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NEW RESEARCH AREAS AND RESEARCH PROBLEMS IN LABOR PEDAGOGY

НОВІ НАПРЯМИ ДОСЛІДЖЕНЬ У ПРОФЕСІЙНІЙ ПЕДАГОГІЦІ

Анотація. У статті розглянуто професійну педагогіку як наукову субдисципліну, яка має предмет дослідницьких інтересів, конкретну термінологію, методологію наукових досліджень. З'ясовано принципи і методи вивчення сфери професійної підготовки майбутніх спеціалістів, функціонування людей у середовищі та умов їх професійного розвитку. Визначено, що процес ідентифікації дослідницьких напрямів професійної педагогіки у Польщі розпочався у 1970-х рр. Основоположником польської професійної педагогіки є Т.У. Новацький, який обґрунтував взаємозв'язок «людина – освіта – праця» як фундамент нової наукової субдисципліни, визначаючи при цьому десять напрямів досліджень, які зосереджують увагу на інтересах освіти, пов'язаних з трудовою діяльністю: світоглядні проблеми, професійна освіта, зміст освіти, теорія і методика виховання, теоретичні основи методологічних досліджень, професійна орієнтація, професійна підготовка, дидактика, інфраструктура, управління, педевтологія.

Актуальні проблеми досліджень професійної педагогіки зумовлені вільним ринком, а також такими супутніми негативними явищами, як проблеми безробіття, трудоголізм, професійне вигорання тощо. Вирішальне значення з точки зору функціонування людини в професійному середовищі має проблема професійної кар'єри, яка довгий час була переважно мозаїчною кар'єрою, а не лінійною. Дуже складною галуззю для досліджень, пов'язаних з професійною діяльністю в галузі освіти, є проблеми професійної міграції.

Акцентовано увагу на широкому спектрі дослідницьких питань, пов'язаних з функціонуванням людини в екстремальних умовах праці. Такі професії, як: солдат, поліцейський, пожежник, рятувальник, аквалангіст та ін. вимагають особливих і вимогливих особистостей, фізичних задатків, навичок та різних компетенцій. Нагального дослідження потребує функціонування людини в екстремальних умовах праці, пов'язаних з ними небезпек, кар'єрного росту та можливого використання навичок і досвіду в персоніфікації.

Ключові слова: професійна діяльність, професійна педагогіка, наукові дослідження, нові напрями досліджень, професійна підготовка.

The role of work in human life

Since time immemorial human work has encouraged reflection. Human work is universal, since it is present in all cultures and civilizations, but it also has a historical dimension due to its presence at all stages of human development and its individual and social value. The individual dimension means that work enables a person to enrich their personality, develop skills and talents, satisfy various needs, and derive pleasure from creation and success. Work may, then, have the autotelic value (value found in itself) and instrumental value that serves to satisfy other needs (for instance material, social, prestige-related, moral and creative) (Bera & Wierzejska, 2015). Sometimes, however, it may be a nuisance and an unpleasant duty that can lead to destruction of an individual (Bartnik, 1991). There are also people who do not find any value in work and live at other's expense. As far as work's social dimension is concerned, a person contributes to the development of a given community through the creation of various goods (material and non-material) and the improvement of the economic conditions, or in other words through objective values important for interpersonal relations and social life (Bera & Wierzejska, 2015).

The phenomenon of human work has been explored in different studies and scientific analyses. It has been particularly important for the philosophy of work, sociology of work, psychology of work, praxeology, economy, organization and management, occupational medicine, as well as labor pedagogy discussed in this article (Bogaj, 2007; Furmanek, 2006; Kwiatkowski, 2010; Bera, 2012; Szlosek, 2015).

