field of art), to express inner feelings and new experiences, to share this expression with others in a productive way, and finally to strengthen reflection about core values, concerning my engagement with the other as different." (Kroflič, 2009, 95)

Drama strategies bring about great and specific possibilities for connecting the theme of conflict with the diversity in the civil society. The basic sources of these possibilities are anchored in two principles, on which drama strategies are founded: one is **dramat-**

icality and the second **theatricality**. Both principles are connected in **role playing**.

Dramaticality (not just in games, but also in life) means that people find themselves in a situation in which they "have to act". And this is usually because they find themselves in a situation of disagreement, conflict, variety of motives or possibilities, etc. Dramaticity, therefore, in its essence carries an educational potential for working through diversity and work through conflict. Not only from the sociological "dramatic" concept of society (e.g. Collins) is it evident that the driving force of society is a "conflict of free wills" (Hegel). If we therefore address in the dramatic play the themes of inter-culturality, coexistence, democracy and civics, we will always discover variety, and usually also conflict, and at the same time values and communication mechanisms relating to promoting and solving this conflict. Drama education can simultaneously deal with real and current societal themes as well as "sci-fi" themes of the type of meeting with other social orders on other planets.

Theatricality (again not just in games, but also in life – for instance, Goffman's dramatism or Schechner's performance social studies etc. (Valenta, 2009) – means that the dramatic problem is not solved through real intervention (even if it is real and current), but will be dealt with in the fictional framework. We transform ourselves into fictional characters, which we play in the space designated for games in our classroom (similar as actors play on the stage in a theatre). Fiction creates a framework so that in (for a change) the "laboratory of the classroom" we can bring to life any problem (real or unreal) and from the distance resulting from playing of a role we can analyze it and find a solution.

Drama roles can be used

- as a subject in "drama education";
- in cross-curricular teaching – in teaching of civics or in others subjects;
- in specific subjects, as well in the form of theatre in education.

From the standpoint of our theme it is interesting especially for the type of participative theatre of A. Boal, the theatre of the oppressed. The goal is to make a performance for students generated from a common situation of oppression that they could be faced with in their life. This could be about bullying

in schools or the destruction of a playground near a block of flats because a building developer wants to build a shopping centre. The principle is that the performance is played twice, but during the second play the students have the possibility to stop the actors, climb on to the stage, temporarily take over the role of the main character and try different behaviour which could lead to preventing the oppression.

Let us return to the classroom. If the performance concerns reflections regarding a current situation in civil society in the play, then there are two other possibilities:

- a) Learning in intercultural education can use the form of educational (socio)dramas (the players take the roles from existing society and model typical situations – for example contacts between homeless people and other inhabitants of a town).
- b) The boundaries and form of rehearsing are then done in a so-called simulation framework, where we play ourselves, but in a fictional situation (how we can “as ourselves” in a situation with a government agent – played by a classmate – indicate an interest in a bribe, for instance).

A part of the education process is also the process of *preparing* for the fictive dramatic situation: the students must analyze the theme and expand the cognitive side of their learning. Further, they must mentally and behaviourally model the behaviour of the characters. The training of managing the real conflict and variation in the phase of preparation occurs when opinions on the method for playing the theme are different.

The following part of the education is the process of *reflection* after the end of dramatic play – in form of reflection the pupils debate about both real and fictive conflicts in a given play.

The contact points of drama and intercultural education can be seen on these levels:

- personal, social and moral conditions for effective behaviour in situations of diversity (to perceive; to accept; to listen accurately; to communicate effectively; to behave positively)
- information about otherness, diversity, multiculturalism etc. (to know; to have knowledge)

- thinking (to understand; to develop adequate attitudes)
- skills of defence (to defend myself; to defend the other – not to be only a bystander)

When we use classroom drama, we can use these **main forms**:

- a) **dramatic structure (also referred to as drama story, process drama)**: complex of situations, connected with a story line. In a drama structure the group – including the teacher – collectively embarks on a dramatic adventure, they work together “in a process of explaining the world to one another (as we mentioned above)”. In this classroom laboratory all drama participants can – being for longer and more deeply involved with the characters – explore closely the issues related to identity, difference and diversity. Drama structure generally always leads to understanding what it means to be human, it allows one to play, for instance, with the fear of diversity. This is explored, however, in an educational cooperative context which values the diversity of the participants. An example of a drama structure could be the project of “Green Children”, done on the basis of texts from the British Chronicles. Playing the story about strange children in a settled community in England of 12th century the participants are able to see more clearly the issues related to immigration and “otherness” in general.

