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WYDZIAŁ NAUK PEDAGOGICZNYCH



*GRAMMARS OF SCHOOLING IN THE POST-AUTHORITARIAN CONTEXT.
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CHANGING TEACHING PRACTICES IN ELEMENTARY
EDUCATION IN CZECH, POLISH AND PORTUGUESE SCHOOLS*

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SUMMARY

As a teacher in early childhood education, I was delighted that within the EDiTE program. I could choose my dissertation topic from my field – elementary education – and even do interviews with elementary teachers in Portugal, Poland and the Czech Republic, where I conducted my research. All three countries have had recent experience with authoritarian regimes. After the fall of these regimes, the three could seize the opportunity to adapt to new conditions in society and bring new democratic principles into education.

After three years of research, reading and studying on these issues while also monitoring current education issues in various European countries, I know that this is not an easy task and that calls for transformative education do not always sound clearly. Society and political conditions are constantly changing, and schools and teachers have to respond. Education and schooling are a picture of the society we live in. They are part of politics. But teachers cannot be solely responsible for the state of education. That is why it was interesting for me to describe and find out, with critical pedagogy as the background, how teachers respond to change: whether they are passive or active, what they consider important, whether they are solving problems and reflecting changes, whether they have a need to teach in other ways. **My research problem** is generally about teachers' consciousness (at the elementary level in education) of change: to what extent they carry the post-communist burden with themselves; their relation to tradition and innovation; how and why they are willing to accept and create new ways in teaching in daily practice, and whether they are willing to do so at all.

Elementary teachers are crucial creators of school culture, with great influence on pupils and other participants in the children's learning process. In my interviews, I wanted to point out problems, things teachers are missing in their practice, issues they try to solve. I addressed **my main research question: What kind of "Grammar of Schooling" is internalized and practiced by teachers in the Polish, Portuguese and Czech schools?**

The "Grammar of Schooling" metaphor, originated by David Tyack and William Tobin, is a conceptual framework for my project. They defined "Grammar of Schooling" as "the regular structure and rules that organize the work of instruction," including standardized organizational practices such as "dividing time and space, classifying students and allocating them to classrooms (grading) and splintering knowledge into 'subjects'" (Tyack and Tobin, 1993, p. 454). All these features are common and natural for children, teachers and parents. But are they right for today's world nowadays, or can they be replaced? Tyack and Tobin tried to illuminate why some educational reforms take strong hold while other efforts at changing the

“Grammars of Schooling” – the way the schooling process is organized and proceeds – remain unsuccessful.

The challenges for teachers seem enormous. Many teachers can feel comfortable in the everyday school practices they are used to, even though the social and political context has changed. This dilemma – between the comfort of the customary and the challenge of innovation – is one of the sources of “Grammar of Schooling.” To describe these aims, I chose Paulo Freire’s **theoretical approach** to teachers’ consciousness – their ability to think about established, traditional, conservative paradigms of schooling and education. Teachers believe in myths and stereotypes about school education. They have their own experience, but they probably have mental and emotional obstacles to changes in their teaching, within the democratization of education. According to Freire’s theory, they don’t even know they are at a certain stage of oppression and serving the existing system (Freire, 2005). Freire tried to explain how school is important to awakening pupils’ perception of their own uniqueness. Similarly, I see the problems in teachers and their thinking; hence my work refers to all three of Freire’s types of consciousness: naïve, magical and critical. Critical thinking engages the essence of human consciousness. I have linked Freire’s critical theory with phenomenography **as research approach** because phenomenography investigates the content of consciousness – subjects’ thinking about particular phenomena. I have tried to describe how teachers’ consciousness strengthens and how it limits their attitudes toward change.

Phenomenography as the method of qualitative research uses interviews and observation as its main research methods. I conducted a total of 28 semi-structured interviews: 10 in Poland, 4 in Portugal and 14 in the Czech Republic. In addition, I relied on teachers' narratives, asking them to describe important changes during their practice – how they had to adapt to the changes from above (system, Ministry, administration) and what changes they made in their own practice, in their approach to work and their teaching. Based on these research methods, I expected to discover the prevailing opinions of teachers in early education, how teachers reflect changes and how they are involved in them. I have described, interpreted and explained the role of “Grammar of Schooling” and the content of teachers’ consciousness as a basis for keeping tradition or making changes.

As my main finding, the answer to my main research question, I can plainly say that “Grammar of Schooling” – the kinds of traditions that are internalized and then practiced in the consciousness of Polish, Portuguese and Czech teachers – are influenced most by educational policy, teachers’ personal experience and role, and their relationships with parents, who are very often obstacles to change. Teachers are willing to make many changes, and I have

introduced them in my categories of description (space, time, evaluation, parenting, relationships in the schools, authority, self-criticism, curriculum, hidden curriculum, inclusion). Nonetheless, teachers often follow traditional approaches or make changes temporarily. They have no clear signal; they do not have a free hand, and thus more autonomy or the conditions from educational policy to work in an innovative way.

The reasons teachers' attitudes toward change seem obsolete and passive are often similar in all three countries. Unfortunately, the frequent explanation for why teachers are passive is that they are tired. In Poland, for example, teachers are tired of frequent changes in fundamental rules. In the Czech Republic, teachers are tired because of their low incomes, constant criticism and the underestimation of the teaching profession. In Portugal, teachers are tired from increasing paperwork and the competitiveness among them engendered by the system, which exacerbates relationships in the workplace. Teachers' conditions are not improving in comparison to those in other professions, nor is the prestige of the profession. Their work is often questioned and criticized; they are expected to perform miracles. It is not their fault, but the system's. Over the last 30 years, new laws found both opponents and adherents; they have brought advantages and disadvantages for individuals in society. Just as there is no ideal society or regime, there can be no ideal education system that suits everyone.

I believe my thesis points to the shortcomings in educational systems of these three countries, contributes to thinking about important issues in schools and can help in initiating relevant stakeholders. Or, at least, my work serves as a reminder, according to Freire's critical theories, that schools cannot support the culture of silence and oppression. It is important to say the teachers' opinions in a loud voice and to support these views from their practice, thus improving teaching, bringing satisfaction to pupils, and helping to create a democratic community of social actors in education.

Key words: elementary education, "Grammar of Schooling", critical consciousness, changes, teachers.

STRESZCZENIE

Ku mojej wielkiej satysfakcji, w ramach programu EDiTe mogłam jako nauczycielka edukacji wczesnodziecięcej wybrać temat dysertacji skorelowany z moim obszarem działań (edukacja wczesnoszkolna), a także przeprowadzić wywiady z nauczycielami szkół podstawowych w Portugalii, Polsce i Czechach, gdzie prowadziłam moje badania. W nieodległej historii wszystkie te kraje znajdowały się pod władzą autorytarnych rządów. Po ich upadku wszystkim trzem udało się również wprowadzić nowe uregulowania społeczne oraz zainicjować wdrażanie nowych, demokratycznych zasad w oświacie.

Po trzech latach badań, lektury i zgłębiania tych zagadnień, a także śledzenia na bieżąco procesów zachodzących w szkolnictwie w różnych krajach Europy, wiem, że nie jest to łatwe zadanie, a apele rozwijanie edukacji transformatywnej nie zawsze wybrzmiewają wystarczająco wyraźnie. Uwarunkowania społeczne i polityczne nieustannie się zmieniają, zaś szkoły i nauczyciele muszą na te zmiany reagować. Edukacja i szkolnictwo są odzwierciedleniem społeczeństw, w których żyjemy. Stanowią one również element polityki. Ale nie tylko nauczycieli należy obarczać odpowiedzialnością za stan edukacji. Dlatego też moim celem było zbadanie i opisanie, w oparciu o założenia pedagogiki krytycznej, jak nauczyciele reagują na zmianę: czy przyjmują postawę bierną czy czynną, jakie kwestie uważają za istotne, czy rozwiązują problemy i zastanawiają się nad zmianami, a w końcu, czy odczuwają potrzebę znalezienia nowych sposobów nauczania. **Moim zasadniczym zadaniem badawczym** jest poznanie zmiany w świadomości wśród nauczycieli (szkół podstawowych): do jakiego stopnia obciążeni są brzemieniem post-komunizmu, jaki jest ich stosunek do tradycji i innowacji, jak i dlaczego skłonni są zaakceptować i wypracowywać nowe sposoby nauczania w codziennej praktyce, oraz czy w ogóle wykazują taką skłonność.

Nauczyciele edukacji wczesnoszkolnej to kluczowi twórcy kultury szkolnej, którzy wywierają znaczący wpływ na uczniów i innych uczestników procesu uczenia się dzieci. W moich wywiadach chciałam wskazać na problemy, elementy, których brakuje w nauczycielskiej praktyce, oraz kwestie, które nauczyciele starają się rozwiązać. **Moje główne pytanie badawcze** brzmiało: Jakiego rodzaju „gramatykę szkoły” (*grammar of schooling*) internalizują i praktykują nauczyciele w polskich, portugalskich i czeskich szkołach?

Za koncepcyjną ramę mojej dysertacji posłużyła mi metafora „gramatyki szkoły” zaproponowana przez Davida Tyacka i Williamsa Tobina. Definiują oni „gramatykę szkoły” jako „regularną strukturę i zasady, które organizują pracę nauczania”; składają się na nią ustandaryzowane praktyki organizacyjne, takie jak „podziały czasu i przestrzeni, klasyfikacje

uczniów i przydzielanie ich do oddziałów szkolnych oraz rozczłonkowanie wiedzy na ‘przedmioty’” (Tyack i Tobin, 1993, s. 454). Wszystkie te elementy szkolnej codzienności stają się powszechne i naturalne dla dzieci, nauczycieli i rodziców tak, jak język ojczysty (stąd metafora gramatyki). Ale czy są one właściwe w dzisiejszym świecie, czy też można je zastąpić innym podejściem? Tyack i Tobin starają się wyjaśnić, dlaczego niektóre reformy edukacji są skuteczne, natomiast inne wysiłki na rzecz zmiany „gramatyki szkoły” – czyli sposobu organizacji i przebiegu procesu nauczania – pozostają bezowocne.

Wydaje się, że przed nauczycielami stoją ogromne wyzwania. Wielu nauczycieli czuje się wygodnie w codziennych praktykach szkolnych, do których przywykli, chociaż zmieniły się uwarunkowania społeczne i polityczne. Ten dylemat – rozdźwięk między wygodą przyzwyczajenia a wyzwaniem innowacji – stanowi jedno ze źródeł „gramatyki szkoły”.

W opisie tej sytuacji posługuję się **teoretycznym ujęciem** świadomości nauczycieli przedstawionym przez Paulo Freirego, który rozpatruje zdolność myślenia o ustalonych, tradycyjnych i konserwatywnych paradygmatach kształcenia i wychowania. Nauczyciele wierzą w mity i stereotypy dotyczące edukacji szkolnej. Dysponują swoim własnym doświadczeniem, ale prawdopodobnie mają też mentalne i emocjonalne zahamowania w obliczu zmian w nauczaniu związanych z demokratyzacją edukacji. Teoria Freirego zakłada, że nauczyciele mogą nawet nie zdawać sobie sprawy, że poddani są pewnego rodzaju uciskowi i służą istniejącemu systemowi (Freire, 2005). Freire starał się wyjaśnić, jak szkoła może wpływać na rozbudzanie w uczniach świadomości ich własnej wyjątkowości. Ponieważ ja również zauważam te problemy związane z nauczycielami i nauczaniem, w mojej dysertacji odwołuję się do wszystkich trzech typów świadomości wyróżnionych przez Freirego: naiwnej, magicznej i krytycznej. Myślenie krytyczne wiąże się z istotą ludzkiej świadomości.

Moje podejście badawcze łączy teorię krytyczną Freirego z fenomenografią, ponieważ fenomenografia bada treść świadomości, czyli to, jak podmiot myśli o poszczególnych zjawiskach. W dysertacji starałam się opisać, jak świadomość nauczycieli wzmacnia ich postawę wobec zmiany oraz jak tę postawę ogranicza.

Fenomenografia to metoda badań jakościowych, która bazuje na wywiadach i obserwacjach. Przeprowadziłam w sumie 28 pół-ustrukturyzowanych wywiadów, z czego 10 w Polsce, 4 w Portugalii i 14 w Czechach. Dodatkowo posiłkowałam się narracjami nauczycieli, do których zwróciłam się o opisanie ważnych zmian zachodzących w ich praktyce: jak musieli dostosowywać się do zmian wprowadzanych odgórnie (system, ministerstwo, administracja), a także jakie zmiany sami wprowadzali w swoich działaniach, w podejściu do pracy i nauczania. W oparciu o te metody badawcze chciałam poznać dominujące wśród nauczycieli edukacji

wczesnoszkolnej opinii, ich refleksje na temat zmian, oraz ich zaangażowanie w te zmiany. Opisałam, zinterpretowałam i wyjaśniłam rolę „gramatyki szkoły” oraz świadomość nauczycieli, od których to czynników zależy czy podtrzymuje się tradycję, czy też wprowadza zmiany.

Głównym rezultatem moich badań było znalezienie odpowiedzi na moje główne pytanie badawcze. Okazuje się, że bez wątpienia „gramatykę szkoły” – czyli tradycje, które polscy, portugalscy i czescy nauczyciele internalizują w świadomości oraz praktykują – podtrzymują lub zmieniają przede wszystkim polityka oświatowa, osobiste doświadczenie i rola nauczycieli, oraz ich relacje z rodzicami, którzy bardzo często sprzeciwiają się zmianom. Nauczyciele wykazują chęć wprowadzania wielu zmian, które przedstawiam w podziale na różne kategorie (przestrzeń, czas, ocena, rodzice, relacje w szkołach, autorytet, samokrytyka, program nauczania, ukryty program, inkluzja). Jednakże nauczyciele często skłaniają się ku tradycyjnym podejściom, lub też wprowadzają zmiany jedynie tymczasowo. Polityka oświatowa nie dostarcza im wyraźnych sygnałów ani nie daje wolnej ręki, w związku z czym nauczyciele nie dysponują ani większą autonomią ani też warunkami sprzyjającymi innowacyjnym działaniom.

Przyczyny, dla których postawa nauczycieli wobec zmiany wydaje się przestarzała i bierna, są w znacznej mierze podobne we wszystkich trzech krajach. Niestety, częstym wyjaśnieniem bierności nauczycieli jest ich zmęczenie. W Polsce, na przykład, nauczyciele zmęczeni są częstotliwością zmian w podstawie programowej. W Czechach nauczyciele zmęczeni są niskimi dochodami, nieustanną krytyką oraz niedocenianiem profesji nauczycielskiej. W Portugalii zaś nauczyciele zmęczeni są rosnącymi obciążeniami dokumentacji i sprawozdawczości oraz napędzaną przez system konkurencją, która pogarsza wzajemne stosunki w miejscu pracy. Ani warunki pracy nauczycieli ani prestiż ich profesji nie poprawiają się w porównaniu z innymi zawodami. Ich pracę często się kwestionuje i krytykuje, a od nich samych oczekuje się cudów. Wina nie leży po ich stronie, a po stronie systemu. W ciągu ostatnich trzydziestu lat nowe ustawy miały zarówno zwolenników jak i przeciwników, oraz przyniosły tyleż poprawy co pogorszenia, tak dla jednostek jak i dla społeczeństwa. Tak jak nie ma idealnego społeczeństwa czy rządu, nie ma też idealnego systemu oświatowego, który odpowiadałby wszystkim.

Moja dysertacja wskazuje na niedostatki systemów edukacji w Polsce, Portugalii i Czechach, a przez to, jak mniemam, przyczynia się do refleksji nad ważnymi zagadnieniami szkolnictwa i może skłonić właściwe podmioty do podjęcia zaradczych inicjatyw. A przynajmniej przypomina, że – według krytycznej teorii Freirego – szkoły nie powinny wspierać kultury uciszania i ucisku. Ważne jest, aby opinie nauczycielskie wypowiadać pełnym

głosem, a ich spostrzeżeniom płynącym z praktyki udzielać wsparcia, aby w ten sposób doskonalili ich praktykę, przyczynić się do wzrostu zadowolenia uczniów, oraz tworzyć demokratyczną wspólnotę społecznych aktorów edukacyjnych.

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja elementarna, " gramatyka szkoły ", świadomość krytyczna, zmiany, nauczyciele.

SUMÁRIO

Enquanto professora na educação dirigida à primeira infância, foi com muito agrado que constatei que, no âmbito do programa EDiTE, eu poderia escolher o meu tópico de pesquisa no campo da educação básica e, mesmo, realizar entrevistas com professores de 1º ciclo em Portugal, na Polónia e na República Checa, onde desenvolvi a minha pesquisa. Todos estes países passaram recentemente pela experiência de regimes autoritários. Com a queda destes regimes, os três países puderam aproveitar a oportunidade para se adaptar às novas condições sociais e trazer para a educação novos princípios democráticos.

Após três anos de pesquisa, leituras e do estudo destas questões, ao mesmo tempo que monitorizava o desenvolvimento das questões educativas em vários países europeus, estou ciente de que não se trata de tarefa fácil e de que a adoção de práticas educativas transformadoras nem sempre se entende claramente. As condições sociais e políticas estão em constante mudança, mudança essa a que as escolas e os professores precisam de responder. A educação e a escolarização espelham a sociedade que habitamos. Elas são parte da política. No entanto, os professores não podem ser considerados os únicos responsáveis estado da educação. É por essa razão que foi interessante para mim descrever e investigar, a partir da pedagogia crítica, como os professores respondem à mudança: se são passivos ou ativos, o que consideram importante, se resolvem problemas e refletem mudanças, se expressam a necessidade de ensinar de outras formas. **O meu problema de pesquisa** incide, em termos gerais, sobre a consciência da mudança por parte dos professores de educação básica: até que ponto carregam consigo o fardo pós-comunista; qual a sua relação com a tradição e a inovação; como e porquê se dispõem a aceitar e a criar, na prática diária, novas formas de ensinar e se na verdade querem fazê-lo.

Os professores de Ensino Básico são criadores cruciais de uma cultura escolar, com grande ascendente sobre os alunos e outros participantes no processo de aprendizagem das crianças. Nas entrevistas que realizei, propus-me indicar problemas, aspetos de que os professores sentem falta na sua prática, questões que procuram resolver. A **questão de pesquisa principal** que tratei foi: Que tipo de ‘Gramática de Escolarização’ é internalizada e praticada pelos professores nas escolas polacas, portuguesas e checas?

A metáfora da “Gramática de Escolarização”, proposta por David Tyack e William Tobin, constitui o enquadramento conceptual do meu projeto. Estes autores definem “Gramática da Escolarização” como “a estrutura e regras comuns que organizam o trabalho de instrução,” incluindo praticas organizacionais padronizadas como “a divisão do tempo e do espaço, a categorização dos estudantes, a sua alocação a turmas (classificações) e a

fragmentação em ‘temas’” (Tyack and Tobin, 1993, p. 454). Todas estas características são habituais e naturais para as crianças, professores e pais. Serão elas, no entanto, adequadas ao mundo de hoje, ou poderão ser substituídas? Tyack and Tobin procuraram esclarecer porque é que algumas reformas educativas se afirmam fortemente, enquanto outros esforços para alterar as “Gramáticas da Escolarização” – de que forma o processo de escolarização é organizado e funciona – não têm sucesso.

Os desafios que se colocam aos professores afiguram-se enormes. Muitos professores podem sentir-se confortáveis com as práticas escolares quotidianas a que estão habituados, mesmo se o contexto social e político se alterou. Este dilema – entre o conforto do habitual e o desafio da inovação – é uma das fontes da “Gramática de Escolarização.” Para descrever estes objetivos, escolhi a abordagem teórica de Paulo Freire sobre a consciência dos professores – a sua capacidade de refletir sobre os paradigmas de escolarização e educação estabelecidos, tradicionais, conservadores. Os professores acreditam em mitos e estereótipos sobre a educação escolar. Têm a sua experiência, mas provavelmente possuem igualmente obstáculos mentais e emocionais a transformações da sua prática de ensinar, num contexto de democratização da educação. De acordo com a teoria de Freire, os professores não sabem sequer que estão num certo estágio de opressão, ao serviço do sistema existente (Freire, 2005).

Freire procurou explicar como a escola é importante para despertar nos alunos a perceção da sua própria singularidade. Do mesmo modo, vejo problemas nos professores e nas suas práticas de ensino; daí que o meu trabalho se refira aos três tipos de consciência apontados por Freire: ingénuo, mágica e crítica. O pensamento crítico convoca a essência da consciência humana. Relacionei a teoria crítica de Freire com a fenomenografia enquanto **abordagem de pesquisa**, na medida em que a fenomenografia investiga o conteúdo da consciência – o pensamento do sujeito sobre fenómenos em particular. Procurei descrever de que modo a consciência dos professores fortalece e como limita as suas atitudes face à mudança.

A fenomenografia enquanto método de investigação qualitativa recorre a entrevistas e à observação como principais métodos de pesquisa. Realizei um total de 28 entrevistas semi-estruturadas: 10 na Polónia, 4 em Portugal e 14 na República Checa. Adicionalmente, baseei-me nas narrativas dos professores, pedindo-lhes que descrevessem transformações importantes ocorridas nas suas práticas – como tiveram de se adaptar as transformações vindas ‘de cima’ (sistema, Ministério, administração) e que mudanças tiveram de operar na sua própria prática, na sua abordagem ao trabalho e no seu ensino. Com base nestes métodos de pesquisa, propus-me descobrir as opiniões predominantes entre os professores do primeiro ciclo, como os professores refletem sobre as mudanças e como estão envolvidos nas mesmas. Descrevi,

interpretei e expliquei o papel da “Gramática da Escolarização” e o conteúdo da consciência dos professores como base para manter a tradição e operar transformações.

Em termos de principais resultados, em resposta à questão principal da minha pesquisa, posso afirmar sem hesitação que a “Gramática da Escolarização” – os tipos de tradições que são internalizadas e depois operadas na consciência dos professores polacos, portugueses e checos – são influenciadas sobretudo pela política educativa, a experiência pessoal e papel dos professores e as suas relações com os pais, que são muitas vezes obstáculos à mudança. Os professores querem fazer mudanças, em domínios que introduzi nas minhas categorias de descrição (espaço, tempo, avaliação, parentalidade, relações nas escolas, autoridade, autocrítica, curriculum, curriculum invisível, inclusão). No entanto, os professores seguem frequentemente abordagens tradicionais ou efetuam mudanças temporárias. Falta-lhes um sinal claro, liberdade de iniciativa e, portanto, maior autonomia ou condições, promovidas pela política educativa, para trabalhar de forma inovadora.

As razões pelas quais as atitudes dos professores em face da mudança parecem obsoletas e passivas são muitas vezes as mesmas, nos três países. Infelizmente, a explicação frequentemente fornecida para a passividade dos professores é o facto de os mesmos estarem cansados. Na Polónia, por exemplo, os professores estão cansados de mudanças frequentes nas regras fundamentais. Na República Checa, as razões apresentadas para o cansaço dos professores prendem-se com os seus baixos rendimentos, a crítica constante e a desvalorização da profissão de professor. Em Portugal, os professores estão cansados devido ao crescente trabalho administrativo a que se veem obrigados, bem como à competição entre si que é gerada pelo próprio sistema, que exacerba as relações no local de trabalho. As condições dos professores não melhoram, em comparação com as de outras ocupações, o mesmo se passando com o prestígio associado à profissão. O seu trabalho é frequentemente questionado e criticado; espera-se deles que realizem milagres. A falha não é sua, mas do sistema. Nos últimos 30 anos, nova legislação produzida suscitou oposições tanto quanto adesão, tendo trazido vantagens e desvantagens para os indivíduos em sociedade. Assim como não existe uma sociedade ou um regime ideal, não poderá haver o sistema educativo ideal, que agrade a todos.

Creio que a minha tese aponte as insuficiências nos sistemas educativos destes três países, contribuindo para o pensamento sobre questões importantes que atravessam as escolas e podendo apoiar a iniciação de stakeholders relevantes. Se não mais, o meu trabalho lembra-nos que, de acordo com as teorias críticas de Freire, as escolas não podem apoiar a cultura do silêncio e da opressão. É importante expressar de viva voz a opinião dos professores e apoiar

estas visões a partir da sua prática, assim melhorando o ensino, fomentando a satisfação dos alunos e apoiando a criação de uma comunidade democrática de atores sociais na educação.

Palavras-chave: ensino básico, Gramática de Escolarização, consciência crítica, mudanças, professores.

“Leaders who do not act dialogically, but insist on imposing their decisions, do not organize the people—they manipulate them. They do not liberate, nor are they liberated: they oppress.”

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers and researchers search every day for the true nature of learning and education. They deal with the issue of whether the educational paradigm really aims to help people to achieve the highest standard of living or a fulfilling life. According to John Dewey, “If we teach today as we taught yesterday, we rob our children of tomorrow” (Dewey, 1916). How much change is necessary and in what timeframe should it come? Fundamentally, are educators interested in making the changes that are possible? *“Innovation is hard, because it means doing something that people don't find very easy, the most part. It means challenging what we take for granted, things that we think are obvious. The great problem for reform or transformation is the tyranny of common sense. Things that people think. It can't be done differently, that's how it's done.”* (Robinson, 2010).

In Portugal, since the 1974 Carnation Revolution, teachers have faced new challenges in the move toward democracy. Two years later, the democratic proclamation established that culture and education should not be oriented toward any particular philosophical, political or religious direction.

In Poland and the Czech Republic, the biggest changes that inevitably affected education grew out of the change of social, political and economic system in 1989 following the democratic revolution. This systematic transformation influenced every sphere of life. Like many other Eastern European countries, Poland and the Czech Republic had to open the way toward democracy and capitalism.

An authoritarian order left its footprints on the ordinary citizens' lives. Rigid rules (such as affirmation of discipline and obedience) were relaxed; people can now change and adapt to new features of democratization such as subjectivity, free choices and free voice.

The challenge of change in society and in education was enormous; educators had a chance to be inspired by different approaches, schools, systems and offered the possibility to learn and take from Western countries. According to Průcha (2010) we should ask: what was valuable in the socialist education and not only focus on finding shortcomings and ignore the positives, which undoubtedly existed. Many teachers feel accustomed to everyday school practices, even though the social and political context has changed. This dilemma – between the comfort of the customary and the challenge of innovation – is one of the sources of “Grammar of Schooling.” It is difficult to respond to changes in living conditions- these changes affect the progress, development, views of children and adults, too. Children now have

access to new and more open media all their lives and their parents are learning to live in a democracy and (in the Czech Republic and Poland) under capitalism.

These “new” children, in their formative years (ages 5 to 7), become part of their first institution: school. But in the context of new challenges, that school is mostly an old-style institution.

In the formative years in childhood (5-7 years), children become part of a new, first institution for them - school. Everyone must adapt to new condition in this institutional life and go through the whole system of education. School attendance at secondary and high school will certainly be different, but there is some similarity for all levels of education. “In the fundamental sense, school is school, no matter where it happens” (Jackson,1990, pp.8).

In primary school, the child becomes first a part of society with which the school is aligned. In 1915 Bachman wrote about the effort to establish the principles of elementary education and the concept of interrelation between the individual and society. He described human society as a “psychical “organization that binds its members together emotionally and mentally. “As a psychical organization, society is not static. The relations between the people within it undergo change. The form of society may also change. In one age, a given society may be an oligarchy; in another, a monarchy; in still another, a democracy. But an organization has an end or purpose. Actually, not only does it have an aim, but that aim also is to be found in the life and welfare of its members “(Bachman 1915).

Equal access to education is one of the fundamental prerequisites of a democratic society. The most important thing is collaboration, creating the community, challenge to citizenship. "Thus, school is needed and makes sense not because it transmits knowledges, but because it enables children to be together and learn in ways made possible only in and through collective experience " (Kwasnica, 2015, pp. 12). In my phenomenographic interviews, I have asked teachers to address this question.

Political and economic changes after 1989 produced social, cultural and psychological changes for citizens of post-socialist countries (Leyk, 2016). Great educational reforms were part of these changes. New alternative and private schools began to emerge, and school schedules were filled with slogans and words about democratic access to education - new school, new curricula, new values need new teachers. At the turn of the millennium, international programs began to be fully implemented and international exchanges for students and teachers were put in place. Even teachers of primary and secondary schools could go abroad to gain experience. Within the permeability of curriculum in initial teaching programs in the E.U., the crucial aims for European countries and their universities were identified. Clark

identifies similar changes in education in American higher education, pointing to the key *organizational problem*: “how to best interrelate these streams of knowledge, particularly in preparing practitioners – school administrators, schoolteachers, and other such school-based professionals – as school counselors and school psychologists.” Within the extremely decentralized and diversified American higher education system, “there can be no one best way,” and only through “local experimentation schools of education will have to find different pathways for their own general improvement and particularly for the strengthening of teacher education.” He locates “reasons for optimism” precisely at the point of individual school experimentation and comments: “New patterns do not emerge overnight; they come out of “year-by-year trial and error” (Clark 1999, pp. 354, 357).

In my research, teachers could point out problems, things they are missing in their practice, issues which they attempt to solve. In elementary education teachers are crucial creators of school culture, with great influence on pupils and other participants of the children’s learning process. Paulo Freire’s points to this role of teachers in his book, *Teachers as Cultural Workers*, while Donald Schon, in his book *Reflective practitioner*, addresses the status of the teacher as a creator of cultural environment. Both books provide background for my dissertation research. Morgan (1986) reminds us that culture is not imposed on a social setting or institution, such as a school; it develops through social interactions. Every coworker in the school setting is affected positively or negatively by the work culture (Adamy and Heinecke, 2005).

A conceptual framework for my project is provided by David Tyack and William Tobin’s “Grammar of schooling, (GOS)” which they define as “the regular structure and rules that organize the work of instruction,” including standardized organizational practices such as “dividing time and space, classifying students and allocating them to classrooms and splintering knowledge into ‘subjects’ ” (Tyack and Tobin, 1993, p. 454). Tyack and Tobin try to illuminate why some educational reforms take strong hold, while other efforts at changing what they call “The Grammar of schooling” – the way the schooling process is organized and proceeds – remain unsuccessful.

Within the EDiTE project I have worked in the framework of developing democratic teacher professionalism through transformative learning. The starting point for the project was a redefinition of the relation between theory and teaching practice – practice being not only the field for research, but primarily a source of knowledge–I conducted my field research at three different primary schools in Poland, in three schools in the Czech Republic and pointed on examples from Portuguese schooling. I focused on stimulating the development of transformative professional learning, which is conceptualized as a process of change.

In my phenomenographic research, I seek to identify in interviews with elementary teachers during their daily practice, the main problems articulated by my respondents. I am interested in their reactions to changes in the education system they have been gone through during their practice, and also their opportunities and willingness to participate in these changes – their points of view, how they reflect possible changes and the current trends in education.

I have divided the potential changes in education into two groups. The first comes from above, suggested by politicians, influenced by general changes throughout the EU, or other countries, on behalf of emancipation, equal opportunities, etc. What kind of “Grammar of schooling” is an effect of bureaucracy (administrative decree)? The second group consists of changes the teacher can realize alone within the school conditions, in the system, often based on the above primary changes or those to which teachers progressed during their practice. Teachers can change their attitudes toward teaching for different reasons – actual classes, particular conditions in the school, parents, new methods in pedagogy – when we see change in a positive way. It is important to know what kind of “Grammar of schooling” is in the minds and practices of teachers (especially elementary school teachers) in the context of the thesis of Freire, who said, “Teachers should be teachers and not coddling parents” (2005, p. 28).

Within my comparative study, I want to describe the opportunities of teachers in the Czech Republic, Portugal and Poland; their attitudes in dealing with small and large changes and putting them into practice. I will address **my main research question:** how does “Grammar of Schooling” help or hinder the transformation of teachers’ awareness of democratic educational interactions among subjects of education, including students, teachers and parents? In other words: What kind of “Grammar of schooling” is internalized and practiced by teachers in the Polish, Czech and Portugal schools? I tried to find answers for these questions in my research work.

Here, I would like to express my gratitude to teachers, who kindly, with openness, helped me; who reacted to my requests and questions; who gave their time for my research and showed me some of their pedagogical art and secrets.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

In selecting the topic of my work, it was crucial to address elementary education, as I had been working in this field for almost twenty years. I wanted to deal with the questions of freedom, democratization and the reflections of teachers at this level of education -- what problems may occur and how teachers can solve them. I came up with a qualitative design rather than a quantitative one because I was interested in individual teachers' opinions and did not want to lose or overlook them. I divided the research problem into several specific questions in which I am looking for answers in a phenomenographic analysis of interviews. In the theoretical framework, I have anchored my empirical data on change: a change in teacher thinking, based on Paulo Freire's critical theory, which outlined his pedagogy of the oppressed in contrast to the traditional education system.

The aim of this thesis is to point out the specificity of problems and access to education in elementary education, comparing data and context in three EU countries: Poland, Czech Republic, Portugal. The pedagogical approach, which deals with change and critical thinking, is critical pedagogy. In my work, I am thinking about whether in the present circumstances knowledge can be put into the child's head in different ways, as Freire describes in his banking theory, and whether the teachers are aware of these ways. I want to know if teachers can think critically and, in some way, provide similar opportunities to children as they begin their schooling.

Elementary teaching is a very specific job in which the teacher, usually a woman, takes the child from family life to the institutional environment of compulsory schooling. Crossing this bridge requires a lot of tact and specific knowledge from the teacher. Every human being is different; one of the main tasks of a teacher is to ensure for every individual pupil during primary education takes as much pleasure in learning as possible. From this period the child's further relationships to the school, to obligations and to cooperation will develop. The primary teacher, according to her own conscience and ability, accompanies pupils and launches them into a new social life.

The conditions in which this work is done, however, are changing. The social environment for Polish, Czech and Portuguese teachers has also changed over the last 30 years. My research focuses on how teachers are able to make changes in the social context of their work. The teacher is often the object of criticism. She or he is accused of not responding to current demands and modern learning styles. Are teachers allowed to enact changes? Indeed, is

the development of education in their hands? Or is the teacher the messenger of current political domination over education?

I will address the systemic changes in Poland and the Czech Republic after 1989 and the current status of teachers (especially primary teachers), their obligations and examine competencies that are currently the most discussed.

Chapter 1 *SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXTS OF TEACHERS' PRACTICES*

I could to do research in three European countries, and therefore I decided to use the term “post-authoritarian” in the title of my work. This adjective connects all three countries. Poland, Czech Republic, and Portugal have coped with the consequences of such regimes in recent decades in society, culture, and education.

According to J.J. Linz, author of the concept of authoritarian regimes, that was described in the 1970s, authoritarian regimes are “political systems with limited political pluralism, without sophisticated and leading ideology, but with a typical mentality, without extensions or intense political mobilization (except for some stages of their development), in which the leader or his/a small group applies power within formally poorly defined but predictable borders” (Linz, 2000, p. 159).

In the past, authoritarian leaders in these three countries tried to promote political allegiance in society and in the schools. Students had to be loyal, supportive citizens, and authoritarian political systems tried to reclaim public spirit in their way; they used schools to socialize students and the future elite to be nationalistic. They transmitted political ideas that could have been the content of civic education, and the political power was reinforced.

Leading ideology strongly affected the development, of young people’s morality, rationality and trust, was by and teachers couldn’t do much in such a social and political order. They had to be obedient and follow the foundation of curricula, cutting them off from free thinking and decision-making.

1.1 The Czech Republic and Poland

As neighboring countries, the Czech Republic and Poland had a similar history and conditions for changing existing regimes in the 1970s and 1980s. In both countries, “the impatience” in the '70s and '80s was confirmed by a grouping of dissidents who tried to oppose the regime and, thanks to their courage, showed another possible path of development and life for society. The movements Solidarity in Poland, and Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia formed, calling for the protection of civil and human rights. Their dissent and other opposition activity stimulated the emergence of massive nonviolent civic protests, which opposed one-party Communist rule and called for liberalization and democracy.

In Czechoslovakia, the Velvet Revolution, a nationwide general strike on Nov. 28, 1989, started the great changes in society. The Communists ended their monopoly on power. Parliamentary elections were held in June 1990. Václav Havel was elected president of what was then called the Czechoslovak Federation, and in 1992 a new constitution was adopted. A year later, the state divided peacefully into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Since the Velvet Revolution, the Czech Republic has enjoyed free and fair elections and tried to consolidate democracy.

In Poland, the starting point was in many respects highly unfavorable for reforms. The Polish economy suffered from all the typical deficiencies of central planning: distorted structures, pervasive shortages, massive misallocation of resources and lack of inventiveness in state enterprises). Above all, it inherited from socialism a huge foreign debt and high inflation. They are the reasons for the big changes in economic and political life in the decade after 1989, including indirect voting for president; new, liberal political parties; the transition in the banking system; building of institutions; dominance of private ownership; privatization, and the changes in tax system. But the transition was certainly not a smooth process. Gradually it turned out that two things were important: that realistic policy targets should be taken, and that transparency in policy-making should be given the highest priority.

After economic and political change came a public health service, education and social security. New administrative reforms in the pension system, the health system and education have been adopted in the name of decentralization of state functions to local governments.

Education reform, important for the country's future, aimed at improving the curriculum adjusting education to the changing labor market (particularly replacing the traditional vocational secondary schools with more generally oriented educational institutions), lowering the obligatory school age from 7 to 6, and introducing incentives into the teachers' pay scale. Unfortunately, the first changes aimed less at stimulating rationality and innovation than at bringing labor relations closer to the market system, then at stimulating rationality and innovation. As an inevitable and natural consequence, social tensions happened (Belka, 2000).

Studies show that it is not easy to determine the starting point of post-socialist transformation (both socio-political and educational). While in Hungary and Poland, we can watch some easing and changes in the late 1980's, in Czechoslovakia the transformations did not really begin until the fall of the "old regime" in November 1989 (Greger, 2011).

In Poland, it is a fairly widely held opinion that the well-being of society depends on both the political system and the education system. Many Poles, however, have long nourished the opinion that although socialism and centrally controlled economy were not a successful solution

for the good of society, the education system at that time was not all bad (Białecki, 1996). Without going into a detailed assessment and disputes, the socialist model of education, in its functions both established and implemented, would be inadequate today. The basic features -- prescriptive, centralized management; unified programs and curricula; a fixed calculation of costs based on the standards; preparing cadres strictly according to the predicted needs of the centrally planned economy; resolving the allocation to schools of positions in vocational training and recruiting-- indicate the incompatibility of this solution to political pluralism and a market economy (Gołębniak, 1998).

Every publication of international research report was a source of anxiety for postsocialist countries, because their accomplishments were not satisfactory and provided an incentive for pushing fast changes on the educational system. For example, a 1995 international research report identified significant areas of functional illiteracy in Poland. The situation in the Czech Republic is similar. From the international TIMSS (1995, 1999 and 2007) and PISA (2000, 2003, 2006, 2009) studies alone, we know the achievement levels of Czech pupils have worsened over time -- not only in relation to other countries that participated in the study, but also in absolute terms. A recent McKinsey report on Czech regional education thus was titled *Declining results of Czech elementary and secondary education*. The report implied that the decline in Czech education would bring heavy economic losses (Greger, 2007).

Greger further argues that reform of the entire education system (whole-system reform), is undoubtedly more challenging than the implementation of sub-projects or innovations that reach only a small percentage of schools and pupils. Positive examples of change on a small scale are not usually transferable to the educational system as a whole, and so systemic reform requires much more effort and thinking. I see an interesting comparison with Tyack and Tobin's conclusion in the chapter 3 Grammar of Schooling in my dissertation.

On the other hand, it is a fact that many changes, especially at the beginning of 1990, were carried out immediately as the negation of the previous regime, not with a clear vision of alternatives or an ingenious way of implementation, as Fullan's model would necessitate. Čerych (1999) states that the changes in Central and Eastern Europe were carried out at a speed unprecedented in the Western world. Reforms are normally formulated and implemented in a matter of years; however, many changes in the post-socialist transformation occurred within a few months, or more than a year (Greger, 2007).

Ritzen et al. (2000) speak in general terms of social changes, from which changes in education are inseparable, arguing that while formulating a comprehensive social reform is easy, its realization is much more complex. This is because the reform's implementation

presupposes the society's ability to come to some reasonable agreement, as well as the will of various groups and institutions to work together. At the same time, respect for different needs and public willingness to undergo changes implies a certain degree of short-term sacrifice for long-term benefits to all. Education is a complex system in which everything is connected to everything else. But the Czech education system is divided between regional education and higher education, requiring two Long projects and two White Papers. If the quality of the educational system depends most of all on quality teachers, how does it prepare them? (Kalous, 2012). In Poland, there is also a dual system of supervising education by local administration (management body controlled by the party elected in elections of local administration) and by central administration (pedagogical supervision held by chief education officers who are appointed by the minister of education). One of the greatest challenges for the Polish educational system stems from the political dissonance which often occurs between the local and the national political levels, whereby the local government consists of politicians who do not belong to the ruling party but the opposing one. Cooperation in this set up is usually difficult and inhibits realization of tasks (Śliwerski, 2015).

Research about teachers, referred to traditionally as pedeutological research, addresses also the question of teacher education. Immediately after 1989, research in educational sciences was also minimized to mute the voice of faculties of education. There were questions about changes, expected or proclaimed, that were actually taking place in schools and in the teaching profession (Hanesová, 2016, pp.64).

According to Havlínova's survey, "about 95 percent of teachers in the Czech Republic in 1993 taught in the same ways as they had been taught under the socialist system. They seemed to show the same weaknesses: a passive approach to teaching; a low level of creativity and motivation; an absence of self-reflection; professional dependence on orders from above; and unprofessional behavior."_The scale of the problem confronted by the new educational approach -- its aims and content, as well as teachers' attitudes -- is visible.

The historical perspective brought the dilemma of what to leave and what to retain in the existing system. Experts contend that the bottom-up transformation of the school system in post-socialist countries was not feasible in the first years of their democratic development. It is necessary to reach an „excellent level of provision of basic legislative, organizational, financial and personal conditions for de-centralization, evaluated self-management of schools and especially for the quality and sufficient number of educational professionals and their professional development “(Kosová and Porubský, 2011, pp. 17-27).

Hanesová distinguishes two phases of transition within pedeutological research:

1. PHASE OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD (1990-2005)

Right after the democratic revolutions in 1989 higher demands on the building of integration 2004 our countries joined EU and our access to research opportunities widened radically. The fact of integration into the OECD and EU set new, higher demands on the building of knowledge-based economy and society.

2. PHASE OF REFORMS, SECOND TRANSITION (2005- PRESENT)

Involves reconstruction efforts related to professional standards for teachers, creating conditions for professional development of teachers and changes in the teacher preparation system, the status of teachers and their professional identity. (Hanesová, 2014, p. 52)

Poland has had frequent changes of government including the Ministry of Education, with potentially negative consequences for the schooling system and society. Polish educational researchers show that since the beginning of the 1990s, teachers' enthusiasm has been disappearing; fueled by the fatigue from the struggles between political parties, which affected their work. Some see education as anti-democratic. As early as 1990, Kwieciński warned against anti-democratic tendencies in education, reminding that “democracy does not create itself. A destruction of the totalitarian system in Poland does not automatically open doors to democracy. The school might become an unconscious or consciously created and manipulated tool used to inhibit development of the society and prevent its walk towards democracy” (Kwieciński, 1990, p. 2).

Although teachers live in a post-authoritarian order, they are still deeply immersed in hierarchical one, in relations both with the school's administration (top-down) and with pupils and parents. This problem is particularly visible since the last education reform (2016). Central management, steered by the ministry and regional civil servants, make many teachers obedient, and the same obedience is expected from other participants in school life.

1.2 Portugal

Portugal exited the authoritarian regime some 15 years earlier than Poland and the Czech Republic. According to Lobo's survey and research, which were done around 2014 the entire spectrum of Portuguese society about the public meaning and enduring legacies of the transition period, a majority of Portuguese are proud and their views on the effect of the 1974 revolution have been largely positive, particularly at the higher levels of education.

Concerning the goals and the achievements of democratization, the Portuguese highlight aspects of the welfare state as the most positive legacies, particularly in education, housing and health (Lobo, 2016, p. 174). In Lobo's article, the author examines with public opinions on the transitional period from the beginning of the changes in Portugal from 1974 to 1976 and with the question of political parties' responsibility in connection with convictions or forgiveness for crimes. A majority of society held the view so-called third way of the former Salazar regime. This third way was "silence" -- no comment on past problems, but looking ahead and facing new experiences.

Socialist countries had to deal with a similar problem in the 1980s, and this issue has so far been often solved and criticized. The issue of change in education in the transition period, after the revolution, is similar. The condemnation of socialist education and the need to accept rapid change has not always been positively received. Society is still looking for an ideal school system as well. The contradiction between tradition and innovation is a constant topic of researchers and politicians. Where better to start in transition periods than in children's education, in the education of a new, emerging generation? What can a democratic society offer children for their and "our" best future? How can they be treated as more than just a political tool?

In Portugal, Salazar laid the foundation of ideological education in the 1930s, and 15 years later socialist countries followed the Soviet example in schooling. In these post-authoritarian countries, this unified education continued for almost five decades until revolts against the ruling regimes.

In 1933, Salazar expressed the opinion that the constitution of elites is more important than teaching the people to read (Pinto, 2011, p.56). His ideology, based on the four-part doctrine of "God, Fatherland, Family and Work," shaped teachers' lives. Ideological control over teachers and students increased; everyone used mandatory textbooks. Resignation and obedience dominated the primary schools. The ruling party was obsessive about education, but with no modernization. Instead of promoting progress, it controlled what the schools had

inherited. A significant Catholic parochial education sector emerged (Pinto, 2011), and Christianization affected everything.

New policy greatly strengthened “the family as a social cell,” “faith, as an element of national unity and solidarity,” and “authority” and “respect for the hierarchy” as “principles of the social life “(Pinto, 2011, p.57).

Now I will briefly describe education in Portugal’s transitional period. In 1976, the emerging Portuguese Constitution anchored the most important democratic proclamation: that everyone had the right to education on a platform of equal opportunity, and that culture and education should not be oriented to any particular philosophical, political or religious direction. These general principles had to be sufficient for the next 12 years, when a new law, Magna Carta of Education, was established (Sousa, 2000).

Sousa poses questions on current educational topics, evaluating the law for possible changes or controversial points. One of them is focalization within education -- prioritizing the individual or group of individuals (society). How can teachers respect the right to differences in knowledge and culture? Will, or should, they create individual curricula? The next point is the direction of education, describing another ambivalence: should society preserve tradition, turning back to the past? Or should it seek a solution to current problems? What skills do we need for the future, and what kind of society do we want to create?

The point about political dynamics concerns ideas about linking education and policy, specifically the political regime. How can society, through teachers, prepare children for active citizenship? Concerning the openness and effectiveness of education, all Portuguese have the right to education and culture, and basic education (nine years) is compulsory and free. An interesting current topic in educational policy is access to schooling at different ages. Lifelong learning has started to be popular, and students may select different educational paths. Another interesting point: how are the Portuguese pursuing homogeneity of education? Is education the same for everyone? The Portuguese very openly cope with the question “if the curriculum should be equal for all people or shall it be diversified according to each one’s aptitudes, interest, social needs, and talents?” (Sousa, p.6). Education is stratified according to age, sex and social class, but the Portuguese Education System Act recommends giving a second chance: schooling for those who did not enjoy it at the appropriate age or had other disadvantages (sex, cultural environment) where they grew up.

To conclude this chapter, I would like to mention a feature common to Portugal and Poland that had a noticeable influence on society: belief and religion. In the Czech Republic,

because of persecution in the 1950s and the suppression of religion as a class enemy in the Communist regime, its influence was greatly limited.

Portugal is one of the most Catholic countries in Europe; almost 90 percent of the population belongs to the Roman Catholic Church. Poland is also conventionally perceived as one of the most Catholic countries in contemporary Europe and the importance of religion was strengthened during the socialist period, when the church was the expression of struggle and rebellion against the regime and provided a home for the resistance movement and the fight for human rights, liberty and civil society (Boguszewski, 2009). “Ironically, this growing presence of religion is accompanied with declining support, as reflected in polls, for the church’s political involvement in society” (2009, p. 2).

Findings on the religiosity and morality of Polish Catholics show selective acceptance of religious dogmas and dictates, especially among the younger generation. Although young people declare that they participate in religious practices at least once a week, they have different views from the church on basic religious dogmas such as those on premarital sex, divorce and abortion (Zielińska, 2013).

In relation to education, it is necessary to emphasize that according to Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26 point 3) and the Constitution, “parents have the right to religious and moral upbringing and teaching of their children in accordance with their convictions. All religious organizations officially recognized by the state have the right to organize religious education (RE) in schools, under the condition- that schooling does not violate other people’s freedom of religion and conscience” (Zielińska, 2013, p. 4). The state schools are obliged to organize RE classes at all levels of compulsory education, but student participation is optional.

The common characteristics of the transitional period in the three countries are a turn toward democracy, tension between preserving traditions and turning to the past on one hand, and on the other searching for solutions to current and future problems. These aims are shared by stakeholders, new educational professionals and their professional development, which started at universities where all current needs in teacher education should be discussed.

Chapter 2 *TEACHERS' PROFESSIONALISM: TRADITION AND NEW CHALLENGES*

As the creator of the concept of “reflective practice,” Donald Schön caused a real revolution in teacher training (Gołębniak, 1998). In his book, *The Reflective Practitioner*, Schön addressed the problems in creating curriculum for teachers and the crucial question about the proportion of theory and practice during their teaching education (Schön 1983).

Schön first drew attention to the fact that professionals' success today depends on steadily increasing their self-awareness through reflection on their actions and the ability to support "conversation with the current situation" (Schön, 1983, page). The consequences of this position determined implications in teacher education. Professional education should be redesigned to combine the teaching of applied science with coaching in the art of reflection-in-action. Professional schools should learn from such deviant traditions of education as art studios, conservatories of music, athletics coaching and apprenticeship in the crafts, all of which emphasize coaching and learning by doing (Schön, 1983).

M. Czerepaniak-Walczak presents an even more decisive stance on the recognition of the usefulness of a "practical" paradigm for teacher education in her book *Aspects and Sources of Professional Teacher Reflection*. In her enriched translation of Schön, she described the teachers' professionalism, which helps the teacher to understand it and use their own specific potential. (Czerepaniak Walczak, 1997, pp.10)

The teacher should constantly think about how to do things better, similarly to other professionals in other fields. The requirements for teachers are changing. Today, the education system needs “active, mobile teachers, able to take the initiative, clearly aware of their professional goals, open to everything new and optimistic about innovation” (Symanyuk, Pecherkina, 2010, pp. 199).

On other hand, professional teacher should have professional conditions. Great demands are imposed on teachers, but the feedback they receive is often not adequate to their activity. Moreover, their status in society is rather weak and rarely has advocacy, even from the politicians. The public can hear about teachers in the media, what they should know and do, while the question of how we can help them better manage their work for society is rarely posed. “The Status of Teachers and the Teaching Profession – A study of education unions' perspectives” is based on an extensive 2015 survey dealing with teacher status issues. This “status” report was one of the major documents on which the EU Report to the Committee of

Experts on the Application of the Recommendation Concerning Teachers (CEART) was based. This report is one more sign, one more piece of evidence, that reveals the threats to the status of teachers from misguided “reforms.”

“Given the intimate relationship between teaching conditions and learning conditions; those same threats endanger quality education” (Symeonidis, 2015, p.4).

Leeuwen in his foreword to this report says, what the danger is for the teaching profession and how important the global debate about the future of education is. The company should pay attention to private interests and slick marketing and to address issues related to the status of teachers, the right to education and education as a public good (Leeuwen, 2015).

These issues include:

- a) initial and continuing training
- b) recruitment
- c) advancement and promotion
- d) security of tenure
- e) disciplinary procedures
- f) part-time service
- g) professional freedom
- h) supervision and assessment
- i) responsibilities and rights
- j) participation in educational decision-making
- k) negotiation
- l) conditions for effective teaching and learning
- m) social security (UNESCO and ILO, 2008, pp. 8-9)

Hargreaves and Flutter argue that “the global economic recession has damaged teachers’ pay and working conditions in many countries, particularly in Europe, and that job satisfaction, a crucial factor influencing teachers’ self-esteem, has declined as a result of job insecurity and salary reductions.” (Hargreaves and Flutter, 2013, p. 11). In this context they point out that in many countries with teachers’ low-income are forced to take private lessons - this, however, is spoilt to the reputation of public education and the status of teachers again. (Hargreaves and Flutter, 2013, p. 11).

The teacher’s position within society is not simple, and politicians have often adopted a pejorative rhetoric against teachers, creating public mistrust toward the profession. Specifically,

teacher status is clearly related to the national socio-cultural and economic context; job security; salaries and working conditions; teachers' professional development; representation of the teaching profession; professional autonomy; social dialogue, and involvement in decision-making.