The importance and role of work in the life of individuals and societies, as well as dynamic changes in the work processes concerning especially the matter and form, have provoked changes in the fields of interest and scientific explorations of other scientific disciplines interested in human work (Beck-Dudley, 2018, p. 167). At the same time it is difficult to imagine the development of scientific investigations in the field of labor pedagogy without referring to the studies in other related fields. Therefore, the approach to work and research into work make this field an interdisciplinary one. Some researchers consider this interdisciplinary character to be an opportunity for the development of work pedagogy and a chance to implement the already-developed theories, they also see it as an impulse for the field's development (Kwiatkowski, 2010; Furmanek, 2006; Bera, 2012); others believe it proves the dispersion of research efforts undertaken by labor pedagogues (Jeruszka, 2010) and stagnation in the development of its methodology, and consequently loss of its identity (Gerlach, 2006). Yet another group claims that the socio-economic transformations are not really reflected in the pedagogy's conceptual system (Szlosek, 2007). In his theoretical analyses, F. Szlosek arrives at a conclusion that as long as labor pedagogy fails to define the areas of research that reflect contemporary conditions and to mark the most crucial points on this map, it will remain far from the theoretical ideal (Szlosek, 2015, p. 96).

Different conceptions of research areas of labor pedagogy

When in 1970s Tadeusz W. Nowacki, the father of labor pedagogy, attempted to define the subject area of this new discipline of pedagogy, he focused primarily on the relation between a person, education and work. Consequently, he determined the scope of interest that included education, work at school and at home, as well as career counseling and guidance, training, employee's functioning in various professional contexts, and their pursuit of different forms of professional development, for instance lifelong learning whose aim was to excel in one's profession. It was undoubtedly a successful attempt to define the importance of work in an individual's lifelong development. Since then, our socio-economic life has changed significantly affecting also the ten traditional research fields defined in 1970s: teleology, knowledge of professions, selection and organization of teaching content, upbringing, theoretical bases for methodologies, career counseling, further training and professional development, equipment-related issues (infrastructure), guidance, and pedeutology (Nowacki, 1978). In the 1990s, the growing importance of market economy led to some serious content-related transformation of the research areas and significant modifications in the aims of vocational education. As emphasized by S.M. Kwiatkowski, it was reflected in the correlation of research with the stages of education as well as career with pre-vocational training, vocational education and professional development (Kwiatkowski, 2010, p. 23).

There appeared also alternative systems of defining labor pedagogy research areas, including S. Kaczor's circles of labor pedagogy. Kaczor focused on the following fields: a) philosophical foundations of work at the beginning of the 21st century; b) terminology concerning general and vocational education; c) guidance and counseling, especially career-oriented; d) learning in order to act – the importance of skills in one's activities; e) learning in order to cooperate; f) people in the world of work; g) labor pedagogy as a social science; h) multidimensional and multilevel personal approach to individuals in the work process; i) labor pedagogy and andragogy; j) teachers in formal and out of school vocational education; k) education economics and labor pedagogy, as well as labor pedagogy in the European Union – new approach (Kaczor, 2003).

Other interesting conceptions regarding the identification of research areas of labor pedagogy have been offered by Z. Wiatrowski (1980), R. Gerlach (2006) and Z. Furmanek (2010).

R. Gerlach acknowledged that the radical change in the economic and political situation in the country requires the adoption of a completely fresh perspective in order to define new areas of labor pedagogy. He considered the following issues to be of interest for the labor pedagogues: a) human work and its place in the system of values; b) professional career; c) the process of guidance and career counseling and the new rules for career counseling; d) general technical education; e) relationship between pro-vocational education and vocational education; f) directions of the scientific, engineering, and technological development; g) condition of vocational education; h) recognition and comparability of diplomas and certificates; i) relationship between general and vocational education; j) aims, content and the methods employed to teach democracy, peace and tolerance; k) organizational and economic conditions for adult vocational education; l) careers of vocational institution graduates and their performance on the labor market; m) humanization of work regarding the technological transformations; n) competence of vocational education teachers; o) education in higher educational institutions treated as vocational training centers; p) comparative studies on the development of work pedagogy in various countries; r) the profile of a labor pedagogue (Gerlach, 2006, pp. 115–123).

The suggestions offered above differ in their scope; some can be defined as complete research areas, others, whose scope is more narrow, constitute research problems that can be successfully placed in a given field of labor pedagogy. Relevant at this point seems Szlosek's statement that once new research problems are defined, it will indicate directions of further development of labor pedagogy as a domain of knowledge with practical applications (Szlosek, 2015, p. 73).