Working with a diverse population in valuing diversity also means working on issues of tolerance. Increasing tolerance is often the main goal of intercultural education efforts. The problem with the simplified goal of “tolerance” is that it often means to endure or to put up with something or someone we do not like or agree with. In a drama structure “Comedians” (see below) we tend to refigure the notion of tolerance to include some of its other shades of meaning (permissiveness, generosity, etc.) but at the same time to explore more profoundly the context for being tolerant or intolerant. Using a parallel from the social world of people who lived on the margin of the mainstream (in our conditions the

so-called comedians, people who were not settled down, who earned their money as acrobats, animals trainers etc., usually travelling from one place to another) at the beginning of the 20th century, we have the possibility to focus on the relationship between two different cultures in the same environment nowadays. The drama structure can help provide a way to examine how cultural knowledge is constructed and where bias and prejudice begin, and what pre-conditions are needed for coexistence of different groups and diverse people.

We give an example of drama structure on diversity that was developed for high schools and university students as well as for teachers and lecturers in intercultural education. Drama is structured in the usual way – starting point / building belief / action / development / reflection.

Drama „Tolerance of difference“

Educational aims: to be aware of tolerance borders and limits, examine factors that determine tolerance borders and limits, explore conditions that cause the borders to shift.

Age: from twelve-year olds to adults

Drama scheme (situations and dramatic conventions)

1. A young girl in front of a mirror. *The teacher in role / monologue*. The teacher in role of a young girl in front of a mirror talks to herself. The monologue may begin as: „Why did they stare at me? Because of this hat? Mother was right, it is too extravagant with these long feathers... But let them to see the real fashion! Their funny hats with small roses and small bows...“ The teacher in role should give more details supporting the reality and atmosphere of a small town at the beginning of the 20th century and a person who lives here and wants to be perceived as a special person, somewhat different from the others. A significant day for the place in which the girl lives is mentioned at the end of the monologue – the anniversary of the town’s foundation is celebrated.
2. Questions (teacher): “Could you guess where the monologue happens? And when? In which historical period?” (Participants usually recognise the period as the 1920’s or 1930’s). “What might be the girl’s name?” (Ann, for instance).
3. In front of the mirror. *The teacher in role* (Ann) in front of the mirror. The mirror is formed by the line of participants (*collective role*). The mirror poses the questions for the girl, for instance “Are you happy in this town? Who are your friends? What is your family background?” etc. The teacher in role (Ann) responds to these questions: some important information is given in the form of these replies: Ann is the mayor’s daughter.
4. Suggestion for a town celebration. The teacher reminds the students about the town anniversary celebration. What such a celebration used to be like? Students’ suggestions (parades, fireworks...), the teacher’s suggestions (if this is not proposed by the students) – an exhibition of photographs.
5. Exhibition of photos (*still images*). The name of the exhibition may be „The life in the town – past and present“. Groups prepare still images as photos with subtitles (e.g. *First-graders with their teacher, Fire-workers in training* etc.)
6. Visiting the exhibition. The photographs are exposed in the corridor of the town hall. *Building the space* (a wall for the photos, a corridor for the visitors). Still images are exposed one by one, other participants take the role of anybody from the town. They visit the exhibition – individually, in pairs, in groups (e.g. as a family) and they comment on the photos.
7. A sound of the town (*Soundtrack*). What is the sound of this small town? Groups prepare and present the soundtracks one by one (using the voices and sounds from the room where they are).
8. *The arrival of Comedians* (travelling circus) and their presentation (*full play*). The following information is given by the teacher: the travelling circus arrived to town to be part of the celebration. Two large groups prepare the circus presentation before a performance to attract attention of town inhabitants. Who is at the presentation? (for