“In general, a positive opinion of teachers should be encouraged. Not only are teachers responsible for the state of education. The impetus for cooperation should come from the top. Likewise, teachers must have the right to complain and must have the right to collective bargaining. A collaborative and supportive relationship between government and education unions requires a process of social dialogue that should aim to improve the quality and status of education, professional standards and conditions” (EI, 2011, Article 38).

We are getting used to the term “competency,” since it is an integral part of the EU dictionary. The definition of this term varies. Here it is used in the sense of professional teacher competence. Symanyuk and Pecherkina divided in their work the teacher's professional competences into three components, which include the ability or the skills of the teachers. The teachers should have these skills or should try to gain them during their practice. We can see all these components as a possibility for assessment the quality of the teacher.

***THE ACTIVITY-RELATED COMPONENT** of teachers' professional competence includes subject and activity-related knowledge, the desire to be a professional, the aspiration for the freedom of choice, orientation toward working with people and toward the integration of the efforts of others, the desire to create something new, the willingness to overcome obstacles and to take responsibility for the result, the motivation to achieve success, and the willingness to take risks.*

***THE PERSONALITY-RELATED COMPONENT** of teachers' professional competence is represented by the desire to build one's own life, to take responsibility for events taking place in it; the ability to offer support, to help others, the commitment to self-development, and to control one's emotional states.*

***THE SOCIO-COMMUNICATIVE COMPONENT** of teachers' professional competence manifests itself in flexibility in communication, tolerance of uncertainty, optimism, and well-developed self-control in communication. All these factors depend on the type of school the teachers work in (conventional or innovative) and the length of work experience (Symanyuk and Pecherkina, 2010, 200).*

According to Śliwerski, we should give teachers opportunities to create a modern, contemporary class. Teachers could self-limit state authority by basing education on principles of subsidiarity. Then they will be self-confident and able to resist political changes, contributing to a long-term development strategy for education and an improvement of education quality by providing students with high-quality educational offers and openness to parents and children (Śliwerski, 2016).

There are different approaches and initiatives to ensure new teachers' professionalism. One is the EDiTE program, which has enabled me to do research in my field, elementary education. EDiTE brought together researchers from five European universities in a joint effort to research current issues in teacher education.

Its theme is “Transformative Teacher Learning for Better Student Learning Within an Emerging European Context.” This Ph.D. program tries to create and supports mutual interdependence in educational research and practice. In its three main sub-themes – teacher learning, student learning and European context – the emerging researchers (most of them experienced teachers) deal in their theses with such questions as: How can educators increase the quality of teaching, improve the effectiveness of classroom-level processes and develop teachers’ practical knowledge? What are the implications of non-measurable components of students’ learning for teacher education? What could be the emerging European context for the “European Teacher” (ENTEP/Schraatz, 2010) learning? What skills, competences and attitudes of teachers should be developed?

Teachers are the main change agents. As researchers and society, we need from them a new vision of their role in education. This is also a task for educational institutions: to create active, reflective teachers. It is really important that new teachers be open to changes and innovation.

Current teachers still carry their own schooling experience; they still hold to tradition, and it may seem that they are hardly giving up learned stereotypes. They observed teachers’ practices when they were students, and now they imitate those practices without reflection. The aim of my research is to determine how deeply they are drawn into tradition. The analysis of the literature on teachers’ work suggests that the deeper their practice is immersed in their own experiences as students, especially the affirmation of obedience and subordination in authoritarian interactions, the more often they tend to maintain traditions in the classroom and also in relationships with parents. They have neither the need nor the courage to introduce democratic changes. They just adapt and reproduce what they remember.

Chapter 3 “*GRAMMAR OF SCHOOLING*”: *A SOURCE OF TENSION BETWEEN TRADITION AND CHANGE*

One of my project aims is to understand the conditions, opportunities and challenges of teachers' work in state and private elementary schools in the specific emerging geopolitical circumstances of post-socialist Central Europe – their Grammar of Schooling - GOS (Tyack and Tobin, 1994). This metaphor comments on the source of rooting in school systems and compares that rooting to the rules of grammar in language. When people speak, they do not consciously follow the rules of grammar. Much of the “Grammar of Schooling” has become so well established that it is typically taken for granted as just the way schools are. Practices such as graded classrooms, structure schools in a manner analogous to the way grammar organizes meaning in language.

The changes, driven more recently by EU synchronization and integration processes, channeled and adapted as they are by national governments, pose challenges to school realities and teachers' practices. According to Tyack and Tobin, “Almost any blueprint for basic reform will be altered during implementation, so powerful is the hold of the cultural construction of what constitutes a ‘real school’ and so common the habits of teachers in adapting reform to local circumstances and public expectations “(Tyack and Tobin 1994, p. 478). In my research, I am interested in how educational changes are implemented (or not) and in the teachers' role in this process. But my interest in school-based educational change is not limited to top-down, policy-driven changes. I am equally interested in changes initiated by the teachers themselves.

The term “Grammar of schooling” helps to understand the nature of (un)consciousness adaptation or resistance to change from educational institutions. This problem is found not only in post-socialist countries, but also all over world, as I will describe below. Other research borrowed this opinion to describe the implementation of something new in the learning practice, very often about ICT (Information and Communications Technology).

The acceptance of the standard language is a long, slow process of acquisition that goes unnoticed through the actions of the linguistic market, and the school plays a crucial role in stigmatizing varieties that deviate from the official or standard one (Bourdieu, 1985). According to Hock, the society or community has certain principles or sets of rules in their educational institutions, which they have adopted over the years and considered it to be standard. It is hard to accept new rules, so they reject them or even create stigmas. This is the sociolinguistic perspective of grammar – the way, how people can perceive this metaphor (Hock, 1991).

“A number of similarities between the two types of grammars can be established. First, there is a grammar, the so-called standard grammar that gradually displaces or at least coexists with the grammars of other varieties and is considered the prestigious one. At the same time, the other grammars are stigmatized. In this sense, the ‘Grammar of Schooling’ corresponds to the ‘standard’ grammar, and other types of organization within the schools are regarded as deviant. Second, standard grammars are less likely to change than grammars that are not codified, and those are usually the grammars of non-standard varieties. In the same vein, innovations in schools seldom succeed. “(Arbelaiz and Gorospe, 2008, p. 53). As I have already mentioned, in these types of grammars, their rules and principles tend to be used unconsciously. The parallels between natural language grammars and the “Grammar of Schooling” help society understand the nature of the resistance to change by educational institutions and can be useful in counteracting it (Arbelaiz and Gorospe 2008).

David Tyack and William Tobin are specialists in the history of education and American cultural history. In their 1994 paper, they described different reforms in institutions of which two of them are enduring and three were only transient attacks on the “Grammar of Schooling”. “Why has the ‘Grammar of Schooling’ been so stable, and why have most challenges faded or become marginalized?” (Tyack and Tobin, 1993, p. 457) They have constructed several case studies to examine these reforms. Only some of them have become part of “Grammar of Schooling” – common embodied practices in our schools that the society has accepted over the years.

The authors named the “Grammar of Schooling” as historical product and explored the origins of two enduring institutional forms: the graded school and the Carnegie unit. They analyzed the history of three transient attacks on the “Grammar of Schooling”: the Dalton Plan, the Eight-Year Study and the new model flexible high school of the 1960s. Based on their findings, they attempted to describe the causes of institutional continuity and change, and suggested ways in which education changes should be driven to be successful, thus implemented and lasting (Tyack and Tobin, 1994, p. 457). They focused not so much on what happens in classrooms as on the organizational framework that shape the conditions under which teachers instruct students. Periodically, innovators have challenged the structures and rules that constitute the “Grammar of Schooling”, perceiving them not as the reforms they once were, but as straitjackets.

The changes they attempted to implement included such efforts as: creating ungraded schools; using time, space and numbers of students as flexible resources, and diversifying uniform periods, same-sized rooms and standard class sizes; merging specialized subjects into

core courses in junior and high schools or, alternatively, introducing departmental specialization into the elementary school; grouping teachers in teams rather than having them work as isolated individuals in self-contained classrooms. Typically, these innovations have not been lasting (Tyack and Tobin 1993, p. 455).

Graded schools have resisted within the “Grammar of Schooling”, and in retrospect have met two current and often emphasized education goals: and individual approach to teaching and equal access to education. This type of elementary school was „new“ before the American Civil War and while it originated in rural areas, it soon spread to cities because of its popularity. The curriculum was divided into yearlong modules and were students sorted according to academic proficiency and age; and individual teachers instructed them in self-contained classrooms. It was a big change and progress which by now has become so familiar that it is hard to imagine a time when it did not exist or to conceive of alternatives. It was once a deliberate invention, however, that spread rapidly across the urban landscape and promised to make schooling differentiated by the proficiency or age of pupils, easily replicable as cities swelled, and more efficient and equitable (Tyack and Tobin, 1994, p.457)

Authors of innovative ways of teaching did not question the age-old assumption that a classroom was a self-contained place where one teacher set tasks for a group of students and evaluated their performance. Because these authors were looking for even greater efficiency, they invented a system by which one teacher could teach all children the same subject, at the same pace and in the same way. The curriculum was more precisely sequenced, and pupils were classified by proficiency. The system thus created was to look equal for all, to judge fairly according to gender, economic status, and immigrant or native-born background. “Administrators, most of them male, divided the traditional curriculum – reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic and the rest – into required sequences and supervised the teachers, mostly female, to make sure they were following the syllabi” (Tyack and Tobin, 1994, p. 458).

At the end of the year, the pupils took tests. They had to prove that they deserved to advance to the next level. Unfortunately, failure meant staying in place; that ‘is why graded schools were criticized. For this reason, a category of organizational deviant was created: the “retarded” or slow student who failed to be promoted. On the contrary, in rural schools, students were allowed to continue at their natural pace. If someone did not manage, it was not so noticeable. Rural communities have tried to help pupils who experience this failure.

During the development of the graded school, it has been also a change to the changes, but not to the fundamental. “The graded school seemed to perform necessary organizational

functions, and over the years the public came to regard distinct grades as emblematic of a “real school” (Tyack and Tobin, 1994, pp.460)

As an example of a transient attack on the “Grammar of Schooling”, the authors describe The Dalton network of schools around the world. Although the Dalton school was originally intended for the second stage, there are currently more elementary schools. Helen Parkhurst developed it in 1920 in an attempt to break the lockstep movement of students in graded classrooms, tailoring instruction to individual students and small groups rather than a whole class. She negotiated monthly contracts. According to them, children should have worked in the following period. It set goals that had to be completed successfully. This system allowed students to make progress at individual pace during morning academic sessions while the afternoons were dedicated to such activities as art, music or physical education. The rooms in the school were renamed to the lab. The teacher was waiting there with the materials and facilities for the given subject. Pupils learned by practice - Teachers did not lecture long hours for the pupils to remembering knowledge by heart or listening boring content whole hours. The pupils never heard the bell - they did not have the strict time for the lessons. They worked on joint projects, but at the same time they were given an individual pace and approach (Tyack and Tobin, 1993, pp.460).

“By 1930, 162 (2%) of 8,600 secondary schools surveyed in a national study reported that they had completely reorganized their schools to conform with the Dalton Plan. In addition, 486 (6%) of the secondary schools reported that they had a modified version of the Plan in their buildings” (Tyack and Tobin, 1993, p. 465). The Dalton Plan in its original form was very demanding on the administration, the organization of instruction, teacher training, and the control and feedback for students. Still, it included all the elements of transformational teaching, which involves creating dynamic relationships between teachers and students; a shared body of knowledge to promote student learning and personal growth; transformation of teaching: active learning; student-centered learning; collaborative learning; experiential learning, and problem-based learning (Zimbardo, Slavich 2012).

How did some reforms become so institutionalized that they became the standard matrix of schooling, and why did challenges to this basic grammar falter? An unequivocal answer to this question is impossible. “The experiences of the schools in the study show that substantial changes in the grammar of secondary schools were possible under highly favorable conditions: when colleges were eager to attract students and thus willing to suspend some requirements (as for Carnegie units in traditional subjects); when liberal ideologies attracted both teachers and

families; and when powerful support came from foundations and professional associations” (Tyack and Tobin, 1994, p. 476).

Tyack and Tobin emphasized that humans build organizations and can change them. *“Cultural constructs of schooling have changed over time and can change again. To do so deliberately would require intense and continual public dialogue about the ends and means of schooling, including a re-examination of cultural assumptions about what a “real school” is and what sort of improved schooling could realize new aspirations”* (Tyack and Tobin, 1999, p. 478). This common effort to change the school could fuel a broad social movement. Above all, reformers would have to involve the public in a broad commitment to being part of the change.

On the one hand, we should try to preserve what is valuable in the current practice and, on the other hand, we should have doubts about the fact, which we consider to be self-evident and unchangeable. (Tyack and Tobin, 1993, p. 478)

Another metaphor about rooted educational methods of learning was developed by Robinson, who speaks of them as myths. He reminds us that the current system of education was a revolutionary idea in the mid-19th century. Poor people were surprised that their children could benefit from public education. This paradigm should be changed in the 21st century. Robinson emphasized collaboration, changing the culture and habits of a school institution, and creating a natural learning environment. The myths, according to him, are standardization; conformity; testing; cooperation (it is not cheating); higher education for good jobs in the future; raising standards; dividing people into academic and non-academic, smart and non-smart; and organization on factory lines (ringing bells, separate facilities, separate subjects, age groups).

Public education is reforming in many countries. According to Philips, administrators and policymakers should be careful about basing decisions on myths and lies that hide under such slogans as: Teachers are the most important influence on a child’s education; Homework boosts achievement; Class size does not matter; A successful program works everywhere; Zero-tolerance policies are making schools safer. (Philips, M., 2014)

According to M. Fullan and B. Levin, the measure of success in reforming education in the Czech Republic should be primarily educational outcomes on the part of students (not just cognitive, but also pupils' attitudes to learning, etc.) or attitudes of parents and other direct actors in education, such as teachers and school principals. (M. Fullan and B. Levin, 2009) M. Fullan, in his theory of educational changes describes a triple-I model educational changes divided into three phases (Fullan 2007):

PHASE I.: Initiation --The initial stage, which leads to the decision to make a change.

PHASE II.: Implementation –The first experience with the introduction of the reform ideas into practice. According to Fullan it is the first two to three years of implementation.

PHASE III.: Institutionalization – otherwise known as a "sequel" (continuation). Indicates whether the change takes hold and will be preserved and incorporated into the current system as an integral part, or whether the system will return to its original state.

Another example of a “Grammar of Schooling” may be found in the problem of authority. Must a teacher be an authority in the school? Vališová (2015) wonders if we really need authority and manipulation in education. What kind of authority should teachers have, and how much do the pupils have to respect them? The relationship with authority in contemporary schools is insistent; we can find it as part of the “Grammar of Schooling”. But where can pupils see the line between respecting authority and at the same time not blindly and passively accepting opinions and knowledge from legislatively mandated authority -- the teacher? When should teachers (and parents) begin to cultivate critical thinking in children and, at the same time, teach them to apply it in an acceptable and civil manner in relation to the teacher?

On the other side, could it be possible to find ways to free teachers from some of the rules of the “Grammar of Schooling” and awaken their critical reflexivity? Freire provided the category of consciousness, distinguishing three types: magical, naïve and critical. The “Grammar of Schooling” is typical of magical or naïve consciousness. Can “Grammar of Schooling” be changed by teachers; is it in their hands? Could they apply the subsidiarity principle to primary education?

It means, if teachers should do changes, they need more autonomy – so that there is space for creativity and motivation. Then new rules and conditions could emerge, initiated by teachers – practitioners so that teaching builds more on the experience of teachers rather in bottom-up-approach. Top-bottom changes often kill this creativity, the teacher does not fit in the strict curriculum, the teacher adapts, has no word, his activities decrease after time because the work without the stimulus and cannot enjoy their own engagement.

I perceive the principle of subsidiarity in education in this way. Teachers (at a local level) show good examples of innovative practice... but there must be someone in higher administration, in politics, who processes these views and takes them into account and addresses them at the right places. All these teachers’ "subsidiary opinions" (emerging in

practice, in local level) could be important (they are related and supplementary) and put them together by some officer, or researcher. There are examples, in the Czech Republic, where shared web pages exist as examples of teachers cooperating and helping each other. On different portals and websites, teachers share their methods of work, types of teaching, the motivation of children in individual subjects and in general. But these resources are more methodological than about hot questions that touch on the improvement of education in a broader sense.

Chapter 4 *CRITICAL THEORY OF EDUCATION*

Men relate to their world in a critical way. They apprehend the objective data of their reality (as well as the ties that link one datum to another) through reflection -- not by reflex, as do animals. And in the act of critical perception, men discover their own temporality. Transcending a single dimension, they reach back to yesterday, recognize today, and come upon tomorrow. (Freire, 2005, p.3)

Critical pedagogy is based on critical theory, a philosophy that has its roots in the work of thinkers of the Frankfurt School (Giroux, 2001). Critical theory criticized existing societies at that time and strived to create an opposition to both capitalism and fascism (Harrington, 2006). Nowadays its task is to warn against different forms of neoliberalism, a system that produces social inequality, is based on material benefits and power and avoids moral responsibility (Giroux, 2012b).

Critical pedagogy should help students in constructive thinking to understand social values, such as freedom, justice and equality. Critical educators should consistently try to separate politics, ideology and religion from education. Schools should follow basic democratic principles, such as decentralization, self-government and subsidiarity. On the other hand, how can teachers and students be aware of inequalities and serve the system when they do not discuss it and use critical thinking? According to Dave Hill, the main topic -- the ideological and policy context -- raises these issues:

1. Privatization (pre-privatization of public services)
2. Marketization (competition in public services)
3. Reduction of public spending (salaries, pensions, / benefits, social wages) cutting taxes on corporations and the rich
4. Competition between workers (performance related pay, payment by results)
5. Attacks on trade unions, workers' rights and centralized/national pay-bargaining, casualization/ 'precarization' of work
6. Management of the workforce: 'new managerialism,' including huge increasing differentials in pay/ power/ culture of bullying
7. 'Management speak / managerialist / consumerist discourse
8. Denigration / Ideological attacks on public sector workforce such as teachers, education professionals
9. 'Divide and rule', vilify the poor, ethnic minorities, immigrants, sexual minorities
10. Vocational education for human capital: "homo economicus" (Hill, 2007)

Some authors take critical pedagogy as a struggle against capitalism, as a political instrument. Peter McLaren, for example, in his revolutionary critical pedagogy leans toward Marx's historical materialism and class struggle. McLaren argues that capitalist societies deprive proletarian children of education and deform the education of children of the bourgeoisie, who take advantage of their class and lives by its prejudices. He wants to prepare critical educators on the basis of revolutionary critical pedagogy.

The change or transformation is usually described as social change, but I am interested in the changes that happen on the level of individual and collective consciousness that emerges in the social process: how and when to think critically in order to change our consciousness and situation? How do teachers connect with education and how do they teach children in elementary (ISCED1) education? Critical theory addresses these problems. Freire and his successors have tried to explain how school is important to the awakening of pupils' perception of their uniqueness, but unfortunately, the established "banking system" (the passive acceptance of knowledge and opinions of others) in the schools actually kills this ability in children.

Like pupils in the school, people in society take a passive role and live in a "culture of silence" from which it is then difficult to flee in future life: "A deepened consciousness of situation of people leads to apprehend that situation as an historical reality susceptible of transformation. Resignation gives way to the drive for transformation and inquiry, over which men feel themselves to be in control. If people, as historical beings necessarily engaged with other people in a movement of inquiry, did not control that movement, it would be (and is) a violation of their humanity. Any situation in which some individuals prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence. The means used are not important; to alienate human beings from their own decision-making is to change them into objects "(Freire 1993, pp.161).

Teachers are actually victims of the "Grammar of Schooling" because most of them personally have gone through this conventional system, obediently attending as pupils and then educated in a similar paradigm of traditional schools and for their future profession at universities. Many may have chosen teaching as a profession on the grounds that they recognized this established system and liked it. This is one reason they should think whether and how to change the current situation. According to Freire's theory, they are not actually aware that they are at a certain stage of oppression and serve the existing system.

Freire said that schools too often serve the needs of an unjust society instead of the needs of the oppressed students. He emphasized the political, social and economic contexts in

education and literacy in his students' lives. He wanted to help students, who, thanks to education, could become independent, active and responsible members of society, which they could later help change.

He suggests other methods of education, such as problem-posing education or dialogical education, and puts them in opposition to traditional education, in opposition to the grammar of schooling. Traditional education only tells students what they should know, while Freire's "education formulating problems" encourages learners and motivates them to activity. This is not about transmitting information, but about communication between teacher and student. The subject of education actually mediates the relationship between the teacher and the student. Through dialogue, the teacher ceases to be a teacher of students, the teacher "disappears", and a new concept emerges: The teacher learns from teaching students. The teacher is no longer only one who teaches, but also one who himself is taught in a dialogue with students. Students teach at the same time they are learning. This is education as the practice of freedom -- as opposed to education as the practice of control. (Freire, 1993) It is one sign of transformative learning and an important assumption of professional teachers.

The philosopher and theorist Henry Giroux continued developing Freire's thoughts on behalf of critical pedagogy contending that teachers should be able to challenge what they are teaching and point to a hidden curriculum (Giroux, 2016). If a hidden curriculum teaches pupils what life is all about and emphasizes that the society's predominant values are those that pupils "take away" from school, early education is the most intensive period for this curriculum. Pupils draw experience from institutional life and then have to manage the demanding classical curriculum, in which they must learn to read, write and count during the first years of school.

Giroux see pedagogy as part of culture, and because children are increasingly influenced by commercial culture, critical thinking is essential for them. According to critical pedagogues, the schools and the media are the tools of ideology. But school should support such values as equality, freedom and justice. Incorporating the various constructions of reality into the curriculum and students' reflection is part of democratic society (Spade and Ballantine, 2008).

Contemporary learning theories try to specify the aims in the education process and search for the right kind of knowledge that should be transmitted to children at a specific age. Because of progress in education, we need to innovate and focus on methods that will lead to good learning results for pupils. However, such results are often hard to achieve. The current trend in transformative teaching says, that we should do better as educators. As Lipman (2003) states, we do not need to focus only on gaining specific information and knowledge, but rather

on dealing with relationships between them. “Genuine understanding occurs only when students can be thoughtful and reflective about the information and knowledge they have been presented, and when they are sensitive to the goals of inquiry and can therefore be reasonable and judicious in their assessment of the processes and conclusions of inquiry. Introducing new subjects specifically designed to teach critical thinking, creative thinking and other process skills into the curriculum is a step in the right direction, but the benefits will be limited if students are not also given the opportunity to use these skills in their content subjects. Only in this way can we nurture students who can be sensitive to what is problematic in any given situation, be reasonable and judicious in their work, and think for themselves “(Wong, 2008).

So, what is the sense (meaning) of critical pedagogy in my work? When I juxtapose the old and the new, tradition and innovation - critical pedagogy will always be on the side of the new, if it promotes social equality and justice. It means progress and the critique of the present. It does not have to provoke a social shift in the primary school environment, but it can teach teachers and children, too, to look in a different direction and criticize existing discourses. One major issue in my work concerns the extent to which primary teachers have been able to internalize and apply critical thinking to their work as a base for creating and practicing democratic interaction among their pupils while consciously coping with the “Grammar of Schooling.”

It is right to have doubts about what we do and accept. The objectives of critical pedagogy (theory) -- utopian, stimulating activity, experimental thinking and any deviations from established standards -- are all perceived as good examples in the activity of a teacher or pupil. In analyzing the data, I would like to highlight these deviations from reality as space for change in the spirit of Freire's ideas. How much can teachers think critically, can they realize they are doing so, and which of the three types of consciousness according to Freiere do they use most in their work? Are they resistant or open to alternatives? How do the teachers perceive the elements of the dominant system (educational, political, cultural, religious) in their work? Are they resistant or open to alternatives? If so, to which, and if not, why?

Chapter 5 *ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AS PART OF PRIMARY EDUCATION OR LIFELONG LEARNING*

To understand and properly interpret the outcomes in education systems, it is essential to ensure that data are comparable. In my work confusion is caused by the lack of clarity in words or names used to describe stages of education, such as elementary and primary.

Generally, European countries have followed the ISCED system (The International Standard Classification of Education), compiled in 2011 to analyze cross-nationally comparable data and enable the creation of a common framework for comparison and research as an important source for work in social science. “ISCED is a product of international agreement and adopted formally by the General Conference of UN ESCO Member States. The last version, ISCED 2011 distinguishes eight levels of education. Empirically, ISCED assumes that several criteria exist which can help allocate education programmes to levels of education” (International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 2011, 2012, p.6).

The concept of elementary and primary in many educational systems does not correspond to classifications ISCED 1 (primary education) and ISCED 2 (lower secondary). Programmes classified at ISCED level 1 are named to in many ways: primary education, elementary education or basic education (stage 1 or lower grades if an education system has one programme that spans ISCED levels 1 and 2). For international comparability purposes, the term ‘primary education’ is used to label ISCED level 1 (ISCED 2011, p.30).

This fact makes comparisons more complicated. In addition, the system can change over time in particular countries. (During the three years of my Ph.D. program, the Polish system changed.)

The term "lower secondary education" can vary from one system to another according to the pupils' ages. That is why three model of primary and lower secondary education (ISCED 1-2) were created in 2017/18 and are now part of compulsory education in all European education systems. The simplest model corresponding to compulsory school attendance is **single structure education**, a general education provided for all pupils, without transition between primary and lower secondary education.

The **common core curriculum provision** model provides the same general common core curriculum to all pupils. After successful completion of primary education (ISCED 1), all students progress to the lower secondary level (ISCED 2).

The most complicated seems to be the **differentiated lower secondary education** model, in which, after successful completion of primary education, students are required to

follow distinct educational pathways or specific types of schooling, either at the beginning of or during lower secondary education. In some countries students follow different tracks in vocational, technical or general education. In others, they are enrolled in different types of general education. At the end of their studies, they receive certificates of different levels. (Eurydice, 2017). In Poland, the organisational model of full-time compulsory education is now switching toward the single-structure model.

5.1 Specific of elementary education in three European countries

The question remains how many years ISCED 1 lasts in different systems, and what elementary education is. The term elementary education does not exist in this ISCED system but is always part of primary education (first grade, first cycle, part of basic schooling). Countries have their own names for school types, and sometimes it is difficult to translate them into English, so primary education in one country means something different from primary education in another. However, the reports in Eurydice give the names of the schools in the original languages in brackets.

According to ISCED 2011, ISCED 1 typically lasts from four to seven years; the most common duration is six years. ISCED 2 typically lasts two to five years; the most common duration is three years. The programmes at level ISCED 1, considered elementary schooling, are typically designed to provide pupils with fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics (i.e., literacy and numeracy). They establish a solid foundation for learning and understanding core areas of knowledge and personal and social development, in preparation for lower secondary education. Age is typically the only entry requirement at this level. (Eurydice, 2017).

Table 1: BASIC INFORMATION ON ELEMENTARY EDUCATION SYSTEMS			
	CZECH REPUBLIC	POLAND	PORTUGAL
Obligatory pre-school year	Since September 2017, the education is compulsory for 5-year old.	Since September 2016, pre-school is obligatory for 6-year-olds. Parents of 6-year-olds have a choice: they can enroll their children in the 1 grade of primary school or keep them in a pre-school.	Attending pre-school is optional, recognizing the importance of families' role in children's education.
Age of school admission	6	6-7	6
Length of primary / Elementary school	9/5 (5 + 4) Basic education lasts nine years. The first stage, elementary education, corresponds to the first five years of schooling. ISCED 1 and ISCED 2	8/3 (3+5) from September 2017 It includes two stages: - grades 1-3 (early school education), - grades 4-8, in which teaching is done by subject. ISCED 1 and ISCED2	9/4 (4+2+3) Basic education lasts 9 years and is divided into three sequential cycles. The first cycle corresponds to the first 4 years of schooling. ISCED 1 and ISCED2
Compulsory education	10 years, including kindergarten (starts at 5 or 6 in kindergarten)	9 years including kindergarten (until 18- part-time compulsory education)	12 years (6-18 years of age, ISCED 3)
Other specifics	Children in the last year of pre-primary education are legally entitled to education. Attendance is very high. Since 2017, the last year of pre-primary education is compulsory.	Parents of 6-year-olds have a choice: they can enroll their children in the 1 grade of primary school or keep them in a pre-school. The compulsory external exam will take place in grade 8 of primary school, and its results will influence admission to secondary schools	The education system is under three ministries. The school network is organized in school clusters, made up of schools that offer all levels from pre-school education to secondary education.

The table contains the basic features of the elementary school in a given country. In all three countries, public education is free, but there are also private and church schools. The

length of elementary education is not the same in these countries; the structure is more similar. Elementary school is, of course, part of compulsory education and primary education. General administration is similar, too, with the responsibilities distributed among the central government, regions or communities. The general content determines the curriculum; in the Czech Republic, for example, the schools teach according to the programs prepared on the basis of the central framework. Although the school network in Portugal is organized in school clusters, the Portuguese education system is very centralized in terms of organization and funding. But I could see teachers had some autonomy, namely at the pedagogical level, in regard to timetables and management of non-teaching staff.

Within basic education, pupils are allowed specialized artistic courses in music and dance. Next, different paths for certification in basic education enable the education of students with specific characteristics and profiles that may cause them problems in attending school. Elementary schools are the starting point for lifelong learning, and pupils' school experience affects not only their development but also their place in society. Basic life skills and competencies that pupils gain in elementary school influence their future careers, levels of educational attainment and, last but not least, employment opportunities. Of course, the quality of education is linked with the teachers' personalities, teaching standards, training, roles they are asked to fill and conditions for carrying out their tasks within society.

5.2 Teachers' careers in the Czech Republic, Poland and Portugal

The definition of the best teacher probably does not exist; everyone would define the best teacher differently, perhaps according to personal needs and interests. But the teacher must ensure (even more in the current individualized concept of teaching) that everyone in the class feels good and develops in some way. Every child should benefit and grow in school. Society offers a free education, but with the assumption that the individual will pay it back in some way in the future. The teacher as a supervisor should show every child the right path, and the developed society should support the child. We are not all the same, and the teacher must be prepared for this diversity. At present, in all three countries, higher education is required for elementary teachers. In the Czech Republic a specific training program has existed for over 50 years (Spilkova, 1996). In Poland and Portugal, there are more ways to become an elementary teacher; teaching disciplines are more combined, and studies are offered at different universities. There are periods when there are enough teachers and times when there are

shortages, depending on working, social or demographic conditions. However, the quality of teachers, which must serve the current needs of society, must remain as high as possible.

Who can become an elementary teacher in Poland, Portugal and the Czech Republic? Table 2 answers the question and gives specific information.

Table 2: INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION			
	CZECH REPUBLIC	POLAND	PORTUGAL
Education	ISCED 7 Master's. Primary school teachers (Grades 1 to 5) are required to hold a master's degree, which generally takes five years to complete at a school of education (typically comprising a three-year bachelor's degree program followed by a two-year master's degree program). Graduates of these programs are qualified to teach all subjects at the primary level.	ISCED 6 Bachelor. Every teacher must complete at least a three-year university or college course of study, earning a bachelor's degree, as well as a one-year teaching practicum. Most teachers also complete a two-year master's degree program. Preschool teachers and teachers in Grades 1 to 3 must obtain a degree in preschool and elementary education, Teachers in Grades 5 to 8 must obtain a bachelor's degree or a postgraduate diploma in their subject of specialization.	ISCED 7 Master's. Teachers are required to have a second-cycle degree. Teachers receive their education through polytechnic or university programs, holding at least a bachelor's (preprimary education) or a master's degree (primary and secondary education). With the implementation of the Bologna process (finalized in 2009-10), a master's degree in education is the minimum requirement for teaching.
Primary teachers in country	28 200	219 800	49 400
Primary education student	534 900	2 306 100	656 700
Number of pupils per teacher in prim. education	19	11,1	13,7
Formal rating system	NO	YES	YES
Shortage of students in ITE	NO	NO	NO
High drop-out rates from ITE	NO	NO	NO
Induction period	during ITE	1 year after ITE	Subject to change*
Number of units per week	21-22	19	25
Average annual salary of an elementary teacher	11,909 euro	13,799 euro	28,697 euro
Gap year/sabbatical	NO	YES	YES

Employment statute	General employment legislation	Non-civil servant	Non-civil servant or civil servant
CPD-continuing professional development	Professional duty	Required for promotion or salary progression	Mandatory

*Resource of my respondent - when she took the course, she had a 3-month induction period

Based on the content analysis of Eurydice materials and other statistics on European education related to the elementary level, I have selected up-to-date information to interpret my research findings and get closer to the conclusions of my work.

According to Teaching Careers in Europe: Access, Progression and Support 2017, in these three countries, the authorities are not carrying out specific planning for the teaching profession in primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1-3), 2016-17.

Although some education systems have developed a model to estimate teacher supply and demand, these countries don't plan at either a top-level authority nor at the local level. (). They risk being unable to anticipate longer-term trends and to plan ahead accordingly. They cannot offer teachers the certainty of employment or attract people to the teaching profession or establish successful initial teacher education (ITE).

According to statistics, these countries have enough teachers (in the CR there are shortages only in some subjects, in PL and PT even an oversupply). In PL and CZ the teacher population is aging, but in all three countries the rate of teachers leaving the profession is not high, nor are there shortages of students enrolling in ITE or high drop-out rates from ITE. In CR, prospective teachers receive professional training during ITE, usually through classroom placements, internships. In PL, teachers have to go through an additional step after graduating from ITE, a one-year internship to confirm their professional competencies.

In Europe three main systems exist for recruiting fully qualified teachers for their first appointments: open recruitment, competitive examination and candidate lists. In Portugal, candidate lists are used along with open recruitment. Schools are filling temporary vacancies oring recruit professional specialists only when no candidates are left on the candidate lists. The dominant method used in Europe is open recruitment (PL, CZ), in which the system is decentralized and the responsibility for recruiting new teachers is usually managed by schools, sometimes in conjunction with the local authorities. The system depends on the schools' level of autonomy schools in selecting the most appropriate candidates.

Teachers in public schools are considered public employees (civil servants) in all European countries, but in some education systems they may have the status of civil servants

or non-civil servants. In Portugal, only teachers in permanent positions are appointed as civil servants; those occupying temporary positions are non-civil servant public employees. In CR, the teacher is a contract employee subject to general employment legislation, and in Poland, all fully qualified teachers are non-civil servant public employees.

In connection with other situations (filling temporary positions, replacing absent teachers, hiring teachers for probationary/induction periods), all three countries have contracts of indefinite duration and fixed-term contracts. In Poland, the type of contract depends on career level. In accordance with the Teachers Charter, „trainee teachers” (first career level) are always employed on fixed-term contracts, and teachers in the two top levels („appointed” and „chartered” teachers) are always employed on contract of indefinite durations. In CR, teachers are subject to general employment legislation, which may specify the maximum length of fixed-term contracts.

Induction, a support phase provided for prospective teachers, is compulsory in Poland and Portugal, while in CR it is not regulated but the practice part is obligatory within master’s degree study. According to the annual report of the Czech School Inspectorate (2015-16), in over 70% of schools, newly qualified teachers benefit from mentoring support. In Poland, the prospective teacher has to cooperate with the support teacher assigned to him during her/his first-year teaching. Within this period supported teachers have to accept mentoring, schedule meetings with the school head and/or colleagues to discuss progress or problems, assist with planning and assessment of lessons, attend professional development activities (courses/seminars, peer review, diaries/journals, participation in other teachers' class activities and/or class observation, team teaching, networking/virtual communities, collaboration with other schools). A positive evaluation is a prerequisite for permanent employment.

Continuing professional development (CPD) status is often mandatory in Europe. (Portugal has a set minimum number of hours, in CR it is considered a professional duty and in Poland CPD is required for promotion or salary progression.) The top-level authority and school-level authorities establish this obligation and also regulate the specific conditions under which CPD plans operate in the Czech Republic and Poland. In Portugal and Poland, CPD is included in the school development plan, must be produced at specified intervals and often has to contain mandatory elements. Only in in the Czech Republic are no mandatory requirements centrally defined; every school is responsible for developing its own CPD plans, which should be discussed with the relevant trade unions.

The needs and priorities of CPD are defined by schools and teachers themselves; N they take into account teachers' individual plans and self-evaluation (in the Czech Republic and

Poland). Teachers are encouraged to participate in CPD as the most common incentive for career and salary progression. Thanks to active participation in CPD, in Poland teachers can gain promotion (in multi-level career systems -PL) and receive higher salaries (in flat-career systems – CZ, PT) or they can take on additional responsibilities (PT, CZ), which may also carry a financial incentive. These extra responsibilities can include management positions, subject coordination, mentoring, career guidance and advisory roles. In the Czech Republic, teachers may have responsibilities as ICT coordinators or developers of education programmes.

Other advantages attract (or force) the teachers for activities in addition to their daily obligations. These include support of a financial nature (i.e., the provision of free courses, funding for schools or grants for teachers) or a non-financial nature, such as the option to attend courses during working hours or take an unpaid study leave (Teaching Careers in Europe, p. 63).

Specialist support for teachers who have pupils with general learning difficulties or specific difficulties exists almost in all European countries. But support for personal and professional matters is not so obvious, certainly not in PT, PL and CZ. Teachers may receive advice and support for managing interpersonal relations or for developing and improving professional practice, but not in dealing personal or health issues.

The proportion of financial resources devoted to various levels of education may be measured in relation to the gross domestic product (GDP). In Poland and Portugal, public spending on primary education relative to GDP fell in the middle of the statistical range among European countries, but in the Czech Republic, by contrast, the level of finance is very low. Teacher competence frameworks were likely created to compare teachers – their productivity and effectiveness in teaching and presenting suitable knowledge to the students, especially 21st-century skills. The framework for measuring teachers' competence has been developed by the top-level education authorities and was supposed to be comprehensive enough to allow it to be used throughout all stages of a teacher's career, taking into account ITE and CPD (Teaching Careers in Europe, p.14).

In-service appraisal identifies good performance and leads to the awarding of bonuses, salary progression or promotion. Teachers' are registered in the formative evaluation, which provides feedback and determines professional development needs. Teacher appraisal is regulated on the highest levels in these three countries; moreover, in the Czech Republic it is required, but without specification. According to universal law for employees, the National Labor Code, employers evaluate employees. "School leaders as employers have a duty to evaluate the quality of teachers but are fully autonomous in determining how this takes place"

(Teaching Careers in Europe, p. 84). Nor does Poland monitor the appraisal system. In Portugal monitoring is occasional because of the 2008 reform highly contested by teachers' unions. Monitoring is continued through external contractors on behalf of the top-level education authority. New teachers are not appraised in CR and PT, and in PL it is done at the end of the induction period.

In-service teacher appraisal is considered an evaluation of individual teachers in their profession. First of all, it provides important feedback for teachers, and then it should determine salary progression, readiness for promotion, professional development needs, and underperformance. All these factors depend on teachers' employment contracts. In CR these aims, and outcomes are provided locally or as part of school autonomy.

In Portugal salary progression and rewards are currently suspended. But legislation provides for teachers to be evaluated and considered for salary progression every four years. Even if their performance is declared „very good” or „excellent” at two consecutive appraisals, they may receive a salary increase in a shorter period or an extra month's salary.

In Poland rewards are given to teachers who are considered to be performing in an outstanding way but have not applied for promotion (on their own). They may be given for introducing innovative teaching practices or for exceptional performance in normal duties. Promotion can allow a teacher to step to a higher career level or gain a salary increase.

The practical aspects of teacher appraisal involve appraisers (staff) and their responsibilities, the frameworks for these evaluators, the methods or evaluation instruments, and the existence of rating systems. The evaluation of teachers in European countries is really diverse; teachers are evaluated both internally and externally. The different processes are carried out at various times in a teacher's career. Most often (in three-fourths of EU countries), school leaders are fully responsible for the process. In the Czech Republic, a teacher appraisal is based on the opinion of only one type of appraiser. In PL and PT appraisal also includes some manager, mentor or peer evaluator. In Poland, even the parents' council can add a non-binding opinion to a teacher's performance appraisal.

These frameworks reflect the aims of the appraisal system in a given country. In CR, as stated previously, appraisals are structured by the local or school autonomy. PL and PT have specific appraisal frameworks that describe teachers' duties and code of conduct while considering the school's development plan or internal policies. The formal rating systems exist in less than half of European education systems.

In Poland, the ‘performance assessment’ is given in writing and concludes with ‘outstanding’, ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ descriptive grades. In the CR, the rating system is not used.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that the current transformation of the entire schooling, elementary education and higher education of future teachers must be based on the principles of humanization and democratization, built on the “old” principles of Comenius (which I explore say in the next chapter and must aim at a comprehensive cultivation of a child’s personality. Educational goals should be set in the order of attitudes (to themselves, people, nature, knowledge) and moral values, then skills (working with information, quality communication, cooperation, discussion, problem-solving) and knowledge only third.

5.3 The graded school and the trivium

In chapter 3, I described the graded schools more through the lens of the American system or history, drawing the theory from Tyack and Tobin’s article. The graded school was once a deliberate invention, “new “before the American Civil War (1861 to 1865) and after. American society needed educational reform: dramatic changes had taken place in curriculum, the student body and the overall purpose of education itself. “Industrialization, urbanization, and increasing immigrant populations led to the need for a mass public school system that would provide basic values and skills for its students and future American citizens” (Yuh, 2015, p. 333).

But what about the structure of graded schools in Europe? When and why was this structure first suggested in Europe? I omit the Middle Ages, i.e., the monastic and church schools, and I emphasize the fundamental educational changes in the Czech education system at the end of the 18th century, when the schools were significantly reformed. The state started to be responsible schools and schooling, and a compulsory general educational was introduced. In the Terezian era (the reign of Empress Maria Theresa from 1717 to 1780), illiteracy was perceived as a brake on social progress. Elementary schools were for everyone, but middle school mostly included only children from wealthier strata. At that time, elementary schools included the trivium (first and second class), primary (three classes) and normal (four classes). Schools did not follow up on each other, did not continue in a linear fashion; they were always elementary schools, but they differed in the level of the education they provided and in their graduates’ perspective.

Trivium schools taught the three basic skills: reading, writing and counting. They were **rural**, in the parish; **main** and **normal** schools were in larger cities. The crucial curriculum – the trivium was taught in all three types of schools. This elementary education inaugurated in 1774 was valid until 1869, when a new law was issued in the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Vališová, 2011).

The graded school structure was created slowly and naturally, based on society's needs. One-class schools – ungraded schools, in which children of different ages attended the same class – were gradually eliminated except in the villages. Probably from the beginning of schools, knowledge was collected into subjects. The essentials – counting, writing, reading – were the subjects of the trivium. Then, according to need, came what was necessary and practical –for example, work activities (different for girls and boys), knowledge of farming, business. Religion was a compulsory part of education in schools; secularization occurred only after 1870.

In my search for the roots of the graded school, I should mention the well-known Czech pedagogue, philosopher and theologian John Amos Comenius (Jan Ámos Komenský, 1648-1670), considered the father of modern education. His thoughts and opinions on pedagogy in his *Great Didactics* (*Didactica Magna*) are part of modern-day pedagogical methods and directions, implemented, of course, in an appropriate way. Although in his time all social life was influenced by religion, he rightly deserves that educators today draw on his thoughts. From his religious writings can be drawn his humanitarian, educational and moral principles. In his work, I can also see a hint of the graded school.

From his pedagogical principles, I would point out that Comenius was pushing for school for all: boys and girls, rich and poor. If people were educated, he thought, they would think more about things; their options would open up, and they wouldn't have time for socially undesirable activities. He wanted general schools called the Workshops of Humanity in which everyone should be taught everything. They should teach people to be rational and wise, careful in their activities and their hearts; they should be pious (Komensky, p. 95).

In the *Great Didactics*, he referred to a “four-part school workshop by age and school success” (Komenský, p. 223). He also gave an example of how a school should work: as a craftsman's progress, learned by working over the years. Education should progress similarly. Within a few years, “a full circle of education will be discussed, gradually during the youth to the manly age (24 years), when one should be ready for the tasks of life” (Komensky, p. 234). He divided the stages of life into four six-year periods, when the second part (ages 6 to 12) falls into an elementary school, he said general, in the mother tongue.

The task of the elementary level was to exercise the “inner senses,” which meant the acquisition of experience not only in the practical way (perceived by all the senses, in today's terminology), but also in the figurative way, to think more about things. “Children have to use pictures and memory, learn to read, count, write, weigh, measure, draw, sing, learn something by heart” (Komensky, p. 235).

In his concept of elementary (general) school at a given historical time and in given social conditions, declared, among other things, the following principles:

- Children should start their education in schools where they are taught in their mother tongue (an unpopular opinion at that time, Latin was preferred by the highly educated). There are not only Latin but also other languages. The school must take care of the common people, so it could not talk to them in strange tongues.
- If children were to be raised as human beings rather than animals, they should be raised together. Inciting, encouraging and stimulating the desire to learn should be a common aim, without contempt or mocking over others.
- We cannot let the child decide in his sixth year of life what suits him, what to look for in life. That is premature. He does not have enough mental abilities, and his own desires should come later.
- The main task of elementary school is to teach children all the basics they will need throughout their lives.
- The pansophic principle is one of the important access to education: that everything must be taught to everyone, as a guiding basis for education, something like universal education
- Children should work this way for six years, divided into six classes, preferably in separate rooms, so as not to interfere with one another.
- For each class, there should be special books containing all the curriculum for the class. Books differ in form rather than content, and each book will lead children's understanding differently, becoming progressively more specific and more difficult. It gives the children a new way of seeing the same things and new pleasure in learning.
- Four hours a day are devoted to public lessons. In the morning, mind and memory are educated; in the afternoon, hands and voices (Komensky, p. 246).

I chose those principles that are related to the graded school or are current to date.

Therefore, I should finally mention his idea of pansophism-in his time he wanted to destroyed tradition, that knowledge is the privilege of the chosen. He emphasized, that all the people possess reason and desire for knowledge they must have unlimited access to knowledge and science (Lukaš, 2014). At the same time, these democratic views are close to today's opinions, that deep transformation of human society is only possible by means of well-organized education.

“The modernity of pedagogical ideas of John Amos Comenius, the creator of the school bell and 45-minute lessons, has been permanently present in the life of school for 355 years. His organization of the class-subject-lesson school system, defined subjects, a special book as a source of knowledge for each subject, and precisely determined the beginning and the plan of work for annual, monthly and daily teaching (and these complicated innovations of that time have not changed up to the present” (Lukaš, p. 39). Next, he described teacher-frontal instruction, as well as ideas of life-long learning.

Over the centuries graded schools have persisted within the “Grammar of Schooling” and proved to be the most effective and cheapest way of schooling, most often used in Europe and the United States. In addition, there are many innovative schools and innovative approaches, or at least innovative methods. But the graded school holds a firm position.

In the theoretical part of my dissertation, I tried to explain all the keywords and themes related to my work. I appreciated the fact that I could do the research in the field of study closest to me: elementary education. I summarized current conditions for elementary teachers' work and mentioned some fundamental differences in practice in the Czech Republic, Poland and Portugal. I mentioned, generally, the professionalism of teachers and their possibilities for reflection and critical thinking, competence, influencing the school culture and, accepting changes. I drew the theory of change mostly from the article on “Grammar of Schooling. Mainly, I continued to use this theory in my research and data analysis. I briefly described the situation after the overthrow of authoritarian regimes, when it was difficult to change people's thinking and, at the same time, to change the work of the schools.

Thanks to the critical theory of Paulo Freire and others, I could approach teachers' personal possibilities and courage, and describe whether they fully adhered to traditions and values of the past, or partly adapted to change or found their own paths.

EMPIRICAL PART

Chapter 6 *METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF RESEARCH*

The aim of the chapter on methodology is to provide a clear view of how the researcher could acquire new knowledge in his work. The EDiTE project, in which the main output is a doctoral dissertation was designed for three years; therefore, the research had to be carried out within two years. I found this is not a long time, and many things have been changed from my original intentions, presented at the first EDiTE summer school in Brno. The main reasons for the changes were mainly my lack of research experience, as it was my first research work, and the short research time. That is why I made a huge change right from the beginning, giving up the action research after my first experience in Polish schools and choosing only phenomenographic design instead.

At first, I was continually studying literature, different approaches and opinions on qualitative research and. Then, with the first interviews in schools and problems in meeting with teachers, I made some adjustments and produced my finished work. During the research, other key topics emerged that deserved further development. Along with the topic of parent-school relationship, on which I wanted to focus from the beginning, the topic of the amount of work teachers do was often discussed: what are their duties, and what is "extra work." In addition, it has been impossible to avoid the current problematic topic of inclusion, especially in Czech schools.

On the theme of parent-school relationships, I wrote an article for a professional journal. During the research, I found the teachers' narratives to be an interesting source of data. So, teachers from other schools were asked to express their opinions. The text of the narrative and its main question are included in the appendix 5.

The research sample was further expanded with a view to my stay in Portugal, where my research was limited because of the language barrier. Only teachers who speak good English could be interviewed; otherwise, the answers would have been very distorted. But I have visited several Portuguese schools and included in the survey all my findings on Portuguese education for comparison.

6.1 Research design and research problem

The contradiction between tradition and innovation is always a basic question of society. As Hendl quoted from the book "Otto's Teaching dictionary", pedagogy is considered a practical science that strives for change. The task of pedagogical research is to describe change in education. This research is also an exploratory study. Its goal is to explore unknowns, define hypotheses and questions, or even propose a theory to prepare for further research (Hendl, 2005).

In qualitative research it is permissible to reformulate research questions, to take "steps back", to supplement research methods or reconstruct a research sample. Because qualitative research is very flexible, researchers use it to investigate phenomena that they don't know enough about.

I will supplement phenomenography grounded primarily in interviews with observation of everyday school life, namely space and time organization, ways of communication and other school-based processes and phenomena. As the main purpose of my research, I would like to learn from teachers their very subjective feelings and opinions about their work. My intent as a researcher conducting qualitative research is to use a variety of techniques and methods to investigate and describe how people (teachers in my case) perceive, experience and create social reality (Švaříček, 2007).

I describe the condition for applying changes in teachers' practice and the possibility of changing their consciousness from established traditional practices to progressive changes in teaching. In my research, there is one main variable: the "Grammar of Schooling" in teachers' consciousness and practice. I want to address what makes the adherence to certain well-established rules, and vice-versa, what makes certain changes possible.

There were decided about critical form of research. This form can be based on critical theory and can equally be built on the concept of feminist research. Critical research deals with marginalized and oppressed groups in society as well as with factors of democratization social relations (both its stimulators and inhibitors). What does critical qualitative research mean from the perspective of critical educators?

Not only is the action research supposed to lead to change, but also the critical researcher should similarly try to illuminate myths and illusions and help overcome certain injustices that can occur in society, in this instance at school. Just as a reminder of these problems, a researcher forces teacher to think about the subject.

Paulo Freire called the respondents in his research partners. He dipped into their way of thinking and wanted them to think about their thinking. Together teachers learned to think critically. These are the principles on which critical research is based, and which are the background of this research and at the same time in phenomenography:

1. **The critical perspective** is interested in changing the world, not merely describing it. It's about an explanation of the type of questions -- how, how much and so on -- but also **WHY** (whom does it serve)?
2. **Critical perspectives** believe in the importance of changing individual and group consciousness to enable social change to evolve (Hendl, p. 144).

Critical qualitative research should therefore confront social injustice in some parts of society and seeks for factors of changes.

Research designs are different procedures used in qualitative research. Hendl points out that there is no generally recognized way to define or do qualitative research (Hendl, 2005). Phenomenography was chosen as one of the newest types of qualitative research, and interpretations of it often differ. In my case I needed to research how teachers perceive and understand their practice in its specific context. Phenomenography offers a way to discover links between consciousness and attitudes toward the reality in which people live. The concept of consciousness is one of the main analytical categories in critical research.

Simply put, in this work the common question **WHY** has become a link between critical research and phenomenography. We can say a phenomenographic design exists. I attempted it in this research, which consists mainly of interviews and narratives, with the researcher in the field questioning teachers and observing their practice and working in the classroom (Hendl, 2005).

Phenomenography investigates the content of consciousness – subjects' thinking about particular phenomena. In addition, critical thinking engages the issue of human consciousness – a consciousness of itself. Paulo Freire and his successors have tried to explain how school is important to the awakening of pupils' perception of their own uniqueness, a potential to transform the traditional “banking system” of education (the passive acceptance of the knowledge and opinions of others). This is the first major example of the “Grammar of

Schooling”. Similarly, I see the problems in teachers and their thinking; hence I will use in my work all of Freires’ types of consciousness – naïve, magical and critical.

