

***The 15th Summer School for Young Researchers
on Adult Education and Counsellogists,
May 22-24, 2013, Międzygórze, Poland***

In May 2013 the 15th meeting of experienced and young social sciences researches took place in Międzygórze, a mountainous resort in the south of Poland. Although this time the name of the event did not include the word 'young,' its scientific head prof. Józef Kargul had decided to retain its classic formula, which involved: encounters of novice scholars and experienced researches of andragogy and counselling as well as other social scientists; discussions on the papers presented by the School participants; a simulation game; a trip to a foreign adult education centre and numerous informal meetings with the School's founders, guests and participants.

The participants' contribution to the School's activities involved paper presentations, reporting on the progress of their doctor and habilitation dissertations, and thorough discussions on the content of each other's works and the ways in which they were presented. Moreover, the young researchers were also engaged in writing reports for scientific journals, compiling and presenting scientific profiles of the guest professors and organising author meetings.

The attendees had also an opportunity to take part in "simulation games," that is activities designed by Prof. J. Kargul to help them acquire and/or enhance their scholarship skills necessary in research work. In simulation games, the young scientists were encouraged, for example, to adopt the roles of professors and journal editors, expressing their opinions on and offering critical assessments of articles provided by the professors. Such role-playing certainly boosted the junior researchers' self-confidence and augmented their expertise.

As a material and cultural outcome, the School's meetings yielded a number of articles by the participants to be published in the upcoming issue of *Dyskursy Młodych Andragogów (Adult Education Discourses)*. The discussion with dr. Małgorzata Olejarz, the journal's editor-in-chief, on its publishing policies evolved into a biographical narrative about the history of the journal and the critical moments which determined its final shape.

Although the School's structure is repeatedly based on the same generally accepted pattern, each year it receives new contributions from its guests and participants alike. During the Międzygórze meeting, the introductory lecture was given by Prof. Zofia Szarota from the Pedagogical University of Cracow. She talked about

the values upon which good aging is founded, styles of approaching to old age, educating for old age. She grounded her argument in Jan Amos Komensky's general theory of education of the entire humankind and presented the research on inter-generational transfer of values. The gerontological discourse started by Prof. Zofia Szarota's lecture was taken up further in the gerontological and andragogical debate continued by Prof. Mieczysław Malewski and Prof. Tadeusz Aleksander.

In his lecture, Prof. Mieczysław Malewski (University of Lower Silesia) spoke of adulthood as a rather vague category which, though fundamental to andragogy, has paradoxically perhaps failed to make a substantial novel contribution to this discipline. Presenting the epistemological scale of adulthood, he posed a number of questions which shed light on adulthood from the perspectives of constructivism and ontological realism. He appealed to the listeners to approach various categories and their dictionary definitions with caution, because we tend to rely on them while in fact they may hamper our ability to reflect creatively on social reality.

Prof. Tadeusz Aleksander (Jagiellonian University) gave a lecture on completing education and in-service courses in Polish restructured companies. Referring to the research he carried out in such production and service institutions, he presented them as social organisations capable of upgrading (though without difficulties) their workers' qualifications.

Some papers delivered by the young participants also fell within the field of andragogy. Dr. Joanna Kłodkowska (ULS), drawing on the Situated Learning Theory, gave a talk on the determinants of learning to cope with organisational changes in the Voluntary Labour Corps. Alicja Szostkiewicz, (Nicolaus Copernicus University) presented her research project on the factors influencing life-long educational activity in mid-adulthood. The doctoral candidate explained the key categories of terms used in her project and presented the purposes and methods she planned to employ in her future research.

Some methodological issues were dealt with at a meeting with Prof. Danuta Urbaniak-Zajac (University of Lodz) titled 'From my own biographical-methodological experience.' She talked about her own research and learning experiences related to it, about changes in her own approach to research methodologies. The similar methodological issues were analysed by dr. Daria Zielinska-Pękał (University of Zielona Góra), who discussed dilemmas inherent in carrying out participant-observation research. She presented the methodological assumptions of virtual ethnography, compared it with classical ethnography and characterised virtual community. She also talked about combining the roles of researcher and participant during a discussion forum on maternal issues, which was fraught with some ethical dilemmas. She presented the ways to coping with a sense of discomfort associated with combining these two roles.