- instance, the leader of the troupe, clowns, acrobats, jugglers, sword-swallower, fire-eater, magicians, trapeze-artists, knife-throwers, tight-rope walkers, trick-bicycle riders – iron men, people working with animals etc.)
9. *Presentation of the whole play* (one group after another). Pupils from other groups take the roles of town inhabitants.
 10. *Comparison of soundtracks*. The soundtrack of the town (repetition from point 7) and the soundtrack of the troupe (the travelling circus) improvised by the whole group.
 11. *Narration*. After the circus performance but still on the stage the leader of the troupe asked the mayor to give permission to circus people and their children to settle down in the town for longer. When the mayor looked around, he could see some signs of disapproval on the town inhabitants' faces. In the evening some of them came to his house, knocked on the door and asked him not to allow the circus people to settle in the town.
 12. The mayor before his decision, thinking about various citizens' attitudes to the circus people settling in the town. *Range of attitudes*. 2-3 participants stand still as statues, representing circus people (in still images), others in the role of town inhabitants around them at a distance and in a position (for instance with their backs turned towards the circus statues) representing their attitude to the settling down.
 13. Local newspaper interview. *The teacher in role* as a journalist from the local newspaper is interested in inhabitants' attitudes – opinions: the teacher in role is approaching the inhabitants standing around circus statues and interviewing them (introducing her/himself, asking for their opinions): „Do you think we could benefit from the circus settling in our town?“ „Are you worried? Why?“ etc.
 14. Permission (*narration*). After some hesitation the mayor gave the permission for the circus folks to settle down but only at the outskirts of the town, in their caravans. There seemed to be no problems for some time with the coexistence of the two communities, but after a month a problem appeared. The problem concerned a town monument at the main square, which all the inhabitants were proud of. The monument was badly damaged.
 15. Monument design (*still image*). The participants in two groups prepare the monument design (typical monument of the given historical period) and build it in still image by their bodies. One of the monuments is chosen to be the core of the problem.
 16. Monument damage. Participants come to the monument one by one and „destroy“ it by gentle changes on the bodies in the still image (for instance, they hide one hand behind the body of „a hero“ to indicate the damage).
 17. Inhabitants' reaction (*interview*). The damaged monument is in the middle of the room, around the participants in the roles of inhabitants. The teacher's questions: „Who damaged the monument? Whom to blame? Are you sure?“ , etc.
 18. Another problem appears. *Narration*: the monument incident was the first sign of the apparent conflict. Other problems and conflicts followed. Small groups of participants debate what the problems are – in various areas of life: shops, work, church, school, pub, etc., and then play it out in a *variety of drama techniques*.
 19. Family life (*simultaneous improvised play*). Small groups in which the participants take the roles of the mayor's family: the mayor, his wife, his daughter (Ann /girl from the beginning of the story) and other roles. Hidden instruction to the daughters from all families: they fell in love with one of „comedians“ and want to marry him, otherwise they would leave home. Simultaneous improvised play of all groups: it is a Saturday evening and the daughter is not at home yet. After a while the daughters enter into the group play (returning home). The teacher finishes simultaneous playing after some time.
 20. Reflection on the scale of tolerance in a family. The scale is set as a line from absolute

intolerance to complete acceptance. The daughters position the family members along this scale with identification and explanation for what reason they are on the particular place in the scale (for instance, “This is my mother and she is close to complete acceptance because she was on my side in my argument with my father, she believes in true love”). When all family members are positioned along the scale, the participants can give the inner voices to some of the roles, (e.g. to mother: “I wish love for my daughter because I know what it means to live without it.” Or: “She does not know what life with a comedian will be like... it is not a romance...”). All families are places one by one on the scale.

21. The council deliberates about the problems of the town. A meeting is organized about the conflicts and problems with travelling circus. A discussion of the issue with *The teacher in role* (the mayor): “Should we have the comedians in the town some more time or should we expel them from the town? (even though winter is coming?). The councillors vote. If the vote is in favour of expelling, the councillors see in the mirror their own faces (in pairs) and hear the voices of comedians (around).
22. Reflection on the whole drama (out of roles).

A single dramatic play

In this case only one situation is played. We give a short description of one example of this “one situation play” which was a part of the project “Training of trainers in multicultural education” organised by the Czech nongovernmental organization People in Need (Člověk v tísni): authors of this article were lecturers and supervisors of this project.

Activity: “The scale of defence-reactions”

The main aim: to analyze and train behaviour in a situation of intercultural conflict in a fictional framework.

Teacher’s material: the scale of defence (published in Hilberg, 2003) classifying and explaining these

reactions to oppression: - compliance; - paralysis; - evasion; - alleviation; - resistance;

Short scheme of the activity:

1. The class is divided into groups of five and then every first, second, third etc. student from each group goes to form a new group (groups of firsts, seconds, thirds etc. are the newly formed ones).
2. Each group obtains a card with a description of one of defence-reactions; members of the group discuss the particular kind of behaviour.
3. Students return to their original groups of five, but the topic of their defence reactions (discussed in the previous step of the scheme) is kept secret.
4. The teacher’s instructions: “You are members of a minority in the country called XY. You are a group of friends and you have an afternoon meeting (drinking coffee or tea) in an apartment. First debate briefly the characteristics of your character (who you are), but don’t mention your kind of defence reaction. Debate also the relations of characters in the given situation, who is your host, if some of you are a couple, etc.”
5. The teacher proposes topics for the following played situations:
The majority represented by the government starts to limit teaching in your native language. The majority suggests introduction of special identification cards containing a lot of personal information regarding your minority status. They begin to be somewhat aggressive in contact with you on the streets of town and other places.
6. The teacher’s instructions: “Choose one topic and start simultaneous improvisation (discussion) about the issue – in each group of friends. Keep your character and try at the same time to observe the strategies of others.” (The teacher also informs the groups about the time, gives signals for the start and end of the play, etc.).
7. Group reflection on varieties of reaction, common reflection in the classroom based on the whole Hilberg’s scheme.