In my work I deal with such issues as the goals of primary education regarding children, parents and teachers. My main question concerns the teachers’ consciousness of their thinking ability (according to Freire) in connection to the established, traditional, conservative paradigms of schooling and education. Teachers are often involved in the traditional paradigm; they believe in myths and stereotypes about school education. They have their own experience, and they probably have mental and emotional obstacles to changes in their learning in the context of the democratization of education.

Table 3: STRUCTURE OF CONCEPTUALIZATION OF RESEARCH	
RESEARCH SUBJECT	“Grammar of Schooling” internalized by teachers and used by them in their everyday practice.
MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION	What kind of Grammar of Schooling do teachers in the Polish and Czech schools internalize and practice? How does “Grammar of Schooling” inhibit teachers from changing their consciousness?
	Because of the complexity of the grammar of schooling I have chosen only a part of it: educational interactions in a school’s teaching and relations with parents in early education as its core elements for creating a transformative and democratic community.
SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do Polish, Czech and Portuguese teachers understand and practice their role in educational interactions? 2. How do Polish, Czech and Portuguese teacher understand and practice their role in relationship to parents as subjects of education? 3. How does the grammar of schooling differ in the consciousness and practice?
METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH	Qualitative approach; phenomenography Theoretical underpinning: critical pedagogy, especially P. Freire’s types of consciousness
RESEARCH DESIGN	An approach to research: phenomenography Data collection: interview, narrative, non-participated observation, Data analysis: phenomenography

6.2 Research aims and research questions

Research on democratic teacher professionalism is expected to inform the larger field of social theory focused on contemporary democratic cultures in a European context. I expect my dissertation to offer insights into how teachers' work adapts to changing systems of professional competencies as their teaching and learning cultures transform. Using the phenomenographical approach, I would like to learn how the teachers' consciousness strengthens and how it limits their attitudes toward change. I tried to identify what the content of the "Grammar of Schooling" is for Czech, Portuguese and Polish teachers and how it influences the process of generating practice-relevant ideas about teaching in different cultures under systemic change.

Because I have a personal experience as a teacher in Czech elementary schools, I am ultimately interested in developing and implementing new possibilities for teaching children in the changing social, economic and political conditions that have transformed schools and affected teachers in Central Europe since these countries joined the European Union. I have described the changes and their influence through the lens of teachers: how they have shifted relations between the school's subjects, how they have affected their attitudes toward democracy, and how they have played into the teacher-parent relationship.

I have chosen the "Grammar of Schooling" as a paradigm through which I have investigated and described the deeply seated beliefs, stereotypes and unconscious practices in everyday education. In my phenomenographical study, consciousness is analyzed through the meanings given by experienced actors and their perception of the possibilities of changing their educational practices. Teachers' perception of their potential to generate positive changes could contribute to the improvement of conditions for teaching and, at the same time, improve the learning of pupils while creating a democratic community of social actors in education.

According to A. Męczkowska, in this case the ontological assumption of the non-dualistic type of relations between the subject and the object of cognition is considered as constitutive beings. Both objective and subjective elements of cognitive relation are in this sense unified, because it is assumed that "there is no reality beyond consciousness, and that there are no such forms of consciousness that would not be related to experiencing reality; the relationship between man and the world can only reflect in the area of subjective awareness." (Męczkowska, 2002, pp. 19) Therefore, knowing what kind of the "Grammar of schooling" is in the teachers' consciousness will allow for intentional action to change it-

Methodologically, my qualitative research is grounded in phenomenography, based on the analysis of specific cases and the focus on the views and feelings of teachers toward the continuing changes. Educational sciences offer many different definitions of aims or goals of research. Usually there are three types of aims: cognitive, theoretical and practical, all of which I tried to address in my research:

The cognitive aim is to recognize the contents and structures of the “Grammar of Schooling” in the awareness of early-education teachers in Poland, Portugal and the Czech Republic. Based on interviews with teachers, I established the different categories of phenomenographical research and attempted to find the prevailing opinion of teachers in early education about changes in the schools during their practice, how these changes were perceived, and how teachers are involved in them. Therefore, specific cognitive research in my thesis described the content of “Grammar of Schooling” in the consciousness of elementary teachers in Polish, Portuguese and Czech schools. I interpreted the content of “Grammar of Schooling” in the teachers’ consciousness and tried to explain its role in their consciousness as a possibility for either maintaining tradition or generating change.

My **theoretical objective** is to understand why and how the “Grammar of Schooling” stimulates or inhibits teachers’ openness toward democratization of relationships among the subjects of education. I wanted to find out teachers’ opinions on whether the changes taking place in education (both generally and at their school) are democratic. I classified changes – to the above system and to the changes teachers can make within this system to organize themselves. I was interested in whether the teachers are willing to take part in change; whether the changes appeal to them; whether they consider them democratic in relation to parents and pupils; how deeply the democratic principles are received and learning skills used in elementary education; which democratic principles are popular and promoted in contemporary education.

As **my practical aim** I tried to find ways of changing of traditional “Grammar of Schooling” in teachers’ consciousness, changing the paradigm of school practice in the sphere of relationships among subjects of education within democratization and transformation. I pointed out particular examples of making changes in the teaching practice of elementary teachers. Were teachers’ minds petrified by the “Grammar of Schooling”? After all, the reforms are going to be implemented in the classroom, not in the Ministry or the Parliament.

In my main, general questions, I asked: What kind of Grammar of Schooling do teachers in the Polish, Portuguese and Czech schools internalize and practice? How does “Grammar of Schooling” inhibit teachers from changing their consciousness? As the “Grammar of

Schooling” is the source of persistence of hierarchical relations between teachers and students, as well of protectionism toward parents, the condition for the democratization of the interaction of subjects of education is to free themselves from this grammar. Because of the complexity of GoS, I most wanted to focus on educational interactions in schools’ teaching and relations with parents in early education as the core elements for creating a transformative, democratic community.

I raised other research questions, more specifically:

1. How do Polish, Czech and Portuguese teachers understand and practice their role in educational interactions?
2. How do they understand and practice their role in relationship to parents as subjects of education?
3. How does “Grammar of Schooling” differ in the consciousness and practice?

These questions have been answered in my research. The results are included later in the dissertation.

6.3 Research sample

As mentioned above, teachers were selected for the research from elementary schools in three countries – at first in Poland and the Czech Republic, then during my secondment in Portugal as part of the EDiTE project.

I have had the most research time in Poland; the schools were pre-arranged within our project. and the headmasters cooperated very well. Most teachers were very willing to cooperate, not only with interviews but also with classroom observations, even several times. They showed and introduced me to the procedures and their methods, the classroom arrangements, pupils’ workbooks, assessment sheets and classroom practices. I was even invited to a party for parents and school Christmas markets, and to visit our university jointly with children from elementary school within other projects.

6.3.1 Schools in Poland

Research was carried out first in Poland, from autumn 2016 until spring 2017, at three schools that were our EDiTE partner organizations. One of my three Polish partner schools is not a public institution; the two others are. I asked the directors of our partner schools for help in choosing candidates for my research: the teachers who are willing to be interviewed and share their experience. In Poland I interviewed teachers from grades 1 - 3; with reflecting the differences in the elementary system. The following table gives a basic description.

Table 4: SCHOOLS IN POLAND			
School	1.SPST	2. ZSG	3. FIM
Kind	public	public	private
Number of elementary classes (only 1.-3)	11	8	6
Average number of children in elementary class	24	23	17
Main motto or characteristic			
1.SPST	"Learn about your main abilities and your main talent. This one should be developed to help others. Everyone can be distinguished in any direction just to know their talents. " GRACIAN BALTASAR (1601-1658)		
2. ZSG	A graduate of our school: is cultural and responsible, aims to constructively resolve conflicts in the team, knows his rights and obligations, respect the common good, care for the environment.		
3.FIM	"If we teach today as we taught yesterday, we rob our children of tomorrow" (Dewey, 1916)		

1. SPST This school is one of the bigger (zespół) in Wrocław on the outskirts of the city in a large housing estate. The school is attended by about 600 pupils and at the elementary school about 180. I could have come to know the very active teachers and the director - woman, that is evidenced by participation in many projects of various topics. School motivates teachers to further education. They emphasize the role of the school in respecting the truth and defending the dignity of one's life, one's own and another- that is to say, responsibility for themselves and the results of their education, but also for the environment, and for independence and friendship.

They have the Certificate of School Supporting Ability, and also belong to the Lower Silesian Network of Schools Supporting Talent. That means, they try to manage that each student has the opportunity to recognize and adapt learning strategies to the style of thinking

and the type of intelligence. Teachers recognize and diagnose the student's specific needs in this area and work with student using his talents and skills.

2. ZSG A school on the outskirts of Wroclaw, which grew amazingly over the last thirty years. From a small village school is a large school for children in 1-8. class and there are two classes of kindergarten, too. There is included by many children from foreign countries, especially from Ukraine.

3. FIM To this huge private school is possible to run the admission procedures throughout the whole school year. The primary- elementary school is part of the big school body. Children and youth of all nationalities may be enrolled. The school is completely new, in very modern building. According to school website, aims the school are about fostering international mindedness, supporting active participation in our community and at the same time supporting pupils to gain an understanding of the global impact their actions and values. The school act high confidently, using the slogan as: today's learners, tomorrow's leaders and equally J. Dewey’s words: If we teach today as we tough yesterday, we rob our children for of tomorrow.

In the context of phenomenographic research, a total of ten teachers were interviewed, according to the following table:

Table 5: TEACHERS IN POLAND										
School	1. SPST				2. ZSG			3. FIM		
Teachers	PL1T	PL2T	PL3T	PL4T	PL5G	PL6G	PL7G	PL8F	PL9F	PL10F
Age	30	62	55	58	56	55	49	51	54	28
Class/number	2/22	2/24	3/25	2/22	3/22	2/22	2/26	1/14	1/17	3/20
Practice	3	35	28	32	31	30	20	20	27	4
Interview	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Observation	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Narrative	-	Y	Y	-	Y	-	-	Y	-	-

6.3.2 Schools in the Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic my respondents were teachers from grades 1 to 5 (reflecting differences in the elementary systems in three countries). My subsequent research there took two months and was completed during my secondment in Portugal. I did the last two interviews on Skype.

Table 6: SCHOOLS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC				
School	1.ZSKO	2. ZSSJNN	3.ZSTR	4.ZSCHO
Kind	public	private	public	public
Number of elementary classes	9	5	15	17
Average number of children in elementary class	25	16	24	22
Main motto or characteristic				
1.ZSKO	The main feature of this school is the "family" environment. Each class has a relatively low number of pupils the class			
2. ZSSJNN	The weak cannot be strengthened by weakening the strong. We cannot build a personality if we have taken initiative from the people. We cannot help people permanently this way: we are doing for them what they can and should do for themselves.			
3.ZSTR	Program Step by step			
4.ZSCHO	MENSA (gifted children, especially for math and logic)			

- 1. ZSKO** School is on the outskirts of the city of 46,000. The principal is responsible for three buildings with children fulfilling basic attendance, and two of the buildings house elementary classes. The school has 338 pupils, for whom a variety extracurricular activity such as ceramics, making costume jewelry, flute lessons, guitar games, art, handicrafts, silk painting and English lessons are available. Pupils thus have enough room for self-realization at a convenient location. The school has a "family" environment because of a relatively low number of pupils (according to teachers, but not obvious from the chart). Teachers can have a more detailed overview of each pupil attending this school and so can help them better in further training or problem-solving.

2. **ZSSJNN** This "free (liberal) Primary School" is the private school in the same town as the previous school, created in 1993 by a group of parents and teachers with similar views on education and aims for behaving (leading) their children. The first intention was to create a small school that children and parents would love. The main goal here is to create strong, healthy personalities in their pupils, liberal man. The pupils should know what freedom, respect and tolerance mean. They tried to educate the children in accordance with the famous proverb that each person's freedom ends where another's begin. Children should be able to understand their own person, to further develop their interests and skills, to use their time meaningfully, to behave responsibly toward their health. They take an Individual approach and accept differences, trying to develop each child's of talents and respect and remove weaknesses. Each class has a maximum of 20 pupils, with one place for a child with a health handicap.

3. **ZSTR** The primary school with an amazing history that reflects all the significant events in 20th-century Czech history. It is one of nine primary schools in the northeastern Czechia in the city of 31,000. Pupils attending this school are often from poorer families in the city, but the structure of pupils is different. The building is very large. In the front wing is the first stage (elementary classes - 1.-5.) with three parallel classes and a functioning afternoon with the associated out-of-school activities for children. Some teachers may teach at their own discretion in the "Začít spolu" - Step by step" program. It is used by six teachers from 15 at the first grade.

4. **ZSCHO** The school is in a town of 9,300 on the border of Czech and Moravia. The town has two other primary schools, a practical school and an arts school, for students under age 15. Many children commute from smaller villages nearby. The school is known for its extracurricular activities, especially sports, and is active in Mensa, an organization that brings together gifted children. A psychologist for children and parents is available at school for group and individual consultation.

Table 7: TEACHERS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC										
School	1.ZSKO			2. ZSSJNN			3.ZSTR		4.ZSCHO	
Teachers	CR1KO	CR2KO	CR3KO	CR4SS	CR5SS	CR6SS	CR7TR	CR8TR	CR9CH	CR10CH
Age	45	53	38	47	46	45	59	33	46	46
Class/number	1/30	3/24	4/24	2/19	5/18	4/19	2/16	4/21	4/22	2+4/16
Practice	23	20	15	24	26	23	32	10	23	19
Interview	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Observation	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
Narrative	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

6.3.3 Schools in Portugal

The smallest research sample was in Portugal– four teachers from grades 1 to 4, reflecting the differences in the elementary system. My subsequent research here took three months, from January to March 2018.

Table 8: SCHOOLS IN PORTUGAL			
School	1. EBEBQ	2. EBJSJ	3. ETDP
Kind	public	public	public
Number of elementary classes (1.-4)	4	8 classes, including 2 classes of kindergarten	11 classes
Average number of children in elementary class	16	25	18
Main motto or characteristic			
1.EBEBQ	Paolo Freire: Education does not change the world. Education changes people. People change the world.		
2. EBJSJ	Cooperation with parents		
3. ETDP	Teaching in projects – project EU		

1. **EBEBQ** This new elementary school (built seven years ago) is on the border of two municipalities and operates two kindergarten rooms and four first-cycle rooms, one of which has mixed classes (1. st and 2. grade). This “saved” class serves as Specialized Unit to Support the inclusion of students with multideficiency and congenital deafness or blindness. There are

four teachers, three auxiliary teachers, one joint director for kindergarten and school, and other educational staff members. Other specific features include a multipurpose site that both serves a kitchen and cafeteria and is used for sports and recreational activities.

This school operates an ATL that provides Family Animation and Support Activities (AAAF) for pre-school and ATL children for students in the first cycle. Although there is a parent association, these activities have been managed in recent years by the AEVS. (These abbreviations are parent's organizations in Portugal.

2. **EBJSJ** This school is in the center of Lisbon. The school population is 215 pupils, distributed among a pre-school education room and eight rooms of the first cycle of basic education. The school operates in a building built around 50 years ago. It and the school garden attract tourists: its roof is a public viewpoint with a beautiful panoramic view of the city. The walls of the corridors and two larger rooms are typically tiled with the childish motifs. This school has a parents' organization, a new social body that is, part of the Association of parents for Basic and Secondary Schools. This social group wants parents always to be aware of what the school intends to do and contribute to a better, more active school and student growth. It seeks to contribute to better respond to wishes and concerns of parents and pupils.

3. **ETDP** The biggest school in my research has a pre-school education section, with three groups of children, and several first-cycle classes, from the first to the fourth year. The school was inaugurated in 1961. In 2016-17 it underwent works of requalification.

Table 9: TEACHERS IN THE PORTUGAL				
School	1.EBEQ	2.EBJSJ	2.ETDP	3.ETDP
Teachers	PT1	PT2	PT3	PT4
Age	41	52	48	42
Class/number	2.	4.	3.	1.
Practice	16	32	20	18
Interview	Y	Y	Y	Y
Observation	Y	Y	N	N
Narrative	Y	N	N	N

6.4 Ethical issues

Nowadays, no research paper or article published on the Internet or in a newspaper can ignore the consideration of ethical issues. Dissertation research in particular must have developed and considered ethical and moral rules, which in the event of doubt could prove fair conduct on the researcher's part, preventing circumstances that would prove that he or she made mistake in this ethical field. Ethical issues may concern informed consent, privacy, harm, exploitation, deception, betrayal, confidentiality and trust. The ethical guidelines in social research lie in our sense of responsibility for setting professional standards as a researcher, which should confirm the researcher's credentials or quality for commissioners or the general public. Educational researchers should operate within an ethic of respect for anyone involved in the research they are undertaking (Goodwin, 2003).

"Individuals should be treated fairly, sensitively, with dignity, and within an ethic of respect and freedom from prejudice regardless of age, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, nationality, cultural identity, partnership status, faith, disability, political belief or any other significant difference. This ethic of respect should apply to both the researchers themselves and any individuals participating in the research either directly or indirectly" (BERA, 2011).

As every researcher within the EDiTE program, I ensured that procedures implemented for data collection, storage, protection, retention and destruction comply with national and EU legislation.

During my pedagogical research and data analysis, I took care to ensure and provide a true picture of the situation in schools and to better understand all aspects of education in context because it is fundamental to democracy and social well-being. Phenomenography as a research approach has a responsibility to shape the data according to ethical rules and moral considerations as in other qualitative research. The data are more specific, concrete and open. Specific ethical dilemmas or ethical and moral considerations can appear. In my own case, the relation between teachers and researcher can be very close because of my previous teacher practice in the same branch that involved similar problems, which I should now impartially describe and evaluate in my work. Data are intimately connected not only to my role as a researcher but also to my personal identity.

I would mention that researchers are ethically responsible for results and interpretations. This is a rather philosophical thought, but it can happen, especially in long-term qualitative research with few respondents, that researchers fall into deep sympathy with the people whose activities and opinions are studying. "The sociology of knowledge cautions us to distinguish

between the truth of the statement and assessment of the circumstances under which that statement is made. We trace an argument to its source in the interest of the person who made it, we have still not proved it false” (Becker, p. 240). Researchers may be accused of bias because they serve some actual rules of society -- some moral tradition, actual political situation, or the state of education in a particular country and society. But pedagogical researches are always normative, hence interests of researchers are visible and in accordance with their philosophical perspective.

In the above chapter (6.3) about respondents from my country, the Czech Republic, I mentioned how teachers were selected for my research, how they were made anonymous, and from what source I drew information on individual schools and education systems. Participation in my research was voluntary, and every participant could withdraw data or leave the study at any time. Participants were assured of full anonymity and confidentiality throughout the research. Their names will not be used. The findings are going to be used only for academic purposes -- doctoral dissertation or academic publications.

According to Tracy (2010), procedural ethics suggest that research participants have a right to know the nature and potential consequences of the research — and to understand that their participation is voluntary.” Such procedures not only attend to ethics but also lead to more credible data, and on the contrary, weak consent usually leads to poorer data” (Tracy, p. 847). I detected these feelings in my respondents: when they had doubt or unpleasant feelings, they tried to protect themselves when they feel distrust. Fortunately, these feelings were rare and often changed during interviews, and in later observations, teaching practices were more relaxed. The final data, which some teachers gave me in narratives, were very honest. I think because teachers had had more time to work and to describe the worst sides and the successes in their teaching practice. They may have felt that I would not misuse their information and that I had guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity.

I always obtained voluntary informed consent from all participants, under the condition that they understood and agreed to their participation without any duress before the research got underway. In the Appendices (1,2,3) I attached all the informed consents from the three countries. I sent a specific request to the Ministry of Education in Portugal, where, to record interviews, it is necessary to have official consent to research.

6.5 Methods of data collection

By its very nature, qualitative research uses multiple methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). If we want to understand a phenomenon in depth, then it seems necessary to use the various data sources available to us. In my triangulation approach ¹I rely on: phenomenographical interviews (see above, the chart on p. 47), observations, written narratives, and analysis of the document. Using multiple methods and techniques can help facilitate deeper understanding. I use triangulation not only as a method for validation or verification but I seek to use multiple technique to ensure that an account is rich, robust, comprehensive and well-developed (Cohen, 2006).

6.5.1 Interviews

I have used an interview format because its features are useful in accomplishing my research tasks, both collecting data and interpreting them. "Interviews enable participants— be they interviewers or interviewees— to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view. In these senses the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable." (Cohen,284)

Several types of interviews are described in the literature. Some of them are mentioned below. I am not sure, if in this work can be defined punctually a kind of interview. I could proclaim that the questions of how the interview will evolve depends most on the personality of the particular respondent and on the ability of the interviewer, how is able to react to this situation.

Individual interviews are the most time-consuming and costly approach, the one-on-one interview, is a data collection process in which the researcher asks questions to and records answers from only one participant in the study at a time. "One-on-one interviews are ideal for interviewing participants who are not hesitant to speak, who are articulate, and who can share ideas comfortably. " (Creswell, 218)

The **phenomenographic interview** has a focus—the way in which interviewees understand the chosen concept—and this focus is maintained throughout the interview. Interviewees are encouraged to reveal their qualitative understanding of the phenomenon.

¹ According to Cohen, triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour. It is a technique of research to which many subscribe in principle, but which only a minority use in practice. (112, Cohen)

In the phenomenographic research are the processes of conducting and reading interviews important and the quality of the research will also depend on the initial acquisition of the interview and their transcripts. Transcription is a transformative process and links interview and analysis across the data. "The critical aspects of interviews as living conversations can be identified, namely that they are productive interactions in which the data is constituted, that the interviewee and interviewer negotiate on several levels to produce a shared meaning, and that meaning production in interviews is achieved through language "(Dortins, 2002, p. 207).

According to Bowden Walsh, in the phenomenographic interviews can researcher use two common kinds of question. One of them is in the field of the study about the problem, are open-ended and diagnostic, revealed the different ways of understanding the phenomenon. The other he called 'what is X?' kind questions (Bowden, p.8). Those support topic in research but aren't address so specific. It is more about the skills of the researcher to ask these questions at the right time. There I can see similarity with ethnographic questionnaire and using type of questions such as 'Could you explain that further?', 'What do you mean by that?', 'Is there anything else you would like to say about this problem?' (Bowden et al. 1992). At the same time, the personality of respondents is important and its access to interviewing. In my research, teachers were briefed on what they would be asked about and could express if are willing to attend. I did not want them to be forced to talk to me.

As a researcher and a former teacher, I am aware that I can be influenced by my own perceptions, my own views. I strive to stay vigilant about asking misleading questions, since I need to avoid and reduce incorrect interpretations. I have always tried to respond to the personality of the respondent, his work and life - as part of a strategy to create a pleasant and open climate for the interview. According Marton, phenomenographic interview is a productive interaction, where the experiences and understanding are jointly constituted between interviewer and interviewee (Marton, 1996).

In the six specific topics were asked the teachers to talk and there were developed two different types of approaches. In the case of talk-active teachers who are willing to express themselves about common situations during their daily practices and their attitudes toward ordinary situations in the class, the school and education, were asked minimum number of questions and let the respondents talk as freely as possible, probing them only when can feel that one my topics has not been addressed (Table2). In the case of incommunicative teachers, there were prepared specific questions for each topic (Table 3). I use semi-structured interviews, which according to Gill consist of several key questions that help define the areas to be

explored, but also “allow the interviewer or interviewee to diverge to pursue an idea or response in more detail” (Britten, 1999). Open-ended questions provide the opportunity to identify new ways of seeing and understanding the topic at hand. The flexibility of this approach, particularly compared to structured interviews, also allows for the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants. Semi-structured interviews also allow subjects the freedom to express their views in their own terms (Gill, 2008). The set of carefully open-ended key questions was designed so that it relates both to the general life of the teacher and his / her professional career, and at the same time reflects topics related to the apparently discussed problems of education in the given country.

Many respondents were afraid of the interview and asked me in advance what would happen and what to prepare for. I was delighted with some of their reactions:

... This is a special or a good question. I never thought about it ... (PT1)

I could lead that mere thinking over the question or the given phenomenon can lead the teacher to some changes and a different conception of the phenomenon.

...hm, that's a pity. Maybe we could do it this way ... I like what colleagues are doing. I will have to think about that a little...(CR3KO)

But there weren't only such fruitful or overt negotiations. Teachers who seemed afraid to answer gave short answers and often said I don't know. But these were very few in my research.

As I described above about Walsh's X-type questions, I did not ask in the conversations directly about the issue of change in education. I asked this question only in the narratives and rather as a voluntary expression. I did not force the teacher to answer this question directly. I have tried to look for answers in an indirect way, based on general questions in which I have seen possible sources of change and issues of Grammar of Schooling: tradition, stereotype, innovation, teachers' individual paths. According to Ashworth and Lucas, who described the researcher-phenomenographer (2000, p. 299), “the researcher and the researched must begin with some kind of (superficially) shared topic, verbalized in terms that they both recognize as meaningful. ”

At the beginning of each interview, it was important for me to explain to the teachers what my work is about and why I was doing it. Why did I need their honest opinion for my research findings? How was the description of their work in school and experience relevant to me? Why did I want to observe their lessons and write narratives about changes in education, which are the data necessary for me to analyze and create an outcome space in my research?

I think I gradually gained more experience from phenomenographical interviews. I had to guess how to approach a particular person – whether I should ask questions very openly, or gradually find the information I needed; how much time teachers needed to answer; when I should push them for the answer and when not; how to stop them if they did not talk about the topic I needed.

For some teachers, the interviews were therapeutic. They told me what they needed; they vented to me. I was someone who listened to them, on any point or topic. What does that say about the situation in schools?

On the other hand, mainly at the beginning of the interviews, teachers were afraid of me. Some were worried and looked on me as an inspector. But in time they opened up to me more about how things should work than how they *did* work.

The phenomenographically orientated research required long interviews of an open-ended nature, encouraging reflective articulation of experiences, ideas and conceptions. These ideas were documented and led to the development of phenomenographic categories of description.

Transcription

Methods of recording, transcribing, coding and analyzing language interactions are also employed by researchers and practitioners in such disciplines as developmental psychology, sociology and anthropology, as well as those in professional fields including speech-language pathology, education and counseling (Lapadat, 1999). Qualitative analysis programs exist to aid in the sorting, coding, selection and storage of text data (Miles and Huberman, 1994), but I decide to do these processes manually. Recordings were transcribed so that they could be studied in detail, linked with analytic notes or coded. There are three types of transcription for interview texts: literal, commented and selective (Hendl, p. 212). I used literal transcription because I had texts in three languages to analyze. In literal transcriptions, all sounds are transcribed into the written text, including unfinished words or sentences, repeated words, pronunciation mistakes, grammatical errors and exclamations. I used several symbols in transcription to help with later analysis of the text, but I cannot say that I used a commented

transcription, which uses the symbols much more. I did not apply any text selection, and I also postponed it until a later analysis because of translations from other languages. Transcription of Polish was done by a Polish teacher for my research. I have also dealt with the meanings of some terms, especially the use of metaphors and hyperbole, cynical notes and answers. Similarly, I have also taken advice from Portuguese teachers on the English text. Here information may be distorted because English is native to neither of us.

I created symbols for situations in which teachers hesitated, I felt they did not respond honestly or they avoided the answers during their free narratives. Such cases were rare, but I again had to convince the teachers that the interviews were anonymous. It is a pity when a researcher meets with this situation, but I supposed it could happen in research samples. In analyzing data, I started with the Czech transcription because it was the easiest for me.

6.5.2 *Narratives*

In my interviews with teachers, I often felt that they would have given me more answers if they had had enough time and peaceful place to do the interview. If they were not in a hurry, their answers could be thoughtful. I decided to submit one specific question from my research to the respondents in writing. My intention was to give teachers time to think more deeply and seriously about the question of changes in their practice. They were asked for short narrative accounts of changes in their practice. I received various answers, short and longer, some close to the topic, some not. Some described their practice, some parts of their teaching life, and some really thought about the changes they have had to go through during their practice. Unfortunately, not all of my respondents, did provide this narrative, although they were asked several times. The question was addressed to them after prior arrangement through e-mail, and their responses were sent back to me.

I consider narrative research, biography and stories to be highly beneficial sources in pedagogical research. I see them as a transfer of experience through a researcher to the next generation of teachers. These methods mediate the closest relationship to the teaching profession, highlighting the descriptive character of qualitative research.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) contended that stories from personal experience are both personal and social. They conveyed this stance about stories as the essence of the experiences reported about teachers and teaching in schools. In my research, these narratives as part of teachers' life stories were important, available secondary research instruments. "Though they might be problematic in that verification is difficult (unless other people were present to verify

events reported), stories, being rich in the subjective involvement of the storyteller, offer an opportunity for the researcher to gather authentic, rich and ‘respectable’ data” (Bauman, 1986). For instance, Bruner (1986) echoes the interpretive mode of educational research, regarding much action as “storied text,” with actors giving their situations meaning through narrative.

Research findings from narratives were not coded into substantive categories for generalizations, but I decided to include them in category 5, change, and their subcategories – traditions and innovations. Outcomes are often dialogical, and teachers explain their reasons for making changes or keeping up tradition. They could almost always add other subcategories, as shown in the tables in subchapter 6.6.6.

Narrative research offers practical, specific insights. For participants in a study, sharing their stories may make them feel that their stories are important and that they are heard. When they tell a story, it helps them understand topics they need to process (McEwan and Egan, 1995). Giving opinions is a natural part of life because all individuals have stories they want to share or tell others. In this way, narrative research is so familiar to individuals because it captures a normal everyday form of data (Creswell, 2012).

The aim of the narratives in my work was to approach the term “change” in individual teachers’ careers. Written assignments contained only two questions in which teachers were urged to assess whether they had reacted positively or negatively to the changes they had undergone in their careers. Teachers could describe their “personal” changes in either the approach or the perception of specific pedagogical situations and cases. In this section teachers very often described the current problems in their country or school. (Appendix 6 – example of narrative)

I have addressed all my teachers often and repeatedly about narratives. However, I have not been able to get answers from all of them. I mentioned these numbers specifically in the teachers’ table in the chapter 6.3. In addition, I asked other teachers from the same school, so that a single number of respondents was 10 in the Czech Republic, 4 in Poland and 1 in Portugal. I would like to highlight that in Portugal I addressed only four teachers about the interview as my research sample, and then five teachers about narratives.

6.5.3 Observations and other sources

In addition to the interviews, I carried out classroom observations, in which I investigate the approaches teachers and children take to the classic methods of the GoS or to teachers’ innovation in the classroom. I focus mainly on work methods that can be assessed as

a departure from the classic frontal teaching prevailing in ordinary schools. I focus mainly on work methods that can be assessed as a departure from the classic frontal teaching prevailing in ordinary schools. My observation also focused on such phenomena as time management in the classroom, pupils' seating, initiation of interactions, teacher's language in turning to pupils and textbooks.

Dealing with information about education system in all three countries, focusing on elementary schooling, elementary teachers and pupils at the beginning of compulsory schooling (Theoretical Foundation, chapter 5). I worked with information from websites or texts about the relevant school that I had obtained from the teachers in my research. I also used newspaper information about one school in Poland and Eurydice material. I could see the workbooks and textbooks the children used, and the notes or evaluation systems of some teachers.

6.6 Phenomenography

In the literature on the subject, phenomenography is understood to be a research method (Bowden, 2000, p. 1), a description method (Szkudlarek, 1997, p. 185), or a research approach (Męczkowska, 2003, pp. 71-89). According to John A. Bowden (2000), phenomenography constitutes a research method: a method of collecting and analyzing data.

Table 10: THE NATURE OF PHENOMENOGRAPHIC RESEARCH			
PURPOSE		STRATEGIES	
DATA COLLECTION			
From whom?	Why?	How?	Relation to purposes
ANALYSIS			
How is it carried out? (Detail?)			
Who does it? (How many; expertise; roles?)			
Relation to purposes			
INTERPRETATION			
Context of study			
Context of application			
When no longer phenomenography			

The nature of phenomenographic research (Walsh, page8) John A. Bowden (2000).

Because of my research aims, I took the phenomenographic approach because its basic idea “is to identify and describe individuals’ conceptions of some sort of reality as faithfully as possible. The more faithful we, as researchers, can be to individuals’ conceptions of an aspect of reality, the better we are able to understand learning, teaching and other kinds of human action within society” (Sandberg, 1995, p. 157). According to analysis of the transcripts my interviews, I can see differences among a number of distinct ways of seeing the phenomenon that are apparent in these conversations. I remember, and I take into account that, “If only one transcript is assigned to a particular category of description, it cannot be asserted that it is the individual’s conception of the phenomenon in any absolute sense. The person’s conception of the phenomenon is unlikely to be stable” (Bowden, p.16). Views may change with time and

context. The researcher only interprets the communication with the person and is not "that person" (Bowden, 2000).

According to rules of qualitative research, we shouldn't miss a single interesting insight into the researched phenomenon, and every idea has a chance to be visible. Particularly in phenomenographic research when researchers can consider every interesting opinion. In this aspect, phenomenographic research approaches action research, as Bowden wrote when she described developmental phenomenography. "Do not miss one interesting point" (Bowden, p.14) It is very important in the research on GoS in teachers' consciousness, its stability or changes.

I perceive qualitative research as a superstructure over quantitative, whose statistical data clearly tells us conclusions. So, we know everything, but there is exception that statistical tables cannot capture. It is very fruitful to follow a small number of respondents (10) and interesting to see why one's view differs from the other nine.

6.6.1 Data analysis from the perspective of the theory

The standards for qualitative research are flexible and fruitful. Through my qualitative work I have tried to convince the reader that my study is accurate and credible. Also taken into account is the researcher, who should be reflective and express personal biases, values and assumptions, which can be an important part of the research. The following data analysis reflects the description and themes, as well as their interrelation. I am following also rules pointed out by Creswell, that the analysis involves not only cultural background but also the researcher's own interpretations, which are influenced by his or her cultural background (Creswell, 2012).

"Outcomes of phenomenographic research are represented analytically as a number of qualitatively different meanings or ways of experiencing the phenomenon (called 'categories of description' to distinguish the empirically interpreted category from the hypothetical experience that it represents), but also including the structural relationships linking these different ways of experiencing" (Åkerlind, p. 322). The relation between outcomes elucidates different ways of experiencing the one phenomenon. Phenomenographic research typically gathers a text database. In my data analysis, text consists with divided into groups of sentences, called text segments, and determining the meaning of each group.

I was previously preoccupied with analyzing data in my preliminary research, where my main question was: What types of teacher-parent relationships as an element of “Grammar of Schooling” are internalized and practiced by teachers in the Polish schools? Here I used a method of processing data and creating categories of description² according to Sjöström (2002), who stated that the analysis includes certain steps. *The first step* is familiarization: I became familiar with the material by listening records and reading the transcripts. This step is important in making corrections in the transcripts. *The second step* is compilation of participants’ answers to a certain question. I identified the most significant elements in participants’ answers. *The third step* is condensation, or reduction, of individual answers to find the central parts of a dialogue. *The fourth step* is preliminary grouping or classification of similar answers. *The fifth step* is a preliminary comparison of categories. *The sixth step* is the naming of categories. *The last step* is a contrastive comparison of categories, which includes a description of the character of each category and similarities between categories (Sjöström and Dahlgren, 2002).

At the beginning of my main analytical process, I proceeded in four steps:

- 1. Identify relevant data.** In the first readings, I identified information that I considered unrelated to my topic and unnecessary. I was able to do this during transcription, but I wanted to give myself the opportunity to return to this source of information in recent reading and analysis of the text.
- 2. Deeper analysis.** Here I searched for common topics in the text that I had coded, as well as the initial, given, descriptive categories related to my topic and research questions. Gradually, a new pool of meanings began to emerge, from which I chose new categories of description.
- 3. Relation between categories.** I tried to research which commonalities and differences exist categories.
- 4. Checking reading.** I reread transcripts to find or re-value some data that I added to the analysis.

Codes were created according the text. The most important of these codes were put into the “pool of meaning” (a phenomenographical term), and in the process of categorization, in

² Conception and ways of understanding are not seen as individual qualities. Conceptions of reality are, rather, considered categories of description to used in facilitating the grasp of concrete cases of human functioning.

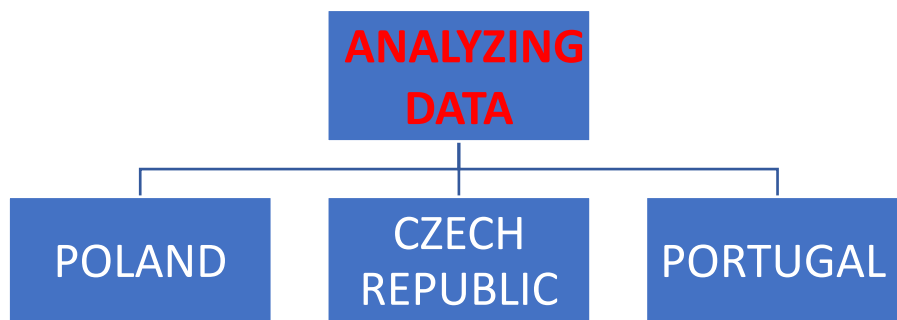
which the researchers describe characteristic features of each conception, new categories developed.



Figure 1: The process of analyzing data

It needs to be stressed that “as a research approach, phenomenography initially emerged from a strongly empirical rather than theoretical or philosophical basis” (Akerlind, p. 321).

The “outcome space” elucidated relations between different ways of experiencing a single phenomenon. The assumption of structural relationships between different ways of experiencing is one of the epistemological assumptions underlying the phenomenographical approach (Marton and Booth, 1997). It provides a way of looking at the collective human experience of phenomena holistically, even though the same phenomena may be perceived differently by different people and under different circumstances. By creating categories, it is necessary to adjust the researcher’s thinking, reflection and new perspective, and it is more important to focus on the collective experience than on individual transcripts.



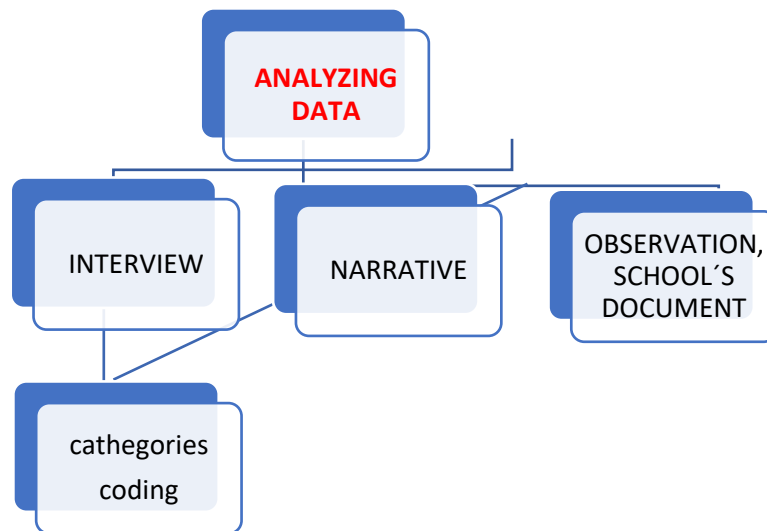


Figure 2: Data analysis

Rather than using statistics (for quantitative methods), I analyzed words to describe individuals' thinking about phenomena. The qualitative approaches most used in educational research are ethnographic design, narrative research design and grounded theory design. Grounded theory is similar to phenomenography (Staudková, p. 448), particularly in data collection and analysis. Conversely, these two methods differ in their results. The aim of grounded theory is the creation of a new theory of the central phenomenon, but phenomenography shows perception of experience through interconnected categories. I prefer analysis by hand because I am analyzing a small database.

In consequence, phenomenography has become a continuation of phenomenological theory, since it creates more comprehensive and developed conceptual instruments (Harris, 2011, p. 110). An important difference between phenomenographic analysis and traditional content analysis is that, in the latter case, the categories into which the utterances are sorted are determined in advance. The phenomenographic process is tedious, time-consuming, labor-intensive and interactive. It entails the continual sorting of data. Definitions of categories are tested against the data, adjusted, retested and adjusted again. The rate of change decreases, however, and eventually the whole system of meanings is stabilized (Marton 1986, p. 42). Researchers who describe phenomenographic research are not united on the formation of categories.

No single question in my interview was directly about the changes that teachers were implementing, or not, in their practice. So, I did not ask the teachers my research question directly, but rather found the answers later in their narratives. I looked for conclusions in the teachers' answers and therefore I need to defend some given categories related to the research

questions. Teachers' answers are often ostensibly related to the topic. It was harder to analyze this data and create new categories. So, I intentionally chose some categories because I am looking for answers to my research questions. Therefore, I have chosen a middle path, which I describe in the next chapter on coding.

If I have to deal with the data analysis according to Marton, I cannot avoid his descriptions of categories, and thus theories of first and second perspectives. These two different perspectives actually correspond to the differences between phenomenology and phenomenography. The first perspective always answers the phenomenological question about particular phenomena and can make a statement about them. The second copes with people's opinions about this phenomenon: why are they thinking this way? Or what do people think about **WHY...** firmly rooted tradition? Any answer to this second kind of question makes a statement about people's conception of reality.

Distinctions are pragmatic and very simple. Following the example above, consider the two statements: "We can change firmly rooted tradition" and "There are people who think that the firmly rooted tradition in our schools should persist." Each statement may be true independently of the other's truth or falsehood. The researcher must verify or disprove the two statements (Marton, 1981, p. 179).

In my case, first-order perspectives (common in phenomenology) could come from questions. Can the teachers adapt to changes in the classroom? I can describe various aspects of Grammar of Schooling in daily practice. But from the second-order perspective (an aim of phenomenography), I should describe why the teachers realize changes or do not, why they hold strictly to Grammar of Schooling or do not, the various aspects of the world of their thinking and consciousness.

To dealing with three factors affected the validity of phenomenographical research pointed out by Dahlin , I extracted from transcriptions distinctive and exclusive categories which are the logical system, then I conformed between results to what I know from previous studies in the field, and to the aim of confirming plausibility of the categories, I checked if they are recognizable as representing actual or possible human experiences (Dahlin, 2007).

6.6.2 Coding: developing a phenomenographic outcome space

Getting started with analysis is very hard. As background, three pillars were necessary: research question, phenomenography, and my theoretical background: critical perspective and the “Grammar of Schooling”.

All interviews were transcribed, and the transcripts were subjected to phenomenographic analysis. I have created codes, “pools of meaning” according to phenomenographic terminology, and then category of description at my own discretion.

As the first phase of the analysis, coding is a selection procedure based on criteria of relevance. Utterances are selected and marked. The quotes (codes) themselves are interpreted and classified in terms of the contexts from which they are taken.

Coding as a research phase is well described in the approach known as grounded theory. If any general theory is to be developed, the whole text needs to be subjected to coding, to uncover the content and formulate the theory. The coding in the phenomenographical approach does not create a new theory, but rather points to important conclusions describing the phenomenon and can suggest the possibility of change.

As codes I used words or phrases that somehow generalize specific phenomena observed in the text. Strauss and Corbin (1990) have described three basic types of coding, which one could simply call the first, second and third readings. Open, selective and axial concepts already express the activity the researcher should focus on when reading the text.

Quotes (codes) in phenomenographical research have two contexts. In relation to how they can be interpreted:

1. They are connected with a particular interview.
2. They help create the common “pool of meanings” to which they belong.

Quotes (codes) suggest individual opinions, while the “pools of meaning” express emerging common consciousness and opinions, which in the next analysis are further selected into “the categories description.” These “categories of description” are then ready to be used in the interpretation of the research results, in my case implemented in the theories of Grammar of Schooling and Freire’s type of consciousness. The phenomenon in question is narrowed down to, and interpreted in terms of, selected quotes from all the interviews.

How is the interpretative work finished? The utterances are categorized on the basis of their similarities, and then categories are differentiated from one another in terms of their differences. Borderline cases are examined, and eventually criterion attributes for each group are made explicit. In this way, the group of quotes is arranged and rearranged, narrowed into categories and finally defined in terms of core meanings on the one hand and borderline cases on the other. Quotes from the data illustrate each category (Marton, 1986, pp. 42-3).

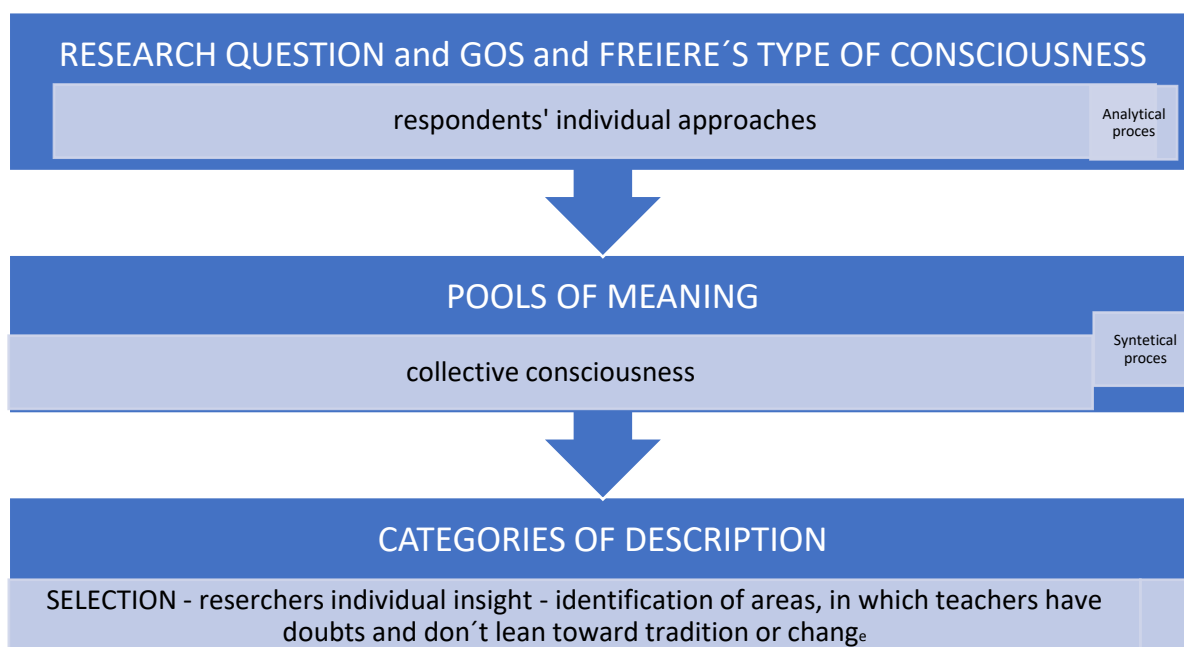


Figure 3: The way of creation of category

6.6.3 Special tools for analyzing data

I prepared special charts for every interview, in which I checked and searched codes and could subsequently create subcategories – pools of meanings (Table 13). I analyzed my data manually. In coding, I always started working with the first interview and created a range of codes (36 codes in first interview in the Czech Republic), then moved on to the next interview. I added the codes to the table and assigned them to the pool of meaning. After completing all 10 interviews, I collected 50 codes after the first reading. Some codes were very close to one another or occurred in a few pools of meaning. I finished this first reading with a slight selecting a few codes, then began to reread the interviews and gradually modify the codes. After a second reading of the Czech teachers' transcripts, I had created so many that it was necessary to reduce them and associate them into fewer categories. I had to deal more with those topics that are closely related to research questions.

Table 11: TRANSCRIPTION FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC		
CODES		POOLS OF MEANING
1A	Variable lesson length	1.Time
2.	Teaching in another class	2. Space
2B	Too many pupils per class	
3A	Advantages, disadvantages of grading	3.Assesment
3B	Giving grades	
3C	Only high grades	
3D	Too much positive evaluation	
3E	Grades throughout the year and final grades	
3F	Testing, exams	
3G	Individual evaluation	
4A	First communication with parents = “rules”	4.Parents relation
4B	Bullying from parents	
4C	Meetings with parents	
4D	Bad experiences with parents	
4E	Help from parents	
4F	Parents in the classroom	
4G	Parents’ bias about school, children	
4H	Interactions between parents	
5A	Problem pupils	5.Relation to pupils
5B	Weak pupils	
5C	Naughty pupils	
5D	Disabled pupils	
5E	Relations in the class	
5F	Problem class	
5G	Grouping children by skills	
6A	Positive feelings of teacher	6.Teacher’s personality
6B	Negative feelings of teachers	
6C	Teacher’s fatigue	
6D	Teacher's extracurricular activity	
6E	Self-criticism	
6F	Own family	
6G	Self-confident teacher	

6H	Satisfied teacher	
7A	Teachers' approach to education	7. Curriculum
7B	What teacher wants and what she must teach	
7C	Curriculum overload	
8A	Time to chat	8. Motivation
8B	Motivation of weak pupils	
8C	Using new or different methods	
8D	Learning what makes pupils happy	
8F	Motivation when the aims are too high	
9A	Motivation through successful activity	9. Relation in school
9B	Support from direction	
9C	Freedom in teacher's work	
9D	Good relations among teachers	
10A	Poor relations among teachers	10. Changes
11.A	Tendency to vary approach	11. Leaving school
12A	Pupils leaving school for poor results or mutual antipathy	12. Inclusion
13A	Assistant in the classroom	13. Money

However, I could place this table in the Appendix, I decided to put it here for clarity of the way of my analysis. After readings and creating pools of meanings in the Czech Republic, I continued the same way for the interviews from Poland and Portugal, with the difference that I used the codes and pools of meanings from the Czech interviews and added the specific codes from Poland and Portugal to the existing ones. But the number of added codes was smaller than I had supposed when I started analyzing data. Finally, I added only two codes from the interviews in Poland and only one from the interviews in Portugal.

Table 12: TRANSCRIPTION FROM POLAND AND PORTUGAL			
3H	Autoevaluation and another method of evaluation – formative assessment	3. Assessment	Poland
3I	Common evaluation whole class	3. Assessment	Poland
1B	Full day in school	1. Time	Portugal

The overviews about answers and codes by particular teachers in each country are in the tables 7, 8 and 9 at the end of this thesis in the Appendix. I did not always find expressions for each code in the single interview.

The data from the observation and study of school documents added interesting insights into the emerging subcategories (most often linked with category 1. about GoS) and confirmed the views teachers expressed in interviews. Data from the narratives related to a very specific issues of change and have therefore been included in the last category of changes, traditions and innovations.

After checking all codes, pools of meanings from first and second readings, and charts that I created during my analysis, I could choose the issues that were important to me and create categories and their subcategories, common to all three countries. Here are examples of my pools of meaning, from which I created subcategories and categories of descriptions:

Table 13: POOLS OF MEANINGS		
Emerging main categories and subcategories	Pools of meanings	
1. MAIN FEATURES OF COMMON GRADED SCHOOL – CHANGES WITHIN GOS	A Space	Hidden space in the classroom
		Small collective – advantages
		Shifts in Poland
		Changing classroom
		Changing teachers in the class
		Group and project work, individualization
		Changing a school as a workplace
	B Time	Children in school – all day
		Obstacles to changing time unit
		Time for teachers – meetings
		Extracurricular activities
	C Evaluation	Grading, unfair evaluations
		A form of parents’ meetings
		Only positive grades
		Testing, selection of pupils
		Physical education, music, weak pupils and evaluation
		Homework – influence assessment
		Individualization or democratic rules
		Written assessment, poor pupils

		Negative evaluation	
		Teacher evaluation	
		Purpose of evaluation	
		Grading – strong tradition	
	D Parents relation		To know about the families
			Create community – activity from teachers
			Parents’ help for school
			Parents’ meetings
			Problems with parents
			Homework
			Examples from own life
			Parents’ competitiveness
			Divorced parents
			Teachers’ responsibility - for what
2. RELATION IN THE SCHOOLS	A Among pupils	Collective, tolerance	
		Parents’ influence	
		Strong friendships for a lifetime	
		Features and behavior from the family	
		Conflicts in the classroom	
	B Teacher – pupils	Teachers’ childhood influences	
		Better, worse classes	
		Elementary teacher as next authority figure.	
		Teacher’s decision - why elementary teaching	
		An individual approach to children.	
	C Relation to administration, Among colleagues	Teachers help one another	
		Bad relations	
		First teacher	
		Improving relations	
		Large schools	
		Psychological or other assistance	
		Number of teachers in classroom	
	Sabbatical year		
3. THE TEA	A Self-criticism	Authority, self-confidence	
		Self-esteem	
		“Reflective practitioner”	

	versus authorities'	Personality and professionalism
	B Relation to curriculum	Overloaded or poor curriculum
		Missed knowledge in curriculum
		Changed curriculum
		Individualization
	C Hidden curriculum	Nonstandard relations with parents
		Relation to evaluation, grading
		Major problems
		Loss of interest in work
		Fatigue in summer vacation, lecturing
		Selection for gymnasium
		Insincere communication
	4. INCLUSION	
		School or special school
		Problem children – is it inclusion
		Assistant, helping teacher
		Repeating the school year
5. CHANGES YES OR NOT	A Tradition	Inherited teaching methods
		The teacher's authority
		Town or village school
		Old tools
	B Innovation= new tradition	Opportunity training, self-education
		Individual innovation
		Freedom of headmaster
		Examples from abroad
		Too many changes

“

I completed this phase of analysis, created categories of description, and checked and assigned meanings, examples and opinions from individual interviews. The results of the analysis were placed in tables and linked according to each category so that they could be used for comparison and creating conclusions related to my theoretical background (GoS and Freiere's consciousness).