The lecture by Prof. Elżbieta Siarkiewicz (ULS) opened a debate on counselling. The main topic of her talk was performative counselling. Having introduced theoretical tenets of counselling and explained its basic terms (e.g. counselling,

counselling, institutional and non-institutional counselling practice rooted in everyday life), she went on to talk about the role and power of language in constructing people's worlds, including the one of counselling. She also outlined her own quest for performative expressions in counselling practice. Counsellogy-related issues were also central to the talk by dr. Alicja Czerkawska (ULS). In her paper titled "The Existential View of the Human Being and the World – Implications for Counselling," she discussed the assumptions of philosophical existentialism and the existential view of the world as related to working with advice-seekers.

The subsequent talks were also related to the theory and practice of counselling. Agnieszka Dragon (ULS) pondered over her own research project dealing with mediation as professional activities and interpersonal interactions in the eyes of their participants. Ewa Kurek (Warsaw University) addressed the role of contemporary career counselling as a kind of support offered to advice-seekers struggling with changeable reality. Dr. Beata Jakimiuk (Catholic University of Lublin) in her presentation reflected on questions concerning the methodology of creating the career counsellor competence model and the ways of designing standards informing it. She told the listeners how the counsellor and counsellor competences as defined in the projects drafted by the institutions involved in standardisation of counselling practice.

Dr. Magdalena Sasin (University of Lodz) presented the assumptions of the Erasmus Programme, elements of a theory of motivation, her own proposals of research on motivation, the grounds for her scientific interests as well as the research material she collected in interviews with Erasmus exchange students.

Some papers and talks focused on social pedagogy and social work. Experiences of homelessness, as viewed from the social worker's perspective, were the subject of the paper delivered by Dorota Ejneberg (ULS, a social worker). She presented various approaches to homelessness, the process of becoming a homeless person and her own reflections resulting from work with homeless people. In her talk titled "The social worker as a reflective practitioner. The analysis of different counselling situations", which also fell within the scope of social work, Agnieszka Szewczyk (ULS) defined "counselling situation," described its different types and discussed the role of the social worker as a counsellor in the process of help provision.

Dr. Marcin Szumigraj (University of Zielona Góra) presented the results of his analysis of the Lubuskie Province population. His talk titled "The population of Lubuskie Province in 2012 in the light of the research – resources and deficits" outlined the picture the Province population, their features, cultural capital, customs, mobility, values as well as problems they struggle with in everyday life.

The organisers of the 15th Summer School for Young Researchers on Adult Education and Counsellogists also enabled younger participants to meet some foreign researchers. The guests came from Australia and Spain. Professor Stephen Billet (Faculty of Education, Griffith University, Queensland) gave a lecture on professional lifelong learning as related to personal and social agency. He talked about the

effects of activities involved in knowledge construction that is about how individuals change through learning and modifying work rooted in the culture of practice. According to Prof. Billet such transformations result from both self-efficacy and social contribution.

Professor Emilio Lucio-Villegas sketched a portrait and achievements of Paolo Regulas Neves Freire, a Brazilian pedagogue and representative of the radical emancipatory pedagogy. He presented the key elements of Freire's theory, dialogue (its cornerstone), the method of fighting illiteracy enabling people to understand and change the world, the conception of oppression and conscientisation. Wiesław Gałązka (ULS), a well-known political image specialist and journalist, was also invited to give a lecture on the "Genuine PR (Public Relations)" campaign he was involved in. He focused on the theoretical underpinnings of the PR concept, the term "image," its elements and the role they play in the social space. He also outlined some profiles of the PR pioneers. He referred to his own experiences in work for his clients and he gave the listeners some practical image-building tips.

The Summer School became also a stage of two interesting cultural animation events initiated by the School participants themselves. Drawing on her own resources, Miriam Mościcka-Biedak, (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun) invited the School community to a medieval dance workshop, and dr. Monika Sulik presented a fragment of her biographical workshop titled "Unusual biography of a Sisyphian community activist and book devourer," in which she encouraged the participants to reflect on the "Bicycle" installation and the impressions it produced. That served as a pretext for inspiring them to search for their own biographical guidelines.

Traditionally, the participants took part in a study trip to one of the neighbouring countries. This time the visit was paid to the University of Ostrava in the Czech Republic. The members of the party had an opportunity to meet Czech andragogue and educators and to compare the professional position on Polish and Czech academics and andragogue education models.

Bringing together experienced and beginner researchers, the Summer School offered its participants effective help in finding their place in the "space of science." It also provided a public and social space for testing and negotiating their role as andragogues, counselling experts and/or researchers. This summer the experience was enhanced by beautiful scenery of the tourist village of Międzygórze located in the East Sudetes near the charming Wilczki waterfall. The beneficial impact of the evening strolls on the general atmosphere of the School cannot be overrated.

Joanna Kłodkowska

(Translated from Polish by Wojciech Gromski)