In the phase of implementation of drama strategies into everyday school practice we registered the following risks:

- First of all, it is clear that the problem must be selected so that it can be realized in the form of a true “three-dimensional” (not just narrated) situation in which the students can play a role. This is specific of the curriculum based on drama in education – the curriculum has the form of a situation full of action and the situation is often its content.
- **The teacher must have good didactic knowledge of the curriculum of multicultural education** (we have it as an element of the new national curriculum) **in the sense that they are able to transform the curriculum often limited in documents “only” to concepts** (for example, the concept of intercultural conflict, risks of democracy, etc.) **into a form of specific interpersonal situation.**
- They must also be able **to recognize the phenomenon described in the theories of human behaviour** (especially intercultural communication) **in practice, to differentiate the most specific type and principle of behaviour** (for instance to differentiate when a student/character in a play is really using techniques of defensive assertiveness and when they are being aggressive; when the play deals with a conflict of general interest or a conflict of values; when the communication is required on a general level or a personal level, etc.)
- Relating to this are the skills for leading the post-play discussion. If the teacher is not **educated properly in the practical differentiation of potential conflict phenomenon of multicultural society and understanding them**, they will not be able to effectively connect the behavioural teaching in the played scene with the subsequent cognitive teaching in the reflection after the play.

We know from research that gaining such education is not easy and the teacher in such cases often turns to their own “folk-theories of human behaviour”. At the same time it is clear that without good training, carried out in the framework of pre-service education, there is a problem in working with a particular behaviour and the function and interpre-

tation of the behaviour is most threatened by folk concepts and subjective sociological and psychological theories of the teacher.

We, of course, also have **themes for discussion** (in relation to the research). Our information suggests that if the teaching methods, whose results should become evident in everyday behaviour, do not reach deeply into the emotional structure of the personality, then the “practiced” social (interactive) behaviour in schools cannot find a place in normal life situations. This means that when reacting in normal situations, the behavioural elements of reaction are strongly connected – and this is significant – with the emotional elements – we usually call this “spontaneity” (it is not connected only with rationality). If there exists in a person a certain fixed connection between a certain type of stimulus, a certain type of emotional reaction and a certain type of behavioural reaction, and these connections are not in agreement with the educational ideals, then it can be very difficult to change this type of connection only through educational means. To offer a hyperbole, it would be more beneficial for this change if several psychotherapeutic systems were used, yet common education is too weak for such a change. We are, however, not appealing for teachers without special schooling to play therapists. At the moment, it is important for teachers to know about this problem and not be subject to clichés that those who play a dramatic role will act effectively in the future in a difficult situation.

General conclusions concerning the implementation of conflict-based strategies

The most extensive research questionnaire to date was carried out in the last year, relating to the current situation of Czech high-school students in various types of schools (approximately 1,000 respondents from 15-20 years old, organized by the People in Need Foundation and the Millward Brown company). Among other things this research uncovered a contradiction: young people are perceptive of the problems of the current world, yet do not believe that they can solve them (over 80%). However, they are willing to be engaged where they are shown examples

of ways in which they can help out. The influence of the mass media was primarily mentioned in relation to this, rather than the influence of schools.

In the second part of this text we have presented more specific problems associated with implementation strategies from two areas – fictional and non-fictional. For the implementation of all educational approaches working on the basis on conflict, in conclusion, we want to stress again the overall context – in this case the conception of schools in which work with conflict is deeply rooted in the overall school philosophy.

We showed that schools are currently more likely to guard against the strategies based on conflict, or consider them as unfavourable. We defend – on the basis of the previous argument – the viewpoint that the changes in schools at the current time should concern the movement from a negative attitude towards conflict to a positive position. The education programs that are determined for schools – and their

actors, that is the directors, teachers and students – should be focused of forming a conception of schools as a “conflict positive school” – that is, accepting the positive point-of-view of conflict and the subsequent processes of evaluating work through conflict.

Positive relations of the schools towards conflict mean that conflict is incited and managed constructively in order to fully use its potential – and this relates to learning and teaching, as well as to the characteristics of school life in general. Not only is this seen as unavoidable in a diverse environment, but moreover it is valued as a means to help the schools in a process of renewal. The students and teachers – in the sense of the transformation position in the curriculum – not only jointly learn how to solve conflicts, but at the same time (and from our perspective primarily) view the method of working through conflict as a value necessary for forming the more general values of a contemporary democracy.

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