According to the phenomenographic approach, the “common consciousness” was sought and created in the analysis of the changes, producing the categories of description. At the same time, I also noticed a connection between categories, and I regularly marked down these contexts on the sheet as a draft I could use later as a description of collective consciousness or, in contrast, I could see differences in views.

Table 14: OTHER IMPORTANT COMMENT FOR INTERPRETING DATA	
INTERVIEWER	
CR4SS	RELATION BETWEEN CATEGORIES 3 and 5 (Teacher’s personality and change)
	She criticized the changes. She has a lot of changes or improvements in her head, and sometimes she unconsciously creates change within established rules.
CR6SS	When and why is a teacher supposed to change practice or methods?

In this section, I have described the ways I tried to obtain data from my interviews within the phenomenographical approach. I have also created a space for explaining or understanding my topic even within a critical approach. As a result of this work, I found the main categories of description.

6.6.4 Categories of description: analysis from interviews

The concept of the traditional education system was anchored in Grammar of Schooling by Tyack and Tobin, who inspired me to do this work. In 1994 they were thinking about why some school reforms and changes persist and some do not. Their conclusion was, in fact, very similar to Fullman's theory of change. In their article, Tyack and Tobin explained the need for building graded schools at the time before 1860. This structure still prevails in school systems in almost all European and other countries; deviations occur mainly in alternative and innovative schools. I have tried to identify in the analysis what changes or deviations from this structure can occur in the work and attitudes of teachers in my research (mainstream) schools.

In interpreting my data, I took over the basic categories in which changes in schools can take place according to these authors, namely space, time, evaluation and relations with parents.

The first major category was created “artificially,” as is typical for grounded theory. But other phenomenographers, such as Bo Dahlin (1999) in his study *Ways of Coming to Understand*, similarly used this way of creating categories in their phenomenographic analysis.

The other four main categories are based on the interviews, from analyzed data. There I highlight the most frequently mentioned items and problems in teachers’ work and teachers’ relationship to them – items that link my research question and the Grammar of Schooling and, at the same time, allow me to evaluate teachers using Freire’s types of consciousness. I chose to evaluate and interpret the results of five main categories, in which I would like to indicate whether certain features of education systems change and what is deeply rooted in the systems of not only schools and teachers, but also public consciousness.

By analyzing the data (from interviews, narratives and observations), the following description categories were identified:

Main category 1: Main features of common graded school – changes within GOS

Subcategories = (pools of meaning):

- a. space**
- b. time**
- c. evaluation**
- d. parent's relation**

Main category 2: Relation in the schools

Subcategories = (pools of meaning):

- a. among pupils**
- b. teacher – pupils**
- c. relation to direction, among colleagues**

Main category 3: The teacher's personality

Subcategories = (pools of meaning):

- a. self-criticism versus authorities'**
- b. relation to curriculum**
- c. hidden curriculum**

Main category 4: Inclusion

Main category 5 : Changes yes or not

- what teachers suggest to change and reasons or deeply relation to subcategories:

- a. tradition**
- b. innovation**

These categories organize further analysis of empirical data.

6.6.4.1 Common features of today's graded schools

a. *Space*

One of the features of GoS is arranging space for teaching and learning. In the traditional school process of education take place in the rooms with closed doors with the black, green or white board on the front wall. Pupils learn sitting at the tables and follow the rules and order. It is easy to recognize that space as a classroom. Everyone experienced it before. It is "normal", "proper". In my research I have try to find how this aspect of GoS is domesticated in the mind of teachers.

The space in these classes is a huge advantage. In addition, the new schools I visited in Portugal are designed in this way. They have spaces for class and space for meeting friends from other classes, or for individual work or teamwork, even laboratories or small libraries. Lack of space is the main drawback of schools in all three countries, which have lots of children and little space. Conversely, enough space and fewer children per class will be one of the main benchmarks of school quality.

Every corner and hidden space in a classroom -- a small hallway, a kitchen, a separate area with two computers -- is a diversion from austerity in an ordinary classroom. These our classrooms, unfortunately and predominantly, still are reminders of frontal teaching of frontal teaching, or Paolo Freire's criticism of the banking system, in which the child sits passively all day and only receives knowledge. Space was often used by an assistant working individually with selected children. These groups don't interfere with each other and at the same time are part of the class. If schools have spaces in which pupils can be divided into groups and at least occasionally work in smaller collectives, they have a better working environment. Teachers welcome this small change and can use this advantage in preparing their lessons:

Here we have about 20 children. It suits me. It is intense and meaningful. Having 30 pupils is demanding, and I would not have a clear conscience for a job well done -- the awareness that I did not teach them what I had to, because in those 20, of course, it is better. I do not think that, as a state, we're so bad about having 30 children in the first classes. (CR7CH)

Why? What do you appreciate in this school? Are you happy here?

I love this school. In the fact, it is a small school, a nice building; the kids are very calm. We can see the playground from the school. Outside, we can better keep students under control, forestall the conflicts in class. On the playground, the conflicts are resolved. They are not brought in the classroom and then, in the class time, we cannot solve the conflicts. We, as adults, can see and take care of 10 people at the

same time. It is not a common ratio. On average, in the school, we have six kids per adult; that does not exist in other schools. We have a lot of things here, a lot of material for science, games, mathematics. The children, maybe because of the playground possibilities, are calmer than in other schools. Parents here are more collaborative. That's why I prefer to be here compared to other schools. (PT1)

Are you often outside?

When my assistant is here, no, because she likes to teach Portuguese and we have to arrange the class, divide it. Although I like to teach math more than Portuguese, I also prefer science, but I have to teach Portuguese in my subject. Actually, my students say I have the more pleasant part of Portuguese – stories and modeling expression of them. I like it. In math, when we share classes with the assistant (at the same time), she goes into the library with the first-year group and spends time there. She leaves with the second class and I stay with the first class. Working with 10 kids in this school is a luxury! (PT1)

For lack of space, large schools in Poland hold classes in shifts. One class is divided into two groups: the first class is taught in the morning, the second in the afternoon. Teachers try to use various options for change space and time – for example, by exchanging classrooms or taking field trips and excursions. Because of the number of pupils in the bigger city schools, a teacher dares not take the children on field trips alone, but has to ask another pedagogical staff member or, most often, parents to go along. These small changes of space are another way for teachers to keep children calm.

We have a lot of physical activity in the classroom, I try, even if there is little room. In the morning, we meet in a circle and talk; it is also associated with moving. The children leap, they show some gestures ... and then others repeat it. They need to release some energy. (PLIT)

This year we are going for a second shift, all year. And they have another English teacher. (PLIT)

At the end of the first class, I organized an integration trip for children and parents. And after that trip, I think, a lot changed. So, we climbed the mountain; we made a bonfire, some sausages. I prepared the competition for parents, for children. It was completely different than in school. Parents had the opportunity to get to know each other and me as a teacher, too, from a completely different angle. (PLIT)

I can change my schedule. I mean, I have it; it's limited there; it's supposed to be 90 hours a year in art, in working – technical subject 60. Anyway, I have to abide by this limit. I like it; Depending on how I think, I can do more art, technique or music. And everywhere you can do something manually, touch, arrange....(PL5G)

I have 22 students, and I should have a quiet corner somewhere. I have the benches on this rug, but it is not enough. We need to have fun, family feeling, play games, which I spread over 10 minutes in lessons, some blocks. But then a mess, you have to straighten up. It would be cool to be able to curtain it off. ...It would be nice to have such facilities, small rooms. We are struggling all the time with a lack of space. We do not like bells in these younger classes. Some older students come down to us in the corridor and cannot be here, chatting is too loud. It would have to be quite a separate wing. (PL5G)

I try to follow the students; I do not try to put them in any such templates. I can never predict how my lesson really will go; I cannot quite determine it. That's why I like the methods by Freinet: I am searching experience and creativity. We go on trips, observe nature. Children have specific tasks and work in groups. I like it.

I took the 6-year-olds in my class. Not all of them could read yet. Some of them, a little. So, I found that we should focus on talking. So, we talked a lot and read books. The children learned it. Now, they are able to say their sentences very nicely. I always teach them how to put their thoughts on paper. It is difficult at the beginning. They make a lot of mistakes, but I say, "Do not worry about these mistakes. These corrections in red, you will then rewrite, and next time it will get better." So now we are writing already the ads for books! (PL2T)

There is a boy who is just like a storm. Sparks could be flying. He is in a terrible mood with the general answer "no." As a teacher you have to find the right moment and way when you have to clean up the atmosphere and we can continue working. As a teacher I cannot regret the time for this "calming" because without managing this situation, it is impossible to continue learning. I also see that children have to go an afternoon shift, so often we start outside – on the playground, some organized activities. I always leave them a little time when they can play together and do what they want. For them, it is simply a reward. (PL2T)

And what disturbs me at work? Shift work for the morning and afternoon. It has to be because of the number of pupils, classes. We cannot be located in other way in our school's condition. It is a difficulty. (PL4T)

Space in schools is really limited. Children sometimes move to specialized language classes, have a computer room or kitchen, or move to a space with an interactive whiteboard. Even at an elementary level in some schools, children often change teachers for different subjects. It is a change for both teachers and children. In general, changing the space for children and for the teacher itself is a pleasant refreshment for both sides:

And most of all, I think the teacher is resting from them, as I had it with the previous five-year-classes when they sucked my energy. I was going to other classes for rest. (CR4SS)

If the teacher has to teach everything, the level would be a bit lower. When someone really does music, she has a relationship with the music. Why she would not teach it, when the other guy knows how to teach PE? It's better for the kids, not only in organizational terms. As a PE teacher, I can teach PE in another class, and the other teacher can teach art in my class. (CR7TR)

I have been teaching all the subjects in my class, even English, and religion with the priest. And I'm still teaching a first-class boy with autism and disability, only English. This is a challenge, but we have small successes. He is in the integrated class and has individual learning.

We sometimes have lessons in the ethnographic museum. Pupils can model with wax there and won't get burned! It is not possible in our school. The same with cooking. We are limited; 26 children in the kitchen is unimaginable, working with dough and ovens. They learn how to prepare a baking tray and how to cut with a sharp knife, how to make sandwiches; we even grow onions and sprouts in the garden. There are lectures: academy of nutrition. It's great. There is more equipment, and the environmental is adapted for children. But we have to pay for it and traveling costs. (PL7G)

I teach so-called early childhood education- elementary subjects, which is native language – Polish language; mathematics and socio-natural environment, nature, society. And also, computer classes. Then, there is a teacher who teaches art, others for music, PE and English. Children in my class have six teachers for required subjects, then two teachers for afternoon club activities, and some pupils have extracurricular classes with other teachers. (PL8F)

They have the teacher for English, music, art, PE, German and Spanish, about 5-6 teachers. I have computers with children.

The changes are going in both a better and a worse direction. I am totally for withdrawal of the gymnasium. We could have early school education, definitely from grades 1 to 3 and a second cycle from 4 to 8. The class would be close to another one, with one teacher as a tutor. And I admit it is difficult to leave my class, let it go into the wide world – for the children and the teacher. (PL10F)

I teach everything, even PE and computers in the second class. I still have compensatory classes in pedagogical therapy in younger classes, and I have individual teaching of an included child, from the third grade.

This is good because the children get used to the fact that there is one more teacher, and the sister comes for religion. They can learn that not everyone has the same character, that not everyone requires the same, and there are other people, too. (PL6G)

In elementary school, I associated with this problem of space teachers' opinions about

the alternation of teachers during the day in one class. I looked at whether it is an advantage and what changes are welcome in this regard. I intentionally did not evaluate this specific issue in the graded school regarding subjects (each teacher different subject) because that is now how elementary classes are taught, although there are exceptions. In the first classes, teachers strongly support the family approach, and then it is common to gradually add teachers alongside the main classroom teacher for other subjects.

I think for the first and second class I would have left one teacher. But when it comes to some subjects, maybe music, it is probably not the wrong thing. Children are then happy to hear someone else. So, when there's someone else there but you predominate, I think it's okay, but in fourth or fifth class. Before they go to lower secondary education, where they have many teachers, it must be a shock if they are used to having only one teacher all the time. (CR2KO)

Certain concepts of space may also be seen in group work and in projects where the teacher divides children in the classroom. She wants to help herself, create change, another “space” for work.

...motivational game for everything, mainly for relationships ... how they help one another, it's not about grades. As you start giving grades, children will vary widely in skills. I have other dividing ... a class divided into groups. Some work orally; others have to write. Then we turn around. So, you have two classes in one an hour. That's why I enjoy it and what gives me energy. (CR5SS)

...one can try group work. Kids are very grateful for poems, songs. I really enjoy it ... I run extracurricular activities - English, first class, I love it ... although I don't envy my colleague the first class with 30 pupils all week... I enjoy the extracurricular activity. (CR3KO)

Because we cannot be alpha and omega. We cannot be everything. Every person is a specialist in something, more individually ... I am more creative and handier, for example, so I can lead the children in visual art and I know that it will be really satisfying for all. (PL2T)

My respondents have internalized the classroom as the most common space for teaching and the strongest element of GoS, which is difficult to change or imagine in another way. It is a practical matter: they have to keep the pupils together, so for this social group is the classroom the best solution. However, I gave some examples of how this stereotype may be disrupted and more is explained in chapter 7.1.

b. Time

Eroding a standard element of GoS such as time (a basic time unit for a lesson is often 45 minutes) is very difficult under given conditions in all three countries. Although teachers would like to “destroy” this tradition, it is not possible because a class is taught by someone else, or a noisy class disturbs another one that does not have a break, or there are school time limitations -- the lunchtime, class change, gym class, etc. Teachers interfere with these stereotypes, for example, by expanding project teaching, in which the individual objectives and time units are synthesized into a single unit. If teachers want, they can extend the learning unit, especially for the purpose of completing pupils’ work -- not only in painting, but also in the main subjects.

I thought you had such freedom, you can extend your classes, when you don’t manage your work in 45 minutes. Can you exceed the lesson time? No, but when I’m in my class on Monday and I teach it there for five hours, I can afford that. There are situations where it is not possible. (CR6SS)

Children generally spend more and more time at school, so there is the possibility of building another timetable in the future. Schools exist to meet the demands of parents and society. For example, in Portugal, a child can be at school from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., an incredible 11 hours. Unfortunately, it is very common, and this is associated with other issues, as preparation for school, meaningfulness of homework and afternoon activities. Schools themselves increasingly take care of children's out-of-school activities, I would also emphasize their “watchdog” function. All extracurricular activities are a disruption of the standard, but fortunately, teachers are often inclined toward them, although these activities are difficult for them.

.. when one realizes what the children will remember, once... The teacher did something crazy, like having a rabbit in the classroom or taking them to the mountains for a week. (CR3KO)

I like novelties; I like to prepare something new; I like to look; I like to find out. I want to give these children something more, not only books and curriculum. Well, I’m trying. We go out a lot, all kinds of museums, philharmonics, theaters. Most of the children do not go to such places at all, so you also have to teach them this culture and behavior in these places. (PL8F)

During lessons, we take short breaks. We already have such special, practiced games. Most often, these are gymnastic exercises, which can wake children up during the lessons, cheer them up a little and stimulate them to continue learning. (PL10F)

The other side of the pupils' life is more important than school. School is the place where you spend 12 years of progress. Childhood is a much shorter part of life, and it should be more free and joyful. Children should play sports and whatever they want. We need to do other activities, like dancing, religion, scouting, that are not connected to school. (PT1)

Pupils are in school all the time. At 4, we finish classes; then they wait for their parents, who come at 5, 6 or 7. The teachers leave at 4 and pupils stay. It is not a good timetable. In fact, in elementary school, at this stage, the most important subjects are PE, music and art. Yes, about creativity, cooperation, relaxing... Most people are saying that sports are not so important. But by playing basketball, you must do things after things, your brain is starting in other directions, it is important! It is good for cooperation; you have to work with other people. This is a necessary skill throughout life, too... everything about life and society, social skills. (PT2)

In the context of time, I would mention that teachers would spend free time with kids if they had this opportunity. What are they leaving out because they don't have time? It is linked to the curriculum category? What do teachers consider useful or important?

We need to chat, because the kids cannot put a sentence together. Of course, for the effectiveness of teaching time, the child responds in one word, and so we replace this shortage with the morning chat. First, we exercise, and then we talk. Everybody tells, what he or she did over the weekend, not just talk, but listen to others, too! (CR4SS)

We have such an appointment class. It is usually the last day, on Friday, or an hour of reading when we encounter a topic, so they like to talk then about themselves. Or when a problem arises. But I do not think it's public humiliation of kids before all. I do not like it. So, we are speaking nicely, what happened, what went wrong. (CR6KO)

I would like to have more freedom and a little more time to do things that interest my children. For example, experiential teaching, organize trips, action. However, I feel that I have had little time recently... I use the program based on the core curriculum... the program put together by the publishing house, so I use given books. There is a lot of knowledge and work already. I have to teach children to read, how to count. In first class. To practice it well, I have to devote a lot of time to it. These are smaller, younger children, and some things must be practiced in other ways – remembering to play, remembering to move around. (CR6KO)

I described time as an element of GoS and reasons a change on this issue in today's school are so difficult. There is the question of how teachers can spend time with children and what kinds of activities they can choose. If teachers have to keep strictly to the curriculum, their choice of activities is limited, and their autonomy, too.

c. Evaluation

Issues of **evaluation** and in particular grading are very problematic, especially because there are no clear rules. And this obscurity creates unpleasant situations for everyone: teachers, pupils and parents. However, for children in elementary schools, assessment has significant and often never-ending consequences. In Poland society dealt with this phenomenon by no longer grading. In Portugal, children's results and grades have recently been posted publicly, on the walls and boards in the schools, and this practice still persists in some places. In the Czech Republic, this problem is not talked about. The society cannot offer an easy solution; we do not know what we want. In the past, rules for grading were set more strictly. It is not clear whether this is good or not; teachers' views are quite contradictory. I also deal with this in the chapter on the hidden curriculum.

*I think that evaluation is very difficult. Yes, maybe because we have something like that; in this school is evaluation works like this, in another one it works like that. It is different in every school. And even in the same school, there are some differences because the teachers are different. But we have some kind of similarity. **Is it possible to make rules in a big school? Some system of evaluation for all?** You have the same system, but then the interpretations are very different...*

***Do you have grades, or...?** Yes, five grades. Two negatives: 1 is very bad; 2 is bad – not so good; 3 is, like, sufficient. Then 4 is good and 5 is very good. (PT4)*

***I saw the grades for the children in another school on the wall, in the corridor...Is this the practice here, too?** Yes, it is normal. Publicly? Some schools have this board. Last year we took it down we don't do it anymore because some parents didn't like it, but it was obligatory. Now it is not. Everybody could see – parents –, how the child was doing in school.*

Now, in elementary school, we are not obliged. It depends. If you want to, you can. But from the fifth grade, they have to again. So, everyone can see.

***And parents don't have a problem with that?** It was always like that. **Yes, sorry, I cannot imagine it.** It seems strange to me. There are some parents ... Yes, for us it is such a long tradition. It belongs to school; they are used to it...*

At the end of every grading period we have a meeting, all the parents from the class, and they can see, individually, their children's grades. We don't see a problem with that... (PT3, PT4)

One can observe efforts to cope with problems of objectivity:

I give tests to find out what the child has learned, What I'm trying to teach them – It's feedback for me, as it is for parents -- to see if the output of the subject is of good quality. And I'm going to find out what you cannot do, and then I should still practice. I say I do not want to give you bad grades; I just want to find out what you do not know yet. (CR5SS)

Between schools? What is for grade one 1 in one school is for grade 3 in another school. It should be fair, but it is probably not... Clearly the most popular teacher is the one who gives the better grades. However, parents have the right to know how a child is doing. When they are still graded 1 or 2, the parent is calm. When my kid has 1, I will not go and seek, what he can and cannot do. But then I might be surprised that he had good grades, but he doesn't know anything ... (CR8CH)

It is certainly not objective; it is the opinion of the teacher, and she compares the individual with the others if the evaluation isn't a description ... It is very difficult to stuff the children into the five grading levels. (CR6SS)

Teachers have different attitudes toward the role of grades - stricter or more lenient – as a stimulus for pupils' performance.

*Perhaps someone feels that we are giving better grades here, in the first and second class. I started to give the grade 3 from the second class because I suppose it unnecessary to give grades to small children. I have here a poor little boy. We are slowly approaching grade 3; he is very weak. But he tries very hard at home. **Did you set some rules with his parents, when he is very weak?** Then he should go to the consulting center or a special school. **Have any of your pupils gone to a special school?** Yes, they have, but without the worst grades. They just needed to repeat a year. It's going to be humiliating to repeat a class with other children. Here all these kids know one another. So, when it happens that they are going to special school, to another school, not staying here... (CR6SS)*

Earlier, I personally graded strictly. When I can see that the pupil is smart, I want it to develop a bit, so I'm even tougher. But for those children who have problems, I am not pushing them because I know it is useless. Because you will not help either side...pupils need evaluation; they are waiting for it ... Although you can see in some children that the evaluation troubled them ... If they are not rated, how do you force them to start doing something? Grades matter. (CR10CH)

The next example is how teachers try to make evaluation more objective:

We always prepare a joint test in the team with other teachers in Polish language and mathematics skills. Every educator is responsible for the test in her own particular subject and class. Later the person who prepared it is responsible for evaluating the whole school. All the children take the same test.

We do not have such a thing as a class evaluation at the end of the year. Such things are not being developed here. In behavior, if there are any problems, then we have a psychologist, an educator who solves problems. Teachers evaluate only the knowledge, skills that children have gained throughout the year, after the first, second and third class. These are evaluations that compare the individual classes, i.e., "a," "b," "c." It's more for us, right? And one of us later develops or gathers ... means ... everyone checks in their class, then we send results to one and we have a comparison, right? How do particular classes ... what needs to be further refined in a given class, what to work on. Well, but this is the common evaluation. No comparison. (PLIT)

It is different for every cluster.³ In ours, we don't have typical school meetings; we have meetings with first-year teachers from our cluster. There, teachers have to deliver the same tests to all the students in the grade. So, we have to arrange it. (PT1)

However, one can see also opposition toward testing:

I don't approve of evaluation, what we are doing now. Because it begins with what the children know. We as teachers should see progress. We can't evaluate by tests. And when one kid starts the year and doesn't know how to read and another one knows, should they be evaluated the same way? Teachers should evaluate without knowing that somebody did much more than another one? We should highlight an accomplishment in the evaluation of the child's own progress. It has value. Numbers don't. (PT1)

And notes in numbers:

Yes, we have divided the school year into three parts, ending at Christmas, at Easter, in June. We have to grade in every part, three times a year. For me, the written assessment is important. You can express yourself as a teacher; show given (by authorities - system, administration??) autonomy, be less strict, more global. Not only write some grades in the usual way: she has a 5 in math, Portuguese, something like that. It is not in here in our level, but in the second cycle and secondary school, it is only that. You have grades and they tell nothing about people. (PT2)

Teachers affirm their autonomy:

We have a lot of autonomy. In your class, you are the king. The minister of education doesn't care about us. They say nothing, how to do it... We really have liberty in how to work because we had a big change.

But I can see that children's accomplishment is presented publicly on the wall in corridors, next to the door in the class or school. I think. it is horrible...

³ An administrative unit in education in Portugal. Several schools form a cluster, cooperate more, pass on pupils and teachers, and have the same rules.

We don't really do it this way. We have much more autonomy. From 1995 to 2005, the government gave us more liberty. We are doing projects from the Ministry of Education; I can teach science, mathematics, all... within. They don't forbid as to do things. But in the past, before, '95, they did. (PT2)

Now it's considered innovative to give a formative (written) assessment - a description of the student's achievements. What problems will it help solve, and how do the teachers perceive it?

Stuffing the assessment into grades is unobjective but I have the experience, what I used to do every quarter but I don't now because it is so exhausting...I always wrote written assessments for parents, how their child was doing. But it seemed to be useless because I'm going to spend some afternoons, and I think it's not even much interest to anyone, because then they'll ask you, "So it would be 2 yeah?" So, I had the will to do it, but I did not think it would be effective. (CR7TR)

Ability to write 16 not exactly identical verbal ratings so that one does not repeat -- Jaruška is similar to Maruška, but they cannot have the same written evaluation, when the parents are going to see it... I do not need to have this problem. That's why I have never done it. I don't have time for it in June, or even the ability to write it differently for the two almost identical children. I am not like my colleague; she is doing it. For me, it's better to talk to parents 22 times and have individual meetings, at least 20 minutes for everyone. It's also a difficult time for me, be at school from 3 to 5 all week. (CR6SS)

It's more a pity that everyone always puts importance on grading, the grades one, the best... And if you could choose? I would not even give grades. It would be nice for me. but I have to say that some parents, even at the Montessori school, came and asked me, what would be a grade? Well, I wrote grades for them. Additionally. It's a tradition for Czechs; it's just that, it's tough. (CR3KO)

But I would not want to write a formative written assessment. I will tell you this: I do not like it. In the first class, I used to write letters as children continue and progress. I tried to write it every other month, and it's such crazy work, no ... and write it over some template to just change the name. It doesn't have any effect, does it? I would not like to do it because it's terribly laborious. (CR9CH)

The question remains how children perceive evaluation and whether they profit from it. How do they perceive unfair evaluations that can exist and how aware are teachers and parents of the children's feelings? Some families prefer the positive evaluations all cases; others would prefer a stricter benchmark. How can teachers deal with this problem -- not only on paper, but also in their heads and consciences? Children have different personalities -- positive or negative, sensitive, indifferent, wishful, envious, coddled -- which teachers should take into account. Is it

possible to take into account the interest of the individual and at the same time an interest of the whole class, working by democratic rules?

But if you give a grade, it is more visible than the written assessment. Parents will read what they want; they do not see what they should improve. They cannot read it. And they do not want to hear what their child cannot do; their child can do everything. But if you give him a grade three or four, that's what they are interested in. I would rather put the grades on the final report than the written evaluation. You have to teach them the scale, the system, because someone is making up for grade three, and he always has that grade three, and he's got it and it's such a beautiful three. But somebody gets a three, and it's like grade five for him because he's doing well in generally and then it's tragedy. So, I always say: grade 1 is nice, grade 2 praises, and grade 3 says you did it well but there are some mistakes. I'm only grading in the first class on a scale from one to three, rather because of the parents. (CR2SS)

We mostly use such a formative assessment – descriptive assessment. But there is an in-school grading system: we also use some letters when it comes to tests, we call diagnostic. We use letters “a,” “b,” “c,” as a specific score, percentages. It is concretely given in the school statute. And for the most part, we use this formative assessment, or simply descriptive assessment.

Children are treated gently during this period of education. I do not think that this formative assessment system is bad; for the parent, it is the best feedback about the child. Even if the parents cooperate with this system, there really are great effects. Grading can often seem unjust: “I got grade 4. My friend wrote less or wrote the same. She got 5, a better grade.” So, I'm glad that we don't have a grading system because it would cause a really big problem for me to judge children with grades. But then, for children, it is such a difficult transition to the fourth grade. (PL1TO)

I tell you honestly that the grades were much better for me. Because the parent was also taught on the grades! If the child got grade 5, the parent knew he had learned perfectly. If he got 3, the parent knew the child did not know much. Such an A, B, C system – I had to explain a lot to my parents about what it is. That 80 to 100% gets an A, 80 to 50 gets a BB, from 50 to 0 gets a C. (PL1TO)

In the level between 51% and 80%, the child is in the process of acquiring skills and requires exercises. The third level is below 51%; this is the lowest or minimum progress. The child is required to do a lot of repetitions to retain the material.

When it comes to grade 1 tests, there is a different way of assessment. There is Polish-language content, and the other is typically mathematical. We both assess it in a written way and make this assessment motivating. We can calculate it in points and count the percentage for parents, so the parent knows the percentage and know what level the child is on. (PL9F)

Formative or written assessment was a hot topic among Polish elementary teachers because they had to cope with these issues after the reform several years ago and can already see the advantages and disadvantages of this change in practice. In Portugal and the Czech Republic, this type of evaluation is the exception rather than the rule; grading prevails.

Our formative assessment – well, this is also almost a contentious issue all the time. We have a special computer program: “reads perfectly,” “reads very well,” “reads well.” I click: “In my opinion, he reads well.” And the parent think, as this is grade four, “That's great. Everything is fine, right?”

We are also a school that has introduced this formative assessment, and we are introducing these elements, too. I do such tests once a month, and children get notes – my evaluation, where I write what they will have to pay special attention to. I have to write what we learned last month. There is a lot of work for me because I have to write it for everyone. Well, some parents read this because there are also recommendations underneath that children need to work on. Well, if they read it, it's great. (PL7G)

We use a written assessment in younger classes. I usually start to tell children in the first half of the third grade that if I were to give a grade, you would definitely get a high 5 grade. I'm not talking about these worse ratings yet. But in the second half, I say, it could be maybe a 4 ...

The grading is better for the teacher. It is faster. I give 5 or 3; each parent was brought up on these assessments. They know that grade 3 means that the child cannot do this or that. But for parents, I think that this written assessment is better because both the child and parents know what he can do and what he should work on. (PL7G)

The written assessment is tiring for teachers. It is good for people who understand. Parents understand that a child should achieve some level after the first and second classes. Parents read only a subjective assessment, meaning only their child. They cannot compare and they are afraid of this comparison, so they often hide this assessment. They do not have a “reference system.”

I am writing tests sometimes, there are some points, so a reference system exists for comparison. So, they can see some of their child's skills from this point of view. I also had parents who said that it is very nice, but they do not understand anything. So, we try not to use any words they wouldn't understand. We start with a positive one, but the truth is also there. But the assessment prevails in a positive way. We give recommendations on what everyone is working on. Only it is so exhausting for teachers, and in the end, someone will stand and say that he understands nothing. (PL7G)

Our formative assessment – well, this is also almost always a contentious topic. This descriptive assessment is so good for the parent. As a teacher you first have to say something good about the child, right? And then what child needs to work on... I have to appreciate the parents who read this because there are also recommendations underneath that you need to work on it. (PL6G)

I teach grammar, and now the third teacher for English has been added in our school and she teaches conversation. Two teachers on one subject in the same class - and then, they have to agree with the evaluation of every pupil - I'm the worst, I teach grammar!

Excessive positive ratings can also harm and ultimately have the opposite effect of the desired effect on the pupil. Excessive motivation with good grades or positive ratings may not work.

... but you almost know, whatever I do and, in every case, I do, even wrong, I'm just getting the same praise for it. So, what would I do? Why am I trying? (CR7KO)

But I make it tender, soft, necessary for small children - with stamps, and so on. I'm trying to give a positive motivation on all the cases. I give 1 with a dot; it is the worse "1," When I give 2, it's already exceptional, so I make it softer ... (CR5SS)

Grading children takes a lot of energy; often teachers do not know how to do it; they are helpless. Especially when children are forced to take standardized tests, they are compared to other classes and schools, especially selective ones. Younger teachers in particular have an idea and an overview of the high demands, but also of different conditions in various schools, especially urban ones. By talking about it with their former university classmates, they can compare and, at the same time, take this unresolved situation with insight.

I have a colleague who often gives 5 grades and then gives them a grade 2 in the final report, but that's stupid. (CR9CH)

It's a hunt for the result. The question is, what's going to stay in the kids' brains when I fill their heads very intensively during a year ... and not all of the kids are the same. We really are a school there from, a lot of socially weaker families, a village where they are really no excellent students. (CR3KO)

Exams, kind of an obsession with grades. No sense. We don't have exams nowadays, but two, five years ago, it was very, very bad...

It was the regulation by the Ministry of Education It was the regulation that the Ministry of Education made for the mathematics program. So, two, three years ago, we even had exams in the elementary school. That promotes competition between schools. But now, we don't have them again. (PT4)

No, there are differences around the country. I was in other schools, where there were common math exams for whole clusters.

4: *We don't have these kinds of exams right now, at the end of second grade, here. The Ministry wants to know how students are really doing in mathematical skills. They are not graded; they have final scores from 1 to 100.*

3: *It is not obligatory, but everybody does it; That's the way things are. But it is not for testing the children; it is for testing the system*

4: *If they have problems writing or reading, or more difficulties in geometry or in some specific subject matter, it helps schools for the next year, third class; you can plan things differently. My kids have specific problems in geometry, so next year I will try to focus on – you know. It is not an exam. It is made an exam; it is done that way because it is national; it is equal for every secondary kid...*

3: *We can't give grades until we have the test results. The exams don't test the children, just the system...They are different from a final test and don't influence the child's classification of child, or how many points you have, if you go to university or not. (PT, PT3)*

In the evaluation of such subjects as art, PE and music most teachers have been set up to evaluate pupils' individual performance and progress. In evaluating their effort, the problem comes when the child does not want to do the activity.

...when I give someone a grade two, that's just because I know he's able to get it, but he's idler. When a baby boy is fat and weighs like me, I know he will not climb (a rope or pole). It is a success for him to hang on a pole in the third class and to overcome it twice. And I gave him grade one, because he improved. I'm not trying to compare him to others, but his performance. (CR1KO)

So, in the fourth class, you ask: Did you study for this test, Tereza? She had one week to prepare. I gave her the test to study at home, and she tells me she did not even look at it... But what I can do? I can't give them all the same grade, when she isn't able to make the effort to succeed. It is unfair to those who try... (CR9CH)

Art? I definitely do not grade the drawings, no, in no case. I completely hate it when art is graded. It shouldn't be evaluated... And PE? I do not give grades. You praise them; you're angry with them; it's enough. There are children who don't have the gift, but you can see that they are trying. I have not given grade two from PE.

So, they're trying, and you're good ... Yeah, they're trying. When they're limited by weighing 60 kilos in the first grade, I know it's a problem caused by the parents and not the child. Why would I scold for it, when just he or she is trying and going to PE? (CR9CH)

Well, it's tough. Here teachers give the grade one for attending PE classes because the kids just go out of the gym, do not want to train ... already at the elementary level ...

Today, a girl didn't want to train, the third time -- she has an excuse from her parents. I say, "What happened to you?" and she said, "I had a little cold." ... "And now you're, all right? Look, I have a runnier nose than you." "But my mom said I should not practice." And last and foremost? I say, "PE is also a subject. You cannot do that." (CRIKO)

*Subjects such as music, art and physical education we grade mainly by observing. We don't grade specific things. **But do you have to grade them in those subjects?** Yes. But it is not a number; it is mention, words, satisfying or good, or ... (PT4)*

Teachers must also evaluate and motivate weak learners. Children with disabilities who were mainstreamed and weaker pupils themselves know and see that their performance is weaker, and their grade one may not be the same as the grade one of the classmates. The question is whether all poor students are happy about this positive grading and it is a good incentive for them. Again, it depends on the teacher's approach, the way she chooses and decides democratically, together with all the children and their parents.

I have such a system that everybody gets grade one and collects points during the lessons, gets a bead. And indeed, the weak Nikolka, who often has grade five, actually gets the five beads once in a while, and I can give her grade one. Sometimes in an hour they may have grade one ... some children find it hard to reach, but here Nikolka may also have the grade one for activity. So, you need to motivate them somehow. (CR3KO)

Yes, psychologically demanding. And you compare those kids, even if you do not want to ... because there is some initial difference between these children. Everyone can do something, and those grades should match their individual efforts. He tries, works, is also excellent, so why should he have a grade three? He goes at his own pace, the teacher said, and he does well, so let him give grade one, too. (CR8TR)

We work slower in this worse group, but even the poorer pupils here can receive grade 1. Because he can handle it. But I have to evaluate him -- to compare him with the whole class. Unfortunately, he usually has grades 3 or 4 in all subjects, and suddenly he will have 1 or 2 in English. I go slowly with this group; I repeat more, more exercises. Vice versa, even a good pupil who studies, who ends up at the university has 1, too. It is not possible, is it? What can I do? (CR7CH)

There was a problem how to teach the children: you want to learn for yourself and not for this grade, assessment, right? And the parents, too! The parents should not ask after their child comes home from school: "What did you get today?" Only "What have you learned?"

Of course, we have to start from the best that is in the child, but we have to point out the minus, what is bad in his or her given assignment. Further, do not just indicate, but fix it. Give exact instructions: what a given child has to do, in what time, to improve. (PL7G)

We also have a lot of poor students who can't manage school and have opinions from counseling centers. These are very demanding; they should be in a special school. And one parent is happy to go to the counseling centers, and another will not go. The parent is afraid that someone else will judge his child and it might not be appropriate for the child's future.

And sometimes we have children who should have an opinion from the counseling center. In the common class, moreover, it is hard for these children and for us teachers, too. But we have to work with them, right? And now it's inclusive teaching, so we have children with disabilities here also. (PLAT)

Some teachers accept formal requirements regarding the assessment; others complain or try to avoid them.

*I have come to my method, my three levels of evaluation... I try to judge children, this is a wise word ... to show them what they can do well and what they still need to work on. I do not use words: "You cannot do it, but you still need to work on it." Second, "That's good for you, but sometimes there are errors." That is information. Third: "Perfect, you can do it, but you should try a more advanced assignment." And this is my main philosophy of formative assessment. **How often do you have to do this?***

We have no guidelines. We must prepare it for parents at the end of the first semester and at the end of the second semester, in the same way we evaluate behavior. However, I check students' knowledge or skills during the year.

I try to pass on this information to the children above all, then to their parents. That's why we have an electronic diary. Through this system, we have been communicating since the second class. In the first class, I judged them to be great and we always have a „queen of letters". (PL 9F)

Negative evaluation is a little lost in a written assessment. On the contrary, in grading, a failing grade is immediately visible.

I think bad grading was motivating for children. Getting 1 means you failed; you have to work on it. And now the child gets from poor results only the information that he has to work on it. That means the child can feel, it is not so bad. It is not the best, but maybe I can succeed, manage. (PL10F)

Homework also influences the teacher's assessment of the pupil. The teacher perceives how pupils approach their work and at the same time has forced him to compare pupils with others and their approaches to work.

You can find a task, columns in math, that parents can handle... I do not like it when parents call me and don't know what they have to do, they don't understand. I will not listen to parents when they say, "Why do the teachers give them this homework?" And I am not one of the stubborn teachers who just use their authority and give them the assignments. When I give homework, it's just to reinforce what we have done. That's what parents can manage. If parents and children don't want to do homework, they won't. I know the choices are voluntary, but I require them to do something.

And if pupils don't do homework? Or are all doing homework?

They don't do it; there are lots of slob. You know they don't. We see statistics. But pupils don't pay any penalties. It's like shooting at a target. We move out from the middle, and who eventually reaches the edge will be the biggest slob. (CR9CH)

Well, there must be homework. Also, the point is not to overload children with this work. Some elements, such as reading 15 minutes every day, including holidays, is not homework! Otherwise, the child will not learn to read. You have to learn to read; then it is not homework. I mean, I do not assign homework very often. I try to work out as much as possible in the lesson, but it happens. If a child falls behind, then he has to work at home... (PL5G)

We were doing math examples, and the child still wasn't able to do it well. So, he has to practice at home, right? He gets some additional exercises, materials, books, and he has to work hard on them; he should achieve some level of math knowledge. He will need it. He has to do it. I know that then something will stay in his head. (PL5G)

In elementary school, we need to evaluate not only the level of knowledge. We need to motivate the child to do any activity. Many teachers do that. The aim of evaluation is different here than in common subjects, where performance is supported and appreciated with the grade -- most often. Teachers in Poland don't give grades, but they support the children a lot in extracurricular activities and competitions. The teachers appreciate these competitions, support and discuss them.

In art, it seems to me that more participate in contests because there are opportunities. Children are very willingly engaged in that they are very happy to take artistic actions –whether they paint or do some modeling, anything to create something. When it comes to sports, children are happy to attend sports clubs, some kind of floorball or football. Some go to music school, but we have music activity in our school, too. In my class, I focus on singing because I'm not instrumentally talented, but I like singing a lot. It also gives them pleasure. (PL8G)

We have one tradition: after the weekend, children bring their certificates, cards anything for all kind of their afterschool activities. Those children who do not win but only take part, they bring photos at least. We appreciate their activity together. (PL3TO)

We write these monthly tests, and the best pupils are still highlighted. They have public applause. This way the child who wrote the test flawlessly is rewarded. So, this person can feel satisfaction in some way. They really want it; they are ambitious, want to stand up and receive applause after this test. Those very ambitious children need it. (PL6G)

We have established a paper notebook that the child has at school every day, and this serve as a correspondence book between me and parents. If the parents want to inform me of something, they write, too. No ratings, only information. And then I know what is going on. A parent also knows what's going on here. (PL2T)

I also have the possibility of some reward. If children do something splendidly, I can tell them, "Listen, today you were so great that you do not need homework." They shout; they are happy. And this is a form of praise, and a hope that next time they will work the same way. (PL7G)

Parents require ratings, especially grades. They want to know how their child stands among others; it is the most typical tradition. Some teachers even consider grading necessary as motivation. Standardized tests serve also these purposes. Their results can be a guide for parents who need to monitor and compare their child's results; for the teachers, what their pupils have learned in the subjects and where they need to work more; and for the director and administration, for various comparative purposes.

If the child has 5 points and the parents can see that their child is in the last place...they start working with the child because they do not want their child to be on the bottom. This is the motivation.

Now I have 25 students; I have to prepare 25 written assessment twice a year. It is difficult; it is not possible to copy and paste. The parent knows a lot because we have an information notebook in which is written: "no task" or "no exercises" or "no learning the poem." Everything is written on a regular basis ... how the child worked. For me it would be wrong if I wrote that all of them are working well. It is not true, and later they could see. I am happy I have this kind of parents. I can tell the truth about the children and they appreciate it. (CR5SS)

*Parents also send their children to other schools, to the town, but here our school is popular. **Why, do you think?** There is definitely a good level of teaching. You can see it from the third and sixth classes' exams. (PL5G)*

For what is the rating useful at all? It worries me because we do not learn to get the best grade, and we do not evaluate to show that you're the best ... This is missing; this is a problem ... so that children, parents, but also teachers understand, why we have evaluation ... (PL9F)

Such class tests are given once a month to check children's knowledge. This is information only for teachers so we can know what went well, what went wrong and what we have to do again with the children, exercise. How the class copes with the parts of the curriculum. In the third class, we are doing standardized tests, where the results are compared with other schools. The teacher has to fill out prepared tables according to the results. (PL3T)

The test looked like a mathematical competition. There was no book knowledge, just for logical thinking. I'm just for assigning logic and jigsaw exercises in math, but such abstract tasks that they should have done in these tests. The minister wanted to check the level, but the level of what? (PL

We have so-called third-grade tests. On their basis, we do the analysis that is passed to educators in 4 class, to get them know in which sphere children are good, where they have problems. Then, in class 4, children take another diagnosis, so we have feedback about them from 4 classes. Teachers tell us how it came out. If the results overlap, it's great, but sometimes they do not completely fit together. Children come after holidays; they have this jump (class 4) and do very badly on the test. But you know, the test itself is not a determinant of knowledge, in fact. Because a child can also feel strange, nervous, and doesn't perform well.

In these examples, we can clearly see that evaluation by grades, as an element of GoS, is required much more by parents than by teachers themselves, who would be able and often willing to change these grading practices.

d. Relations with parents

Relationships between parents and teachers are different and ever evolving. In general, we have progressed from authoritativeness to liberality, but it is not easy, even in elementary school. Here the parent-teacher relationship is specific, and it should be very sincere, decent and open so that it benefits the child. Relationship depends on the school and the specific teacher. Some teachers can establish superior relationships with parents; in some schools, teachers like to distance themselves. The difference can be seen when comparing private or public schools. A dedicated teacher generally wants to know a lot of about the pupil – and the pupil's family.

It's also very important for me to know a lot about the children, and to have a good relationship with parents. Every year I feel it's getting worse, and I'm rather disappointed because you're doing a lot of for them – you're writing emails and you have only three answers...(CR1KO)

Here the parents and the group from around the village are great. Yes, not only in my class, but here in these people know one another on the outskirts of town; they are friends, such a community. Then it's nice. The parents are a bit active when I ask them. My parents will arrange, they will raise their hand, five of them will car-pool, so they take us there and back, too ... I do not have any problem. They are fine. (CR3KO)

And those kids are, from the start, terribly protected by their parents. In most cases, they care for them; then he or she gets in some more trouble, and the parent comes in, and cries out and he does not really know what to do with him. "Now, teacher, do something." But we do not want it to be this way. (CR8CH)

The children, maybe on the playground they are calmer than in other school; parents are more collaborative. That's why I prefer to be here compared to other schools.

***Is it important for you to cooperate with parents?** I think the school and home have to work together. Now, parents are more active. When I began to teach, the parents didn't want to be involved in the activity; the school was very separate. Now, I think, parents feel more comfortable speaking with the teacher.*

***Are parents involved in school life in your class specifically?** In many ways. When I ask them. Only one problem: when we had to choose a class representative to the school board. The last time I asked to parents to come to school and I had to introduce the activity in the class, we had a lot of volunteers. (PT1)*

In Poland, not only homework, but also other responsibility, is required from parents. There the decision of when to send a child to school – at age 6 or 7 – has been transferred to parents. It is the parents' if they want to send a 6-year-old to school. Children can be examined further when problems appear. There are often children who are withdrawn, not emotionally prepared to enter such a large community at school. Most of them are children who are hyperactive and cannot sit still for a while. We do not sit at the desks all the time, but we definitely have to spend more time there than in kindergarten because pupils have to do exercises, write the alphabet... unless education in the first class is supposed to be like a prelude to further education, where children learn only letters, not necessarily reading. (PL4T)

The change came in the year when new law started. So, there were a lot of children in one year. Parents were afraid of it, but it was a very nice class. Parents probably needed three years to prove that they made the right decision in sending the younger kids to school, that the children worked very well. It is so paradoxical, isn't it? This is the best class for my career in school in terms of education, although it really is hard work with such younger children. But with this cooperation and such close contact and trust with parents, the class really did work out.... (PL7G)

Active teachers can do a lot to create community, but unfortunately, they are often not followed by their colleagues, and so they give up on their ideas or activities. They are willing to work without a special appreciation, in their free time. If the school doesn't have a director who understands and supports these active people -- sometimes even the opposite -- it is a pity for the whole society.

A mom from Ukraine came here to talk about Ukraine. It was amazing. I use parents and their professions. When a dad was a hunter, he came; he brought the antlers, he did a workshop. Or a chef... Yeah, I tried, but I was in conflict with the director's opinion. He thought teachers should not ask for this information from parents, who have to consider whether they want to tell us. These meetings with headmasters always bring new information but I think year after year, we can do less, and parents can do more. I do not see it as a shift to good. For it to work, those relationships have to be open. For three years I can see them in the family! I'm in touch with them daily, most of all reading. That's such a psychological move; that's a great deal, those reader tasks. (CR3KO)

I do not say much about sponsorship; the director does not want us to beg. I don't know why. But parents bring us things when they have something or do some work -- beads, scraps, cloth, fabrics ... so they're used to giving materials. (CR3KO)

Sure, but I always wanted to cooperate with parents, even though it was just roasting sausage outdoors or going somewhere. We did it every year, but not all parents participate, of course. There are a lot of people who do not care. (CR9CH)

Because I know that music connects people. We can go by bus and sing. Everyone is happy; the parents know these songs from their childhood. Or we sit by the fire. I know there is no barrier with music. There was such an inaccessible mother. I tried to persuade her to be happier when she spends time with her child and others...and it went better! (PL3TO)

Sometimes parents are a bit ashamed to talk about their problems. Well, unless there is something so strong that they have to come and tell me. For example, if I know about a child, that I cannot to

take for green school, because the parents don't have enough money for this activity, I try to call to some institution or ask director to help us. Because after all, I can go with all my children to such weekly green schools. I wrote to the town council asking for financing for some children, and I never got an absolute refusal. (PL3TO)

I try to do the best for kids. I give them to the right tools, try to involve them, be together when they want to be. Maybe I am doing too much in this involving. I want them to leave the first cycle with the tools and skills, how to do things in the future. That is what the parents expect of me. (PT1)

I have 24 children in 4 class. Next year they are going to the second cycle. It can be sad, saying goodbye. **Have you taught them for four years?** Yes. I am not very keen on computers, so I don't use video. Last time parents gave me a video recording from the last party at school. I had made a speech; I was crying, kids crying – everybody crying. When I lose children after four years, it is very difficult. I always have classes from the beginning (1st class) to end (4th class), and it's very sad when they leave. (PT2)

Teachers are asked to create good relations with parents, ...

4: I know what you mean; it happens, these attempts to create a community. It is similar here in Portugal, too, but not in big cities.

3: Because in the big cities, you don't really have communities. Because in this school and the other one, you have people from everywhere, so...

4: They don't know one another. Between them, between parents, they don't have relationships most of the time. Sometimes they meet because of kids' birthdays. They go to the kid's house or they go to the shopping center to celebrate together. They don't meet too much. Then it is very difficult to work with them in the school because each individual think differently and for the teacher it is difficult. Sometimes we have good propositions from parents and we accept them. Again, yes and no, because sometimes it does not make sense; it is not workable and feasible. (PT3, PT4)

Very different, of course, are parents and their access to school. Some are strongly influenced by stereotype and tradition, with respect to school and authority, but eternally criticizing. On the other hand, modern parents are willing to meet with teachers and engage in school activities as much as they can.

I would formulate the types of parents: who has more or less time to give, who is more interested or less interested. Plenty of parents expect the school to take care of everything; it's the school's job to teach. You know there are two, three children in crisis. It is impossible to have 22 great parents. Three parents are totally indifferent; they just go with crowd. (CR10CH)

Some people send their children to our school feeling, "It must be, so let's go ..." They are inactive. Sometimes they even show you: I pay and you will do the work. Then some will do anything for you before the school accepts their child, but when the child comes, they're finished. Some ask what you need to do. And then there are those who can break their backs and do what you need. They are always there to help. (CR7CH)

My parents are getting involved. I have one class where the parents even came to teach. When a dad was a cop, he did a lecture, as well as a dentist mom. Then it did not happen for a long time, but now we are on a trip in the forest with our parents. And when they cannot do it themselves, they arrange an activity with their acquaintances. (CR6SS)

It is an open house, and we have it for all who want to come to see you at your lessons, usually those who want to go to our school, or parents whose children you teach... Sometimes, in the first class, parents want to come to class, but not after that. When we have a sleepover at school, one mother asks if we don't want help or she'll be willing to go for a winter course... We ask our parents if there is anyone interested in helping or in giving us something, awards for competition and so on. (CR6SS)

We have here fewer parents who would be on the teacher's side. Rather, they attack the teachers, and it's the kind of backfires. They repeat rumors about a teacher in front of a child. And then they come when they cannot manage their own child, and you should help them. There are many such cases. (CR10C)

They came to see us for a trip. We met at the waterfall and then took them home.... Otherwise, they come to see the Christmas party, but we don't present anything as a class. So, we have few activities to which parents are officially invited. Parents are not so officially invited ... I know it's done elsewhere. It's nice, but unfortunately, we don't do it. (CR3KO)

Behavior among children is definitely very important to me. I try what I can do best. However, too many things depend on the parents, and certainly on how the child works and behaves at home.

I have these two jars. One had a smiley face, the other a sad face. Sometime at the end of the day or at the end of the week, children wrote what they did, what they are proud of, what they got out of or not and put it in the jars. What they can change later, improve, apologize. I also showed parents these writings at the meeting. It is also information for them, right? Also, about the children's behavior. Because teachers often claim something and the parent does not believe them, thinking, "My child would not do that." And here the parent has a confession even signed by the child, right? That "I did that," "I

hit someone,” “disturbed,” “I did not pay attention to the lesson.” So, it was also a motivation for them. (PL1TO)

We are very open to cooperation with parents, especially in my class. For us, this is very important. A tradition has also been created that parents organize a family festival at school, once a year for several years; parents help us. No! Teachers to parents. This role reversal is a pleasure for teachers! (PL4TO)

I have a group of wonderful, fantastic parents I can always rely on, since the first class. If we organize something, they are immediately ready to help. I know I do not have to worry about anything. If there is some class ceremony, they will organize everything for us. I can practically come with children and everything is ready.