The integration processes in Europe have stimulated the development of labor pedagogy; various research projects and activities have been undertaken to make Polish diplomas recognized and comparable abroad. Also changes in

the system of vocational education invigorated labor pedagogues. S.M. Kwiatkowski believes that it generated interest in the new or barely recognized issues, such as: vocational education theory, measurement of effectiveness of vocational education and integration of theory and practice, studies into the standards of professional qualifications, module-based education, as well as the relationship between vocational education and the European labor market. Also important have been the issues of life-long learning, knowledge of professions, career counseling, problems of general technical education, professional qualifications, educational reform, work as value, as well as terminology (Kwiatkowski, 2010, pp. 26–28). Consequently, taking into account market transformations and the accompanying processes, the author has successfully divided research areas into following groups: a) knowledge of professions; b) career counseling; c) professional qualification standards (norms); d) lifelong learning (Kwiatkowski, 2010, pp. 16–19).

Labor pedagogy research areas as seen by T.W. Nowacki

In one of his last publications, Tadeusz W. Nowacki, the father of Polish labor pedagogy acknowledged the conceptions of new research areas formed by other labor pedagogues and suggested adding the following areas to the ten previously-established: a) career guidance; b) occupational health and safety; c) labor migration; d) professional careers, self-creation and personality types. T. Nowacki suggested also that more attention should be paid to occupational pathology (Nowacki, 2010, p. 28).

It occurs that some of these fields, including **career orientation**, or to be more precise, career guidance, have been developing dynamically for some time now. Numerous studies, including works by W. Rachalska, K. Lelińska, Z. Wołek, M. Piorunek, and A. Rózański, attest to this development. Also significant are the studies in the field of engineering and medicine connected with the occupational health and safety; particularly important contribution to the development of these complex issues was made by D. Koradecka (Nowacki, 2010, p. 27).

Recently, the problems related to the **free market** and the accompanying negative phenomena, such as **unemployment**, have intensified. It has been reflected in the publications by, among others, S.M. Kwiatkowski, U. Jeruszka and A. Bogaja. These problems have been also investigated from other scientific perspectives. It seems fully justified that labor pedagogues regularly analyze the relationship between the employees' personal resources and unemployment that hinders their development possibilities. Moreover, human work has been losing its mass character owing to technological advancement – the amount of time than one needs to devote to work has been decreasing. Therefore J. Sztumski's (2010) question whether we should discuss work pedagogy or rather unemployment pedagogy seems extremely relevant. Another

issue that has been growing in importance is free time and its rational use in the process of individual's development.

There are also numerous studies offering different perspectives on the issue of professional careers which are becoming increasingly less linear but require from the employees to explore different professional contexts, and not only change their jobs but oftentimes to re-qualify. Also the predictability of careers has decreased and this aspect has been discussed by, among others, M. Piorunek, A. Bańka, Cybal-Michalska, and E. Sarzyńska-Mazurek.

Free access to the European labor market has presented the researchers with other research problems, including: labor migration, chances for pursuing career on an international level, opportunities and barriers to functioning in a new social and professional environment, and issues of acculturation, children's education etc. According to T.W. Nowacki, when labor pedagogues started exploring the issue of **labor migration**, they have boldly entered a new, complex territory, and hence discovered a brand new branch of labor pedagogy. From the pedagogical point of view, scientific discussion about the challenges that education faces regarding labor migration of young adults is of utmost importance, especially since migration figures are not slowing down, only the country of destination changes. This issue has been discussed not only in various interesting studies, including R. Bera's, W. Danielewicz's, M. Korczyński's, but also in doctoral dissertations, for instance by B. Możdżan, S. Zgórska, R. Franczak, G. Konieczny, P. Zielińska, M. Cabak, M. Kalkowska, K. Nowosad.

