

Maja Piotrowska
University of Wrocław

***Knowledge about counselling in pedagogical studies.
In search of a remedy for the main problems of the
modern world. 10th National Pedagogical Congress –
Special Symposium. Warsaw, 20 September 2019***

On September 18th-20th, 2019 in Warsaw, the jubilee Tenth National Pedagogical Congress was organized by the Polish Pedagogical Society, the Faculty of Pedagogy of the University of Warsaw and the Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education. The main theme of the Congress, which has become a meeting place and a place of exchange of thoughts of many eminent representatives of the scientific community, concerned *Pedagogy and education in the face of the crisis of trust, community and autonomy*. The title formulated in this way by the organizers created a number of opportunities for participants to propose new perspectives and try to read such an important issue, especially in the context of the emergence of various crises in an increasingly complex and ambiguous contemporary world. During the three days of the Congress, the participants (observers, speakers and listeners) undertook many discussions focused on the contemporary challenges facing pedagogy and education in the changing economic, political, cultural and social reality of Poland and the whole world. The participants were able to listen to numerous jubilee lectures, plenary lectures and papers delivered in seven thematic sections and eight special symposia. The sections focused on such general issues as: Educational policy, school, educational institutions; Teacher; Youth, student, student, listener; Family, child, care, educational institutions; Labour market, professional development, employers' expectations; Global environment, local environment, social relations, social groups, media, migration; Methodology of research in humanities and social sciences.

During special symposia the participants shared the knowledge resulting from their research on less general topics, as indicated in the titles: Abilities and creativity. Problems, concepts, perspectives; Special pedagogy in recognizing the theoretical-empirical triad: person-family-society; Heritage of ideas and drama of the fate of leading figures and Polish pedagogy in the twentieth century: history,

analysis and criticism of the bonds and rifts between generations; Trust and sense of community in the work of teachers; Knowledge about counselling in pedagogical studies. In search of a remedy for the problems of the contemporary world; Identity of media pedagogy. Perspectives, challenges, tasks; Polish-Ukrainian scientific discourse on the pedagogy of work and andragogy; Ontological (un)safety. Contemporary person in a trap of meanings, threats and symbols.

On September 20th, 2019, the third day of the Congress, the special Symposium was held entitled *Knowledge about counselling in pedagogical studies: In search of a remedy for the main problems of the modern world*. The centres that had initiated the meeting were: University of Wrocław, Lower Silesian University, University of Zielona Góra and Naukowe Towarzystwo Poradcoznawcze (Scholarly Society of Counselling). The Symposium was chaired by Professor Edyta Zierkiewicz of the University of Wrocław, who invited the academic teachers of Polish universities to share their comments related to the teaching of counselling knowledge to students and the experiences gained from it. During the Symposium, nine speeches by representatives of various academic centers in Poland dealing with education in this field were delivered. The extended title of the Symposium not only referred to the issues related to university teaching, concerning the indicated area of expertise, but also emphasized its connections with the current reality, emphasized in the general title of the Tenth PTP Congress.

At the very beginning of the meeting, Professor Edyta Zierkiewicz emphasized the importance of counselling reflection in pedagogical studies. The Symposium was opened by a speech by Professor Alicja Czerkawska from the University of Lower Silesia in Wrocław, entitled: *Adaptive and emancipatory dimension of educational biographies of adults: Reflections of the counsellor*. The speaker presented the assumptions of her research project, within the framework of which adults (in the period of early and middle adulthood), who undertook pedagogical studies at the University of Lower Silesia, have the opportunity to analyze and interpret the course of their own educational biography. During the classes on the subject of "Lifelong Learning Workshops" the students look at various elements of their own lives, including the development of individual identity, the main themes of life, significant people and social relations, living conditions, their own possibilities and limitations, experienced difficulties, dilemmas, turning points in their existence, changes in their views and value system, dreams, life goals. This recognition leads to a deeper understanding of oneself, one's own destiny, the socio-historical and cultural context, and thus provides an additional impulse to build conscious relationships with the inner and outer world. Professor Czerkawska pointed out that in the process of lifelong learning of adults and in the process of self-analysis, presented in the form of auto-narration, two different creative orientations are clearly visible – striving for adaptation and achieving emancipation.

In the speech entitled *Guidance through the eyes of the student: The research report*, Dr. Anna Kławsiuć-Zduńczyk, representing the Nicolaus Copernicus

University in Toruń, presented the results of her own research, concerning students' knowledge of professional helping, their expectations towards counselling services, as well as their experience in using institutional support. The research was conducted by means of a diagnostic survey on a sample of 200 students. The author emphasized that her findings may be helpful for vocational counsellors in building their skills and methodology and also for lecturers, educating students in the field of vocational guidance and counselling.

Dr. Anna Maria Kola (also from the Nicolaus Copernicus University) presented a paper entitled "*What can I advise you...? The theory and practice of counselling in the education of social workers*". The speech concerned historical and contemporary ways and forms of counselling education (family, professional, social, etc.) in the study field of "Social Work in Poland", analysed from the point of view of the quality standards of academic education, including those set by the Polish Accreditation Committee, as well as of reforms of the social assistance system. Dr. Kola noted that the changes in the aid system cause that the aid activities now go beyond administrative activities and put more emphasis on direct, specialized support for the family in various areas of its functioning. This support is realized by means of specialist counselling, which is an element of training future social workers at universities in Poland. Both papers are published in the present issue of the *Studia Poradownicze /Journal of Counselling*.