But I also have a group of parents – this is not a large group, but it exists – with whom, from the first class, these relationships do not go together. (PL1TO)

I had the award, thanks to the parents; I succeeded in the poll. I went to Belweder [the presidential palace in Warsaw], to Maria Kaczyński [the first lady]. She gave me the award; it was my greatest achievement. Then I got 1,500 zlotys, which I had to spend for our school. I paid all my expenses, along with my family. It was an experience, and incredible satisfaction. Plus, some interviews in the newspaper. I know, it’s not about the money. (PL2T)

Finally, I managed to ask the parents after two years to go to the psychological center, I wanted them to provide me the opinions. They did, but they did not even want to hear about the verdict, and there were terrible problems with this child. Sometimes parents don’t want to see that their child hurts other and teachers cannot jump over it. You cannot always help, even if you want to. (PL7G)

Are parents involved in school life in your class specifically? Extra activities? No, usually not. It is difficult in a big school. I think – pupils, teacher, parents together...

3: Sometimes. But it is not what they or I decide; the school decides. We have a family day when parents can present, propose some activities... **Is there more activity from parents or from you as teachers?? Both. We plan things for whole day...**

Do you sometimes ask parents for help? Is there cooperation this way?

3: No, it is not very common.

4: Sometimes parents can help, when the teacher asks. Approaching each other too much – sometimes it could be good, but it’s tricky. Later, if you want to take a step back, where it was, it could be more difficult.

3: *You know, there is some kind of mentality: parents are superior; they are like clients of the school. It means they are thinking about school life, but it is not always reasonable.*

4: *We don't want to do it much...Because they take too much sometimes. More than they should. It is the question about education. We have to be in the middle. We can say all the time: no, no, no. But we cannot say yes, yes, yes...Sometimes yes, sometimes no, we are in the middle. (PT3 a PT4)*

Parents require that the teacher are responsible for child while they are in school. The children should be constantly under the eyes of teachers. Is it possible, and is it good for a child? *Nowadays, the parents are so overzealous, overprotective. We practically can't leave these children. They do not let them try their independence. We even had a control from the curatorium.⁴ From that time on, the administration seems to be afraid, and we accompany pupils everywhere. (PL4TO)*

There are parents who are very involved with their children. They leave the cleaning-up and other chores and try to find time for their children, and play, talk, etc. But there are parents who do not. It's a bit a chore for these parents to spend some time with their child. (PL6G)

What is interesting or specific this year is that parents very much want to take care of their children, so in the second class they forced the ban on bringing sweets to the classroom; children should eat only everything healthy. We try to do this, of course! But children smuggle; they hide pieces of cake., but it is so. This year the cellphones are forbidden in school; children turn them off in the morning and then they can turn them on when they leave school. Why do such small children have cells? For games, probably... Although later they become independent, some of my students are going home alone, and cells are definitely useful on the way home. (PL7G)

The form of the parents' meeting is often strictly fixed, including frequency during the year, but there is a change: directors are more easygoing in organizing parent's meetings. Some teachers prefer an individual concept; others are satisfied with traditional joint encounters and solving problems together. Many issues are resolved even during random meetings in the corridor or shortly after class.

I had a class once, and there were parents my age, so we organized parents' meetings at a bowling alley. (CR4SS)

We have to cooperate when I address problems with discipline. I tell parents I will call them when their child crosses a line - and I want support from you. I always say it at class meetings. If you have a

⁴ A government administrative department in Poland, often exists in regional level.

problem, call me. We will arrange a meeting and solve this problem. I don't want to hear about it from a neighbor. (CR7TR)

This is my tradition: to integrate more parents. Each parents' meeting takes place with tea, coffee and biscuits. They know at the beginning of the year what kind of class events I plan.... But it's all voluntary. I ask them to sign up on the list where you would like to help me, by activity. In general, I know parents are busy and do not have that much time. Each of us has to work. I am happy that there are no financial problems in my class. But the children are in school from the morning until 5 p.m. Parents are working – there is not one mother who could help me in the morning – so parents have to take a vacation day, a free day, if want to spend time with us in school. (PL3TO)

I respond, “if it does not work.” When the first, the second, the third attempt with a child is negative, I immediately send the request for a meeting with parents. When a child does the same thing again, I ask parents for help, and it works, mostly. (PL6G)

*We have meetings three times a year; we have three periods. And about four meetings a year, one in the beginning, and then individual meetings when the parents ask. **Does that happen often?** No. (PT1)*

Officially, we have parents' meetings three times a year. But before Christmas, Easter and summer, I want to see each parent face to face. I can talk half an hour with one parent, so we use to have two or three days to do that. When we have these meetings, I cannot say the kid should do this and shouldn't do that. The parents may start fighting..... we didn't discuss some topics in front of the whole classroom.

So, do you prefer individual meetings?

Of course. Most teachers say OK, this is better. But they give the evaluation to children by these parents' meetings and don't say anything about it! They speak half an hour generally to parents and don't care anymore and then go home...But we are teachers; we want kids to improve. We should speak with the parents longer; they should tell us about the problems they can see here. We should be friendly. For most teachers, this is not acceptable. This is three days, you know.

Only half an hour for a meeting – it is not good for the school, for the kids, for society. You are the mother; you have a son and a daughter; you should have the interest, and the teacher should do the same. Like teachers, you should do better, the best for kids. We are the same community! But most teachers still say, “I will do it this easier way.” They are not here for the parents. (PT2)

We have parents' meetings whenever I feel they are necessary. We can e-mail or call, say we can meet tomorrow or next week, but we have meetings with all parents at the end of every period, three times a year. But here we meet parents almost every day. Mornings, they bring the kids... we can say no, no, no, things are this way... (PT3, PT4)

Even conflicts with parents are common, and sometimes there are a long-term problem. The parents are usually not satisfied when the child fails to meet their expectations of parents and they try to solve the problem on their own. But often, good and polite communication with the teacher is lacking. Problems with parents – bad experiences – often depend on the teacher’s personality and how the teacher handles problems, tense situations and aggressive behavior by parents.

Yeah, I was solving the problem, the bullying, with the parents ... and I have to say that the parents were very unpleasant. I had to defend myself a lot. It was so psychological. They were very much behind that kid, and he bullied the others. I invited a psychologist, as an impartial person. Parents did not even admit that their child would do anything like that.

Do you think we are prepared for this as teachers?

No, absolutely not ... we are terribly lacking in this psychology. We should have some kind of training. And kids equally. From childhood, in kindergarten, they should focus on interpersonal relationships ... It’s about ethics. It is today’s quick life. And the weekends? To the shop, to McDonald’s and to the cinema, that is the best fun. Something is missing here ... (CR3KO)

Above all, the parents’ respect for the teacher was greater. Sometimes there are such parents who say the teacher is never right and does nothing good, just wants to hurt their child. Of course, it is gossip. Where is the truth. (PL6G)

There is a sad story from one school, but at the same time it shows that teachers have ambivalent experiences with parents’ involvement.

Parents organize various events – for example Halloween, a celebration at the end of the year, sports days. However, teachers do not participate in these events because we do not have time. We are so overwhelmed with responsibilities. We could do this in our free time at work, when we are not teaching but we have to often replace our colleagues all over the school when they are ill or absent Then we have to take our work home. But we should do it at school, not work at home.

Activities are most often on Saturdays. Last year there was a nice bazaar, all organized by parents. I didn’t get an invitation from parents, so I did not feel invited. (PL10F)

Such groups are made up of active people I can rely on. They are willing to help me whenever I need it; they arrange everything. But last year, there a negative group formed. They created drama; even the headmaster couldn't manage it. Teachers had to apologize to parents.

And about additional help from parents: they willingly bake cakes; they bring fancy, useful things to this class. But they are not so socially engaged together – no going to the cafe. (PL5G)

The only thing is that they are parents of children who really cause a problem, but the parent does not want to see the problem. And if I am talking about this problem, parents want to transfer the problems and responsibility to the school, to the teacher. It should be this way, according to parents. This is a question of approach, upbringing and character. I think it won't be better with these parents in the years ahead because they do not want to see certain things. So, I can only learn to not take so much of it We are increasingly living in a hurry. Parents may have less and less time for children, and sometimes they try to compensate for lack of time by giving them everything, buying expensive things if they can afford it. Well, somewhere they forget about these basic things and relationships, about things children should be able to do for themselves.

Children in my first class could not tie their shoelaces, for example. They could not put on a hat; they could not change their clothes for PE. Parents either think it is not important to them or the teacher should teach it. And it worries me, too. (PL1TO)

I don't think today's parents would like to work like three years or six years ago. Now I have a very different child. These are 21st-century families. Partnerships have disintegrated, and this is a huge problem. They are divorced, set up new relationships. They fight through the children, to gain their favor, but on the other hand, they do not provide the children with anything that is valuable to them – care and support. I want them to feel responsible for their children. It is very important; it is worth using their potential as parents. But maybe later? (PL6G)

I feel very bad because I have always tried to support the parents very much. I am really a person who always has time to listen to parents, and if the parent, after some time, behaves in some unpleasant way, does something naughty, this is not pleasant for me. But I try to forget it soon. I would not like to change my behavior because I would like to be what I am, and I am afraid of situations that happen. It happens a lot that parents can obscure what is most important. Working with children and contact with parents are very important for me. (PL7G)

Even young teachers do not have an easy life in school, it takes effort and patience to cope with this situation. Parents often criticize teachers unjustly, especially when their child has some problems. A young teacher should have someone nearby – a colleague, administrator or psychologist -- who can help with a situation.

I had very difficult beginnings because I am a young teacher. The parents in our school are specific: they put a lot of emphasis on developing children comprehensively, in particular in mathematics and

foreign languages. I received a class from a much older, experienced preschool teacher. She set the level very high, so I was not accepted very well by parents because of my age and inexperience.

They often complained to the administration. In their opinion, I was teaching letters too late; I was teaching multiplication too late. They had to control me all the time because they thought they knew better how to deal with children, what to do in such and such a case. They came; they shouted at me; they spoke haughtily because they thought they could afford it. Cooperation between us was not going well. It was really very hard.

This year is much better. In the second grade, relations between us have improved completely. I think that in the fourth class it will be absolutely great. This year, there is a significant improvement, except one group of parents, where it is difficult to get along with. At the moment it is so good that there are no such parents who are my opponents. I think everyone has already convinced me. But the beginnings were really hard. But I have not given up, and this is the most important thing. (PL10F)

With the children it is not so difficult; it is difficult with parents. Every year is getting harder and harder with parents. They have requirements; they have no knowledge, and they think they know best. That's how it is. (PL5G)

My very friendly colleague had very big problems with a parent, a woman from Ukraine. She simply wanted to do everything her way, not as the teacher wants and can. The teacher had to go to the director... but it was so very unpleasant. You know, there is one parent, one person, who thinks he has the right to everything, even to let the child not learn, not do homework. (PL2TO)

It is more difficult for young, inexperienced teachers. Some parents probably have some concerns. And I am also just reminding myself that it was quite difficult, this first year, for me. Even parents often have such a tendency in Poland that they do not deal with problems with the teacher directly; they immediately go somewhere higher, to the administration or to curatorium, or to the Ministry right away. I'm also trying to keep up with parents to discuss such things at meetings, although they are not really willing to discuss them. Because as always, if there is a problem, nobody wants to discuss it before plenum, and then somewhere they discuss it among themselves. (PLIT)

And unfortunately, it happens sporadically that a teacher does not suit someone there. Then the parent goes to the curatorium, and then we, as teachers, know nothing. The curatorium checks us; everything that happens is controlled ... And this is an anonymous parent who did not like something there. It was not just once. (PL3TO)

They insulted us as teachers, unjustly, and no one said they were sorry. It should not be like that. So here, of course, the parent should help – advise, even, if he has an idea – organize something... But it cannot be that the parent is always right and just right. Because it comes down to the fact that whatever

the parent says is right, and not what the teacher says. It is not always even possible to defend yourself because a conversation is carried out directly with the headmaster, and the teacher is not often asked to this meeting.

It seems to me that we gave a little bit of power to parents. It does not mean that we have to treat parents in a haughty manner – God forbid! The point is that these relationships should be healthy, and not on the basis that I can go and talk about what I want – that they can hurt someone. Parents were able to say, “I will not talk to any deputy director. I will only talk to the director.” (PLATO)

We had an unpleasant experience last year. Some of the children left our class and school, and among them those whose parents caused all this unpleasantness. They just wanted to get rid of some student who behaves inappropriately, that he should be deleted immediately starting tomorrow, straight from the class. It’s a shame. Well, it was just unpleasant. PL

I did not have a conflict, but bad experiences, yes. When I started to work with that group, I was second teacher there, and they all liked the previous teacher a lot. It was very hard for me; they very often said, “Oh, my previous teacher was better.” And the parents, too. And there was one mother who moved her kid to another school, and it was a strange situation for me. (PT1)

Have you had negative experiences with parents? *Yes, sometimes. And parents are different. We have great parents; we have parents – you know. So, not boring but problematic. (PT3)*

Homework can be a kind of connection between a teacher and a parent. Despite current criticism of the meaningfulness of homework, it fulfills a certain communication function, in particular in the elementary schools. Homework forces parents who are not at all interested in the school to do something. And the parents who profess a more rigorous upbringing and leadership of children consider homework a necessity and perhaps a pleasant duty.

Thanks to them, parents can see a bit of what’s going on in school. I think they should. I have a colleague who does not assign homework at all. But the parent But the parents know they should sign the kids’ homework for me. I love it. It is 10 to 15 minutes. Kids do not have an hour of work. They learn how to manage their time And it’s such a duty: they come home, they do a little bit and then they can go play. (CR5SS)

I can see that in many families, homework is the only thing that parents and children communicate with; they know what the kids are learning. If they didn’t have those assignments, many parents wouldn’t know anything about their child in school. I have already given up on homework on weekends; I give it only during the week. I have met with the opinion that I am interfering with their family life. But I give it ...

even if you meet the opinion that parents do not want the homework. I always explain them like this: be glad for it because they have an opportunity to talk to their kids ... (CR9CH)

Indeed, when parents do not read, children will not read, either. I have to say that I was very proud of the fact about reading, with these books and thanks to the workshops ... in the 3. class, once a week, children come and show me what they choose to read. But it's not much. (CR5SS)

Children with dyslexia, dysgraphia -- when they have a time when learning is difficult for them, they get a homework book every day. I have an agreement with my parents that if they cannot do it, they'll do it another day. It does not happen that they write: today we did not, we apologize. And as always, I say: reading is not a chore to me. We have to read with joy!! (CR10CH)

Again, while some parents help teachers even in ordinary lessons, some are fundamentally against giving such help.

*And at the end, everyone chose a European country to make a poster about. **In the third grade?** First! But with parents, because parents think that everything is beyond them, that only education at school raise. (PLATO)*

I am an older teacher. I think there should be homework. It prepares children for the upper levels when they have to prepare for classes. If the teacher in high classes has only one hour a week, he must ask for homework, study at home. There is a problem because the children forget. I try to give homework almost every day, really very small things. Children very quickly get used to the fact that it is homework, that they have to prepare at home, that there is not only time to spend with mother and dad, but also some obligations. And we already had such a class here that almost did not have homework at all, and later, in the fourth grade, it was just a horror. (PLAT)

If children want to read to their parents, they should. If parents listen to the reading, teach the children, they can do it, but it is not mandatory. I give homework on Mondays to hand in on Wednesday, Wednesday to Friday, Friday to Monday. But it is a small thing. Yes, I do... three times a week. Small tasks. There is a question if it is bad for children and parents to spend time together on homework. By checking and writing homework, the parents can see how the child is involved. But on the other hand, when there is too much homework, there can be too many conflicts in the family. For example, when the child has learning difficulties, we can have moments, when parents want to children do more and more and more... and the child is really tired of studying all day. We can create a lot of crises in family relations with this access. (PT1)

I have an opinion, but it is not popular. I am against homework. Because the children spend so much time in the school. Years ago, we had school only in the mornings, or briefly in the afternoon, so that it was not so bad. But now kids are in the school so many hours. Most children go to school at 8 o'clock and leave at 7. They spend more time with us than with their parents. (PT4)

3: Well, I am not against homework. Sometimes you could do homework very, very specific – not every day, because they spend many, many hours in school and they must have the same time for play and to do things with their parents.

During the day, do they have some free time for doing things on your own, painting, art? *No, it is not possible...*

3: Only on weekends or at night – later. Because they are rarely with adults ...

What about homework during vacations? Does it exist here?

3+4: It does.

4: They have to read books, 20 to 30 pages from textbooks, but OK, it is difficult; it's not a holiday. (Everyone laughs.)

Reading should be relaxing. But it is not, for all, I know. If reading is not required and a child is still willing to read during vacation, it is very good! (PT3, PT4)

Teachers often give examples from their personal lives. They show how she treated her own children.

I have a feeling this is about the generation. Those parents force us... they are interested only in good grades. I wanted my daughters to have good grades, too. And even though I started reading with them, I could not even tell what I was doing, how I terrified them. (CR5SS)

I try, especially in 1.,2. class, to say to parents: offer your children a wider range of activities. Try anything – modeling clay, guitar, gymnastics -- and not just one thing. (CR1KO)

I changed my mind a lot after having my own children, in the first year I was back in school. Fifty math-sums to do every day – it was abnormal and enormous. My daughter counted, too. First of all, children need to play; it is part of growing, a physiological need. ... For me it is the same at home. It is important to be a mother and not be a teacher. (PT1)

I have already mentioned the ambitious type of parents in the category of evaluation, 1C. Here are some other examples. Parents support; they grow in their children a need for competitiveness, the need to be the best.

Yes, there are preliminary diagnoses and final diagnoses in these younger classes, but not on the basis of comparison – on the basis of conclusions. We give information about what children cannot do.

I have never compared children with one another because everyone has his own abilities, and everyone works at his own pace. Parents like to compare; parents ask, children, too: "Where does he rank in the class?" I say that it is necessary to pay attention to whether the child knows whether or not he has made progress, or if there is some regression.

Parents would like to see who is in the first place, who's the second, the third, and this cannot be so. Otherwise, it used to be this way in the past. (PL1)

All these elements of GoS were investigated intentionally, according to features of the graded school. Very often it was not possible to decide in which categories I should classify these features. The subcategory of parents especially is connected with, and overlaps with, another category. It is obvious that parents have an important influence on elementary schools. (The following categories show the connection with parents in terms of authority, hidden curriculum, inclusion and in relation in the schools.

6.6.4.2 Relations in the schools

Teachers daily perceive, experience and create social reality. I investigated and described changes in their practices or opinions within relationships in the schools. Here the main elements of GoS were questions about authority.

a. Among pupils

Relationships between all people in the school environment are interconnected, they influence each other -in elementary school. I have described the relationships of parents and teachers in the previous chapter, but I mention it also here. As well as relations between teachers, mutual support often influence the whole school's activity. Vice versa, parents influence **children's relationships** very much in the class, the child accepts opinions from the family. Often there meet different types of families in one class, so it is a superhuman task for the teacher to create a collaborative team. Sometimes it's almost impossible.

There was also a weak girl in the class, she worked very hard and the children laughed to her, and we could not do anything with it, simply bullying, supported by parents also. (CR4SS)

And so, I prefer those boys 'classes, with my approach because I'm so much more energetic, brisk. There is fight, we can explain it, let's take hand each other. But such insidiousness and psyche of those little girls, she slandered me ... girls solve those stupid things, I do not have the nerves for it and I do not like it. (CR6SS)

The boy with an eye defect had normally adapted among the children. He was not weak in learning, he caught up everything that was missing from the special school. We caught up all the schoolwork together, and then he left for Prague to some special school for the visually impaired children – we made a trip with the whole class to see him, we visited this school. (CR9SS)

The known rule: our rights should not transfer to the situation, that we are limiting the rights of the others. As soon as somebody is limiting somebody else, physically, or mentally, I always tell them to come and tell me first... (CR6SS)

She ruined every activity. She has not the energy as the others and all effort can be spoilt by that. She had been making problems all the times among the girls, she had been ruining the group, she had been spreading such a hate. As soon as she left, the class was completely different, in the fifth class. Everything got well after that. But before, the four years, I couldn't create good collective with her. (CR4SS)

When I tell them, this cannot be fixed up by me, this is fixed up by the principal, they are not lazy and are going to the principal's office. They are able to do and set up everything, they are really easygoing. My work is, that we really have a great team. although there are some misbehaved children, children with ADHD and all the other disorders, but they stick together, and they are great. Otherwise, nobody wants to teach in my class... We are doing a lot of things out of the school and those are the moments when the team is being created better of course. the children are going with me to the summer camps also, it is a little bit different... Simply, we don't live until half past twelve, but we have a lot of activities around, afternoon...ha-ha...I have a good feeling from that, yes, it is all. I am not evaluated for that, no money...

Of course, it really comes up sometimes, that there is not possible to create a good team, you cannot change it as a teacher. You will not make the team. When the class of hockey players comes together, then it is simply crazy. The classroom full of egoist, one next to the other, no team player. I am still comparing it to the sport, but it is like that.... (CR9CH)

What action can lead children to tolerance? Reading, for example. It's not about reading choices, which is often the job of a book publisher, not the teacher, but just an activity in which better readers support the weaker ones just by listening to them.

We also run a reader's corner in the classroom: children advertise a book, tell a story. They have to read some book, then read the excerpt which they learned very well.

We do not try to read a long text in the forum, in front of whole class. Because I know they should exercise or should read every text; I repeat it to the parents. Whether it's a commercial or if a TV show, a comic book, anything. The child has to read and not learn to read. If a child learns almost a whole primer by heart, he won't be read better later. He must just sit down and read. One better, the other worse, but they must be tolerant. (PLAT)

I have here a Roma girl, and I can see that the children are staying away from her... and she has perceived it already. She didn't have problems before, but now it is becoming worse. And there is a boy here who is different from the other children; he has only one friend left. The other children are starting to show him that they don't want him during competitions or group work. He is still trying in front of me, but I can see that he is uncomfortable in the group with other children. There are still trying to be tolerant to him in front of me, but I can see that it is mutually uncomfortable when they are in the group together... At the end of the fifth class, it gets even worse; it is very hard. Some boys have problems; the social differences are visible; the Roma children have it hard. The facilities – tablets, electronic devices, telephones – play a role... I could see that in the sixth class, there are girls who have iPhones, speaking only with girls who have iPhones, too. Horrible. (CR3KO)

The specific approach, a group work, is one of the best methods to create a good collective – but sometimes demanding and difficult, even impossible.

When they come, the most important thing is to create a safe place for them and let the children acclimate to the group, create a nice team. Two new children have arrived this year and they are greatly welcomed, and it is a success for me. Conflicts come and always will. For me it is important that no child is rejected by the group; there always has to be a place for him.

These methods, such as developing of creative work and group work, have become my priority. Letting children work in a group so that they all have the opportunity to present their forum ideas. They should not only reproduce their knowledge, but also create knowledge. Children also teach each other, working in pairs. And, of course, the behavior in the group is perhaps the most important thing. (PLIT)

It is not easy to create a good atmosphere in the classroom. If children are in a social group for a long time, they can create strong friendships for a lifetime. An elementary teacher can make a great contribution and help children live together.

I've already remembered what I wanted to say. I taught this class for three years, and it was a class, where children were together for a total of 10 years -- nursery school, six primary-school, and three middle-school classes. These children -- these adults – are still in contact today. (PL5G)

They are friends. Friends come, meet each other, already have children. Sometimes they come to me, say hi, speak with me briefly. And that's how I think about our reform again, right? Everybody has a different opinion, that it is good or bad. I think it's good because people can be longer together in one collective.

At the beginning of the first class, as teachers, we need to know how to teach children to collaborate, live together. We need these children to feel good about one another when they are under pressure, just to know what to do. In later classes, it is the same with learning. Throughout the time it should be a very coherent process.

We cannot say that we put stress on learning or on socializing. I can assume that today we will be quick, flip-flops because we have to repeat, do the math. But something happened, and we have to reverse all our tasks. We have to go not to learn, but more to connect these children with the group, to solve the emerged problem, prioritize it before these math tasks. (PL6G)

For sure at the beginning, the integration is most important. These children would feel good, have feelings that it is worth getting up in the morning to come here to meet friends; this is the first stage. Later, of course, there are didactic duties, so it's a bit harder. But if the children get to like one another and form a group, then that's how it works.

The personal culture in all this is also very important, of course, and it is missing for some children. They don't have examples at home. We are fighting this, of course; we teach them by setting good examples. But sometimes they don't try at all; they do not want to be worthy, insult each other; there are nerves and probably kind of neurological diseases among children...(PL7G)

I think what is important the first week is making the rules – defining the rules between students and teachers, then slowly establishing them. They can be in written form. If this works the first week, then it could work the rest of year. (PT4)

Conflicts in the classroom are common; they are even more difficult when the team is not stable, when children come and go. Accepting someone different can be tough, not only for children but also for teachers.

At present my class has 20 students, and every year there are rotations in our class. Someone is leaving; someone is coming. It is a difficult matter because you have to integrate the class team all the time because the children are changing; they do not know one another.

..... I put a lot of emphasis on it so that the class would be harmonious. Children could communicate, so relations between them would be correct; they are able to solve problems with each other without complaining all the time. There should be the least possible conflicts among them, and if

they arise (and they are known to arise, just as in adult life) the children could solve them among, talk to each other. (PL10F)

I have a problem because we have a boy with a different skin color, mixed-race, and he is not fully tolerated. But I was wondering why he is not tolerated. He is not only dark-skinned, but he also has really childish, infantile behavior. The children do not accept this behavior and tease him, look for his weak spots. It's just that they say „black man” or „bamboo” to him, it's so bad ... and we're fighting it all the time. (PL2T)

“What would it be like if somebody did it to you?” I have often asked this question. I try to teach children this awareness. It's not as if I say something once and it's enough. This must be repeated systematically, all the time. That is, generally, the essential question. “Do not do this evil, what is unpleasant to you.” Because I see that sometimes children also do something to children and I always ask: “Would you like it the same way?” (PL2T)

Sometimes children coming to school are so small but nevertheless so strong. They do not realize it because they are accepted at home, sometimes without limits. Their behaviors are different, and it happens that they push the other, do some harm verbally -- say some ugly words ... For me, it is very important that they can express their emotions, but in a cultural way. They can apologize and be positive.

In this case, I teach them that they first say what is wrong; they say, “I do not like ...” or “I was sorry ...”. And then they are just saying what was good, so they look at each other and say, for example, “Alinko, thank you for playing with me in the day room” or “It was nice that you shared breakfast with me.” (PL4T)

The teachers I interviewed gave their opinions on classmates' relations. An elementary teacher must have the skills to figure out how to deal with relationships or even problems among children. Some teachers devote time to increase this competence, developing empathy, which is important for the future and for the schools' role as social agent.

b. Teacher – pupils

In the relationship between **the teacher and the pupil** is obvious that from a professional point of view, the teacher should handle everything. But he is not just a pupil relationship, but also pupils, a whole-class team, as I mentioned above. The teacher's authority must be, natural in the best case, but it is sometimes difficult, especially in difficult classes, even in elementary school.

However, I had a demanding class before five years. Already in the first class, I couldn't excite them for something, motivate them - it was terrible five years for me. I wanted to leave, finish, and go to the unemployment office. So, now you have another class, right? Now I have a luxurious first class.

(CR4SS)

Team – Yes, but it can be influenced by two or three children of course. Two pupils can change the behavior of all children. When the problem boy left as at the beginning of the fifth class, we stayed then in 12 pupils, everything changed. From that time, the class was completely calm, and I did not have to be there. I gave them the work and I could have left the class for the whole day and they were able to finish work even without me!!(CR4SS)

When I started at the work, I sent a girl to the special school. Parents really did not like this solution, but then they came to thank me. The girl was very happy there, she was there among children familiar to her, and she was a star there, she finally met the success. I think, that she is a shop assistant today, and nobody can notice that she attended the special school. And the whole inclusion is about that, that the children will just suffer. Among the people who has similar problems, they would be happy. (CR4KO)

I say, let's behave to each other in a polite way. What you can't do in a perfect way, could do the other one. I wanted them not to offend each other, not to humiliate. And this kind of behavior is very hard in these times if it doesn't come from the family – this is crucial. (CR2KO)

That's a coincidence, quality of the class, how pupils turn together. There are different difficulties, for sure. I don't agree with the statement, that more boys mean it is worse... there are colleagues here, who have these opinions, but I am not one of them...I think, that it can be various, but I – for me is very important, that the class should be a team. That everybody, the children, and me, have the feeling, that... we are "pulling the rope together the same direction." (CR1KO)

I should prevent the tough atmosphere in the class, so the relationships there among the children should be nice. So, the children must not taunt each other but must be friends and help each other. And, I shouldn't be there as a vulture, but I would have pleasure relationship and confidence...so the children would believe me and won't be afraid to come to me. (CR10CH)

I am trying to have the relation in the same way to everybody. Even when I scold them – the problem was solved by me, and when they are leaving the class, I give them my hand to shake and I never speak about it again, and I am not interested in it anymore. It is more about the misbehaved children. (CR5SS)

Unfortunately, it's true, that better and worse class collectives exist.

One can encounter a better or worse class, but everything can be worked out: to determine class rules, behavior and learning as well. There are no better or worse children. They are all the same; you only have to work with one more, with another less. (PL6G)

I get a lot of fun out of teacher's work. I like this job, although I have quite a difficult class. I once said I have some personality that attracts difficult children.

This year?

No, in general. I always have, always ... I think I have written on my forehead, "I accept difficult children." Really, I have to work a lot to deal with it. These children come and are not well raised ... Although I should not say that as a pedagogue, sometimes I have such an impression. (PL7G)

I don't think harder classes exist. From the very beginning, you have to shape a child as a student, a child as a friend. Not all children are in kindergarten, so you have to shape the whole character of the child to achieve success later, in these older classes. If a child has a good base in this younger class, if he learns to work systematically, systematically do homework, systematically prepare for classes, willingly use different things... It is a lot and, in the future, will be better. It will not come as such shock to be a student. (PLAT)

Maybe I'm a strange person, but If I could have taught a more troublesome class, the more I loved it. I remember those classes where a work took a lot out of me, but here I could deal with it; it was great. I am a very fast person, very impulsive. My kids know that I have a style just like that. And I always tell parents in the first class, "Don't be scared of me!" They may think I am shouting out the lesson, but I do not! I say it all very loudly. After some time, the children get used to it. This is my style. (PL6G)

Some classes fit up together better, some worse, that's sure. I would say, that it depends very much on which types of the families are meeting up in one class. And following then the children. When I will have five football players in the class, attending the football training every day, and the whole family would live by that...these boys are not able to change the clothes, they are very dependent on mothers. I need to say, that it has a certain impact also within the class. And I have such an experience, unfortunately... (CRIKO)

Very often a problem in class may be caused by one pupil, and then it is very hard to work with the whole class. Relationships among children are distressing or broken; many children may lose motivation to work or imitate classmates' bad behavior in a busy classroom and in an unpleasant atmosphere. The last solution, as is mentioned in the quotation below, is the teacher's change. And it seems to help.

And what does “better class” mean to you?

I think it is more about context. The children are children. It is easy to work with them. Sometimes it is more difficult to work with the parents. Every class is different, and bad students are not bad students. When the children have learning difficulties, they don't feel motivated. I think I need more time to work with kids with depression. We have to teach the full subject curriculum, but kids can need more time and different activities. But I don't have that time. Especially in two levels in that class, I don't have that time. (PT1)

Are there better and worse classes? *Yes, I think so, even in the same school. You can be lucky...but for lots of reasons. It is random. You first meet them in the first grade. You don't know these kids – who they are and how they live, if they have any difficulties.*

Not everybody is the same. Also, teachers are different – methods, personality, ways of creating relationships... If you change teacher in the class, there will be always differences, for better, for worse. It depends... (PT3)

*It can be a good thing, if we have some classes with problems, if we change the teacher – not all, but some problems can disappear. **In elementary classes?** Yes, it is magic, but relations are different, big problems get smaller...*

Elementary teachers often have very close relationships with children. They can be the first to compete with their parents to be an authority figure.

These small kids are probably the most grateful, are still hugging themselves, need this understanding, and teacher should devote time to it... It is primarily about these relations.

There the cooperation with parents happens, which is sometimes very difficult, as well as these small children who can also drive you crazy, I have to admit. But when I see them when we are preparing something, a goal or a performance, if I see these effects and see how they change, it is compensation for all difficulties. (PL1TO)

I think that in the youngest classes there is the most work, but there is also the most satisfaction. I have been working on my authority for a long time. I am so devoted to my kids. I think I give my positive mood in the contact with children, and I get it back in large doses. (PL3T)

I mean, if I do not get along at this level -- behavior in class -- then didactics, even if I have the smartest children, will not gain much. Because I focus on solving all educational problems. So, children must learn certain things -- habits, and how to get along with others. It would be necessary

to ask parents and children if I am doing well, but I try to listen to everybody and solve every problem, and then also set certain rules for behavior and stick to them. (PL3T)

I also had one boy, who was kind of idle, he did nothing every day, very skillful boy. I was telling myself, this boy works with a ball so well, let him play some volleyball or handball. And the parents really, according to my impulse put him into the handball team. The boy was very successful, and he is happy, he also came alone to me at the second class, and said, Mrs. Teacher, thank you for the handball." Because the parents hadn't realized, that he does nothing. He was bored. He was stealing the money, he was stealing in a shop- because he was idle. (CR1KO)

In some examples, the teacher can see in the situation in the family. The teacher is aware that the child needs other help than what he or she receives at home. The child's struggle with the situation, unfortunately, often manifests itself at school. The teacher can only be kind and patient, but cannot solve the problem in the family.

I know, that especially to him, I can be strict. I cannot permit this to the other children. I know about him, that he can be fragile, and this is his pose, a pretense...he was recently in a consulting center and they found out some type of dyslexia. I did not want it; the parents want it. They don't have much time for him, they are very busy with the work and they have three children.

He is the middle one, it is called the syndrome of the middle child. He went to the school too early, in my opinion, he could have had a postponement. But there were problems with behavior already in the kindergarten, so the father wanted to put him to the school already. The speech therapy was also bad, but they even stopped to attend it. He is pronouncing in the wrong way, and sometimes the children laugh to hi .I like him, but I need to be strict with him. Probably the most, then to all other children I have here. (CR6SS)

These small kids are very willing to learn... We can work with them in a very flexible way; everything is new. In the first cycle, there is the same teacher for different subjects, and we can cooperate. For example, if we have a subject about science, we can find a text in Portuguese that relates to it is and do this kind of cooperative teaching. And this is not possible in the second cycle. It is possible, but complicated. (PT1)

Can a teacher also be a friend?

If they smile, I like it if they have confidence in me. Sometimes they call me Father...or Uncle. Then the smile is important. I am not quite a traditional teacher, I laugh with them; I am ironic. Sometimes I can be also very strict, OK? The most important thing I think is relationships – the way we talk, we speak. We understand things together that are most important. (PT1)

It is very good that we have kindergarten here. You know about particular children; you are attached to them. You know as a teacher you must take care of this, what is convenient and best for every child – access as in family. You cannot only correct them: “You should do it this way,” like in the secondary school or other grades, where teaching is not so personalized. You have 300 pupils, each teacher; pupils have 10 different teachers. They are here 45 minutes; they are not in one class with one teacher all day. We saw the children growing all the time; we know them very well... They don’t even know kids’ names, even after three, four months, because they are changing all the time. They give the tests priority; the children are always being evaluated. (PT2)

*If you have a good relationship with them, it’s OK. It’s great because they hear you, respect you... If it doesn’t happen, it’s very complicated; for four years, you have seen that person every day... **Have you had bad experiences?** No, I had good experiences... Last day?*

Yes, we always had to cry. The last day is very, very, very difficult. But we have some contact, e-mail, or sometimes we meet, with parents, too, weekends ... It’s nice. (PT3)

Nowadays educators and parents often hear about the concept of an individual approach to children. How do teachers perceive it? How can they achieve individualization in their classes? Is this term only in the mind and vocabulary of a teacher, or can some teachers achieve it in their conditions?

We have here a motto that we approach each student individually. And we really try it -- to meet his or her needs. Although I do not hide that it is difficult with 20 children. Every child develops at a different pace; he has his own needs. And we work alone; we do not have any supporting teacher. And sometimes it would be useful to have such a person. (PL10F)

From the earliest age, children perceive a great deal. They are very sensitive to whether the teacher behaves in the same way and justly to everyone.

My children got the show -- I mean a role -- from me; everyone wants to take part in this performance. When I make a script, I choose as many characters as I have children. so that everyone has a feeling they perform. (PL2TO)

4: When it comes to discipline, sometimes I think, yes...they respect the male teacher more easily than the female teacher:

3: I don’t think so... I disagree with him...I don’t believe that male teachers have greater discipline, are more respected. There are some good and some bad, I know... Because we have very strict female teachers. (PT3, PT4)

In Portugal, when I interviewed male elementary teachers, we discussed this situation, too. According to statistics, male teachers in primary education in 2015 (unfortunately, I did not find numbers only for early childhood education) make up 9.8 % in Portugal, 32.1% in Poland and 1.7% in the Czech Republic.

Children often perceive relationships among teachers as well as healthy attitudes in schools, which are also transferred to work in individual classes. This is the content of the following chapter.

c. *Relation to direction and among colleagues*

Teachers should help one another, exchange experiences, support one another in difficult periods of their personal lives and understand one another's difficulties in classes that are different. Often this is not the case, and non-peer relations, unnecessary competition and envy arise. It is not good because teachers should set an example, especially for young children who can also perceive poor relations among the teachers.

I think that in Poland cooperation is more natural. There are four levels of teacher; by law, the younger teacher is led by the more experienced. It is the duty of older teachers to lead, help, evaluate, support and motivate younger colleagues entering the profession. This practice is part of initial teacher learning. As in all professions and jobs, it is better for everyone to understand one another.

So, we are together. We do not hide in the teachers' rooms. We do not close the doors, as in the big schools where in two or three teachers are in the room. We are close to each other here, when we need each other. Then it is a couple of steps and we find each other. (CR2KO)

It is not such routine work for me in this school as in others all around. It is freer. And what I feel is the most beautiful is that we do not envy one another here, we teachers. We do not throw obstacles in the way of others, although I know it is common practice in other schools. Each of us sometimes has the energy and sense, power and ideas to do something, and we simply respect and admire one another. I can say for myself I should probably also do something, but not in a bad way, like "She did it, so I need to do something better." In some schools, colleagues blame you that you are simply too active and that you raise the bar Here it is simply not like that... As soon as somebody stands out, then is the worst, mostly in the bigger schools. It is not about age, if the teachers are younger or older. It is about their inclination to work, their behavior and willingness to do with the children.... Of course, it depends which class you have...if you have the class full of "rogues," you cannot afford to take them anywhere. You need to adapt. (CR6SS)

... but we solve everything together all the time. And when do you have time for that? Well, every week we had one obligatory meeting ... This year it was a little bit like once a month. But we were speaking about it just this morning. The headmaster said we need to start the meetings again next year. I am quite glad that this year it wasn't like that because there was simply too much to do, but it will be needed.
(CR4SS)

Each of us knows what she's best at, which activity suits her. For example, one organizes recitation competitions, another mathematical competition, because she feels better in mathematics. We are supplementing. When we need to do something together, any important celebration, we are all together gathering and working together. After all these years, everyone knows what to do. I say it's like a family!
(PLATO)

As people, teachers are also different and have different experiences, and perhaps prejudices, that make them closed and careful toward pupils....

I don't want to be an exception. I am not trying harder... In the past I would have energy for that, but not anymore. I was more enterprising and more open to everything, but life taught me you simply cannot give more to your work because everybody around you will notice, and then you are the bad one, you know. I was taking children overnight to the cottage, to the mountains...and now, like, "Why are you doing it?" (CR10CH)

In the afternoon, when we stay, we have coffee and we have time for one another – but with the closest ones only, who stayed there, not the ones who hurried home. (CR9CH)

Of course, everybody doesn't fit you every time. We have a colleague who mainly speaks all the time. We know; we take it with a smile; we just wink at each other... I have people more closely connected to me, of course; it is not possible with 23 women. (CR1KO)

What more can a teacher wish than to have a supportive and understanding administration, and a reasonable and dedicated headmaster?

We have a free hand in our methods and ways. We have such a good headmaster. I go to him and say, "See, I want to teach reading according to the syllables, ... He says, "Do you think it would be all right?" The only problem that you meet is money. (CR1KO)

I was also fired there, for my opinions. It was such a strange time. We had a strange headmaster, such a despotic one. She finally fired me, so I went on maternity leave. After that, leave a new principal started, a nice guy. (CR9CH)

In one of my previous schools, there was a principal simply in another school building, another part of town. She didn't have an overview of what was happening there... well, she had more than one school hm... It depends on the personality of the principal, how strong she is, what she can defend, even in front of parents. Some principals behave as the parents wish and won't tell them there is some boundary here, and this is enough... As a principal, you should solve problem in some reasonable, resolute way, but politely... The principals who are afraid of everything – that's the worst that can happen in a school, especially in those small schools. (CR10CH)

I mean, I was very lucky that I was very warmly welcomed here and it remained so. The first director, who retired, was wonderful and a loved person, and the current director is also a helpful, nice person. I am lucky that these teachers were able to orient me for the first two years; they were great teachers and methodologists as well.

I had a lot of questions for my colleagues. Sometimes I felt stupid and had feelings that my friends here had had enough of my bothering them. But I always received the help and advice. And I tried to use it because it is important -- such an exchange of experiences. (PL2TO)

Our director invented “educational walks,” starting that year. We check one another how we learn from ourselves, how children learn from one another. There is a commission (two, three colleagues), which enters a class for 10 minutes and observes part of the lesson. It is not imposed; I have to give my consent. Then together they check and evaluate, for example, if the teacher gave the purpose of the lesson, whether these children know specifically, or how they learn from one another, if the presentation was good, work in pairs, or work in groups... (PL4TO)

I have to say that we have a good relationship with the administration. The headmaster is always on our side -- always. If necessary, always defends. (PL5G)

Taking examples from their colleagues, recognizing their work and their style of education, is not a matter of course for all teachers. Those who can do it set a good example for everyone; at the same time, they are a good “glue” for relationships in the workplace and create a good team.

Lara is always pointing out that she is the youngest, has more energy. I will support her. She will think up something, and I will realize yes, this is how I wanted it. She says, "Let's do something with parents." But that's just the two of us, but the others... (CR1KO)

I tell myself that the people in the small schools should stick together. You can't make any fuss over there because you wouldn't simply succeed here. (CR10CH)

I was lucky that I found young people here in the school, full of energy and passion. I was so lucky, and maybe that's why I remember it so. (PL1TO)

I am a person who willingly helps. I share; I explain; I tell and answer. I have an initial teacher learning; all the time I help. And this is important. Everyone knows that he can turn to a friend or colleague. I have such good friends here, but I cannot always say everything in a wider circle, right? Well, to have good colleagues, that's important. Well, I had such an unpleasant last school year, especially the relationship with parents... (PL10F)

However, these young girls, just after graduation or while studying -- they have no idea how to deal with these children. When I conduct their classes, I try to say: Let them prevail over the discipline because the child will never remember when there is chaos. This is the guide; this is the order of classes. The next current advice is about using textbooks. I can teach the subject and I do not have to do what is in the guide.

..... There have always been very good relations. The school would not function as it is without good relationships. We even won an award as the "School with Style" and a lot of certificates. Well, it is applause for the director, but we contributed. The teachers were usually my age.

Seven years ago, these conditions changed. We enter the class, and there is simply no way to leave children alone. A child cannot be alone because he could have silly ideas; he is unaware that anything can happen. That's why contacts among teachers were reduced; we do not see one another on breaks. I have a colleague opposite my classroom. But she also enters, closes the door and comes out in the afternoon. (PL2TO)

It happens that we have some funding from the school; then more people go together on the trip. We just came back from Kudowa. We were 20 people, but we paid our own way. (PL3TO)

I take care of two initial interns, newly admitted girls -- one for the appointed level and the other for the contract teacher.⁵ Initial teachers coming to school, young people, like to come out with us. They are spontaneous and self-confident; they think they know everything We are afraid, but they are not afraid. However, when it comes to the administration, well, we have some pedagogical advice meetings, too, or the headmaster tries to give us advice during breaks. It also serves integration, right? (PL2T)

Our relations at school with colleagues are definitely a value. I received a lot of support from the older, experienced teachers the first year. If I needed something, or had a problem with something, I could always go and ask for help, and I always received this help from them. From time to time we have integration trips, with a bonfire, frying sausages, games with various topics. And we are also assigned by the administration to groups in which we work on various projects. There are not only teachers from the bottom 1-3 classes, but there are mixed groups, where teachers from grades 4-6 and junior high school come and work with us, teachers 0-3. (PL10F)

We try to be nice to one another, help one another. Really, I can count on the help of every teacher here, and everyone can count on my help. Young and old do not have problems. I work now in one class with a teacher, a young girl, who is only in her second year of teaching, and at any time, if she asks for anything, she will always get help from me. We have no problems. We have sometimes spent our free time together. I would not be working here for 23 years if it was bad. Here there are many teachers who have worked really long time. If someone comes in here, he does not want to leave. (PL6G)

We have coffee sometimes or play sports together. With one I go to the sauna, with one on the treadmill, with the other I dance; everyone does what wants. When we have a break together between lessons, we can talk or go somewhere for dinner. To have a good relationship among teachers is cool. Sometimes when someone new is coming, we can all help him enter the job in our school.

We do a lot of different exhibitions and competitions together with my colleagues. This cooperation and the fact that it's cool helps us do things quickly. We share it; it's not that one looks at another. We start at 8:00, and the lessons end in the afternoon; then we just quickly go home. Hence, we don't manage to have coffee on the spot, and we should, I know, but unfortunately. (PL7G)

⁵ In Poland, there have five levels in the teacher career structure, according to practice and experience:

1. Trainee Teacher (nauczyciel stażysta)
2. Contract Teacher (nauczyciel kontraktowy)
3. Appointed Teacher (nauczyciel mianowany)
4. Chartered Teacher (nauczyciel dyplomowany)
5. Professor of education (profesor oświaty)

Joint activity of teachers is a necessity even in a demanding program. A good director should offer, support and initiate it ...

We try to have fun at school, but we don't always. There is such tension at the end of the half-year and at the end of the year. Everyone has a lot of papers to grade. Sometimes I have the impression that I spend more time on this paperwork than in education, and this is the problem, although it concerns both doctors and lawyers and the paperwork is terrible. It is too much. (PL9G)

We take joint trips for all teachers at the end of the year. A director and employees, for those two days, we are just all together. ... However, on these trips we try not to talk about the school at all, but to get to know each other somewhere. Everyone has the opportunity to tell something about themselves then - tell about some family relationships. (PL2TO)

We meet as friends -- who wants to and can. We just meet and integrate because we do not have much time in school. We have no breaks; we cannot even talk to one another very often. We spend time closed in our own classroom. In the meantime, we do not have time for that because we must also take care of children's safety; we cannot leave them. (PL4TO)

We do not know what it results from. Once, on a trip, we were with the administrators and eager teachers in Prague for two days. Yes, a few years ago; it was enjoyable. And that's what we miss. But it's hard to gather such a group of teachers so that everyone has the time, the will to just go somewhere. We have about 14 teaching hours per week. The remaining time is for organization and order. So ... we go out to the playground every day; we eat breakfast every day; we eat lunch together every day. I am with my children that entire time and cannot teach somewhere else. I come to work every day after 7 because the lessons start at 8, and I'm already with children for by 8:15 or 8:30. This way it's organized ... (PL8F)

I began cooperating with my colleagues, who had master's degree like me, from college. Then there were four of my colleagues, teachers from my previous university of education. So, we had very strong collegiality. We were very strong in the political way and how to lead the school, you know. We were thinking together how to do, about innovation, other ways. (PT2)

I have almost the same opinion. In every school, relations sometimes work.

We have to have good relations with everyone. It is crucial for everything. (PT4)

I have been in this school or in the same cluster longer than in all the other schools where I have been – 15, 16 years, something like that. It is a long time.

You didn't feel you would like change?

Sometimes, you know. Once I would have sincerely expressed my feelings: I wanted to go to Brazil. These kinds of things are going through your head, but it is not serious. These are only dreams. But I have stayed there because it was near my house, 20 minutes, it is not so far... (PT3, PT4)

It is nicest school in the world. If you come there, you will see. (PT2)

Poor and unfair assessment of teachers can lead to the destruction of relationships and cooperation in schools, as well as the overloading of teachers. Teachers may feel that they do unnecessary administrative work. This time spent at meetings and papers could be spent on children.

Then there is the question of money. There is an evaluation of teachers, which started 15 years ago, more or less, with the socialist party. Every class asked me to teach them about science, earthquakes, so ...I leave my classroom for 10 or 15 minutes and explain it to another class, because our teachers don't know the material. So ...we change, but I don't do it more because I am evaluated on work I do in my class, even if this is for our kids...This evaluation is for you, not for me. This is my subject, so I get an A+ because I know; you will get a B because you don't. It began to be a competition. It's weird. In every other country in Europe, you don't have an evaluation. Not even in Finland. This is really a difficult thing. All this damages school life. You don't want to put your hands over here because this evaluation is for me. (PT2)

*We have "groupment" – meetings for five primary schools, primary and secondary teachers. It is obligatory, for every teacher... Almost every week, "groupment." At first for teachers from first grade, then for all primary teachers, for all groupment teachers... There are 40, 50 teachers, after half past 5...**What do you present?? Discuss? Only shit. What are others presenting?** Usually things from the director of the "groupment"; they say you must do official things. (PT2)*

Teachers also often remember their experiences from their school years, perceive this tradition; it is a kind of Grammar of Schooling. But they do not always want to have a school like the ones in their childhood. Most remember their first teacher as an example of how class should or should not be conducted.

It blends in my memory, it was nice, because I was working well. But in the fourth class, there was a very strict teacher, but also very fair, and I had very good feelings toward her. (CR5SS)

Of course, I remember my first teacher; she was the best. I think this is the most important stage of education for children. The teacher has to definitely love children, regardless of whether they are polite or naughty or what their homes are like... (PL7G)

Especially at the beginning of my teaching career, I was thinking about my elementary teacher, how she worked, and I used to use her experience as a teacher. I do not need to do teaching based on her anymore, but I think about this lady warmly. (PL7G)

If I had not been motivated by this lady, I would have never become a teacher. I had three teachers in elementary school; only the second one was good. One fainted at the lesson and did not come anymore in the first class. Later a very respected woman came, but completely without any patience for this job. Although now I understand why: after many years, we learned that she had difficult life-period, concentration camp, etc. (PL6G)

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Do you remember your first teacher? *Yes, in a positive way. She didn't influence me in choosing this profession because it was for me by chance.... (PT1)*

*3: I had four teachers and one of them I remember best. **And she influenced you?** I wouldn't say that.
4: She was a very good person. my teacher. Very gentle and kind, thoughtful. She didn't influence me.
(PT3, PT4)*

I attended a special kind of school as a child. My mother was a nurse, my father a doctor. So, they had work; I had to go to school very early. My family is from the north, but I was born here. When I first went to school, there were a lot of Catholic schools. We couldn't have a uniform as in other schools. We had boys and girls in one class, we worked according to the Montessori program so we had very free work, a nice childhood. We were outside, in the country; we had our own newspapers; if you didn't like this, you could do this. (PT2)

Over time, the small schools have been converted into large one, and it became impossible to maintain.

Now there are 130 people, not only teachers, all staff, and over 600 children. There are 490 here, and we have over 200 in kindergarten. Well, there are a lot of teachers; that's association (zespol). In the past it never happened that colleagues refused to help, that one did not share something she had.

We always remembered about each other, if something happened in our families, or name day or birthday or weddings. This school was small, and we felt like in a large family. Now a lot of teachers have arrived. We older ones, we have been there for 31 years, a few of those teachers. Nevertheless, we try to keep these traditions, but we're not always successful. (PL

We were going for three days. We walked the mountains, we played, we danced. We had the opportunity to talk because we do not see each other every day. We, especially the teachers of the younger classes, have to spend all our time with children in class.

We do not have a bell system; the children are not conditioned to bells to start or end. So, we have different breaks. So, we cannot meet with colleagues. We don't have time. And out of school? We are not often outside ... but it also happens, and quite often, that we arrange somewhere in the city, for example, a trip to a park. Only in such situations, when we can go somewhere, we can talk to each other. (PL3TO)

The school leadership should be active and committed to improving relationships, exchanging views and materials, and providing teachers with psychological and other assistance. The teacher should stand before the pupils in full strength and with optimism and pass it on.

I think my director does very useful work, facilitating and motivating the work by teachers. We are getting along very well, and this new project, – we are experimenting is something very good. We share everything. Before, we shared experience only in our school; now we share it in other clusters. We need the experienced teachers from the first class from our cluster and share and cooperate. That sharing enriches this work we are doing. Before, I had my colleagues for changing and sharing ideas, but in a small school like this one, it is poor. But within this new project, we can enlist the other schools, other teachers, more experience. (PT1)

Perhaps it is difficult to admit, but even in elementary classes there can be such serious problems that teachers have a hard time to handling them and are so exhausted that they prefer to leave the profession.