Another topic that has grown in importance is the pathology in the workplace: mobbing, workaholism that is destructive to a person totally absorbed in their work, as well as overworking that results from the employees' attempt to meet excessive expectations of their employers, which, in turn, leads to burnout. A labor pedagogue cannot overlook the issue of mobbing; although its negative consequences are of psychological and medical nature, the reasons for bullying can be found in interpersonal relations, work management, and generally low culture of a given organization. Moreover, overwork and professional burnout have their roots in prolonged stress, whose causes are not only subjective, that is resulting from excessive motivation and difficulties in attaining goals, but above all are related to the work environment and its social and organizational dimensions (Sanchez-Gelabert, Figueroa, & Elias, 2017). The publications that may be of interest include works by A. Bańka, W. Furmanek, J. Kirenko, and T. Zubrzycka-Maciąg. Finally, the topic that has recently received considerable attention is the issue of work slavery, that is the infringement of basic rules and labor rights. This issue has been dealt with by, among others, P. Stańczyk and R. Tomaszewska-Lipiec.

A person in extreme working conditions – a new challenge

I would like to direct the reader's attention to a broad spectrum of research issues related to a **person's functioning in extreme working conditions**. The group in question includes people working in hostile conditions, unfavorable to one's survival, but who nevertheless fulfill their role and organizational aims while preserving the sense of importance of the performed roles. Extreme environment has never been and will never be a natural place for human existence. The groups that work in such conditions include members of uniformed public service, military pilots, divers, firefighters, mountain rescue personnel, policemen, etc. The research problems that can be posed regarding this group are legion and they include psychophysical predispositions and motivation behind given career path, professional training and further development of competence, professional functioning and the possible dangers, career development, and prospects of using skills and experience in other social and professional roles outside of uniformed public service.

We can, therefore, identify another relevant area regarding labor pedagogy, a unique field of research offering both cognitive and practical aspects. Wide research areas do not pose a threat to the pedagogy's identity but, in my opinion, attest to its vitality and offer prospects for its further development. Labor pedagogues should follow new emerging social and professional problems and explore them in their scientific endeavors, which will undoubtedly stimulate the development of this subdiscipline of pedagogy.

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NEW RESEARCH AREAS AND RESEARCH PROBLEMS IN LABOR PEDAGOGY

Abstract. Work education, like any scientific sub-discipline, has its own subject of research interests, specific terminology and methodology of scientific studies. In the 1970-s, a Polish educationist Tadeusz W. Nowacki, regarded as the founder of the Polish work education, indicated the relationship «man-education-work» as a foundation of the new scientific sub-discipline, thus defining the ten research areas which constitute the focus of education interests relating to work: teleological issues, vocational education, selection and arrangement of the content of education, issues of upbringing, theoretical foundations of methodological studies, vocational orientation, professional development and training, issues of equipment (infrastructure), issues of management and pedeutology.

Since that time, a lot of contemporary scientists have attempted to «update» those research areas pointing out a need to undertake new studies due to the continuous social and economic transformations (comp. S.M. Kwiatkowski, 2010; S. Kaczor, 2003; R. Gerlach, 2003).

Presently there have appeared urgent issues arising from the free market as well as the accompanying negative phenomena, such as the problem of unemployment, workaholism, mobbing or occupational burnout.

An issue that is crucial from the point of view of human functioning in the working environment is the problem of professional careers which – for a long time – have been mostly mosaic-like careers rather than the linear ones.

Also, the issues of professional migrations, which constitute a very complex area for studies relating to the work education, cannot be overlooked in the paper.

This article also attempts to draw attention to a wide spectrum of research issues associated with human functioning in extreme working conditions. Such professions as: a soldier, policemen, fireman, lifeguard, scuba diver, etc. require in their assumptions a specific and demanding personality and physical predispositions, skills and different competencies while maintaining a sense of meaning of the professional functions performed. There appear here a lot of research problems relating, for example, to psychophysical predispositions and motivation to choose a certain profession, professional preparation and further improvement of competencies, professional functioning and associated hazards, career development and possible use of skills and experience in performing other social and professional functions outside the disposable groups.

Keywords: human work, labor pedagogy, new research areas.

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