Professor Jolanta Lenart from the University of Rzeszow in her lecture drew attention to *The competence of educators in the field of professional counselling: Needs and reality*. According to the speaker, the majority of today's graduates of pedagogy, graduating from university, do not have the necessary skills and extensive knowledge of the specifics of vocational guidance. The situation is also similar for elementary school teachers, which may be alarming, all the more so because both are obliged in their professional work to conduct educational activity in the field of preparing students for the choice of profession. According to Professor Lenart, the question can be asked: why won't the Ministry of National Education, in consultation with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, incorporate the contents of vocational counselling into the educational programs for teachers of various specialization? The situation prompted the researcher to undertake archival studies, which were an attempt to determine whether the situation was similar in earlier periods, i.e. in the interwar period and in the period of the People's Republic of Poland, and to conduct small surveys among the graduates of pedagogy at the University of Rzeszow in order to learn about their competences in the field of vocational guidance.

A speech by Dr. Maja Piotrowska from the University of Wrocław, entitled *Educating future family counsellors: The project of optional classes in "Family counselling", extending the knowledge and counselling skills of students*, presented the curriculum organization of family counselling in the specialty of "Counselling and psychopedagogical helping" opened in the Institute of Pedagogy of the University

of Wrocław. The speaker pointed out that nowadays, when so many families experience various crises, both broad, interdisciplinary and well-established theoretical knowledge concerning the area of working with a family, as well as proficient use of the counselling skills in the process of helping its members, become indispensable for future family counsellors.

The next lecture, by Dr. Violetta Drabik-Podgórna (also from the University of Wrocław), was entitled *Visions and reviews in counselling: The counsellor's distractions in the face of the chaos of concepts and actions in the area of career development support*. The lecturer focused on presenting the numerous dilemmas faced by today's counsellors and practitioners who want to act professionally in the area of career support. The author presented the dilemmas of the specialists in the field of career counselling, taking into account five dimensions: ontological, epistemological, axiological, methodical and existential. This lecture has been already published in *Studia Poradownicze/Journal of Counselling* (Vol. 8, p. 71–86; 289–319).

Professor Barbara Skalbania from the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, in the lecture entitled *Knowledge about counselling for parents and teachers of inclusive education*, took up the problem of inclusive education, which takes into account the diversity of students' needs within the framework of public education. In her speech, Professor Skalbania characterized inclusive education, indicating that this model of education assumes equal educational opportunities while providing broadly understood counselling/support for students and their parents. However, there is an important problem related to counselling and support addressed to teachers, which is too narrowly defined and often identified only with their professional development. In the speech she justified that the counselling for teachers should be realized comprehensively, taking into account their personal development, raising therapeutic competence, increasing practical skills, i.e. striving to consciously create a common educational space, which is the main assumption of inclusion.

This part of the meeting was concluded by the speakers from the University of Zielona Góra – Dr. Daria Zielińska-Pękał and Dr. Joanna Dec-Pietrowska, who presented lecture entitled *The specificity of education in the field of counselling – reflections of counsellors*, in which they presented the counselling curriculum for students of the “Social Work” course at the University of Zielona Góra. The lecturers analysed the current process of educating future counsellors and people connected with broadly understood helping. They paid attention to all subjects with “counselling” in the name, required in the course of study at the University of Zielona Góra (i.e. “Family and sexual counselling”; “Educational counselling”; “Youth counselling”; “Gerontological counselling”; “Theory and practice of counselling”; “Professional counselling”, among others). However, the most attention was paid to the subject of “Mediated counselling”, which had been introduced into the educational program and is being taught today only at their University. The lecturers presented the objectives of teaching such a subject in the curriculum designed for future counsellors, its thematic scope, as well as the first reflections of students on

how they find themselves at each of the stages of future counselling work, outlined during their course of study.

The Symposium, due to the diversity of the topics it deals with, related to the field of counselling as it is taught in pedagogical studies, has become a space for asking questions, short discussion and exchange of views.

At the end of the meeting, Professor Alicja Kargulowa, took the floor and thanked all participants for attending the Symposium. She referred to the individual speeches, appreciating the effort made by the lecturers in preparing their speeches and sharing the conclusions of their research. She also expressed her conviction that the Symposium was a good opportunity to undertake an in-depth reflection on the issues of counselling, and in particular on the organization of didactics in the field of educating future counsellors. Professor Kargulowa was convinced that the meeting was highly necessary, also because today there are more and more complex problems that are faced by people who are poorly prepared for the changes taking place in today's world and who look for various kinds of advice, often without taking into account the risk related to the abuse of their trust. Hence, the multifaceted professional training of counsellors seems to be a need of the moment.

At the end of the Symposium, a conclusion was formulated, which was supported by all participants of the Symposium, that joint counselling discussions should take place more often and take the form of regular meetings.

Translated by Edyta Zierkiewicz