Well, I would recommend it to some of my colleagues immediately. But I personally like the job very much, so I don't need – I don't have the feeling that I would need to have a break. And here those people who would need it would need to stay completely at home forever and be replaced by somebody else. Those one year cannot help. (CR9CH)

We need some form of rest for teachers, to gather energy and inspire themselves somewhere else. (CR4SS)

Rest from teaching – definitely. It could be good for everybody, at least a little bit. Sometimes it is enough just to see something. The colleague has an idea, which would never come to my mind... and I don't have to find everything all the time. But team-building, exchanging experience within the break – I would appreciate that. (CR3KO)

I think, if you need to have a rest, you can be an assistant for one year... You don't have to do any preparations there; you are in the class, and at the same time you still keep abreast of events. You see the kids, you see other teachers teaching, and those ideas could be useful.

But I need to say that I have thought about it many times, and I always prefer having a child without assistance. But when the administration tells me this is how it's going to be, I will respect it, and I will adapt to it. But I am glad I haven't had anybody like that. I think you need to get in close touch with the assistant, like a teacher. (CR5SS)

I've always said that if you were teaching for five years – the whole cycle from first class to the fifth – then you could have a pause. I would dedicate a year to myself, some study. If you have to go to a job, to a course or to training during the next school year, it is demanding. It's a lot of work in school. You come to the training afternoon and you are exhausted.

You will sit there, and you say you know what she is lecturing about, and you're doing something else in your head. So that year or a half would be good for you to devote to yourself – actually, to the school because then you will bring back another experience. Always, when I was collapsing from exhaustion, couldn't do more. Training, all the papers, negotiating with parents is getting harder and harder; the kids have never bothered me. So, I went on maternity leave. (CR10C)

I had a sabbatical year -- we say "healthy vacation" in Poland -- twice. The second time I went for two months because I had a very difficult class.

Is it important for the teacher, in general?

Very important. You repair your patience, gain a little distance from work, from children and from parents. For me it was very important. I had such a class, such children. I had so many difficulties and problems that they could be enough for a teacher's whole lifetime. Because I just had a difficult group.

One boy, he cursed all the time; he threw chairs, even kicked the catechesis -- simply a tragedy. Another did very ugly things, too. He went to the toilet, wet his hands, lick. Later he came with his mother, I talked to him, he spat on me.

Instinctively, I moved my hands, I did not want to hit him. But somebody could interpret my reflex in a different way. I was just afraid that I could not stand it mentally. I had that already ... Well, I reached the breaking point, and in December I left. I did not finish the semester, but I told the administration that I just had to go. (PL4TO)

I didn't take a sabbatical year myself, but my colleagues have. They said they rested physically and mentally, and when the end of this leave approaches, they can feel even their desire to return to this work. Yes, they already miss it. My friend who came back from leave is full of energy; she is almost my age and says she rested. She had been teaching a very difficult class for some years. The worst thing for the teacher is to get to such a demanding class. Then they have enough; they are fed up with parents and children. Then such a vacation is useful. (PL8F)

I think a sabbatical year is very important because some classes are not disciplined; parents are very demanding. Our work is generally hard, and teachers are often exhausted, either mentally or physically. We have this possibility, of course. There are also periodic tests, medical examinations, which also qualify us for a sabbatical year. (PL7G)

If there is a problem, we have a psychologist; we can always go. I took such advice when I knew I had a difficult parent. It helped me; I could not cope by myself, even though I had tried several times. I made sure that a third party, i.e., director, was there, it's always better to have someone with you at these meetings (PL2TO)

We can have a sabbatical year. If teachers are doing a Ph.D., they can ask for a sabbatical year, for one year. After 25 years of service, you can have one year without children, but only for the first cycle, with full pay. But you still have to work in the school, not stay at home – develop some project or study something different. If you study, you can stay at home and ask for a sabbatical year.

But we don't have that opportunity to stay home longer, like maternity leave – only half a year. (PT1)

If you want to do some degree outside, for one year, this is a good possibility. (PT4)

In the context of elementary-school teaching, I discussed with the teachers the number of teachers in the classroom – what is an advantage and a disadvantage. This issue, now very topical, is about teachers' cooperation, about the attendance of class assistants and even about more teachers in each class, working in parallel. (Mentioned in 1B, too)

Children...so maybe in the first or second class, they're proud of their teacher. In the third class, then they have somebody else for language, and I think that it is good. They should meet somebody else, different approach, different speech. To learn another language, it is not only being kind, you should also pay attention, you should work now... (CR2KO)

...Having only one teacher, the "mommy approach," is not harmful where the one teacher has the children under protective wings. On the other hand, I believe there are specialized subjects – for example, English – that not every teacher would dare to teach. It is always better that specialized subjects are taught by somebody who can do it better than the one who took a quick course and then struggles. I would connect it somehow, so most of the lessons should be taught with the class teacher, but someone else can be beside him. (CR5SS)

***And the children here know only you as a main teacher. They have you for all subjects. Yes and no.** In the curriculum I teach them Portuguese, math, science and arts, which includes music, theatre, painting, plastic and some PE. But they have after-school extracurricular classes. They have English, music and physical education. It is not obligatory.*

***No?** With me, it is. But in extracurricular activity, not.*

Teaching in this class are me as class teacher, a music teacher, an English teacher, a sports teacher, and a teaching assistant. They have five teachers. Because this is a special class. (PT1)

*We have only one teacher for all classes, for all hours per day and per week...**In this big school, really? Because in the villages it could be other way... Here just one. Really? Nice – for four years... For four years. For all disciplines, subject matters, usually one... Sometimes, when it comes to some projects, one other teacher can come. No more than two. (PT4)***

***In the third class?** They have 27 hours... **Really, and how many teachers?** They have one main teacher and an English teacher. Only two... Two hours of English a week. The English teacher is a specialist. But the English teacher stays alone in the classroom. The main teacher goes out... (PT3)*

When do you plan the lessons, for half a year, you have to do it, or...?

This situation is complicated because of our project, which is here first year. It means more autonomy for teachers but more work, time. In the second year we have to plan very strictly; I have to accomplish it. We have a meeting every two weeks; we plan the activities for the next two weeks. It is very intensive, cooperating, and tiring, too...because I have duplicated work. I have meetings with the colleagues from the second year and then the first year, to help the teachers. It is too much. (PT1)

Here I would like to point out that it would be a shame if teachers had to abandon their demanding profession because of interpersonal relationships. They have to master and solve many other relationships at school, with parents and pupils. At school, everyone should be in the same boat and help one another as much as possible.

6.6.4.3 The teacher's personality

How can we imagine the elementary teacher -- what a great teacher must have, which kinds of pupil competences parents or administrators demand from a successful teacher. The universal answer is probably that no such teacher exists, and teachers do not have the same personalities. The first good assumption, essential for the elementary teacher, is to enjoy the work. From other features of good teachers, I can adduce great classroom management skills, good communication with parents, specific teaching style, an engaging personality, knowledge of curriculum, methodology, subject matter and maybe clear objectives for lessons. This last issue I could see most clearly in the Polish schools from the beginning.

a. *Self-criticism versus authorities'*

It is important to note that good teachers can criticize themselves and realize their shortcomings or standards that they would like to change in their practice. They often admit that they teach small children because they could not manage the older ones.

I am very tidy and consistent, and the kids are led this way. (CR10CH)

It depends on the actual mood -- if I have the energy, if it's the beginning of the week or the end of the week, the end of the year -- or it depends on what is going on in my personal life... I'm definitely trying to make it all positive. (CR6SS)

I cannot solve some problems in the classroom fairly. It's not easy and sometimes cruel, listening to others' opinions in front of the whole classroom. My colleague can solve these problems thoroughly ... I'm trying to do it, but I know that it could be better sometimes (CR6SS)

Often teachers stay at school when they are ill, and of course, it can cause problems later, with age. They're wondering who's going to teach in the classroom, how is the director going to take care of it,

somebody will have to replace me ... Such indispensability or dedication, that's what the teachers think about, so they are going to work sick, but it will catch up with them later. (CR2KO)

I would not want to teach older children. You have to deal with these discipline things; you have to act differently. Here they are treating you as if you are their mom. They're still sincere, I'm telling them things straight. Every day, I begin by asking them how they are and what they did and so on ... speech exercises. I always wanted to work with small children, I'd rather teach only from the first to the third grade. That's where you can do so many projects. (CR5SS)

The children should learn when they can be playful with the teacher and when they have to be disciplined and to listen. They must know that whatever is said to them is valid not just for now, for a moment, but forever. The teacher has to be consistent all the time, and then . . .they know why they come to school, why they need to listen to the lesson. (PL3T)

No, I sit with my children, I kneel, but when we have to listen, we have to pay attention. I explain to them, always. (PL2T)

On the other hand, many teachers use their position and authority very clearly. In most cases, it is for the benefit of children, even though it does not seem that way at first glance. But not always.

I'm a person who likes order. So, when I say that we are practicing and then doing this, and then we are sitting, having a snack, they just do it. They know it is so, and I do not have to argue with anyone, they have learned. When Kája says so, it is just that. (CR4SS)

I am a teacher who sets certain rules, boundaries, and these principles must be respected. If doing something is mandatory, it must be done. If there is homework and the child doesn't do it, then he has another deadline. I try to keep track, but I have sclerosis and sometimes forget, so I make notes on special cards, but nevertheless...On the other hand, it seems to me I am such a loose teacher; we can to discuss, laugh, joke, but also to a certain level: don't cross the line when expression would be rude. Some children have a tendency to cross this border. (PL6G)

Polish teachers seem to be able to appreciate themselves; they can praise, but at the same time they aren't afraid to admit they are tired or express their doubts. Conversely, Czech teachers cannot; they always feel they have to handle everything ...

In fact, maybe it is selfish what I will say.... we have no problems with regard to pathologies, or violence -- I don't know, even drugs ... certainly not in younger classes, but as well as in older -- no. (PL9F)

There are teachers who admit they are exhausted, they need some rest. I had such a leave once, 19 years ago. Recently I have not taken it because I have energy and strength ... I still can! But in five years, maybe I will have to! If a teacher is burned out, tired because sometimes the class is so hard, energy-consuming and difficult, really a lot of work, even when the teacher himself feels she needs to have some rest, this would be a good reason for sabbatical years. That's we are saying with friends ... (PL6G)

I don't have these problems with disobedient children in my classes. Maybe when other teachers come and teach my class, maybe they think my children are not very well behaved, but why? When they are very loud, I don't care. I like it when they are working... working and talking about what they are doing. They don't just sit in their seats and pay attention; they talk....hm... Maybe other teachers think I have behavior problems, but I don't ... (PT1)

Teachers themselves may reflect on how they work. They themselves know best what this work involves and often have to evaluate and motivate themselves, which is very important for mental health -- especially if the teacher doesn't receive feedback and appreciation from the administration and society.

I do not want to praise myself here, but I can simply mobilize children. They are happy to learn; they are ambitious. Children are ambitious; you just have to discover it in them. I always regret it when I send the class, "my" children, to the next grade. Sometimes they come back to me, in the fourth, fifth, sixth grade for after-school classes. Because we had a nice relationship, they come back, for teacher's day with a little flower. Well, that's nice. And I even have students who finish their studies and always come back for the teacher's day or Christmas with wishes. It testifies to something. (PL5G)

Fortunately, not all teachers have the same personality, and coping with a problem class requires a dose of personal courage and professionalism.

Am I calm? I am very restless! I am a great madman! That's why I'm good at working in such crazy classes, in restless classes. I am tired in quiet classes. That year I had such peaceful pupils. I just said A; they said A. And I got tired. I liked them very much, but at certain moments I started to feel slightly overwhelmed. I could not do my work eagerly; they looked at me and they did not know what I meant. Then I went to a class that immediately gave me a shot that immediately reminded me how to work properly. Cool kids, crazy but cool. (PL6G)

I appreciated this own general criticism. " I HAVE BROUGHT UP THIS GENERATION OF PARENTS".

I have the impression that once parents were willing to work, to help, were obliged to prepare their children for school, to pack their schoolbags conscientiously. Recently, it seems to me that parents are approaching everything for themselves. It's just that attitude. The worst is that it's ... me, we, we've brought up this society. It is not good, and maybe it was good thing we did not have everything, we lacked many things... and it seems to me that these, our children and parents, have too much, they have such a consumerist attitude. (PL8G)

Teachers' personalities are different, and different are ordinary people. What can motivate teachers more in their work? They didn't perceive prejudice (society is conscious of the position of today's teacher in the social ladder) and chose this profession. Did they have a family tradition, a strong relationship to children, or were they forced by the social system? (Some wanted a master's degree and thought pedagogy would be an easy field.)

Doing what I do, sometimes I think I should study something else for personal growth... I would like development to learn new things. When I am thinking about what I want to study, I don't know what... there is nothing that calls to me the way education does... This tells me I feel good about what I do. But there is a lot of opportunity to continue to study. Hm... social work ... for personal enrichment, not for career-changing. There are topics in several areas that I think could be enriching for the teacher – for example, psychology, management ... but there is no course that teaches all these things together. It doesn't make much sense to go to one. (PT1)

*I had to make a decision between nursery and school... And I had a friend in Gymnasium, who influenced me. I started to study pedagogy. **Why did you choose elementary school?** From the beginning.*

To change society, to change the world, then from the younger kids.

***Did you fulfil your expectations?** Oh, yes. I am still here after 30 years. (PT2)*

Self-criticism and awareness of the level of authority are important features of the professional elementary teacher, and very important in establishing healthy relationships with pupils. A self-centered, competitive and authoritarian teacher should not be teaching at the elementary level. The question remains what is required (from administrators, parents, curriculum) and whether the teacher can fulfill the high demands on pupils without the need for

strictness and authority. These questions are closely related to the following subchapter on adherence to the curriculum.

b. *Relation to curriculum*

The **relationship of teachers to the curriculum** is different. Some approve changes; some complain. I collected views on the difficulty of the curriculum and complying with it, especially by Czech teachers. I often found situations in which the teacher selects and adapts the curriculum and is forced to camouflage a little because everything cannot be achieved for various reasons. It is a hidden curriculum, which I have also seen in other situations.

Over the last decade, Polish teachers have been confronted more often with changes in the curriculum and system, and they have criticized rapid changes. Apparently, the changes are happening very fast and teachers cannot react so quickly, but they are submissive to changes that are implemented. Most of them have the opinion that the current curriculum is too simple and does not demand enough of the children. As to the question if change is good, very few teachers answered. Teachers even discuss this problem with parents and, if the parents agree, often prepare additional work for their pupils, especially in reading.

There is no time for writing narratives, essays with children. Every week I write "my diary" -- four sentences about what they did over the weekend. Initially, they wrote it on paper, I fixed it and then they rewrote it again. They have the ability to write, maybe 20 sentences or some kind of story, but we do not have that much time, and I'm sorry, we do grammar. We try to do it in English, too. They get the picture and have to write six sentences. Unfortunately, some skills are taught in the English language before the Czech language. Well, I'm sorry, it is no time for telling and writing, describing.... (CR7CH)

Teachers often suggested what could be left out of the curriculum:

For example, it is too early for children to determine the part of speech. I think that in the third class, curriculum is terribly abstract for them; they can do it later. Information about their homeland in the curriculum -- that is terribly too much, it cannot be done. We don't have time to learn and do an activity, which children are interested in, taking trips and playing games about history. That's what they enjoy. (CR8CH)

I think it is a pretty good solution, to develop a concrete framework for the school. The program may contain what is typical for the school and what it can use. The fifth-grade curriculum is overloaded, certainly in the Czech language.

There is unnecessary knowledge -- linguistic, stylistic -- for the elementary school. It would be better if they were learning to communicate, in those readers' workshops and similar activities-- the style of critical thinking. Children should know how to express themselves. They know all the kinds of pronouns, and why, for God's sake, why? (CR1KO)

There are a lot of abstract terms in the Czech language, part of speech ... for children intangible. I do not say they should change completely. We have to find the crucial in the curriculum, but I would move it a little. It is required in the curriculum, so it probably is not quite possible. But I'm managing, and I have to manage, so I do.

***And if you didn't have to?** Well, I'd be glad, very glad. Because you teach some things, and you know you are not doing it as thoroughly as you should. (CR6SS)*

It seems to me that there is quite a lot of learning at the elementary school. In subjects like science, for example, there is an overload. It's unnecessary. They should not have to learn so much. (CR9CH)

Splitting children into groups may seem debatable at times, but it is done mainly to achieve a smaller number of pupils, mostly in language classes, though, at the elementary level, smaller groups per teacher would sometimes also be suitable for teaching reading or other subjects.

When you have 24 children in class for language, it makes no sense. I tell parents there is no time for your child to say more than two sentences during a lesson. That's wrong. And when everybody talks, I can't listen to 24 voices. Maybe I know somebody answered wrong. I repeat; I draw attention to the mistake. The lesson has to break because children have to talk, talk, talk ... then listening, reading, and writing is the last place for me. (CR2KO)

We divided the children into fast and slow groups. They know where they belong, what they can do, who is a bit slower. It's not about who is able and isn't. Someone supposes English is important and studies it from childhood, yet more so, and it's really visible from the first class -- who knows the colors, numbers and so on.

In other subjects in the curriculum, there is so much to learn. It is very difficult, Czech language, grammar. I wonder if it is necessary for the children to know everything. And I try to give them the basics myself, and I will try to get rid of those things that do not seem to me absolutely necessary. (CR6SS)

The teacher admits that the curriculum cannot handle with the children. But: " It does not matter, we also have to do in the school what pupils like ..."

So, I can rate only 4 and 5 classes. I have never taught younger children -- only at home, my own. I know the third class is demanding, a lot of crowding. There is no time to expand a history lesson, which children love and they can have fun with -- when you want to play with the mammoth-hunter, prepare the scene; Then I have to catch up for another month. I am three chapters late, so I am sorry. Or I have to take time from reading. (CR7CH)

Another teacher gives the opposite view of the Czech curriculum:

The curriculum is not full. You can see what we taught 20 years ago, when we started to teach, and what we want now from children. We've been slowing down. We expect much less from today's kids. When I wanted to use some of the tests, I gave five years ago, they were unusable. These children are illiterate compared to the previous generation... when you have to explain constantly what a meadow is, and such basic things. They do not read; they do not talk at home with anyone; they do not understand basic terms. (CR9CH)

Polish teachers since reform have a contrary opinion: they think the curriculum in the first three years of school is now too easy for children.

And now another reform is coming. Changes again. We have just conducted this new core curriculum, which in the previous reform was adapted for 6-year-olds. So now sometimes some children are just bored in the first class. So, I think -- in common with my colleagues, who are older and remember this earlier old core curriculum... well, this basis is really very simple, and there are not so many requirements for teaching. (PL1T)

*The curriculum has changed a lot. **For the better?** It depends on the child. For children with learning difficulties, it is good. But for children who are simply capable, this is not enough. You always have to add something for these children. (PL6G)*

The main curriculum is implemented in each class, of course. But if you can do something more, then something more is being done. But even with easier curriculum, the teacher sees that a child can be weak, for example, in mathematics, when for a long time he cannot handle the transition over 10 in a decimal system. And the teacher must recommend to parents a visit to the pedagogical counseling center. (PL2T)

In these three years in elementary school, the child will not make such significant progress as before. Even a child who does not do well will feel successful. These children are not allowed to feel they have failed. I do not know how to say it.

As a teacher, you do not feel that you have taught them anything. I think the previous curriculum was better. Well, it's hard. I am already doing what is required of me. But I am doing additional things that are not required of me. I carry the reading chart -- in cooperation with parents; they have to be aware of their child's reading. It should be 15 minutes reading aloud every day. and parent must sign this form. So, I'm doing more ... Unless I see that a child is in trouble, cannot handle it, then I will forgive it. (PL3T)

We have experience of old times; this is very useful. These teachers have not limited us to textbooks that are just issued by the state, which is convenient for parents, who don't have to spend much money. But the level of difficulty is really much lower, so we use additional notebooks, project material, all this, lots of photocopies, lots of additional and project materials because we do not want our children to lose out. I am more afraid for young teachers -- how they are going to deal with this situation -- because when children are released to high school after six years here, their knowledge will be at very diverse level. (PL6G)

By giving Polish teachers a simpler curriculum, they can more improvise, choose activities, use technology and test new methods ...

As a teacher, I have to be flexible. I have to be a teacher who reacts according to changes. So, my children do extra reading. I offer additional notebooks to motivate them to read, because they do not want to read. There is a computer, a tablet, an iPhone ... I have the feeling, I should force my children a little, so they carry notebooks and describe an interesting book, or do illustrations. (PL8F)

Children were doing well and everything was good, and now there is less and less content, and children are getting more and more comfortable. They get a prepared task where they only need to enter missing words or missing letters. They need not speak. By writing in general, they have to try, cope with how to write a description, how to write a short story, address an envelope, write a letter. It's entirely new to them. Well, computers... (PL5G)

This program is truncated everywhere, I could see what my daughter used to read; we read the book from beginning to end. Now, fragments are read even in our younger classes. I am old-school. I ask children to read the whole book. Sometimes parents think my lesson is old-fashioned ... We all read the same book: "O Dog, Who Rode the Railway." I do not know what a child may not like in this book. Such

an interesting book. Kids prefer some science fiction or some comics of this type, and then they grow up and they don't want to read... (PL5G)

We used to spend more time learning through active learning. Now there is no time for this activity because children are so loaded with material that they have to realize that we do not always have the opportunity to play, make things more by hand... In addition, our school is also a specialized school where parents put a lot of emphasis on going to the theater, cinemas and various cultural places, three or even four times a month. Then having so little time makes it impossible for us to make this material in the way we would like...

Children are expected to do a lot -- languages, additional classes -- and fewer and fewer are focused on the basics. Comparing it to when I was a student, now it is very cut down, this material. There is much less information from nature, Polish and history.

Only languages are important. Russian, Chinese, Norwegian are taught. The basic language is English in our school, from 0 to class 2. Then in addition, in class 3, there are Spanish and German. Our children are already learning two languages. But for parents, unfortunately, it is not enough, and they enroll children in a million additional classes. Children are learning four languages in total. There is also acrobatics, horseback riding. So, their learning starts at 8 a.m. and sometimes ends about 9 p.m. They cannot have time to do anything for themselves at all... (PL10F)

I think here in Portugal, science is OK. But in math ... it is difficult to manage the whole curriculum, especially because five years ago it was very easy. It has changed; a lot of math content was added. I am working in the second and third class, and this content we usually did in fifth grade class. It was very easy, and now it is very hard. When I started the work the first cycle, the math the first year, we worked with the crayons, the number of We went only to 20; it was very simple. Now, with crayon work in preschool, it is not a part of curriculum for us. (PT1)

Is the curriculum rigid or free? *I think, children do what we want them to do. They are able to count the numbers from 30 to 40; they learn it very early. (PT1)*

When we learn fractions by cutting cakes, they are working with physical things, doing real things. They need time to learn this new content with activities... Then the new content is simple for them to understand. On the other hand, the children can be frustrated, because they are using the knowledge they already have. It pulls them backwards. And they know a lot of things. There are not blank sheets... (PT1)

I don't think the curriculum is difficult. I have time for what I want to do. There are some things that should be stressed more, like changes in social life – yes, citizenship. What is important for the future.

What I think is worst thing is about kids is that they are there too long. They come about 7:30 a.m. and go home at 7:30 in the evening. They are in school all the time. (PT2)

I think, there are a lot of subjects, too many: Portuguese, writing, reading, math, science, arts, physical expression... but in each discipline, we have too many topics. It is too long, and many teachers have to teach very fast. We don't have time to play, or go deeper into things.

If you have kids with difficulties, you don't have much time for them. Because if you take time for those kids, then you ... don't finish your curriculum. It doesn't leave much time for kids with difficulties.

And do you have a lot of kids with difficulties? You always have. Is it similar in every class? I think... yes... (PT3, PT4)

Of course, weaker pupils may find this easier curriculum suitable for them. Perhaps the goal is to have the teacher prepare some additional work for smarter and faster children; perhaps it is to take a certain approach to individualization: why not try it another way? Will this appeal to today's competitive society?

When the child has long-term problems with basic math, then we are telling parents that their child would have to visit a counseling center because he cannot cope with these skills. (PL2T)

Yes, there is skills reduction. I don't necessarily think it's good because it's also individualization when it comes to teaching. There are children who don't jump to a certain level, and for them it doesn't really matter. It is probably important how the teacher approaches this basic curriculum. (PL4T)

Following part above, there are opinions about individualization and inclusion. The curriculum has to adapt to both of these phenomena, and schools can see if the changes work.

c. Hidden curriculum

I perceive the **hidden curriculum** as part of informal learning -- what is not written in the curriculum. It is about relationships in the school environment on different levels. So, some social facts are inadvertently accepted.

The participants are in different social positions in a hierarchical (within a class) or non-hierarchical (teacher-pupil) relationship. At the elementary level, a teacher tries to not remind pupils of social inequalities and perceives the pupil as an individual and a full member of a collective of people, who are together by chance based on given social facts. Parents are far

more part of the educational process than at higher levels of education. The hidden curriculum includes the values of the school and the authorities; the behavior and values of all participants; and conflicts and irregularities that are not openly mentioned. Perceptions of hidden curriculum do not have to be only negative; even a sense of humor and laughter can arise at school. I perceive as hidden curriculum the situations that we don't discuss much about, but that influence behavior, and learning and teaching processes in the schools. Maybe we cannot speak about facts that are difficult to evaluate, so we don't evaluate them. According to Elisabeth Vallance: "Hidden curriculum refers to those nonacademic but educationally significant consequences of schooling that occur systematically but are not made explicit at any level of the public rationales for education" (Vallance, 1983, p. 11).

Teachers need to adapt the curriculum to manage learning in existing conditions -- for example, a large number of children in a language class.

Relationships with parents can be remarkable and extraordinary. So, can teachers' activity and dedication when one does more than is necessary and is not paid for it. Teachers are so happy in their work that they spend afternoons and weekends with pupils even though they have their own families. Should it be said loudly that society does not pay these people and exploits them, when activities benefit everyone -- parents, children and a particular teacher?

*I have amazing parents who are willing to do a lot of things for us. We will play Indians; we will spend weekends in the tepee, and it's really cool. And it's their initiative. **Not just theirs ... that's how you had to start it in the first class, thank you.***

Yeah, well, I guess so, but I really have such exceptional parents. They're my ex-classmates, so that's how it works. They've decided that they will just enjoy their children's childhood.

They have found the school, they found you as teacher.

*I do not see it as a deficiency that I have a few schoolmates there. The others join in. They are really nice people. **That's nice. I understand why you don't need a sabbatical.** I'm really enjoying it because I know it's not going to be like this in the next teaching cycle. (CR9CH)*

Since the headmaster's office is in the other building, we really have free space and freedom. I do not follow the time for lessons punctually; sometimes I can change it. If it is not checked, and the teacher takes the time she needs, it is fine. (CR5SS)

Generally, at school, the child should learn to deal with and manage certain situations; it is part of an informal curriculum. The definition of a hidden curriculum is somewhat more

complicated, but in this section. I include the situations in the school that are not discussed much and are not accepted on moral grounds.

These include problems with tests. The phenomenon of a certain deception and pretending occurs when the teacher assists them in a certain test. It does not help; it is a scam, and I ask myself what are the children learning?

That is why some teachers are against standardized tests, which are often just a hunt for a formal outcome and encourage cheating.

I remember years when it was about a comparison. But it is so embarrassing that I don't ever want to talk about it. The teachers constantly improved children's scores only so their class would be good, ... but that's not the point! Really.

The teacher generally knows what the child can do, what are his current abilities, and then can develop them further. But for sure, it will not be an accurate evaluation when the grade is always an A, the best -- for what? The child would be happy, parents would be happy? Where can this approach lead? (PLT4)

These joint standardized tests ... do I need to know that our school is bad? Our kids are not overloaded. And the prestigious Prague schools ranked great. So, what? Because there is a crazy pace, like in some private schools or ... before the test, the director works on it for half a year to succeed. It seems strange to me. It's just that they wanted these results, so they got them. (CR7CH)

The worst thing in Wroclaw is the selection for Gymnasium. You have to go to middle school in Poland; the child must be accepted; regardless of whether you have 100% or 5% success, you have to be accepted at the Gymnasium nearest your permanent residence. Everyone has no choice. However, if you want to go to a "better" gymnasium, for language or sports, you have to take a special exam. People are able to change their living place to enroll subscribe the child in this better Gymnasium. You understand? (PL7G)

I have to use a special program for evaluation. We have to put in numbers pupils' behaviour and creativity. How can I put numbers on creativity? I have to do it, in math, too, according to tests, and put it into Excel. Grading is not interesting work for me, only an obligation. I don't approve of that. The goal is to have an equal system of evaluation for the whole cluster, but it doesn't work. We are not looking at the children; we are looking at the numbers. So, what happens? I put in Excel the way the results are supposed to be. (PT1)

How do you grade subjects like music, art and physical education? Ha, ha, I cheat. They are doing the best they can. (PT1)

I've been here almost half my life, but there are some stupid rules, I know, so I am fighting again. If you want to go to another cluster, that's your choice; they should respect it. Usually, if you know next year you are going to another school, you don't care. If children have problems? I don't care because I am not here next year. It is not good for kids, for society. Next, you will have less money because they don't pay vacation. That's why young people don't want to be teachers. (PT2)

Hidden curriculum is often about grading. Teachers' heads are spinning all day about how to evaluate their pupils. They don't want to hurt them, give better grades, don't want to make some repeat the year because of certain prejudices, because of the environment in which child lives, condemn them. But why? In Poland, of course, there is the problem of switching from the third to the fourth class; everyone knows it, but it is not discussed much. The period without grades is replaced the period with grades. Once again, most parents, children and teachers are chasing performance and the best grades. But the hardest step is for the children.

It proved to me to be effective because I learned a lot about the child, the parents. Together we had a lot to say about it. But parents must work with the teacher, and I there are fewer and fewer cooperative parents, but these the parents of the children who do not need so much. And they're not the parents of the children who do need help. We take a rating here very responsible; we advise one another ... I think I will break this child completely when I give him this grade. Some grades are very inaccurate. (CRIKO)

Here it is generally taken into account that whoever is verbally evaluated by written assessment is stupid. We do not want to evaluate him with a grade, so we give them a written assessment ... Sometimes you feel it when you have to do a written assessment. So, there is something weird. We do not want to destroy the child completely or expose him to bad rumors, gossips, so we prefer to evaluate in written form. I have too much empathy for giving grades to children, who have their limits and at the same time are doing their best to learn. But he will always get grades 4, 5, so it's terrible. (CR3KO)

Well, I sometimes have to write him another evaluation in his notebook: it did not work; it will work the next time, you tried very hard, I praise you, but I just have to write the grade on the final report -- and it will be bad, and I know it will never be better The child can also see it is the lowest in the class. I have a girl there now who is really doing her best now, and I don't know whether to send her to the next class. It looks as if she doesn't remember anything, she learned in the third class. She's terribly nice; she's quiet ... I have a feeling I am killing her when she's going to get a 4. In addition, in group work, others are not excited to have her in the group; they already see it. There is this situation and you cannot help her... it's hard ... you know.

Later, when the children are in the fourth class, colleagues ask us: "What did you do with these children? They cannot do this, this, this, this." Well, we are sorry, because we tried; I also often taught

beyond this basic curriculum, if there were enough good students. Especially in math and Polish; we have special notebooks where we write essays... (PL5G)

These assessments can be difficult for children. Here is a written assessment for three years, and these numbers appear there. Children do not always understand; they are happy they got the grade, and at the beginning it does not matter whether it is five or two -- until they understand, and this grading system of evaluation is implemented. Also, from the middle of third to the fourth grade, I sometimes assess with the help of grades that the children learn, become accustomed to, understand. (PL10F)

I have an autistic boy. Parents never have talked about his disorder as if the topic is not there. His parents take very good care of him. He uses some specific motions because he has to compensate for his stress. He does not like too many people around him, so in PE lessons, sports, such contact, this is really a horror for him. Sometimes it is not a good idea to cross his path. He is surrounded by two friends, so he has built a safe space -- a fictional place he has drawn for himself. He has own, drawing of himself fictional world, but he is very clever.

Do you have an assistant for this child? *No, because I have no recommendation from a psychologist to the parents. Parents have this obligation, but ... haven't ...*

We prepare children; we try to assess them on A, B, C levels in the third class. We cannot do something like that officially, but we wanted to invent something so that children would not be shocked in class 4 when they get their first low grades. Of course, in September there are no grades in the fourth class; it is a slow, constant process. Children are still loved, stroked. But October comes and grades begin, and this is a huge problem... (PL7G)

Silent phenomena are relationships at school that are not much talked about -- especially since there is no time for it.

When you have experience and you are changing classes after a three-year cycle, you can recognize the better and worse class. I always know who taught the class before me. I know who led them, what they learned, what habits the class has, how they are used to working, how to write assignments. You can see how strident, calm or focused they are. (CR3KO)

I decided to leave the school because the school has such status rumors. The headmaster accepts the naughty and evil kids who are not wanted in the city schools. We'll send you to L....., where are few children. It has always been explained to parents that it will be better; there is a small team. And these children brought the troubles with them, brought them into the class. And then I was really exhausted by it. (CR2KO)

*Now, it doesn't work this way. The people looking forward to pension. **What is the retirement age?** 65, but sometimes later. There is a chart about practice and so on.*

It is not about kids; sometimes it is difficult. The problem is the bureaucracy. The teaching is under its control. There is not completely autonomy, independence.

You can do something when you have ideas. It is tiring. Before, there was fascism, but now? (PT2)

So, evaluation of teachers very often destroyed relations in the schools. Instead of being a team, everyone is working on his own Teachers were forced to pretend to do this and that, and often none of it is true. It is like theatre. It is throughout society. Appearances mean more than reality. For example, here, you have to evaluate other young teachers. Sometimes teachers come to class to evaluate the teachers in other classes; they come from other schools... and they heard the pupils saying, "Finally! I am here five years, and I have never seen a video or other interesting thing like today!" So, the teachers do things they usually don't do. They want to be a good class, so the teacher did it and the pupils have never seen it before. WHY? Isn't it pretending?

But these differences destroyed relations. It is not normal... Yes, we have to deal with the teachers. I am fed up with this – not with the kids, but with this. All the meetings where you stay two, three hours. (PT2)

Is part of the hidden curriculum the teacher's tactics in communicating with parents? How do teachers make parents think about their children's problems or change their view of the school a little? For example, one teacher tries to use exaggeration and a joke to get parents to realize what's more important, homework or shopping.

Parents have less and less time, less patience, they are more nervous. Children see it. It seems to me that parents are more demanding. They would like to throw all the school's obligations on the teacher's shoulders, and if they want to spend time with the child, it was only for pleasure, and that is not quite possible. I think that once the teacher was so much more. If the teacher said something, it was holy. Now parents have answered me, "I didn't do homework because we did not have time; we were at the shopping center." Now, I immediately react to parents' in-jokes. And of course, homework is not processed because you have to go shopping. (PL9G)

I am also tired, but ... you must love this job, yes. I believe I am doing well. Parents – since last year, I have given them a lot of liberty; they can talk about anything. We were very friendly because it is my way of being. I think it is important in life. But I am really afraid because this school is not like that; it is more like an institution than real life. In the second cycle, I am telling them, "If you say these things to other teachers, you will have big problems. (PT3, PT4)

In the eyes of the public, teachers have a lot of free time. Many teachers cannot cope with this accusation, especially because their position in society is not simple and the devoted elementary teacher works long and intensely.

A school is a well-known place; the teacher is always in the public eye. For introverted elementary teachers, it is common to try to prevent unacceptable problems, to avoid possible defamation and accusations before they arise. It is the first step toward a certain resignation that we encounter more often: "I have to do it, so I do it." Parents do not appreciate it anyway... Where are teachers, under this pressure, pushing education? I do not see it as progress.

Of course, even in the context of projects, teachers nowadays have more paperwork; they are overloaded. They often do not have a place to complain, or they don't know where. They are ashamed to admit shortcomings, fatigue, burnout. They do not have anyone to tell their suggestions for change. They do not fight; they become passive or resign.

One would be scared of this responsibility. It depends who goes. Once I had a student who could go only if his father or mother were going. I never took him alone because it was not possible. And his dad was strict with everyone, but not his son. Sometimes parents do not see, and sometimes children behave much worse when parents are nearby. This is a tragedy. (PL4T)

I had a nice offer from another school, but didn't go there. I didn't want to hear later that the director who works there is my acquaintance. I did not want to be treated like this any other time. I have stayed here in our school.

However, five or six parents came here, and it was so bad that they didn't want to take advantage of my experience. What I hear from some is that at the end of this year, then they will switch to a lower-level school. It is so paradoxical in this profession. Parents want their children to get higher and higher grades, and they underestimate the teacher's work, or, what is this? You want to help their child, but they don't want it, and they need to give only that minimum to the children. Who will these children be in the future? (PL9G)

But they make so much bureaucracy, a lot of paperwork to file. I don't want to do anything more because I am here after 5 in the afternoon, doing things for the kids. Now I must do mail and questions to the Ministry, all bureaucratic things and so ... Then most teachers don't have time to do projects. Every school has given up projects ...and we had a lot of projects. ...I hate it, but I don't care anymore. A lot of meetings, paperwork, and we weren't paid extra for that, never. We aren't paid for anything. It is very good when I go there, and I do this. I prepare video or special activities and go to other classes to explain things... People aren't interested in the project anymore... Sometimes, we had meetings until 9 p.m.!! (PT2)

More control, less democracy. I think democracy is always useful. Because we could always say things and change things. Now we cannot change. In fact, the teachers haven't cooperated. We are protecting myself. Most of my colleagues wouldn't work with the parents nowadays.

I said, I know, it is horrible, having so little autonomy. But we should work together. Who should have an interest that kids should be better, make progress – teachers or parents? Both! But they say no, parents cannot control us, but democracy is like this. I had never problems with parents. I am not a classic teacher; I expressed my opinion at the last meeting about evaluation at Easter. I cannot say and do things that I disagree with. (PT2)

One of the current extremes in elementary education that afflicts the teacher is whether to teach little or to teach more. Parents have very different approaches in this respect, and once again the teacher is in a difficult situation. So, individualization of teaching is not possible under these conditions.

There are very many current trends and opinions, and the school should advise parents of the philosophy in advance. Then parents should respect their choice of school and follow its style of education, principles and curriculum.

6.6.4.4 Inclusion

Because inclusion is a hot topic now in all three countries, teachers always mention the poor students (not good at their studies) in their classes and how they cope with them. I chose this topic for the next category. I highlighted teachers' common problems and hesitations; how to confront the situation around inclusion; how to help and how much to help; and how to divide teachers' time and effort among pupils in the classroom.

*We have here in these classes physically disabled children, some other disorder – dyslexics somewhere. We learn among pupils how to behave toward a particular child. In the previous class, I had a seriously disabled kid ...**And do you talk about it in the classroom?***

We do not have much time to do this, but we'll make it to discuss these things. We've been explaining it since the first class. (CR6SS)

They know he has easier work and his individual program, that I will not grade him. They know that Honza will be led differently, and his final report is a written assessment, in which I have to explain what he has done during last year. (CR2KO)

Just now a woman will come from a special center from L..... She decides about assistance. She approves programs and money for that boy – how many hours he will have a week with an assistant. He got 30 hours, but he doesn't need an assistant for PE, art ... That's more than five hours a day. We don't even have it on the schedule! Is this woman normal? She has been here less than for three years, and it's just a mess, it's a mess. (CR6SS)

I taught him in the fourth class, and he also took math with the next class with headmasters, the fifth class. So, he was with me two hours and the rest in the fifth class. He was faster, so I gave him some interesting exercises on the computer, and he enjoyed it. Everything was done quickly. (CR7CH)

I agree with this opinion. We should help the weak pupils, but they all have to come and work on their own, or there won't be any effect. (CR4SS)

When the boom started – public discussion about inclusion – I had just here little twin Roma girls. One of them very clever, cool, intelligent, good; the other the contrary. On a primitive level, but a nice little girl. She was unhappy at the school. For me it was the same. I felt sorry for her. She was a typical case for a special school. There is a smaller team, with counting to 10, not to 20. It is not so demanding for her; she can handle it. But she went to the second class, and I had to make her an individual plan.

I counted to 100 with 25 children and to 20 with her. Without an assistant. What was it like? ... We had an appointment, but the parents did not come. And again. Next meeting, people from the

counseling center were coming. We explained this situation to the father, but he did not understand. He was not bad; he wanted the girls to go to one school, class. But it couldn't have happened. We had to let Klara repeat the year. She really needed to learn the basic knowledge, and if she didn't, we would miss the right time. When there is a child in the classroom who learns something differently from us, then we must logically disturb it. This child has an individual plan because he needs more to concentrate! And we're distracting him. (CRIKO)

When I came to this school, I sent a little girl to a special school. It did not like the parents roughly, but then they came to thank me. They saw that the girl was happy in her new school, she was there as a star, she finally met success. And I think she is shop assistant today, no one knows she was attending a special school. And all that inclusion is about, that the kids are just afraid from mainstream school. They can be happy in the special school. (CR4SS)

I just see hopelessness. When any child can be added to your class, without considering the conditions – how many children with problems are in your class. Now, I have two classes – mixed, 16 children – and you have to manage it yourself if you have three or four like these children in trouble there. (CR10CH)

In class, I have one child sent to counseling, but parents somehow neglect this obligation. They have to watch that they have to make an appointment and the child needs to be checked. But you know, there's three months' waiting time. The validity of the review ends, but the child is still not getting treatment, How can I evaluate it? We also have an autistic girl there who has not had an examination by the psychologist, but they all refuse to do it. They do not have the strength to do it – the very people who should be helping They simply aren't able to do it. They have a lot of cases, work. (CR8CH)

How do you rate children with special needs, children with papers from the counseling center? It was a problem because I have there seven children and others... how to say it? Trouble-free or disorder-free ... Or maybe paperless, because we might all have paper for something ...

Well, so these paperless, they had to learn to accept it, so it was a problem. But today, in the fourth grade, they are totally cool and their comments are funny. That they want to be like these pupils ... want to be a dyslexic, too ... „I want half the dictation“ ... „I want a jigsaw.“ Now, they are more envious, and they tolerate these pupils with the special needs, normally. But it is because we have generally good relationships among children in the class. I do not like the way someone would interfere with teaching, or I would have to adapt to someone or control my mouth ... You see how I am talking. As long as I can work without an assistant, I would like to master it. And I have to tell you that this kid in the first class had unbelievable problems. And now I feel that he doesn't need the assistant at all. Children have learned to tolerate him when he has screamed so loud, so he goes outside or others go outside. They will tell him to go to the hallway. He just yells sometimes, uncontrollably.

Aren't you afraid he might run away? He ran away. He was already running.

You know, I'm not saying we shouldn't take care of children with disabilities. But we take care of them at the expense of the good ones ... but the good ones will someday work for us; society will stand on clever or hard-working children. And so, I have joined Mensa this year and started to do this Gifted Kids' Club, and I'm so full of energy with it, yeah. I have 15 above-average intelligent children from our school. I enjoy it very much. (CR9CH)

I will help them, and I will be glad to help those who try and aren't talented. They were stopped by nature. They are making mistakes, but they are working. But if you are sleeping on the desk during lessons, your forehead is red, do not be angry with me; I will not give you my strength and my energy. I'm unpleasant, but I have to tell him this way. It's tough. We always need to see the reason the kid is doing that.

He has problems since the fourth grade. It's tough; he's cheeky and disobedient. It's a shame. He's probably not getting rid of the label; he just confirms it. I'm sorry, and it's hard. It's hard. (CR2KO)

In my class I have five children with learning difficulties, who have received confirmation from psychological and pedagogical counseling. No serious disorders are involved here . . . but one of them can really be dyslexic. They have an additional lesson with me in the didactic-compensatory classes and another one in corrective-compensatory classes.

In this first class, these differences between the children were coming out only slowly. But certainly, individualization is not always possible. Now, one boy has an assistant, so it's a lot easier for me because she can help me with other children besides this boy.

It's a huge convenience for me; it's just a completely different way of working in the class. I can plan a day... But I have here two cases of very difficult relations with parents. They don't cooperate, so, unfortunately, these classes for compensation cannot really have any effect, and will not if parents will not be part of the common effort and work with the child at home. Well, it is by agreement with parents, from the first class, even at the parents' request, the children have some homework every day, except weekends. (PLITO)

At the moment, we have children from different families. Last year I had twin brothers in my class who were separated from the class because that one kicked my legs, but this was not the only reason. Problematic children. Now I have only one, and he has an assistant sitting with him. Yes, it is necessary. All lessons during the day and in the after-school activity, too. Some children do not need it. But these boys -- even if I have tried, they have always disturbed each other; they have something else in their heads. Boys are from the foster home; I hope they will change for me, in my class, where I will esteem and praise them... It is rare, but we do some educational commissions there. We have not had such a thing for a long time, but we have to help in this way. If there is a problem with a child, we don't force the parent to go somewhere... the teacher asks and gets an assistant, so it is also a bit different. The problem is, the teacher cannot control only this one child; teachers have other pupils... that's why an assistant.

However, the boy has a good memory. I compensate with him myself in the special lessons, which I have for our children. Next, I have a Ukrainian girl for Polish language three times a week, and I gave her special lessons so she would be able to use the Polish language as much as possible, to listen to it. I have to tell you honestly, one month, and she understands! Yesterday, for example, I was very happy about her progress. I even recorded the Russian and Ukrainian with whom I had classes. (PL3TO)

The different work for children in the class is for me so natural that I forget. That is the foursome, when others take a test, that have been given more time. They give me their papers only when they are ready unless it lasts too long, and I have to take them myself. I also have a little girl who does not write with a group, only individually, because she becomes less stressed.

In the past, we directed the children to the counseling center. I filled out the form, describing my opinion and worries, and the parent went with the child. However, now we cannot do it. For several years now, teachers have only been suggesting to parents what concerns them about their child, and then they should go to specialists on their own because teachers are not a professional psychologist...

I have just one pupil with ADHD, whom I can handle, but there are classes ... Colleagues have six, seven children with serious difficulties, and that is a huge problem. Children is not have been leaving from our school.... there are no places in special schools, where children have with different problems or the parent does not want to give child there. We can find a place, a school, for the child, but if the parent does not agree...Then we have children with hearing loss, really with such serious problems. And all these students with disabilities we should integrate into our school.

... For the most part it's not easy for us as teachers because if I'm alone and I have one child who only needs my care, what should I do with the other 20? It is very hard, and I think this is not good in Poland. Next example: children come to a lesson, because they can come only to art or music, but they cannot do it, or they cannot do it with joy, cannot mastered it. So, this is a very difficult problem. (PL3TO)

And besides, we still have a lot of foreigners; we have a lot of Ukrainian children here at school. I have additional classes, and I teach children the Polish language. I have such a girl in the class since September -- a nice girl with potential. It's easy for her to make conversation in Polish, but it's still hard to work on a lesson because she does not understand much in the third class; it could have been easier from the first one. So, I wonder, also, if children are able to help her in a quiet way, it really also helps sometimes. But this is also a difficulty for us. (PL8F)

I have help now; it's good! On the one hand, children can see that there are other children, too, who need help. They have to accept him, do not reject him. When he reads, everyone has to be patient, although he reads one or two sentences.

You have to fight, make no comment that "you have not learned, you're stupid.: It is different. You have to teach them. In general, this assistant does not bother me and the children because he is an appropriate

person who will help someone else and even brings something cool, smart. I have a clever man as an assistant, who taught in the high school and has historical and technical knowledge. It's good for me. The class does not have friction at all; on the contrary, it benefits. (PL7G)

We also have a lot of children with recommendations from the consulting center, no with judgments. Well, but these are demanding children; they should be in a special school, right? And one parent is happy to go to the consulting center, and another will never go. Why? This flaw of the child could appear someday in the future. It will not give him the best reputation to be in a special school, or go to a psychologist, will it? And sometimes we have children who should have a judgment but don't, and it is hard for these children and for us. But we have to work with them, right? And now it's inclusive teaching, where it is said that we want inclusion. So, we have children with disabilities here. (PL5G)

There is one boy in my class who has an excessive need for movement and talks all the time; he has to play with something all the time. The teacher would have to stand by him and check if he is writing in a notebook, whether he does the tasks properly and whether he does them at all. At such moments it is very difficult for me because I cannot concentrate on the class, on other children; I have to pay the most attention to him. He also disturbs other children with this during classes. (PL9F)

We do not have anything like that here. I do not have any such children. (PL10F)

I've already sent five children in the second class to pedagogical and psychological counseling. We have integration classes, where there are children with judgments, children with disability certificates. The integration class is created for children with disability certificates. My class is not integrative; I normally have all children here. In the first class, I closely observed children, and if I saw some graphomotor problems -- kids who couldn't concentrate, spelled wrong, changed or reversed letters...then I directed them to the specialist clinic and the counseling center. If they confirmed what I noticed, the child had to work on the corrective and compensatory class. Then either I or another specialist from the school (we are four here) carried out corrective and compensatory activities. (PL5G)

Is it easy for you to deal with the evaluation of exceptional children, with some disabilities, or the talented – those with special abilities or needs?

Children with special needs, yes, we have many. So, do you have supporting teachers? Do you appreciate them? Yes, but not for this project. We have a teacher assistant to support children with special needs in the mainstream classes.

Are the teachers working in your class, or do you have to send the child to another class?

Most of the time pupils with the teacher assistant are in the other classroom, but sometimes they are in our class. You have these supporting teachers working with them in the class.

Do you like it? *Yes, I do. And other children, yes, they don't have problems with this; they are accustomed to this situation. They do not rank each other. They could, but no, so, it is natural thing.*

Do the children have a lot of relief from the traditional curriculum?

Both: *The curriculum is different. Who is creating this curriculum -- you, as a teacher? Yes, we, and the teacher assistant. We try to create the curriculum together; we see the difficulties...And you are responsible for the plan and everything? Yes. (PT3, PT4)*

Gifted children can cope everywhere, but for weaker children we should have more time, to approach everyone, because they cannot feel happy in these schools where they are constantly being questioned.

There is our problematic boy. I have to teach the children not to pay attention to him, his loud clapping during the lesson – not to imitate it. But you know how children are. However, if he gets angry with someone, it is very bad. It is rare, once every few months, but sometimes it looks horrible. Education is certainly the most important thing, and without this integration, this culture of social life, it would not make sense. (PL7G)

My colleague has a girl with Down syndrome in the class, and she went to an inclusive class at the same time. She went twice to 1 class, twice to 2 class; at 16 she just left the primary school.

Is this good or not?

I think largely not. It depends on the case. These children are not successful; they do not have the conviction that their knowledge is building if someone is weaker. But when the level of knowledge is lower, and they can keep up, the child feels good in class.

I taught the girl for three months. She was very aggressive; she could not stand it all the time. Parents object to the special school -- they will not send their children to such a school -- this is such a big problem. And this girl fought all the time because she was not able to do as other, she was unhappy there.

Does it depend on parents?

Yes, but if they are not completely aware of the situation, if there are pros or cons for their child, maybe the state should regulate somehow. (PL7G)

Do you have an assistant? *Yes, they are in the special units and children have a specific curriculum. Do they spend all day with you? No, only when these three kids come into the classroom. Three afternoons, and in the morning, they are in the other place. (PT1)*

How many teachers teach in this class? *We have two levels... I have one teacher assistant, nine hours a week... Is she for all the children, or only for children with disabilities?* *They are in another classroom with a special educator. They have different subjects; they leave this activity. They are doing more practical things. Some of them don't even read, only one of these three... He even doesn't speak, but he has started to read...He is older than the others, probably...No, no, he is only very big; he is 9.*
Is it interesting for you? *Yes, very... it is a change. (PT1)*

Similar doubts can make teachers have poor pupils repeat the school year. Unfortunately, they use the word “dismissed.” It is too negative, old-fashioned and a bad tradition. Instead, repeating a year should be perceived in a modern way, as progressive: it is advantageous to the child, who hopes to improve and have enough time for things he cannot deal with in one short year. This practice of repeating undoubtedly has advantages and disadvantages. The solution should be, again, good communication among all stakeholders, including the child.

One boy's parents decided if he should repeat the first class or move on, but they approached it differently. I did not threaten him; I did not want to just throw him out of this class because I knew that his development is completely different.

His mother gave birth to a second child, and she saw that her son in school was completely unsuccessful, and he regressed emotionally when a toddler appeared at home. They said it would be better to repeat. Together, we have made this decision, and it worked really well. He was great in class, was examined, had great intellectual abilities, but he had emotionally disturbed him in overcoming this period. Now he is a year older, so he went to first class again as a 7-year-old. (PLAT)

How can I evaluate this poor child, at the end of every year? Now I wonder if this child will manage the fourth class or, despite everything, should repeat the fourth class. This is also a dilemma. Sometimes children are pushed from one class to the next because people say it is better for these children. Maybe, but I think it does not make sense to sit like this for three or four years and be passive and be outsider. But parents are stubborn: “I don't want to have a decision from the counseling center because my wife had it. We would not mark our child.” So, he spent two years in my class and now, finally, I had to be strict and say, “I will not let him go in the third class this school year because he cannot handle it.” (PL8F)

Is there the practice that children have to repeat the class? *I don't remember the last time I did it. Because I value the progress of the students ... I don't dismiss them because they are weak. One year, there comes the progression. It is difficult, when you have poor child.*

I don't know if the child is able to go to the third year. He needs 51 points and he has 49. He was supposed to reach a certain level this year. Has he done enough? (PT1)

Is inclusion always good for kids? Is it an advantage for them? What do teachers know about this? How do disabled children in the class feel, and do school society take their feelings into consideration? It is difficult to decide what is best for a child, whether it is done by a parent, a school, a counseling center or another institution ... However, the teacher should always play an important part in the final decision because he or she is in daily contact with the child and sees the child in the context of the class.

We have also Asperger's problems; a we have very varied class. It always depends on how he will cooperate. He has a problem with pronunciation, and reading is also difficult for him. If he does not start reading, how does he absorb subjects like nature, history? In general, he began to read, only very weakly. He can't write dictation, isn't able to write by listening. I have to tolerate it. OK, I give him a plus: for half a year I gave him the text he was rewriting. I helped him; we were doing it together, rewriting the text. But he did not like it very much because, he says, "I want to work like everyone else," and he started to write with everyone. Well, the effects are different, but at least I feel that he is in the group. I'm really sorry for him. I do not know why he is not in an integration group, on his level. Sometimes I do not understand these rules... (PL7G)

Is inclusion extra work for teachers, or is it a compulsory part of their vocation and teaching mission?

I still have compensatory classes with my children: one hour extra. These are unpaid hours, right?

"Unpaid" -- what does it mean? Without money?

"Unpaid." In that year, they were "card games," including unpaid ones. (PL5G)

There are still many inclusion issues to address and prepare for. It is not so much a matter of teachers' readiness for external conditions, the lack of assistants, probably the financial evaluation for teachers as well, because it is a lot of work in addition to their everyday obligations. The public often perceives teachers negatively -- that they have exaggerated demands or are reluctant to help. But the demands on them are often high, again, unfortunately, opening their path to passivity in other areas of teaching.

6.6.4.5 Changes: yes or no

I understand the word “tradition” as a reality that persists in schools for some reason. It was inherited. What is traditional, and what is new? This is difficult to explain; it is important to recognize the time we are living in and what we are comparing. In my work, I appeal to the period of socialist education that we can take as traditional. But these traditions also came out of the traditions of the schools that arose before this socialist era. So, change is what disturbs the common order and promotes new practices to improve education, in order to teach in schools what is needed in tomorrow’s world. What do we need to teach our children? What are the priorities of today's society?

a. *Tradition*

In this category, I wanted to highlight how strongly teachers appreciate traditions and stereotypes, and where they are more open to change. Are they motivated to change? Do they regard their work as variable or routine? When a teacher in the Czech Republic leads a class for five years and then goes back to the first class, we cannot say her work is routine. Tradition can mean the methods teachers use and inherit; relationships with children; the need for authority; and requiring good, polite behavior of both children and parents. Teachers like to use proven methods, and it may be good to note that every innovation, after years of common use, becomes tradition or routine.

I do not know if it is right, but my approach to school is the same as my parents’ approach; I have it from my family. We approach school with, almost, humility. Mr. Teacher is Mr. Teacher; there is some respect. And as a parent I have to listen to his opinion, at least, because the teacher and my child spend a lot of hours a day together. This is how we were brought up to behave. (CR2KO)

I guess the verbal evaluation would not suit me. I guess grades still mean something – sense, importance and seriousness, their justification. (CR10CH)

I have already done this activity since the first grade. You need to know something about these kids. I always start the day by asking them what they did, where they were, or what kind of weekend they had. This is how you learn about their troubles, what they have at home or their luck, and you can react to it. You can tell them something from your life, too. They will appreciate it. (CR7CH)

Then pupils were telling what each of them was reading, and then they were going to tell me. I just gave them reader’s journals; they were writing very little. Just a brief notice, but they had to talk about it.

But that's the deal and cooperation with the family. It's their memories. I don't check it. My red scratches would make their notebooks look very nice. Those excellent readers have to read more books a year than those who don't read well. When I know that he has been able to read hardly one book at home for the past half-year and it's a record, he will just read one book or magazine. But let him read. He might like it. (CR5SS)

You have to grow up for that. You're coming to school with some ideal; you're solving everything. I take my time. I do not want to deal with a hothead. That's your experience. You have to make sure you want to go along with those parents, but on the other side, you should keep some respectability and rules. Today, parents blame you for everything. These are parents' pretensions: you should do more as a teacher. "There is my son, and I want only grades 1 from you". And you have to say, "It is not like that. He's smart, but you have to help him. It doesn't happen without effort." On the other side, there are parents able to destroy their child; you have to brake them. You have to educate the parents and then, when you have done it, you can get on well with them. (CR7CH)

The teacher's authority is related to absolute obedience and absolute peace in the class through work. For many teachers, it is a prerequisite for good education and proof of work well done.

They have to pay attention. The teacher passes brief information, and they are supposed to know the purpose of the lesson. However, at moments of chaos and noise, pupils will remember two of them, what is necessary. And then even when I ask, they do not know what I am asking. And these young girls, in general, they are so scared of this noise.

However, I think a child will never absorb something if there is chaos in the classroom. Even an adult will have difficulty if there are always changes, noises in the room. Children have to learn. These are difficult things for children coming from kindergartens. There they have more fun on the carpet than sitting at a desk. (PL2T)

The artwork must be finished, exactly. They hand in unfinished work, but some habits need to be taught. Now, everything is on the principle "And I have to do it?" "Yes, you have to." Because when I would say no, just willing people... well, one, maybe two are able to work. Sometimes no one, so you have to impose. (PL10F)

Are there situations in today's school like those when children did not go to school, but went to work and helped their parents? Is the difference between the town school and the village school?

Even in 2003 my pupil in the village school answered me that he did not learn poems. But he could not learn because he worked in the field or cut wood with his dad.

These people had the mentality kids go to school, but kids have to do at home. So generally, in the town, I saw that here the parents care. They are aware that the better children's education, the better the job and the future. But the villages simply need manual laborers. (PL2T)

One point of view about why homework stills exists is tradition. But finally, I give an opposite example, maybe the view of one progressive teacher.

For me homework -- the parent should also keep track of what the child is doing, because I think that, writing one sentence or learning a few words, they learn the approach for the future.

For parents, it is preparation for fourth class, when things suddenly change, subjects arrive, teachers change, and then parents would be very disappointed by unfinished work in the future and bad evaluations for their child... (PL3T)

Here it is quiet; the children are listening; they are active. No such uproar -- there is comfort, and then the teacher's work is different. But this is what you need from the first steps; it has worked out because it is generally difficult to talk to children who do not listen. And now I'm trying to keep my lessons as quiet as possible. (PL2T)

I give homework. I require it. There is no day, probably, without homework. It can happen that, when we do some math problems the child still cannot deal with -- what, then have to practice at home, right? (PL5G)

Yes, homework is very important for children because they teach them responsibility and regularity. I agree with homework, but it just has to be thoughtful. Meaningful. (PL10F)

So, from Monday to Thursday, the children have homework, to which, from my point of view, they should devote about 15 to 20 minutes, to learn to be systematic. But at the same time, they would have time to be with their parents and do other things. I do not know if this is good. I think children should learn primarily in school. This is my point of view, very personal. However, they know that "in the future, I'll have to do it." They are getting used to spending time with obligation and learning responsibility. (PL9F)

It is one of my changes during my practice. Now I give homework only because I am obligated to. Because my colleagues said children have to work at home; the parents should work with them. I think

the children spend a lot of time in school. They need to play, spend time, talk to their parents. The children should be taught in school. (PT1)

Tradition can mean favorite textbooks, books to which teacher wants to return, even the teacher's tradition when a family sends its next child to the same teacher.

Once there were really perfectly developed books, and they are still good, in my opinion. The Falski reading book -- really, each of us knew it. I We also learned this spelling book, from which my parents learned... (PL 7G)

There were several parents who already had children in my class, so it was simpler for them when they gave next their child to me. (PL2T)

b. Innovation

There I am reminded of the variety of innovation and new access, that teachers use, and I see a change from past practice. And there is a dialogical relation between change and innovation. The teacher creates some new tradition within the class, or even the school.

You need a break and change – learn something new and step out of those old tracks. On the other hand, when you have a new class after five years, it's all different. I've never been able to use my stuff for another class; it doesn't work. Occasionally, it depends the group you have, what they enjoy –war [as a topic] is interesting to them, discussion ... If you start discussing with the children and you do 10 classes but only have time for five, you get behind schedule – for example, in the natural sciences. (CR9CH)

It is said that after seven years, one should rest – simply change roles and find new joy. (CR5SS)

I'm glad when pupils are joyful in class, when the kids are relaxed. We laugh. I say: "Don't be afraid. Let's talk and make mistakes, and don't worry!" In language it's really important. (CR2KO)

Give them space. That's more natural to them. The child is able on its own to realize how to read, perhaps in kindergarten – here with the genetics method. Never through syllables. Or maybe sometimes, because those syllables do not mean anything in themselves. (CR1KO)

Whatever they do manually, I'm trying to sing together while we work. Because no one is singing with them at home, few families. (CR9CH)

The parents are quite choosing me. There is a practice: you can choose a teacher you want. We are a small town, and parents know what you do, who is active and who is not. So, there was a queue to pick me ... (CR9CH)

You can use what you want for teaching, except for math. Here we teach the Hejny method, everyone. The whole elementary school, yes ... but we've already realized that it's probably not good to order that strictly. Because if someone does not want to do that, he does it wrong – basically or fatally wrong. Even those of us who want to use this method aren't doing well. It's not easy; we know we have a lot of gaps. We were at summer school for a week; that was amazing. And you realize how you do it, how you are stupid and do not do what you have to do. But again, it is unfortunate because there no time for it. Our schedule is not enough. (CR1KO)

I only have a course, I am an English teacher from a European project. I designed English teaching tools, and I taught only English. Yeah, an interesting experience, two years, ... The project ended, it took two years, and I wanted to go back to school. (CR2KO)

That kind of cooperation, above the standard, we don't have here. I'm surprised by a friend from Prague, who always tells me about your teambuilding and all the activities, and they take trips together and play volleyball and so on ... I have to say, I always envy her. We don't have it in our school. It's a shame. (CR3KO)

*The common tradition for us is a "family day." Children prepare a program, or we go together for a picnic -- parents, children and me. **For the whole school??***

*No, only for the class. Well, recently, there used to be common Christmas Eve parties with parents. Now they do not have time. **Don't have time?***

There is simply no possibility. We also have open lessons, to which we invite parents, but they work; it cannot be done until noon either or in the evening because of additional activities or something. Two, three parents come, or Grandmother will sometimes be delegated. Also, these traditions where all parents and children come cannot be organized anymore. (PL6G)

For example, in the holidays, when I go to training, I have no energy and excitement to educate myself, not at all. So, I want to, rather, prepare in my head how to start next year with my children, what I want to experience with them and so on. (CR5SS)

I use a lot of the same methods and habits, like a birthday in class; we make wishes. We celebrate all holidays together. With this class, we start classes quite normally; we do not sit in a circle as with others. They are not able to sit in a circle because they cannot sit long. They are very active. (PL6G)

In your class today, do you use some special methods, procedures, rituals, activities? Yes, for example, that teachers communicate and cooperate a lot with parents. Or, every morning I bring some things. We can talk about, where it is from? Or how we can use it? Yesterday I was in a restaurant; we can talk about the food... like this, bringing things from abroad. It is my specific approach.

There is one special example from Portugal, where within tradition, the rules expect the changes. After some period, they have to change the school in the same cluster.

At how many schools have you been a teacher? Let me count...Nine, at least. Is that common here? It is in the same cluster. There is a rule that when we finish year four, we have to change schools. It is a law in this cluster. And it is a new school. And I was at home with my kids for a year – twins. When I returned, I had my hours reduced – a part-time job. So, I couldn't work with the same class. I was a teacher assistant. It was better for me and for the pupils because I had to stay home very often if my children were ill...I would have missed a lot of classes if I had been in charge of the class. After that class I went to another place. I was there for three years. Then I had to move, and I chose to be here.
(PT1) space

The Polish teachers interviewed have had a lot of training. This may be due in part to their being in Wroclaw, where teachers can take courses at the many local universities. In general, Polish teachers show greater interest in activities than their Czech counterparts. They want to apply new teaching skills within the class and are motivated to change. They are interested in their jobs and want to educate -- not only in practical way, but theoretically, too.

I was lucky to take part in two projects. First, a yearlong course, "Lessons of Creativity." I have always been fascinated by such a pedagogy of creativity, methods activating children. The other project: two years ago, I had an opportunity to take part in project about working in groups. I use it not only in my class team but also as a coach in a nationwide Olympics, "Destination Imagination." (PL10)

I did online training that allowed me to teach the boy with Asperger's syndrome. He needs such a plan. I'm teaching him for the second year, but I have to repeat every last lesson and add new things slowly. At least there is a little success. (PL7G)

What is very good in our school: we have a lot of opportunity for training. We can attempt courses for innovative methods of learning for teachers. We have organized training on multiple intelligences. But I don't like it. I am attracted by new technologies, i.e., using tablets, interactive whiteboards. This is my specialty. I use the tablet and appropriate applications during lessons with children. I devote a lot of time to implement programming in everyday lessons. (PL9F)

The method of color -- we vote before, they choose their day, color -- what they want to wear. Pupils are very happy, and they enjoy it. They really come all in red. They do not have to be dressed all in red, only an important element. (PL3T)

I always try to work in a group. It is very important to me, and I can see the effects of this activity. In the first class, group work was a tragedy. Children didn't have a problem when I decided, top down, how they were assigned to groups. Later I used a random method. Children shouldn't feel hurt or as if they've been treated unjustly. (PL1T)

My colleagues have already invented various methods and organize lessons open to parents. Parents and children meet in the classroom, and parents have the opportunity to see how their children work. Unfortunately, parents who are supposed to come do not. But I think this is a good future method. (PL1T)

We belong to the network of "schools supporting talents" ...for many, many years. For us, every child is able to be an exceptional student. Therefore, we offer additional activities. So, we also have classes for particularly gifted children, not only for children who have problems or deficits. (PL3T)

I work in Wroclaw, I have a lot of places where I can go, use, learn something new... I'm not a good artist, for example, and I have to run these classes. Why should I bother and pretend that I am able to do it? I will do the basics, but I would like more! So, I go to additional classes -- for example, to various centers... (PL3T)

As an „individual innovation,” I would describe the popular methods of teachers they put into practice -- trying to revive it, trying to change. They create it themselves, use methods from their colleagues or find inspiration in other sources. An attractive change for active teachers are activities that which are financially demanding, and under normal circumstances in the school, the teacher cannot afford them. But someone else -- a project, a parent or another sponsor – may invest.

One father bought for us an interactive whiteboard; he could sponsor us. Well, we can definitely make a movie for some subject; it is some change for us, makes lessons more attractive. Children collect different messages on topics needed for lessons; we write such special notebooks every week, which we create on various topics -- for example, astronomy. But children don't copy from the Internet; they use their own words, a short note. I am trying to link trips to museums along with these topics in notebooks

so that all are linked; we have invented the project with my colleague. There is even a pupil's dad, an astrophysicist, who is coming to us for lessons. (PL7G)

I have created special cards, fišky. Children can use them to describe their experience -- i.e., we observe nature in spring, in autumn -- or spelling cards. Children can to prepare themselves with this special card on dictations, for work with texts by writing. They are step by step, how to do it. Short questions: Where? How? Why? (PL7G)

Our school takes part in the program "School in the City." The city government gives us money for certain activities. We don't have to pay for the pool, for example; that is also cool. (PL5G)

We organize a lot of competitions and happenings on various occasions -- the Day of Friendliness, Boys' Day, the Day of the Animal. Today is the Day of Friendliness. On all breaks, children are mostly dressed in yellow. When the child comes in nice sunglasses or with a nice word written, he gets something sweet. The next big event is a Christmas charity fair. The whole family comes. Parents bake cakes; teachers sell these cakes. Children make a variety of Christmas toys, and we sell everything. We do performances; the teachers perform shows. This year I was a bee. Teachers can laugh themselves. The money is intended for children who have financial problems and cannot always go on trips. We fund them, really collect a lot of money. But all together -- teachers, parents, children. (PL6G)

*I am always changing. In my first experience here, I had first grade plus one class in the second grade, third group, fifth group. **So, you could teach the same children for four years?** I taught the same children I started with in first grade. And this year we have a new project because our Ministry has developed and given schools the opportunity to start new projects. I can teach many things –arts, music, writing, reading, math – in the first cycle. But this year I am always changing. I am working for all classes, and not only here, but in the other schools. (PT3)*

This project is a very good change, not for us but for the children. It started this year, and this opportunity is very exciting. You as a teacher – you have a change. Not that you are teaching, but more how you are teaching...

***And for you, what is better: everyday routine or this project?** I have been teaching 24 years, and routine is boring for me. And now I don't have routine, which is good. This is my opinion; some other colleagues don't think that way. They want the same for ages... but I think changes are good. (PT4)*

For the second class, I have to prepare an annual plan, what we have to do from September until July. It is the teacher's work at the beginning of the school year. This year, in the second third, we have one

special aim because we have a new project. We need to build new things; we are learning to do that. It is a process. (PT1)

A great inspiration for teachers for innovation is, of course, freedom from the headmaster.

I mean, it is a big plus for me that I have the freedom. Nobody is standing next to me; nobody controls me ... I can only plan my work, my methods, class trips. For example, in the first class, I set up a "diary of success" for pupils. It was important for me that every child can see some success.

This kind of positive motivation brings great results, although not always and not in relation to every child.

Another example: ... The willing parents come to read. It is not very often, but there is always a group of parents who come and we have common "reading on the carpet," within the nationwide campaign "All Poland Reads to Children." (PL4T)

As innovations, given the earlier possibilities, we may consider examples from abroad: opportunities to visit schools abroad, shadowing. Teachers can notice the differences. education systems-everyone perceives it differently, pros and cons of particular system.

Last year I was in Great Britain with Erasmus. I studied English for a week. And I had been going to school for a week. And there is one teacher who teaches first class all the time, again and again ...around in circles. I do not know if it is good or bad. Should they develop closer relationships by spending more than one year with their pupils? I don't know. (PL7G)

My Canadian experiences have changed me a lot because -there people live more at ease. I want to benefit from my living there, so I try to use some of the Canadian things, practice here. I would like to make these children more creative so they can come to solutions on their own, not everything laid out for them. (PL7G)

Some teachers think there are too many changes, and teachers and children cannot react, implement or evaluate their feasibility. And some teachers are adapting, but they do not like change. Sometimes they get into a rut.

I discussed with a friend, who has worked at this school three years longer than I, that we would like to work one year without changing. We can get into a rut and focus on what is important and not what someone "invented" himself. I do not know if these changes will be good or bad. Changes are commitments for us, and we pass them on to children. I did not want 6-year-olds to go to school, but we accepted it. Everything is too fast. I am a quick person, but this is very fast. I'm not afraid of change, and after so many years I have to deal with everything. I'm just afraid that in all these changes we will lose our child -- and that's the most serious. (PL6G)

Education should be healed, not destroyed. Some methods have already been worked out, and we should thoroughly carry out this reform. We will destroy everything and return to where we started. First, we move forward in accordance with Europe, then we go back again; I don't know if it makes sense. At all, who talk about it with teachers? Maybe they talk, but I don't know who and where. (PL4T)

We have some classes this year where there are 6-year-olds and 7-year-old together. I have to say how big the differences are between these two groups of children. Yes, I have eight children 6years old. The younger had to adjust to the level of these 7-year-olds. It has not been easy. (PL8F)

There is a formative -- written -- assessment for three years, and then numbers appear. Children do not always understand the system of grading. At the beginning of the fourth class, they are happy they got the grade; it doesn't matter whether it is 5 or 2. Later they will see and understand. Also, from the middle of third class, I sometimes assess with the help of these grades whether the children learn, implement, understand. (PL8F)

We expect changes in a lot of subjects now; we will change the math again next year. It was changed, and now they are going to change again. So, we don't have time to try it out, to be able to say if it is good or not. When it changed, a lot of teachers feel less secure about it about it because it looked like a more general subject. (PT1)

An innovative approach can be the teachers' willingness to communicate with parents at any time. Most teachers are very friendly, and for many parents, it is, unfortunately, a matter of course that needed not be mentioned. In some schools the number of parent meetings is enormous and truly admirable.

We have the first meeting with parents (for the 1. class) in June, then in September ... So, this is more or less 10 official meetings during the year. Among them, there are probably two less formal meetings. But often after the meeting, the parents stay and want to consult. Can I say, "I will not talk to you"? We cannot refuse, as I see that the parent has a need to talk to me. I'm not assertive enough to say, "my time is up, I'm leaving..." (PL3TO)

Some bureaucratic changes are perceived by teachers as very negative:

Because of the question of money, they said the whole school will work together – primary, kindergarten – because it is cheaper. Children stay all together; we don't pay a secretary, other staff members. The authorities can control everything. The primary school must work like this; the teacher must work like this, make notes like this. A teacher is not important; there are rules -- no autonomy.

But this direction doesn't have any affection for the kids; it wants pupils to be like the same ... it is mostly poor, more undemocratic than it was before. There is only one question: economic, money. Money for the secondary schools and control for us. After this democratic election. Before that, 15 years ago, we were electing the director of the "groupment." Not now. We elect one group of teachers, who are on the council, and after this they elect the director. You are the director and the teacher at the same time... When there is an election, and they don't like you because you do things the others don't like; you are not elected next time; you are no more. But the system doesn't have the power to change me. When I was in direction, we did a lot of things because we had a lot of autonomy And everybody had good ideas, lot of hope, believed in everything that was good. (PT2)

6.6.5 Analysis of observations

I was able to observe 10 teacher-respondents in all-Polish classes in three schools in Wrocław; at the same time, I could talk with other staff members or had access to some school documents. In the Czech Republic, I had the opportunity to spend time interviewing eight teachers, but I observed other elementary classes in the same school and school life in general because very often, the classes cooperate within some special activities – trips, inclusion children, PE education, extracurricular activities. In Portugal, I visited only one really multicultural classroom and lessons taught by teacher I interviewed. But I had the chance to learn about three new, modern schools that are just emerging, and I could have some information about new projects whose main feature is cooperation among classes, and among schools in clusters.

Observation is only a secondary method for my analysis, so I assigned suitable codes to the given categories created by interviews of insights. I mentioned teachers' and children's approaches to the classic methods of the GoS or to teachers' innovation in the classroom. I focused mainly on teachers' work methods that can be assessed as a departure from the classic frontal teaching prevailing in ordinary schools, and here I give some examples of my visits in the class. The innovations dominate this chart because they are rather my subjective impressions as an observer, comparing them to my experience as both an elementary teacher and perhaps as a pupil, as I perceived school, years later, in relation to my own life experience.

Table 15: EXAMPLES FROM OBSERVATIONS

Table 15: EXAMPLES FROM OBSERVATIONS		
	TRADITION	INNOVATION
Poland	Very noisy class-teacher, she has to often scold	Assistant in the classroom
	Teacher asks for pupil's book to show it to parents - noisy boy	Games
	PE- teacher uses a strong voice and first person (speaks as "I") - I cannot continue because I do not have shoes for exercise ...	Interactive board – competition within IT technologies
		Awarding for activity – points
	PE - You're disobedient, you will not compete with others	Work in groups – pupils have high freedom in the classroom
	Noisy class – working in groups – teacher has to have strong voice all the time	Sitting in pairs - girl, boy
	Small class but noisy-children have to count for getting calmer	Variable and spacious desks
		They can choose an activity within the lesson
		Emphasis on relationships - boards, pictures, activities - help, tolerance, apology, courtesy
Czech Republic	Homework – signed by parents	joking during lessons
	Whole lessons at the same place	Play – bingo
		Smaller group of children for English lessons
		Czech-English sentences
		Working in centers within project Step by step
		Moving through the whole school – play – work in groups
		Common evaluation in the ring – democratically, what you liked and didn't like in common work
		Is it really true, when it is written in the textbook? Crit thin
		Use all sense by working

	Small, nice class – a lot of pupils	Mustafa – inclusion of new pupil from abroad
		The decision by chance /draw lots - justice
		Playing, moving
		Rules of silence and loudness
		Work in pair
		Rules of class – reminding often - democratically
	A lot of pupils – totally full first class	Computer in the class
		Saying you to the teacher – per name (informal communication)
		Big class
		Rewarding, role in group
	Singing, instrument in the classroom (piano)	Working with assistant in other room, but close

For me, these observations confirmed what I later learned from interviews with teachers or, on the other hand, the first step to getting to know teacher and their work before the interviews. The class as a space and environment the teacher creates for children is an important indicator in assessing the quality of the elementary teacher.

In the context of „Grammar of Schooling,“ these observations have shown me that ordinary classroom work has made some progress and change, and that teachers are trying to create a variety of lessons within the limits of space, time, subject, curriculum etc.

6.6.6 Analyzing data from narratives

I relied heavily on narratives, but I was disappointed that I had not been able to collect them from all the teachers; from Portugal, I have only one. Teachers were asked very specifically about two aspects of change. The first comes from above, suggested by politicians and influenced by general changes throughout the EU or other countries on behalf of emancipation, equal opportunity etc. The second consists of changes the teacher can realize alone under school conditions within the system, often based on the primary changes mentioned above or those to which teachers progressed during their practice. Teachers can change their attitudes toward teaching for different reasons: specific classes, particular conditions in the school, parents, new methods in pedagogy. The specific request for a teacher’s narrative is in Appendix 5.

Outcomes of this research method have been included in subcategory 5, changes, traditions and innovations. But, as in the interviews, the categories of description overlap and may be divided into several categories.

In the table, I describe the teachers' views and experiences by country. In the second column are categories and subcategories I present on the page 96, in which the view might also be assigned; these subcategories are affected by change and related to these issues (categories 1,2,3,4,5.). Some of the numbers are missing. Here changes or opinions are more general; they refer to facts I have decided not to use in categories, but I feel they worth mentioning. However, they are part of the research. They are pools of meanings that have rarely been mentioned and therefore do not have their own description categories, but only relate to the changes.

I had the feeling that narratives often revealed more courageous, more critical opinions. Teachers were not afraid to speak their minds here.

The disadvantage of narratives is the fact that teachers answer questions they are not asked. Rather, they are venting or boasting. They give information that is inappropriate for research, or the researcher can find little relevant information. I offer one example:

Regarding the teaching profession, I cannot imagine another job. Working with children gives me a lot of joy. The children are sincere, and each of them wants to be noticed. They are like modeling clay that can be molded and created step by step. Introduced principles, variable personalities, consistency, respect and more positive evaluations motivate students to correct behavior and cooperation in a peer group.

The long-term observation of children also affected my life. Thanks to them, I started to write poems, songs, legends, stories, scripts, which I used in my work and later shared with others through websites. I did not expect them to be used by schools, kindergartens and publishing houses. After entering my name and surname in Google, you can find my work. I am in teachers' guides, etc., ... (PL2T)

6.6.6.1 Changes in Poland

What changes influence and influenced teachers in Poland?

Table 16: CHANGES IN POLAND IN TEACHERS' NARRATIVES	
(In the category of description: changes, yes or no)	Code of category
Opinions of teachers	
Introduction of written assessment. It requires much more work from teachers than a grading assessment, but it is for the child's benefit. Formative assessment - The child and	1C

the parents see the sense of learning. The pupil knows what and how to improve, what is going well ...).	
The system was adapted to the capabilities of a class team . If the students are distracted, they need a break; after a few minutes I do it. Earlier, the lessons were strictly 45 minutes.	1B 2B 3B
Integrated education , without a special division into subjects (but it is divided into larger contents of knowledge – mathematics, natural sciences, etc.). The education is intertwined without a precise division.	4 1A
The option to choose textbooks . In a cycle of three classes (from 1 to 3) I have to use one publisher. The textbooks must have certification (MEN list).	3B
Classes may be conducted outside the school building more and more often. Thanks to the “School in the City” program, I can go out with children for various activities and trips. The costs are often covered by the municipal office.	1A
Students can leave books at school unless they have homework. Before they carried them daily.	
Smaller classes . Before, 33 pupils; currently 25. Unfortunately, there are still shifts. (One year, children go to school for the first shift, mornings; the next year, for the second, afternoon. One classroom for two classes.)	1A
The change to having 6-year-olds attend school was unfavorable. It’s good that it has already been canceled. Polish schools are not prepared for caring activities to the extent that 6- and 7-year-olds require. There is definitely better in kindergartens in this regard.	
Parents are more demanding than they used to be. Teachers try to get them involved in the organization of class life (trips, parties), regardless of whether they work professionally or not.	1D
The educational sphere is the most important, then didactics (behavior, relationships more than knowledge). If the child is motivated, with high self-esteem, he or she will certainly have higher didactic results. This happens in my classes.	2A 2B
The development of children in early school age, currently between 6 and 9, is particularly important for the development of skills and personality. Students need systematic education and participation in the social and cultural life of their environment.	
Extra activities of teachers : For over 10 years I have been using special memory techniques at work. (I am an instructor in memory techniques.)	3A
Going with the spirit of progress I took part in various trainings and forms of vocational education, which allowed me to broaden and deepen my knowledge, which I use in working with children and which I share with other teachers, as well as with students training to be teachers. Through in-depth knowledge of child psychology, I can also help	3A 1D

parents, support them in the educational and didactic process. I attended workshops. I wanted to enrich my learning of new forms and methods of working with talented students, implementing new methods of educational work, coping with difficult behavior of students and parents.	
Currently, the use of modern communication technologies has made it easier for me to quickly exchange information with parents, quickly responding to emerging problems and dealing with difficulties. Thanks to the knowledge gained with the use of modern media, I have obtained information about my students' current interests, their music and film idols, trends, which makes it easier for me to communicate with them.	2B
Motivating students to participate in school and out-of-school competitions, activities . No matter if the child won, every contribution is important. Everyone received a small prize from me.	2B
Using the interactive whiteboard – children love this way of working.	5B
Cooperation with companies outside schools – a company that is involved in film education, and another one in multimedia education.	
Computer classes in school programs. But it is difficult for every child in class of 25 to have a computer.	5B
In the last few years, the core curriculum has changed too often . This is not beneficial to children and also too often needed a different approach from teachers. They should study – it is a sign of the present times – but maybe other issues.	3B
Of great importance is integration among children in the class . Apart from trips, every year, from the first class, go with children to the so-called green schools. (The teacher works 24 hours a day, without additional remuneration, but it's worth it for the children.)	2A 4
Teachers' work is difficult, requires constant development, commitment, creative work, non-routine, a critical attitude toward one another. The teacher should be distinguished by patience, understanding and flexibility – identify with his work and profession.	3
Motivation for teachers - I have a lot of satisfaction from everyday contact with pupils, watching how, under the influence of my interactions, they acquire basic skills that allow them to achieve further school successes. I feel great pride and joy, seeing that after three years of teaching and raising children from my class, they transform into exemplary, independent fourth graders. Special thanks for my work are meetings with graduates I taught in younger classes and their pleasant memories that they have kept in their hearts from the beginning g.	3
Cooperation . This is an advantage, the smaller school, because thanks to this we know one another; we can exchange experiences, support one another in everyday work and carry out tasks in a student-friendly way.	2C

A school without anonymity. We can treat each child individually; we have the opportunity to get to know him in depth. We know a lot about our pupils, and conversely, the pupils know all the teachers teaching at our school perfectly well. We can help each pupil solve problems.	2A 2B
Thanks to the in-depth knowledge of the child, I can individualize classes, emphasizing and developing what the child is doing well to strengthen their self-esteem and support them in difficult moments to deal with stress and failure more easily.	2A 2B

6.6.6.2 Changes in the Czech Republic in teachers' narratives

What changes have influenced teachers in the Czech Republic?

After attending college, teachers must often respond and adapt to the system when they begin working. Moreover, they often have to make necessary and up-to-date changes in the system with their colleagues in the given school. They do not learn in college how to make them, but practice requires them.

Table 17: CHANGES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC IN TEACHERS' NARRATIVES	
(In the category of description: changes, yes or no)	Code of category
Opinions of teachers	
I have had problems when creating school education programs. My colleagues couldn't explain the program; they disagreed with this change, the curriculum was clear, so they approached this problem in a very tepidly. In college, I did not have a chance to find out what it was. It was only mentioned that there was a general educational framework, but we did not develop this document together and we were not particularly trained. I got acquainted with this goal on my own initiative, first this framework and then the school educational framework – our rules in my school.	2C 3C

The director's approaches to the employee are different at each school, and hardly tolerate injustice and inequality, often rightly. The advantage of the influx of money into schools is certainly that for teachers can have better facilities for schools, classes and children, and older teachers appreciate it. However, teacher evaluation lags behind. Some schools pay teachers extra for supervising extracurricular activities; others do not. This, in turn, is a very demotivating for young teachers and active teachers.

Rewards? At the previous school, yes; not now. Just oral praise. Where is the money going?	
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Here are the parts of teachers' life stories in which they describe changes and adaptations during their practice.

<p>I defended my thesis on the topic of project teaching. I continued this idea in my practice. I try to integrate knowledge into larger blocks. I enjoy it, and I argue that when the curriculum is integrated into a common theme and children use this curriculum in application tasks, they have a better sense of learning.</p> <p>With the new school framework (after the standardized curriculum was abolished) and the introduction of so-called competencies, I have been intensively looking for a comprehensive educational method in which competencies would develop naturally. It was hard working on a team of all women. I was the first to have the Step by Step program—that soon became popular and interesting, also for the parents. Some colleagues considered this threatening, and I understood that it is not advantageous to stand out from the women's team. But I stayed, and today there are seven teachers in our school.</p> <p>But the next step begins because the children from the first cycle (1.-5. class) move on to the next cycle (6.-9. class), and our school administration wants to continue the program. This is connected with the necessity of further education of colleagues, or with the adoption of new ones. I'm afraid teachers are not going to be part of the program. (don't want...)</p>	3
<p>After graduating, I started very actively, and I had a lot of activities with my children – sleepovers, outdoor “green” school, several day trips, work in extracurricular subjects, etc. In the fifth grade I added several children from nearby villages, so I had a class of 34 (1998). It seemed to me they were great. Because I was young and full of ideas, they were my first or for other reasons – I don't know why. We still meet today, and we still have something to say. I have been quite tough in my teaching, at least from my current perspective.</p> <p>Another class came after my pause, after maternity leave, and again it was amazing. I was looking forward to teaching a lot, even though I could expect the problematic third class, with the bad reputation, with some troubled children and even my daughter! But euphoria from returning had helped me, and I could create in this class a wonderful group. Those troubled children stayed in the background, and today they are great pupils in the ninth grade.</p> <p>Even my current pupils are incredible. Their parents chose me; they even stood in a queue! I have a class full of independent personalities. Sometimes their self-confidence may come across as insolence, cheek. If they do not like something, they can complain to the headmaster. Every new teacher who comes to teach my class leaves quite exhausted. I have no problem with my children; I can handle them.</p>	3

<p>Recently it is 24 years since my graduation, and I have remained faithful to my teaching profession, with some exceptions. I went to work and study language in Germany and England, and after returning, I graduated from a three-year program in English and German for the elementary level. I also took my exams abroad. Then I taught, and then I went on maternity leave three times. The nurture of our three sons also brought a welcome experience. All my “breaks” in working as a teacher have been greatly enriching to me, and I feel they’ve been very beneficial for my professional development. I could not have been stereotyped at all, and the constantly changing content of my days at that time allowed me to collect experiences of all kinds, not only about child psychology and didactics, but also about myself and my personal possibilities and qualities.</p> <p>In retrospect, if I had evaluated my studies and preparation for this job, I was enriched most by my various periods of pedagogical practice, and also a study stays in Germany. There I lived with a family of two graduate psychologists, one of whom was even a professor at the University of Nuremberg. Long discussions with them and sharing family life with their two young children were a great school for me, and experience in dealing with small children.</p> <p>Foreign language teaching was introduced in elementary schools just during the start of my pedagogical practice. The initial enthusiasm for the introduction of compulsory education in English immediately produced a shortage of qualified teachers. That’s why I have taught languages for several years in elementary classes. University training for elementary English teachers was introduced, but schools had already started requiring pupils to study foreign languages. There taught everyone who could at least show some language experience.</p> <p>Gradually, the conditions for teaching English have undergone considerable development. The choice of textbooks was wider, and the various materials were starting to appear. Only the numbers of truly experienced, qualified teachers are still insufficient. Because we are mainly linguistic enthusiasts in our teachers’ room, three of us have completed this study. This greatly facilitates the flexibility of the organization of teaching. We can offer extracurricular language activity and even substitute for a colleague. We have IT programs that offer a wide range of language training and learning opportunities.</p> <p>I am constantly expanding my experience as an elementary teacher. The biggest change for me was the opportunity to participate in the rediscovery of the genetic⁶ method of reading that we gradually replaced in our school with the proven method of syllables.</p>	<p>2B</p> <p>3C</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p>
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⁶ In Czech schools two methods are used to teach reading: analytic-synthetic (conventional) and genetic (created in the 1990s). They differ in theoretical foundations and methodology.

<p>Enthusiasts at our school became actors in the first pilot projects. Our teachers have been using this teaching method for 20 years. The created range of workbooks, textbooks and writing books offers a very sympathetic use with the ideas of critical thinking. Everything is very nicely complemented by practical manipulation. The teacher's soul takes pleasure from a wide range of activities, suggestions and learning opportunities.</p>	
<p>The school is changing in our hands. In the past, it was a little more interesting to me. We taught differently, according to the curriculum of the free school, which was a bit looser. There were not enough textbooks or materials; they were not copied and downloaded from the Internet. But I was more creative! We made the tools with our children alone. Perhaps I did not realize the responsibility for what I teach the children – what they will know when they leave our school. Maybe we weren't just young, but also inspired by the mood after the 1989 revolution; we were full of ideas.</p> <p>Today, for these children, learning is certainly more interesting and different, but I'm not sure if we develop the imagination to the extent we did earlier. Today's more demanding children can everything find on the Internet; they needn't to use books or encyclopedias. Overall, I think the computer has taken away a lot. Some are quite addicted to it, and they like nothing else. This, of course, is largely a matter for parents.</p> <p>It's nice to have a lot of school events – sleepovers at school, skiing and bicycling. I just have a feeling that some parents expect it from us. Some of them are happy and grateful to us, but others take it for granted. I try to understand this. Our excess of activity in this direction is part of the competition to attract pupils in our city. I'm a little sorry.</p> <p>I think the situation in school with our headmaster is similar. Before, she was more open and helpful. But I understand that she is constantly pushed by more and more new rules. Sometimes she is unpleasant, but overall, she lets us live because she knows we can be in charge of a lot of things and she can count on us.</p> <p>The school is trying to open up and become closer to parents, more and more, but at the same time, teachers lose the respect of those parents and then even pupils. This is the overall mood, the relationship of the society to the teachers. The profession is losing prestige overall.</p>	<p>5 3B 3C</p>

There is another example of one teacher's development, views and adaptation to changes. Can she actually adapt?

<p>First experience: As a beginner, I was influenced by everything we learned in college, with a focus on cross-subject relationships and motivating children. But there were 29 children in the class, and sometimes the motivation did not work. I felt I could do nothing, at all. I also taught by using drills (mathematics and Czech language). I spent many hours</p>	
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in preparation – there was no copy machine – and I wrote everything myself – worksheets, all 29 times. What I didn't lack was youth and enthusiasm. At school, we taught according to the curriculum Obecná škola - first other kind of curriculum as usually existed before.

Most important were “playful” aids, nontraditional placement of desks

Next school: Great enthusiasm and, again, motivation was important. Every lesson had to have a story. I made a lot of aids and worksheets on my knees. I had first class, but there were only three classes in our school. The headmaster sat in the second building across the city. We canceled the bells ringing and learned with joy. But even here we used drill exercises. It was important to prepare learning on the board – every day a list of tasks and examples. Everything in colors and pictures. Just to make it funny. We tried to learn away from the desk. The children competed – who calculated faster ...Again the preparation took a lot of time.

My third school: Free elementary school – for me a big shock. It seemed to me that I came into great chaos. Very slight grading, no high expectations for children. I stumbled. No workbooks, only papers. Maybe it was not true, but that's how I felt it. Half a year of confusion and sleepless nights. When I got my class, I tried to work in the spirit of this school. I gave only good grades. I didn't assign homework...

Playful moments were a necessity during lessons – not sitting for too long at the desks! I did not have the ability to manage all parts of the curriculum and go through all exercises in book.

Lately, I have been teaching myself differently. Preparation does not take much time. I rarely write on the blackboard because I use interactive textbooks and exercises. I also collected motivational lessons and stories, but rarely –then they are popular among children.

I am going back to the drill because I don't see other possibilities. I give homework; kids have to practice and learn to “study.” I have also returned to strong grading. Parents have the right to be truthfully informed about the state of their children. They understand this way and are not depressed by the poor grades. Parents know that the grade 1 is the grade 1 and the 2 is the 2.

I have clear rules. I have also put emphasis on cultivating expression. I want the children to speak in whole sentences that have more than three words. It's a battle. We have speaking exercises every month. I just had to explain and “teach” my parents first. Also, clear rules are important. I do not have a problem with children in my second class, to be prepared in the morning for lessons – at their desks. That's the same with a snack and a break. This makes the class calm, and everyone knows what's next...

<p>During my personal experience, I have observed the following changes: from classical frontal teaching (the teacher is the one who knows everything and passes it on to the pupils), more and more, as far as possible, I go to learning in the centers of activities (Step by Step program). I realize that the teacher is a helper on the ‘path to learning. I use not only the summative assessment, but also the formative I am learning this descriptive language. I want to give high-quality feedback to children.</p> <p>I am going to change the teaching of mathematics. I am using and studying a new method by Hejný.</p> <p>I formulate learning goals and introduce them to my pupils. Some goals we can create together. Our weekly goals hang on the classroom walls.</p> <p>I create the evaluation criteria; sometimes I create them together with the pupils. I prepare the pupils for the self-assessment. (They can recognize their achievement of goals, behavior.). They are creating their own portfolios. (They add to evidence of their learning.)</p> <p>I prepare with children for “triads” (meetings of parents, pupils and teacher)</p> <p>We create class rules together with pupils, referring to them during the school year.</p>	<p>1A</p> <p>1B</p> <p>1C</p> <p>3A</p> <p>2A</p> <p>2B</p> <p>1D</p>
<p>The Step by step program suits me, so I’ve changed my practice a lot – my way of preparing for teaching, learning how to plan better with regard to different types of intelligence in children, respecting the pupil’s individuality more, and evaluating children on their personal progress.</p> <p>I have to be continuously educated. I regularly attend summer school with this Step by Step program. Teaching in this way was my choice, sanctified by the parents of the pupils and the school leadership.</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>I know that I have gradually reduced my complaining to the children, mainly thanks to my own four children. The first three of my children did not need more cooperation or help with school; they were able to work on their own. The last son can no longer manage the school obligations without my help, and I have realized a lot of things. I used to push for performance, even for the weaker or the children with disorders. Today I’m far more tolerant, and I’m probably more easygoing, put in more things on the back burner.</p> <p>I notice that during my practice I started to focus more on the work with the whole team. I try to raise mainly good people and the whole class. I place a great emphasis on tolerance of differences. I always say, “You do not have to be friends, but tolerate him or ignore him.” I do not like hurting, humiliating, and I’m trying to teach the children the same.</p>	

<p>I think it is ideal when the teacher first has her own children and experience with them to be a little better prepared for foreign children.</p> <p>I see a big minus in pedagogical departments, where students can learn about learning disorders or behavior disorders only by exercising the definitions in pedagogy or psychology, and there is an end to getting acquainted with these children. But the practice is full of them. I have student teachers who come mostly unprepared for this day-to-day situation (thanks to inclusion).</p>	
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The following example is one of the sadder readings, featuring surrender of authority, system, resignation, burnout and regret. This should not happen. Or are these just part of life for teachers?

<p>Rather, I will write to you what I had to give up myself to continue in this profession.</p> <p>- Change the way of teaching. I give up motivating teaching (in the form of games and interesting activities). Some colleagues could see other ways to teach; they started envying me and making problems. I like to do interesting learning because the job is more enjoyable.</p> <p>- Too many pupils in the classroom. It can be managed, but only for a short time. Otherwise, you go crazy. To me it is not worth it.</p> <p>- I used to be a democratic teacher – at least, they said about me. I do not discuss much with pupils today; I decide myself. Maybe it's about age and experience. It seems to me that I'm still doing exercises less and less. Not the themes or curriculum, but we do fewer exercises, repetitions, complicated writing. I reduced my demands. Why? Worse and worse pupils who do not want to learn. Every third pupil "suffers" from some disorder, and so I do not want to have problems with their parents and make them help with homework.</p> <p>- My personality has changed. I'm no longer as open, straightforward, communicative as before. I'm more careful about what I say to my colleagues. The relation is so artificial. You have to pretend and to fit in the team. It is a game, but I'm really funny about it, and I'm wondering what a person has to endure so many times in this environment, in this society. For this reason, I don't want my daughter to work in education.</p> <p>Now I have to let the profession destroy me as little as possible. I should have time and strength for my hobbies because the kids and parents are not worth it. They will leave and others will come, and they don't even say thank you. But I am delighted when I meet old students who announce to me that I was a fine teacher. So, I hope it will change again,</p>	<p>3A</p> <p>3B</p> <p>3C</p>
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and when my own kids flee the nest, I will have more power and time to devote myself to the profession again. Because I always enjoyed the work with the children.	
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This highly experienced teacher summarized the changes she had made during her practice at her school and the changes in Czech education, mentioning the advantages and disadvantages of changes in the system.

<p>Teaching and conditions in our school have changed, from my point of view, in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content of the curriculum: Centralized management and uniform teaching according to the curriculum at all schools have changed to individual. School educational frameworks tailored locally to each school. - Technological school conditions: In particular, thanks to programs supported by EU funding, our school is fully equipped with interactive whiteboards, computers, software, and use of the Internet brought new dimensions in teaching - Aids for teaching: Gradually, especially during the last seven years, I have seen that we have been able to modernize and buy new equipment. Modernization also brought electronic textbooks and the creation of DUMs (teaching exercises shared by teachers on common website) for tailor-made teaching that the teacher himself needs. This is also related to the continuous replenishment of the teacher's education, which depends on each personality and interest ... - The work of the teacher: Unfortunately, the steady increase in administration, duplication of documentation. The advantage is the evidence in the computer, including the certificate. More difficult is to taking care of the children's behavior as part of education, in the context of trends in society. Unfortunately, communication with parents is worse. True parenting and interest in a child are fading away, which is associated with the increasingly perceptible decline in morality. Teachers' rights are diminishing year after year, and more and more rights are being given to parents – unfortunately, with their neglected adherence to their duties as well. - Teacher's status: Although the media are often filled with headlines for higher teacher salaries, it remains underestimated and lags behind the ever-increasing demands of the teacher's work. - Individual approach to pupils: A good teacher always works in the student's interest. Parents should be helped, and in case of suspicion of some specific difficulties by a child, then the counseling center should investigate, evaluate and advise. I think this has always been the case. Previously, the whole process was dominated by a healthy approach to 	<p>5 3B 3C</p>
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<p>individuality and confidence in the good skills and abilities of the teacher. It seems to me that this, unfortunately, is disappearing.</p> <p>We do not want to break the norm, but we want individualization. The number of children who visit a specialist or counseling centers at least once to uncover the causes of school failure is growing. In connection with the introduction of school inclusion, this trend is greatly enhanced. This has meant another more administrative work than ever before.</p> <p>- In addition, the teacher is asked to handle a class of 30 pupils, including a few pupils with specific needs, cooperating with the necessary teaching assistant or personal assistant. Unfortunately, really well-educated and well-equipped assistants don't exist at all. But this kind of training is rarely offered I find this system to be completely inconvenient and very burdensome for teachers.</p> <p>- EU-funded projects: Interesting opportunities in many fields for both teachers and students seems to be opening up. Often, the only way to get news about schooling from the world or to allow pupils to make wider use of their knowledge is to take part in foreign study internships.</p>	
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6.6.6.3 Changes in Portugal

What changes influence and influenced teachers in Portugal? Here is the view of a supporting teacher in first classes, from Lisbon. He is an elementary teacher with about 24 years' experience, full of energy for this job. This year and the next two years, he is going to work as a helping and supporting teacher in a new, special program in his home school.

Table 18: CHANGES IN PORTUGAL IN TEACHERS' NARRATIVES	
(In the category of description: changes, yes or no)	Code of category
Opinions of teachers	
Portugal has suffered many changes, and schools have been bombarded with a variety of documents and different points of view. These changes made me regularly adjust, reorganize and invest lots of time in how I taught. I agreed with some changes but, with most of them, I didn't. Nevertheless, I've always tried to follow/respect the changes enunciated from the top, and obviously my way of thinking about education has suffered changes that are directly related to the years of experience that I have, and many related to education articles/ <i>books</i> I've read.	5

In recent last years, Portuguese schools weren't preparing children for the 21st century with problem-solving, initiative, teamwork, creativity and very good spoken communication), but I gladly recognize that things are changing. Everywhere you can see the qualities employers are looking for. Unfortunately, our education system has neglected the development of these qualities and skills because for many, many years – ever since I can remember – teachers had a rigid curriculum guide to follow and an obsession with final exam results.

There's more to education, like learning how to live in society, how to be a good citizen, how to be independent – skills that will help our children decide what they want to do with their lives.

Within the context of the challenges posed by contemporary society, and to ensure that school promotes a quality education, this school year our Ministry of Education implemented a legislative order giving schools the opportunity to voluntarily join a new project called the Project for Autonomy and Curriculum Flexibility (PACF).

This project was an opportunity to better prepare children for their future. We changed what was going on in the classroom – not what we were teaching, but how we were teaching.

In our elementary schools we have six first grade classes, three in each school. Within PACF, we've decided to create a project called Ideas Workshop, which is developed one day a week, with the help of a supporting teacher – me. Each day I go to a different class to work on many subjects.

In this project we have different activities that interrelate and incorporate several areas of our curriculum, including reading, writing, math, science or the arts, and, at the same time, it intends to develop skills, attitudes and values included in the National Strategy for Citizenship Education and in the Student's Profile for the 21st Century.

In this day we put aside the typical textbook lessons. Students can work on a small project throughout the day, creating, experimenting, organizing, collaborating in teamwork, thinking, expressing ideas and opinions... At this point these activities are developed with the help of teachers' instructions because first graders are young learners and need concrete, tangible steps. But in the future, our aim is to work on an extended full Project-Based Learning method, allowing students to learn by doing and by finding their own answers to a central question or problem.

These small projects that we've applied have been very successful because it's different from what they usually do, and children often say that these lessons are more interesting, motivating, ... sometimes fun, and they learn better. I'm loving this experience, and I believe that this should be the future of education.

Here I offered many examples from teachers 'lives from their narratives -- I could say raw data... They explained to me their professional careers and how they had reacted to changes in schools. Their narratives often revealed more courageous, more critical opinions. Teachers were not afraid to speak their minds, which I appreciated as an important resource.

Chapter 7 THEORIES PROVIDE FRAMEWORK DISCUSSION

In my work, I have used two theories that I will now try to establish and explain, based on my research and data analysis: the above-described “Grammar of Schooling” and Freire’s consciousness.

7.1 “Grammar of Schooling”

My main explanation of why we have currently firmly rooted, standardized GoS, as described Tyack and Tobin, is based on three main functions. First, the system was expanded in a uniform way; in the past, it was appropriate for a large increase in pupils. Second, education was partly differentiated (upgraded) partly by adding new features of schooling within the standard pattern (e.g., by assimilating a range of subjects into the existing system). Reforms took place as accretions to the standard model. Third, equality in education was defined. Parents could believe their children receive a proper education because a “real school” existed that defined equality in education.

Those who called for change had to have objective reasons; the existing GoS did not suit them. “Reformers who opposed this ‘Grammar of Schooling’ argued that the traditional school did not really meet the needs of the child, the organization, or the society. It was not functional; it was narrow in aim, antiquated in design, and harsh in effects” (Tyack and Tobin, 1994, p. 477).

What are these objective reasons for current teachers in my research? How in their practice do they change a firmly rooted tradition, where they can or want to deviate from common teaching practices?

Over the years, we –as the public have in our head, our consciousness, the image of a ‘real school,’ which, undoubtedly, the graded school is, in all three countries. There are exceptions, of course, and other schools (not part of my research) have begun to emerge in all three countries. In ordinary schools, teachers are trying to accept changes within their capabilities, but the structure of the graded school is predominant. Societies are forced to compare this fact with other, more successful (according to statistic data and research) educational systems.

But more specific schools and approaches are emerging that damage the structure of graded schools – for example, with project teaching in elementary schools a little. Even opponents of changes or passive, burned-out teachers must realize that “Humans build

organizations and can change them. Cultural constructions of schooling have changed over time and can change again” (Tyack and Tobin, 1994, p. 460). What are current, new features of schooling within the standard pattern in these three countries differ from post-socialistic, post-authoritarian (in Portugal’s case) methods of schooling? In the following table, I compare traditional and innovative ways in schooling.

I used the features from the article by Tyack and Tobin, especially characters that relate to graded school, (some of which are in the first category of description in my analysis: space, time, evaluation, parent relations) and added others to explain changes teachers were willing to make or accept. I conducted my research in common, mainstream schools, as well as in private or state-owned that were not entirely innovative and no different from most mainstream schools. The subject of my research was teachers and their relationship to the changes they can make within their practice and over time.

Here are examples (evidence) of their efforts:

Table 19: GRAMMAR OF SCHOOLING - PRACTICAL EXAMPLES	
GoS – space and time	
Traditional way	Innovative way
<p>Regular week’s schedule. The lesson lasts 45 minutes, and the pupils sit in classically arranged desks, typical of frontal teaching.</p>	<p>Project teaching is becoming more and more popular and thus destroying GoS. It is not a common and frequent form of teaching everywhere. When teachers work in projects, they do not observe the division of subject matter or time unit. They are often away from their desks or out of school, collaborate with other teachers, or even have an auxiliary teacher for the project. Some progressive teachers have also involved parents.</p> <p>Teachers would like to change this GoS not only for projects, but also for regular teaching; it is not possible for organizational reasons. They would disturb teaching in other classes, or they have a large number of children in the classroom.</p> <p>Although the space in schools is most often very limited, teachers try to use specialized a language classroom, a computer room or kitchen, or a classroom with an interactive whiteboard. Even at the elementary level in some schools, children change teachers for different subjects. It is a change for both teachers and children. In the first classes, teachers strongly support the family approach, and</p>

	then it is common to add teachers gradually alongside the main classroom teacher for other subjects.
CR	Progressive teachers go on trips and “green schools” with whole class.
POL	Teachers like the “green schools.”
POR	Schools are more spacious because pupils are often in school all day and teachers are aware of it. They often spend time outdoors, and teaching units try to adapt to children’s condition and activity. Portuguese schools offer optional curriculum activities, usually taught in the afternoon – mostly English, PE, arts and dance.)

Lack of space is the main drawback of schools in all three countries, where schools have many children and little space. Conversely, enough space and fewer children per class is one of the main benchmarks of quality schooling. The pupil-teacher ratio indicates the average number of pupils for each teacher, and according to 2015 statistical data (Eurostat information), pupil-teacher ratios were relatively low. The highest pupil-teacher ratios for primary education were reported in the Czech Republic, France (which recorded the highest ratio for pre-primary education) and Romania; the lowest pupil-teacher ratio for primary education was at 9.4, recorded in Greece, the only EU member state to report a single-digit ratio. (See table 2, p.35)

GoS – evaluation

Traditional way	Innovative way
Teachers have clear rules for assessment/grading. They distinguish pupils according to their knowledge, most often through standardized tests. They compare them to one another. A child who does not succeed – cannot handle the level of given class curriculum – repeats the class.	Teachers try more and more to individualize teaching because children have different personalities and abilities, which teachers should take into account. Professionalization lies in the way he teacher can take into account the interests of the individual and at the same time the interests of the whole class, working by democratic rules. Elementary schools need not only to evaluate the level of knowledge but also to motivate the child to do any activity. Many teachers do that. The aim of evaluation is different here than in common subjects, where performance is most often supported and appreciated with the grade.
Some teachers and parents consider grading necessary as motivation. Standardized tests serve also this purpose. Their	CR Formative assessment is often only for children with disabilities, sometimes by request from parents.
	POL Formative assessment in elementary schools, no longer by grading.

<p>results can be a guide for parents who need to monitor and compare their child's results; for teachers, what their pupils have learned in the subjects and where they need to work more; and for the director and administrators, for various comparative purposes.</p>	<p>POR</p>	<p>Written assessment has started here, too, GoS was recently very strong when children's results and grades were posted publicly, on the walls and boards in the schools. This practice still persists in some places. In some schools or clusters, this practice is slowly being phased out.</p>
<p>GoS – parents' relation</p>		
<p>Traditional way</p>	<p>Innovative way</p>	
<p>The teacher is the authority and is always right. Parent meetings are conducted in a frontal way. Parents require ratings, especially grades.</p> <p>Fortunately, this feature of the traditional way is disappearing. Very often the parent has the crucial role in this relationship. Problems with parents – bad experiences – emerge, often depending on the teacher's personality and how the teacher handles problems, tense situations and aggressive behavior by parents.</p>	<p>In general, schools have progressed from authoritarianism to liberality. In elementary school, the parent-teacher relationship is specific, and it should be very sincere, decent and open to benefit the child. The relationship depends on the school and the specific teacher. Active teachers can do a lot to create community,</p>	<p>Active teachers can do a lot to create community,</p>
<p>Fortunately, this feature of the traditional way is disappearing. Very often the parent has the crucial role in this relationship. Problems with parents – bad experiences – emerge, often depending on the teacher's personality and how the teacher handles problems, tense situations and aggressive behavior by parents.</p>	<p>CR</p>	<p>The specific format of parents' meeting is tripartite: teacher, pupils, parents. This is a very time-consuming form of classroom meetings for teachers: one hour per pupil; with a class of 20 children, it is 20 hours, not including preparation. The pupil also has to demonstrate self-esteem; it is challenging for children. This type of meeting was carried out as an experiment by young teachers at one school.</p>
<p>Fortunately, this feature of the traditional way is disappearing. Very often the parent has the crucial role in this relationship. Problems with parents – bad experiences – emerge, often depending on the teacher's personality and how the teacher handles problems, tense situations and aggressive behavior by parents.</p>	<p>POL</p>	<p>Parents' meetings are often informal. Teachers try to create community and a cooperative environment whenever possible. Modern parents are willing to meet with teachers and engage in school activities as much as they can.</p>
<p>Fortunately, this feature of the traditional way is disappearing. Very often the parent has the crucial role in this relationship. Problems with parents – bad experiences – emerge, often depending on the teacher's personality and how the teacher handles problems, tense situations and aggressive behavior by parents.</p>	<p>POR</p>	<p>Here the approach is very different in each school. Some schools are worried about parents and maintain a formal approach, while some teachers would like to cooperate more.</p>

Relations in the schools: among pupils		
Traditional way	Innovative way	
<p>In this case, the children were always encouraged to behave well and to help one another in the schools. But this was more often talked about than done. Currently, when society is a bit divided (not so unified as in the socialist era), children in classes come from different social backgrounds and different parenting styles, –so there is more opportunity for such help and understanding (It is said that all people are equal, but in fact, they are not; they have to help one another.)</p>	<p>In general, relations in the schools should be more about cooperation, helping and loyalty. Schools should be aware that pupils are working together; it is not cheating but helping one another. Schools have to offer an environment and efforts to create these important social competences. Smarter and brighter, more skilled pupils help the weaker ones because these, too, need to see their good results, experience a sense of success and have fun at school. Weak pupils can feel and learn that when something is wrong, they can rely on the help of others. On the other hand, the more successful pupils can learn to have a good feeling about helping those who need it. This is the essence of today’s integration and inclusion in ordinary schools.</p>	
	CR	<p>An integrated boy with Down syndrome is welcome in all classes, not only his original class. Children help him dress by in the changing room; sometimes he stays when his class goes to more challenging activities that he cannot attend or eats during their breaks. It was explained to everyone why it was important to help Tom and communicate with him, so he was not afraid.</p>
	POL	<p>It is now a major task to integrate children from another country, which is not always easy. But the common group work is the best way. In addition, some parents were invited to school and helped in the classroom, showing how they lived in their home country, which was a good start in helping the children to get along well.</p>
	POR	<p>Here truly multicultural classes and mutual help seem to be a matter of course. Children also help with language; in one class, they speak several languages.</p>

Relation in the schools: teacher-pupils	
Traditional way	Innovative way
<p>In the traditional, the teacher's authority comes first. It is also a necessity in the classes with huge number of children. Because children need a quiet environment for classroom work, the teacher has to use stricter methods to maintain discipline. On the elementary level, it should be a matter of course that teachers have very close relationships with pupils, with respect to pupils' assumptions, nature/temperament, family environment, etc. However, some teachers keep a distance and do not engage in close relationships.</p>	<p>In general, the fewer the children in the class, the more time the teacher can devote to individual pupils, which is an advantage. Innovative approaches provide more out-of-school and leisure-time activities, which strengthen the teacher-pupil relationship. As a professional, the teacher should be able to cope with any situation.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">CR</p> <p>Elementary teachers know children perfectly and watch them in various activities. They know what they are good at and what a particular child can do, stand out for improve and enjoy: painting or basketball? They propose after-school activities to parents.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">POL</p> <p>Although there is often no supporting teacher in the classroom, teachers try to approach children individually to develop what is needed because every child progresses at a different pace. But teachers know it is a problem.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">POR</p> <p>One of my schools here is really like a family, because it has kindergarten in school, too. Teachers know what is convenient and best for every child. They realize early on that, at the secondary level of education, relationships with teachers become less personal for the children. (The teacher teaches the subject, so he teaches more than 100 children, and cannot all know them well.) Therefore, teachers make close relationships with children a priority.</p>

Relation in the schools: relation to direction among colleagues

Traditional way	Innovative way	
<p>The teacher has his class, his subject. He does not cooperate much with colleagues. There is no common activity; no one creates it or seeks new ways. Teachers try to fulfill all the tasks given by the leadership as best they can, not enter to conflict with the leadership, do not object or criticize.</p>	<p>In relation to leadership, a teacher appreciates it when the headmaster is somewhat passive in the sense that he gives the teacher free space, some autonomy to lead the class as much as possible, in his or her own style. Innovative teachers can respond to dialogue critically, encourage others to use other methods at school, reach out to colleagues and try to cooperate. Gradually, teachers in these three countries take examples from others, and within inclusion or projects, they try to help one another and cooperate. There are positions for helping teachers, assistants, supporting teachers, and sometimes even parents or psychologists, who can come to help in the class. These are undoubtedly big changes in traditional countries.</p>	
	<p>CR</p>	<p>One class has two English teachers: one for grammar, the other for communicative skills. At the end, both have to give a common evaluation for every child.</p> <p>As an example of a benevolent headmaster, I cite one from one of the bigger schools in the Czech Republic, where there are about 13 classes and teachers. About half of them decided to train in the new concept of teaching and learning. The other half wanted to follow traditional approaches. Is such a combination possible in one school? Can the administration handle it and offer it to the public as a choice for parents to choose? To me his approach seems to me very progressive and daring.</p>
	<p>PL</p>	<p>Because of structure in Initial Teacher Learning (ITL), Polish teachers are taught to support one another and motivate younger colleagues entering the profession during their one-year probation period.</p>
	<p>POR</p>	<p>Here I was surprised that administration proceeded very innovatively all three schools where I did research. First, in project teaching, no additional teachers were assigned to elementary classes to take</p>

		care of teaching, so the pupils and their teachers could work very abnormally together on different tasks. At a town school with connected classes (some lessons were taught separately, some together, but with great help from assistants and supporting teachers. I must also note the difficulty of preparing for these collaborations, frequent meetings of teachers within the classroom and within the whole school, and even, for inspiration, meetings for the whole cluster. So, this style of teaching takes a lot of time for teachers.
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The teacher's personality: relation to curriculum

Traditional way	Innovative way	
The traditional way of perception of the curriculum is to fulfill it. Pupils must master the subject and be evaluated for it. Then they can go to the next grade. It is the principle of the graded school.	Changes in the curriculum are required, and gradual progress is made toward greater teacher autonomy and individualization. In Poland and Portugal, the curriculum seems easier, more open, and really focused on basic reading and writing; it therefore creates more space for games, intrasubject relationships (projects), and developing social competencies. In the Czech Republic, the content of the curriculum is still quite challenging, elementary school here lasts five years, so the outputs after those five years must to be noticeable and different from those of the three or four years of initial education in Poland and Portugal. What is left for teachers to innovate when the curriculum cannot be changed much? Perhaps only their work methods.	
	CR	Teachers can see what kinds of knowledge or skills are most lacking in their pupils , what competencies they should work on. Teachers want to take the time for this activity and to adapt their teaching and lessons. They see the shortcomings of the formal curriculum and would like to spend time on what is important to the present pupil. For example, more are working on mistakes, devoting time to them. Or they realize that pupils lack communication skills -- cannot speak well and express themselves. Teachers would require some “blank” lessons in the schedules

		where they could do what they need to do with the children, have some autonomy and freedom -- which is difficult in an overloaded schedule and curriculum.
	POL	Teachers in my research mostly rated the curriculum as simpler than in previous years. They inconspicuously trying to give their pupils more knowledge to their children, according to their possibilities, especially in the third and fourth classes, so that their transition to the next level of education will not so demanding -- and it certainly is. I do not know if this is the right solution, but I can see in it the hints of collegiality toward teachers in higher classes, where elementary teachers actually want to help.
	POR	Elementary teachers say the curriculum has changed too quickly in recent years; teachers and then children cannot respond. Particularly in mathematics, changes were transient, short and ineffective, and therefore teachers could not evaluate the curriculum's effectiveness Often when goals are demanding and cannot be achieved at school, teachers must rely on home activity (preparation for school) -- on parents and homework. But teachers are aware that this is a step back because most parents will not be able to help their children during the week; the children are at school until late afternoon and the parents are at work.

The teacher's personality: hidden curriculum

Traditional way	Innovative way
In the traditional concept of school, hidden curriculum is not acknowledged or addressed. (This does not mean it does not exist -- probably even more. I can say that the hidden curriculum actually	Hidden curriculum actually corrects the mistakes and shortcomings of the official curriculum.? If a teacher helps pupils solve problems that seem unrelated to teaching, helps them to cope with different situations, that is an innovative teacher. He or she is willing to help and reduce the effects of the hidden curriculum, solves the problems of society, and is

<p>corrects the mistakes and shortcomings of the official curriculum. Who solves school-related problems if not the school?</p>	<p>probably critical of himself, leadership, parents and children. A given situation does not leave him passive.</p>	
	<p>CR</p>	<p>On the contrary, there may be situations in which the teacher ignores problems where he should do - according to given social and school rules and curricula. He is aware that this would hurt the pupil. The Czechs say they are closing their eyes, with the best intentions for this child. I have mentioned examples in the subchapter on a hidden curriculum (6 June 4.3) -- for example, a heavy standardized test, when it is obvious that some pupils cannot handle it. If the teacher helps them, is it a cheating?</p>
	<p>POL</p>	<p>On teacher fatigue and burnout, I cannot write about an innovative way because teachers most often pretend, they are ready; they do their work and don't complain. They are afraid make unpopular suggestions out loud in their practice and fear for their positions. However, burned-out teachers will not help future generations of teachers or society. It is sad when good teachers leave their profession because of lack of appreciation from parents, children or leadership, or, even worse, when the teacher is dismissed for critical thinking and suggestions for change.</p>
<p>POR</p>	<p>Even Portuguese teacher has a "grading problem": they need to evaluate pupils in such subjects as arts, music, PE, which depend on creativity and behavior. Because it is a rule. She admits that grading is not interesting work for her, only an obligation. She doesn't approve; she only does it. "But I am cheating because I know pupils are doing the best they can."</p>	

In general, I assume the graded school (with strong GoS) in any country will not be eliminated from the mainstream. In my theoretical section I mentioned Comenius's humanitarian, educational and moral principles and also highlighted and found a hint of the graded school (page 41,42). He supposed (350 years ago!) that educated people should broaden

their vision their options would open up, and they would not have time for socially undesirable activities. He wanted general schools called Workshops of Humanity, where everyone would be taught everything -- the proper aims for today's society. Has his vision been fulfilled? Would he have been satisfied with the level and content of education in these three countries? A utopian question: how can his vision of an ideal school improved for today, when mankind has other conditions, possibilities and experience? Still, the school cannot remain the same, but his idea of graded school is still alive.

Such a change (from a graded to a non-graded school) is organizationally complex and costly, but for certain children it could be a tremendous advance and benefit. This is just my opinion. Elementary school would simply last four to six years, and pupils and parents could decide, on the recommendation of teachers or psychologists, how long a child should stay at this level of education. A child who manages the "3Rs" or trivium, or a curriculum of the first level of education, could then step calmly and enthusiastically into higher classes. Teachers would not have to urge or force children to handle the level of a given class curriculum. Elementary school could then be perceived simply as a "part of childhood" when socialization has to take place, when the child has to be happy and has to learn basic skills for life. By varying the length of this education, the society would offer parents the way they want to educate their children. Do they want to hurry their children's cognitive development? In the future, they may take into such factors as the emerging possibilities of lifelong learning, criticism of an ever more hurried society, general surplus of consumer goods and reduction of working hours.

I would like to emphasize, enthusiastically, that it will be the task of schools in the future to transform into places where pupils can experience critical thinking, dialogues and creativity. But society expects better and better performance from children, and I am afraid that the minimum dropout age will go down and down. For advocates of the graded school, it would undoubtedly be a complication to teach children of different ages in one class. But why should this be considered a problem?

7.2 *Freire's consciousness*

To apply Paulo Freire's activities and ideas to the goals of my work -- namely, to see the current work of elementary teachers through his theory of consciousness -- I must first point out other facts. Freire was actually an elementary teacher; he taught basic knowledge, reading and writing to help illiterate adults in his well-known cultural circles better find their place in

society. He even devised his own reading methodology and was able to teach these adults to read in 45 days (Freire, 2005).

At present, the Czech Republic, Poland and Portugal do not need to teach adults to read; illiteracy has almost been eradicated in these three countries (in Portugal). However, the goal of education in general should be the same now: as Freire stressed, to find one's own place in society. The school and the teacher should be intermediaries in reaching this goal. In this way, I understand Freire's mission with regard the present day. He himself said in an interview: "please tell your fellow American educators not to import me. Ask them to re-create and rewrite my ideas." (Freire, 2005, foreword by Macedo) Is this not encouragement for teachers to change their practices? To react to current conditions in the interest of social justice?

In another link with elementary education, Freire is best known for criticizing the "banking concept" of education, in which the student is too passive, changed into the object of education, filled with too much knowledge by teachers, and his creativity is inhibited. I do not think this is true in today's elementary schools and many examples I describe in my work. But teachers share John Dewey's doubts about the amount of knowledge students are expected to learn. They criticized the transmission of mere facts as the goal of education.

Freire's "culture of silence" is still part of life in the school in these three countries: Teachers aren't brave enough; they have doubts, are oppressed by the administration, hardly advocate their opinions, are not heard. Teacher rarely strike seeking certain changes and changing conditions are rare, as in other post-Communist countries. Rather, I can see signs of a certain resignation, or reconciliation with the system. "It is not talked about." Many examples are given in section 3c as part of a hidden curriculum.

Freire highlighted that teachers and students must be made aware of the "politics" surrounding education and that teachers have enter the classroom with a political mission.

"Education makes sense because women and men learn that through learning they can make and remake themselves, because women and men are able to take responsibility for themselves as beings capable of knowing—of knowing that they know and knowing that they don't" (Freire, (2004, p. 15). The elementary teacher must show children how to read the world. With Freire's type of consciousness theory as a base, and with the help of my supervisor, Marie Czerepaniak-Walczak, (as we discussed on seminars), I identified possible behavioral manifestations of current teachers, outlining examples from research and my assessments.

Freire's types of consciousness

The consciousness is a state of mind and emotion that reflects seeing and understanding one's own position in the lifeworld, historical and social situation, and ability to problematize it and generate action. Freire points out three types of consciousness (**conscientização**), namely magical, naïve and critical (Freire, 2005, p. 14). The concept of consciousness covers intellectual, emotional, ethical and esthetic representations of the elements of the life world, and reaction to it in the various realms.

The magical and naïve consciousness easily surrender domination and manipulation in each of aspects mentioned above. Judgments, opinions and actions of people who have magical or naïve consciousness reflect the interests of others. They are specific to the slave mentality and limit achievement of autonomy. The aim of education is to develop critical consciousness, which is a condition for changing of dominant ideology; changing the world and one's own position in it; and changing the social and political order in the consideration of justice, safety and a peaceful environment to attain full humanity. It needs to be stressed that the critical intervention to the world is not simply the unveiling of social reality through raising of critical consciousness, but rather a change of human action.

Magical consciousness is a feature of mind and emotion of people who are: defeated and dominated, though they do not know it, they fear freedom, though they believe themselves to be free. They follow general formulas and prescriptions as if by their own choice and are directed, rather than directing themselves. They have impaired creative power, and are objects, not subjects.

Naïve consciousness is the state of mind and emotion of people characterized by an over simplification of problems, by nostalgia for the past, by underestimation of the common man and by a lack of interest in investigation, accompanied by an accentuated taste for fanciful explanations. The argument of these people is fragile, and they use a strongly emotional style. They practiced polemics rather than dialogue, have a limited sphere of perception. They are impervious to challenges situated outside the sphere of biological necessity and have confuse perceptions of the objects and challenges of the environment.

Critical consciousness characterizes people who amplify own power to perceive and respond to suggestions and questions arising in their context that state of consciousness, who increase the capacity to enter into dialogue not only with other people, but also with the world. These people have interests and concerns that now extend beyond the simple vital sphere and can enter reality and, increase their capacity to make choices (and therefore their capacity to reject the prescriptions of others. Critical people can perceive any effort toward humanization as imperative for those who believe that human destiny is to become authentic human beings.

There are my categories of description, in which Freire's consciousness may be identified:

Table 20: FREIRE'S CONSCIOUSNESS -PRACTICAL EXAMPLES		
1. Category of description: Main features of common graded school		
CONSCIOUSNESS	TIME	SPACE
MAGICAL	Resignation by dividing schooling into shifts.	Teachers follow general formulas and prescriptions that are often more convenient, for example, letting children move around instead of sitting obediently at their desks
NAÏVE		Because of the large number of classical classrooms, students mostly sit at the desks in pairs; they rarely work in groups or do activities away from their desks.
CRITICAL	Frequent trips with children, lessons in nature, use of modern sports (such as skating), technology, animals in the classroom, enrichment of classes	More freedom of choose activities and space in the classroom, using outdoor spaces, bags in other rooms.

1. Category of description: Main features of common graded school		
CONSCIOUSNESS	EVALUATION	PARENTS' RELATION
MAGICAL	According to standardized testing	Classical frontal meeting, frontal to children in the class

NAÏVE	Coincidentally. The older teacher compares with the past – the way children used to write in the past.	Parents should be obedient to the teacher and the system
CRITICAL	According individual access and possibility, progress.	New kinds of teachers' meetings with parents
2. Category of description: Relations in the schools		
CONSCIOUSNESS	AMONG PUPILS	TEACHER-PUPILS
MAGICAL	The teacher does not decide who is guilty in a conflict, but both pupils are punished the same way, according to the old rule.	Teachers often misuse their authority in situations where it suits them. For example, in PE, if there are many children and one is naughty, he will be sidelined and not allowed to compete with others.
NAÏVE	Children act very emotionally among themselves; they are immature or often spoiled.	Standardized relations, the same for all children, the same requirements for children.
CRITICAL	Ideally, the teacher offers them a critical view of resolving disputes.	More individual; interest in personal life, conditions and abilities.
2. Category of description: Relations in the schools		
CONSCIOUSNESS	RELATION TO DIRECTION, AMONG COLLEAGUES	
MAGICAL	Teachers adhere strictly to guidelines from the administration, even if they could offer their own opinions, propose changes or argue.	
NAÏVE	Are very emotional and offended when they are criticized by their colleagues; they cannot lead a fruitful dialogue.	
CRITICAL	Teachers participate in various training sessions and propose changes in teaching practices by leadership; are active and try to help colleagues; and draw on their own failures.	
3. Category of description: Teacher's personality		
CONSCIOUSNESS	SELF-CRITICISM, AUTHORITY	RELATION TO CURRICULUM
MAGICAL	Teachers cannot think critically about themselves; they are doing everything the right way. Or they admit mistakes but do not know why. Somehow, we did it and we are going further. They do not learn from mistakes.	Teachers strictly follow the curriculum, which is top first priority. Although children have not mastered the previous lesson, they must go according to plan. Even though the children are tired today,

		they have to meet the goal of the lesson.
NAÏVE	Teachers are tired, do not find new ways of teaching, do not individualize the curriculum, do not add work. Their creative power is impaired.	Teachers searches for excuses (fragility of argument) about why they did not use more interesting, more attractive ways to work and discover new knowledge by children. They display a lack of interest in investigation.
CRITICAL	Teachers try new things, learns from their mistakes, learn “from children.” They are reflective and use feedback for their own professional development.	Teachers are aware that the curriculum can be hard for the pupils and try to solve this problem.
3. Category of description: Teacher’s personality		
CONSCIOUSNESS	HIDDEN CURRICULUM	
MAGICAL	Teachers deals only with essential, usual, necessary matters. They do not care about issues that are part of a hidden curriculum of informal learning - out of their jurisdiction	
NAÏVE	Teachers do not solve problems; they take it easy.	
CRITICAL	Teacher are willing to solve problems and situations critically, not be discouraged, and can communicate honestly within the wider pedagogical public.	
4. Category of description: Inclusion		
CONSCIOUSNESS		
MAGICAL	He cannot give his own opinion about inclusion, but rather gives evasive answers.	
NAIVE	Remembers earlier times when inclusion was not possible and the teacher’s life was easier in this aspect.	
CRITICAL	Critically contemplates the advantages and disadvantages of incorporating children in the class, discussing the situation with parents and headmaster; tries to involve weaker and disadvantaged children.	
5. Category of description: Change: yes or no		
CONSCIOUSNESS	TRADITION	INNOVATION

MAGICAL	Teachers strongly stick the tradition.	Teachers do not appreciate innovations, evaluate them cynically, don't bother with new things.
NAIVE	Hates innovation out nostalgia.	Underestimates teachers' innovation abilities.
CRITICAL	Teachers can enter into dialogue not only with other stakeholders, but also with the world. They try to think about the sharing and using tradition and innovation in his profession, what changes they are reacting to, why they should be. They are creative. Their interests and concerns now extend beyond the simple vital sphere. The process is dialectical, and the teacher knows it.	

According to current critical pedagogues, there is a necessity in our schools, by educators and by students, to reclaim the role of developing critical literacies and civic capacities. (Giroux, 2016) People, from lower age, as pupils in elementary schools, should be attentive to important social issues and feel the responsibility for expanding the meaning and practices of democracy. Early childhood education is the best time for emerging these skills and perceiving all civic right and humanity. And because at this age children are still learning a lot of imitation; the example and behavior of their teacher will give them a good foundation for the future to become a democratic and human-minded being.

The critical type of consciousness by teachers helps to the democratization of education, there are examples in up charts of openness to the transformation of everyday practice in a relationship with pupils and parents. At the same time, teachers also have their reasons why they stay with old methods and thinking. In this case, they use a naive type of consciousness, they have both nostalgia from the past and often do not believe in the new possibilities - simply teach differently. There are also some examples in the table of the magical type of thinking. Here the teachers adhere to the rules and dare not to complicate activities. Generally speaking, the main reason why these types of thinking are used is most often the lack of time and the number of changes given top-down, which must be adapted preferentially and obligatorily.

7.3 Teachers' understanding and practices in educational interactions

The above analysis helps me to formulate the answer to my first specific research problem: how do Polish, Czech and Portuguese teachers understand and practice their role in

educational interactions? When I think about and evaluate changes in teachers' thinking, about their approaches to change and making their own changes, I think society must appreciate that they want to change at all.

Every change definitely requires effort, determination and time, and not everyone is willing to undergo changes in established practice. Teachers who are eager for new approaches should be appropriately rewarded, but most often they are not. Interviews showed that, with exceptions, they lose this eagerness during their practice, and this is a pity for society. Teachers' perception of their potential to generate positive changes could contribute to improving teaching conditions and, at the same time, improve pupils' learning while creating a democratic community of social actors in education.

What teachers are trying to change, and how often and intensely, depends on many factors. In the first place (besides whether personality is suited to working with children), teachers are influenced by their work conditions, willingness and positive vision at all stages of life. Teachers are supposed to be creative and willing to accept challenges, new concepts and methods. They should offer their pupils the same. But does the society offer teachers such conditions?

I searched answers in teachers' opinions of top-down changes, and vice versa. Maybe the first changes, from top to bottom, can be considered those in the adaptation period, after teachers embark on their work, when they described feeling that everything was different from what they had learned at University. In this way, they often, at the same time, had to adapt to the new, changes faced by their colleagues today. They had to be able to adapt to the environment in their first year and consciously deal with such questions as: What values do they receive? What can they learn alone? What haven't they kept and what do they appreciate in their work? What is their motivation?

Unfortunately, it is predominant in schools that teachers adapt to changes made from above; they change their teaching because they must adapt to the rules. It rarely works, but I found some examples. I assured myself that top-down changes and those initiated by teachers cannot be separated. Teachers must adapt to changes from the authorities. But sometimes formal changes, top down, inspire resistance by looking for ways to disregard some directives, and as a result, teachers become more creative in their everyday practices. Their changes within their teaching often result from changes in general methods or approaches in a particular school. However, I found examples of such changes initiated by teachers. It is not easy for teachers: when they decide to make a major change in methods or access, it must be accepted in the given country.

As an example, in the Czech Republic there exists a program *Začít spolu* (Step by Step, a method from abroad). In one large school, teachers have different opinions about major changes or using new methods which could be an obstacle to cooperation within the school. Changing a school's methodology requires cooperation. One active teacher (or group of active teachers) will initiate this change, and others will be added over the years. It is a big leap to persuade colleagues and parents to collaborate on new things and to break rules that have worked well for years. The next example is a method of teaching in mathematics in the elementary schools according to Hejný's method. Whether it is more important to count and memorize or to think logically is a constantly hot topic.

Active teachers can then influence not only colleagues, but also school administrators, who can initiate changes. From the point of view of subsidiarity, these changes should be beneficial; they are based on practice, these are teachers' ideas, based on practice, for improving teaching in the current conditions. Those who are teaching daily in the classrooms should know what is best; they should have a say.

There is a lot of literature on changes and innovations at school – how to change schools' culture, especially the teachers' attitude. But is the teacher always the first and competent person who should or can initiate change? Fullan asserts that everyone involved in education should be aware of potential changes in education.

All personnel would study the technical aspects of change: how to learn new teaching skills, to incorporate new technologies, to implement curricula and to cope with the stress that inevitably accompanies change. These shared understandings and the ability to modernize education through innovation would reconstruct the culture of schooling (Fullan, p. 337). Answering my first specific research question, I could state that, despite strong rules and the long tradition of Grammar of Schooling, teachers whom pupils meet at the beginning of the schooling are open to change in everyday life and new demands of education. They are ready to transform their practice toward managing with challenges of democratization of society as well as of human and children's rights. Teachers practice inclusion of children with specific educational needs -- with different kinds of disabilities or different cultural and social background, as well as with gifted children.

7.4 Teachers' understanding and practices in relationships with parents

Teachers encounter different types of parents in the first classes, and the social group – the first-class, created more or less randomly, most often on the basis of local residency– must work in an acceptable way for all. For teachers, this task is very challenging. Parents take different approaches first to behavior (relationships, social competences) and then to education (knowledge). Is it important to absorb knowledge in as large a volume as possible? What is important to parents, and what to teachers? Can a teacher at a regular school unify these approaches into one class management system? It is impossible...

In any case, this reality should be explained in to parents in particular. It is their duty to be more familiar with the situation in the classroom. There is not their child alone, but the class, group, team. Parents should learn what it means that their children are in the first class in the schooling system and think about them as a part of social environment – what can happen, what they should be prepared for, how children should behave to one another, especially how to be kind and help. Society or teachers (society through teachers) should explain to parents why this is important. For the same reason as parents attend childbirth courses, they should be aware of the pitfalls that can be encountered during this stage of their children's lives. They should know essential information about the school. Parents should be aware of what school their children are going to and why they chose it. They must respect its principles as much as possible.

It is important to note that not only teachers but especially parents have stereotypes associated with school, various Grammars of Schooling (e.g., the public evaluation in Portugal as one of the strong, typical examples, or grading in the Czech Republic or 45 minutes lessons and homework in Poland). They need and treasure the certainty associated with the school. They send the child in the morning, and they pick him up in the afternoon. Most parents are not thinking about changes and what could be changed in schools. The priority is that the child spends time there. School is a school; it is certainty.

Of course, some parents are more interested in what is happening in schools, what schools are and what they might be. They want to be active, and if they find a teacher or director, a school, that is open to innovative methods, or even an innovative school near their homes, they dare to lead, educate and accept the knowledge in a different way. Together with their child, they can “read” the world critically. It is in the name of the critical theory that all three subjects of the pedagogical process – parent, child, teacher – should be taught in elementary school to collaborate and open dialogues. Here the pupil should learn how to confront situations, how to defend his position, not to be afraid – e.g. the management of class meetings, or rather

the pupil-parent-teacher meeting, as one of the Czech teachers in my research tried to enforce. I see as a good example of how this time-consuming method for teachers of arranging parents' meetings can benefit children in the future. They will learn to act honestly and not be afraid to say their point of view. The benefit is greater when both parents, even divorced parents, participate in the meeting. Here the teacher fulfills an important social function that is often not valued, replacing another type of social or psychological work. But instead of being appreciated by society, it will be accepted as a matter of course or negatively that the teacher exceeds his competence. In this reality, a child should always be happy in school. The teacher has to show tact and an ability to be a good teacher in deciding when this type of meeting is appropriate and when it is not.

In my preliminary research in Poland for this project, I was more interested in parent-teacher relations and asked teachers about their experience and activities in their classrooms and school. Within my topic, I set my specific research question: What types of relationships between teachers and parents Polish teachers internalized and practiced as an element of "Grammar of Schooling."

I sought examples from other countries with great experience in this field and compared them with the activities of Polish elementary teachers in one of the bigger schools in Wroclaw. I could see that the teachers did very much for parents, for good relations between the school and the family, and that is why I tried to determine whether teachers are aware they are creating communities.

According to traditional GoS, the teacher is a professional working in the closed space of the classroom. Classroom walls and doors mark the territory. Everyone, even parents, could be seen as an intruder. And even the most interested parents, remembering own experience as pupils, do not dare to enter this space. The boundary may be crossed only when the teacher invites parents in. But many parents are really curious what happens behind these walls and doors. Therefore, teachers I interviewed have taken action to try to break these barriers, with the intention of building the trust that is the foundation of dialogue and democratic order. These practices are elements of change in school culture.

Though limited by time, they offered to create social groups with clear objectives. Nowadays, these kinds of activities are among the most important targets in the social sphere. According to Scharmer, "a society should make a positive change. Universally, it needs to abandon the current mode of our educational systems while working as ego-system awareness

and move toward activating generative social fields, meaning “structures of relationships among individuals, groups, organizations and systems that give rise to collective behaviors and outcomes” (Scharmer, 2016). In today’s Europe, as in other places worldwide, the challenges raised by Scharmer are clearly visible.

I think school is our **culture and culture are our school**. Culture is created in the schools, and I consider an elementary education, the first years in school, in this social group, to be crucial -- even for society. There is the possibility to bring together parents, children, teachers and the wider society: grandparents, other relatives, school friends, senior citizens – at the beginning of schooling; it is a huge challenge. The main task will always be to teach children to live together, to connect people; that is the privilege of the school. I appreciated all the Polish teachers’ activities towards parents. Many of these activities are beyond their duties, but these social interactions are needed.

In these emerging communities in more developed countries, active participants ensure that the relevant social group will shape above-standard relations. For example, school learning communities working with many partners are created to increase pupils’ learning opportunities and experiences. Activities to enrich their skills and talents may be conducted during lunch, after school and at other times by partners in the school, family and community (Sanders, 2001; Sanders and Harvey, 2002).

Polish schools begin to form relationships with parents while their children take their first class of compulsory schooling. Class teachers initiate this teacher-parent relationship, offering incentives for action and possible cooperation. They create the platform that will evolve over the next three years. They use legislative options and face prejudices. A favorable emerging atmosphere helps children cope with any difficulties that may occur in the education process. However, is such an atmosphere always possible?

Under current requirements (from UNESCO: Rethinking Education, 2015), moreover, teachers must foster a respectful and secure classroom environment, encourage self-esteem and autonomy, and use a wide range of pedagogical and didactical strategies. They must relate productively to parents and communities. They need to work in teams with other teachers for the benefit of the school as a whole. Teachers should know their students and their families and be able to relate teaching to their specific contexts. They should be able to choose relevant content and use it productively in the development of competencies.

Those are demanding requirements. Similarly, Paolo Freire stressed that teachers should be teachers, not coddling parents. He pointed out that we all have the privilege and the duty to

fight for the right to be ourselves, to opt, to decide and to unveil the truth. Reducing teachers to the role of parents implies playing on parents' inherent fear of rejecting their roles as such (Freire, 2005, p. 28).

As I said above, parents are very heterogeneous, of different ages and social and economic status. They take different approaches to their children's education of, and to the school as a state institution their children are legally mandated to enter. Nowadays in Poland, parents may choose their children's schools. They have the opportunity to inform themselves about a school, visit it, monitor it and compare its program with their beliefs and conditions, and choose the most appropriate school. Very often in primary education, parents' first consideration is what kind of school to choose, its administrative jurisdiction or its proximity to their home. But that is not always the case; recently, parents have often been willing to transport children to schools far from their homes-

For new pupils, the first day of school used to be very festive, but also emotional. This moment can be important – the best opportunity for teachers to start motivating parents to form a positive relationship with the school and classroom collaboration. The teacher should help parents break free of the prejudices they have had since they themselves attended school.

School gates in Poland and the Czech Republic are open to parents more than in the past, although not as open as in Western countries, but the schools' role in creating better relationships in society is increasing. Society emphasizes the essential role of cooperation, equitable access, inclusion and respect, and the creation of communities previously mentioned in this paper. Currently, it is common to use the phrase “partnership between the school and the family.”

The world is changing; education, too, must change. The crucial emerging aim in the schools is moving beyond literacy and numeracy to focus on learning environments and on new approaches to learning for greater justice, social equity and global solidarity. Education must be about learning to live on a planet under pressure. It must be about cultural literacy on the basis of respect and equal dignity, helping to weave together the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. This is a humanist vision of education as an essential common good (Rethinking Education, 2015).

“Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.”⁷

I would like to emphasize how important parents’ rights are and how they can involve teachers and school. **Can they see parents/families as a resource?** According to Edwards (1992), power means resources parents have and need to recognize, and teachers’ goal is to help parents maintain a sense of power, dignity and authority in rearing their children. Empowerment is an intentional, continuing process entered in the local community; it involves mutual respect, critical reflection, caring and group participation through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to such resources and control over them. Critical elements include inclusion and a sense of power in decision-making.

According to many authors as well as my own experiences as a teacher, parents have diverse reasons to become involved in school matters. These include increasing children’s success in school, education of their parents, “communication in the sense of knowing what is happening at school,” impact on the school, school support and, vice versa, support for parents from the school (Paine,1997). Rabušicová Emmerová identified three basic approaches to parents, and parents’ view of a problem as customers and as partners (1997). Epstein (2001) created a research-based framework of six types of involvement – parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community – to focus partnerships on school improvement goals. Transformative teachers, by implementing activities for all six types of involvement, can help parents become involved at school and at home in various ways that meet student needs and family schedules. Input from participants helps schools address challenges and improve plans, activities and outreach so that all families can be productive partners in their children’s school success. This is one of the most important factors in changing the teachers’ awareness and freeing them from their traditional “Grammar of Schooling”.

Creating a parent-teacher relationship is difficult. Such a relationship is very fragile and requires a lot of respect and patience from teachers. It takes their free time and effort. If the teacher is active and enthusiastic and will not be dissuaded by unpleasant experiences, she can

⁷ Universal Declaration of Human Rights : On Dec. 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It has been translated into more than 350 languages worldwide. The full text consists of 30 articles, of which 26 mention the rights of parents within Right to Education.

create a team of willing and understanding parents. A team hardly ever involves everyone equally, and the teacher must cope and not take it as a failure. Similarly, parents in a class may be so different that cooperation is difficult or impossible. Younger teachers, who are often uncertain in meetings with parents and withdraw after unpleasant experiences, may have an especially difficult time. That was not the case with even a single teacher in a big school in Wrocław. Some teachers are achieving exemplary cooperation despite social problems, weaker pupils and recent immigrants from Ukraine.

Polish teachers internalized the possibilities of changes in relations with parents very responsibly, with huge effort. They find time beyond their duties; their approach is very professional. They are building communities in which all members are equal and every pupil has similar opportunities to be active in class and in school life. Teachers know that children spend a substantial part of the day in school because of their parents' workload. Every variation in afternoon activities, every collective action based on teachers' effort and parents' willingness to cooperate is, for the children, a pleasant change and benefit. Teachers, parents and children are co-creators of social life in this area.

How can teachers create better relations with parents? According to teachers, the atmosphere on first contact is most important. Parents must feel that the teacher wants to cooperate and is always open to dialogue, and that they can turn to the teacher when in doubt. At the same time, parents should feel that the teacher sometimes needs their help, and they should not be afraid to offer it. But this process of creating mutual confidence may take time; it can rarely be done at first meeting.

What is important is mutual sincerity. Each side ought to admit that parents need teachers, and that teachers need parents. If they cooperate and work together, the child will benefit from such a relationship. Problems arise when a teacher and a parent do not understand each other and disagree in front of the child. That is not supposed to happen with professional teachers, but unfortunately, parents let it happen.

How do teachers in Polish schools build such cooperation? In addition to parental meetings, Polish teachers in this school are aware of the strenuous work in this field, and it is amazing how they can find a way for parents to establish and develop good traditions in the school. They are constantly trying to create a community of parents and children; they are active beyond their duties; they take this issue as an important part of their work. This attitude will pay off in the future: they will work in a pleasant atmosphere. As examples, I can mention organizing grandparents' day or competitions between classes, which parents help teachers organize. In this school class meetings are held once a month. That means that this community

can get together 10 times a year and enjoy meeting informally in a family atmosphere, in a circle, over coffee and biscuits. An outstanding example is one teacher's idea for a theatrical performance – not for the parents, but by the parents. The teacher managed to organize parents, who prepared the performances for their children.

Next, I asked, how do teachers perceive what makes the best parents, and what kind of experience do teachers have? I must appreciate the very positive, optimistic approach these four teachers take to pupils, to parents, to problems in the background of the huge, loud school. The teachers are aware of various types of parents and their relationship to the school. Even if teachers have a bad experience, they try to ignore it or forget it; they still have the strength to point out professional solutions. They appreciate and support families with problems and, even if the parents cannot help, are open-minded-

As a Czech teacher, I see similarities, especially in legislation. Parents have the right to make decisions about their children and are not obligated to consult with the teacher. Parents needn't consider her recommendations, even though the teacher has the education and experience and spends a large part of day with their child. The teacher knows if the child is a good team player.

Both Polish and Czech teachers feel that today's parents do not have so much respect for school and teachers as in the past. Parents often perceive democratic access differently than they should and, meaning to help their child, take inappropriate action to resolve a situation. Unless the teacher is not durable, experienced and sensible, the end result is rather the opposite. A child can be especially harmed by an unbalanced, insincere parent-teacher relationship. A professional teacher should always be well-intentioned toward the pupil, open to discussion and communication, even if she has a different view from the parents. She initiates the search for the best procedure to solve every educational problem in existing school conditions. Parents should take complaints to the teacher before going to a higher authority, as in normal civil disputes outside the school.

Evaluation is a frequent source of trouble and differing opinions, especially about problematic pupils. Here I can see the advantage of Polish teachers, who evaluate verbally in classes 1 to 3. Czech teachers (with exceptions) evaluate with grades, which appears to be a stricter way, and teachers become a bigger enemy because they give small children bad grades. It is a particular conception of justice that compares pupils with one another more than it measures individual progress. A child may experience a failure, and nowadays parents often do

not like that. Such a style of education is attractive in these times. For today's parents, bad grades don't strengthen the teacher's authority but, on the contrary, reinforce the feeling that the teacher failed to teach pupils properly.

Teachers know they are teaching not only pupils, but also their parents. In three years, skillful, dedicated teachers may be able to create a community in which people with common goals can meet and help one another. If this is accomplished, the teachers set a good example not only for younger colleagues, who will realize the important role they play in the early grades, but also for parents, who are willing to help and who are aware of the benefits to their children. Since it may not be possible to build such relationships in the higher grades, they are crucial in the early years.

I have placed these conclusions from my preliminary research in the Polish school here because Polish teachers have been criticized for lack of vision, reflective thinking and, sense of community. Polish schools achieved better results in world rankings in the first decade of the 21st century); they are more productive and efficient, but not democratic and self-empowered. But I could see good examples of teachers' trying to change reality and, even though are overworked, awareness about the necessity of this democratic principle.

Again, I would point out the context of critical pedagogy and emphasize the teacher's role as a mediator between the state apparatus and the family. In all three countries in my research, state schools prevail. They have their goals, their curriculum, mostly firmly centralized, tied to GoS and hardly changing. However, stakeholders must begin to respect within the democratic approach that there are parents who are not just highlighting their children's performances, the greatest efficiency in education, a high degree of competitiveness, prestige – still the prevalent characteristic of most educational systems. These parents do not want to be part of today's consumer society; they want to educate their children differently. One example is the sad experience of the Czech Republic, where new legislation was passed in 2016 and there seemed to be more favorable conditions and an open way to build new schools. But in the end, most projects of the active educators were, unfortunately, rejected by the authorities, and their efforts and work were probably lost. Changing a school is a social problem of leaving these certainties to go on the journey of experimentation. From a different point of view, people have to realize that state schools are perceived as a certainty in society (parents being the main part of society; almost all people are parents). States generally create schools, support them,

finance them. Then the people in the state can say what kind of school they want, what education to choose for their children.

When a child is forced to start perceiving and dealing with inequalities, an elementary teacher can be the first to see. Inequitable and unfair conditions are all around, in families (rich and poor, have and have-not, can and cannot) in their attitudes toward learning and the style of behavior (you can, must not), in their own abilities (I can do it, I cannot; I am skillful, I am not; I make assumptions, I do not). Teachers must admit these differences and at the same time behave equally toward all children. They cannot help everyone, but they must supply every child's personality with power to fight or to learn to live with all the disadvantages. The teacher must give children the right direction, individualize them, make them as happy as they were, they came to school because children must be happy to be at school. At the same time, within a collective, a teacher must instill in children that they should, as individuals, respect one another with all their differences.

Collaboration between parent and teacher and their mutual respect is essential; they have to work together for a common goal: the meaningful and high-quality upbringing of a child. The teacher should be more responsible in the relationship, as a professional trying to respect parents – their style of education, their attitude toward school, their responsibilities with regard to school and their child. Internalization of such rules and practices makes a teacher a transformative, reflective professional partner for parents.

From a teacher's point of view, parents are not black-and-white, and their attitudes change during their child's attendance at elementary school, especially if it is their first experience with the school. Nevertheless, from the point of view of change,) judging from teachers I interviewed I would divide parents into two groups:

1. Parents who demand maximum performance for their children.

2. Parents who want a different kind of education for their children.

These parents are the most vocal; they are critical; they express their opinions. Others are rather passive and accept reality at school as they are. The first group of parents keeps to the traditions. A stricter approach suits them: firm rules, grades, responsibility, fulfillment of tasks. These parents convince themselves and their children that education means certainty; they need

the highest possible education, good school results, the best grades. This should be the best for their children's future and provide them with hopeful prospects for life and work in society.

The second group of parents takes a more open approach to education, requiring a gentler touch, individualization, promoting a happy childhood, without grades and without homework. Probably the two groups have different value orientations, and the educational system could offer them the best, most suitable school for their children. Parents should place their children at a school whose values or ideas they appreciate, and that is closest to their child-rearing philosophy. I am afraid parents rarely have such options.

Answering my second specific research question, I can state that despite of different experiences and keeping in mind the lowering of parents' respect toward teachers, especially, elementary ones, I find in teachers' interviews and narratives their efforts to treat parents as partners in their daily practices.

7.5 “Grammar of Schooling” in the teachers' consciousness and practice

I would like to say that although countries have new educational laws, principles, aims, plans and descriptions of education after enormous political changes in these three countries (1974, 1989), it is often not true. Changes are being made because states are forced to make them; changes need to be reported; legislation on education must not be obsolete. So, schools bear in mind the principles of solidarity, democracy, tolerance, justice and liberty, and they provide to each student the possibility to develop. These are general goals, and schools are still subject to the state and its authority (Zwierzinska, 2007). Both politicians and their societies are afraid to let go of these certain standards because many people would not even agree to such a fundamental change. So, people have to move slowly toward democracy and be grateful for it. This is my opinion, and so contended Kwieciński, who noticed that radical changes in schools always create dissonance (Kwieciński, 2012).

Teachers are aware of this situation, yet at the same time they do not believe in reasonable changes. Their activities are filled with bureaucracy and school maintenance. They are tired of those pseudo-changes, and that is why they are rather passive and obedient. Everything Paulo Freire pointed out and feared came true a few years later in post-authoritarian societies. That is why I think his work and thoughts are timeless, and I am glad

to have chosen him as the basis for my work. His critical approach to formal education unmasked and continues to unmask how many rules of “Grammar of Schooling” are oppressive and work against transforming school practices toward democratic order. On the base of my findings I can state that even though it is so easy to fulfil rules of “Grammar of Schooling,” teachers have made efforts to change it by changing the place, leaving the classroom (trips, lessons in nature), using new media, freeing pupils from disciplined sitting at desks. Another example of critical consciousness is a more individual approach to pupils and their parents, taking an interest in their personal lives, conditions and abilities. According to Freire, pupils carry all of their out-of-school lives to the classroom.

Teachers’ critical consciousness manifests itself in their courage in defending their practices. As Freire stated: “Thus I can see no alternative for educators to unity within the diversity of their interests in defending their rights. Such rights include the right to freedom in teaching, the right to speak, the right to better conditions for pedagogical work, the right to paid sabbaticals for continuing education, the right to be coherent, the right to criticize the authorities without fear of retaliation (which entails the duty to criticize truthfully), the right to the duty to be serious and coherent and to not have to lie to survive” (Freire, 2005,pp.72 -Letter 4).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Thanks to my theoretical background, I found some features of elementary education that bother me as an elementary teacher with almost 20 years of practical work experience. Elementary education offers many questions about teachers' professionalism, conditions for creative teachers' work, and all the social and political issues connected with this first period of education.

I agree with Fullan on social awareness that change is urgently needed to generate excellence and equity. Leaders in education should try to rebuild the culture of educators -- the problems they have in proposing, designing and creating adequate conditions for teachers, motivating them to show progress and innovative thinking, and have enthusiasm for their work. "Those who think that the problems of education are artefacts of the larger society and that the improvement of schooling can wait for social change are unlikely to embrace change as part of their job" (Fullan, p. 340).

My research raised further questions about country-specific changes to the system, especially "Why?" Why do people want to change education? What are a given country's actual needs? How does it respond to new opportunities in a changing world – open up and open the way to democracy in the new order?

The aim of my research has been to identify the content of "Grammar of Schooling" for teachers in the Czech Republic, Portugal and Poland, and how it influences the process of generating practice-relevant ideas about teaching in different cultures under systemic change.

In my practical part, in the data analysis, I have given many examples from all three countries of the contexts in which teachers are trying to make changes, in what contexts they tend to resist, and why. Based on my findings, I would like to say that teachers are well aware of the possibility of change in all three countries. The question remains whether they are willing to participate.

Unfortunately, the frequent explanation of why they are a passive is that they are tired. Teachers' conditions are not improving with regard to other professions, nor is the prestige of the profession. Their work is often questioned and criticized; they are expected to perform miracles. It is not the fault of the teachers, but of the system. In Poland, for example, teachers are tired of frequent changes in fundamental rules. In the Czech Republic, teachers are tired because of their low incomes, constant criticism and the degradation of the teaching profession.

In Portugal, teachers are tired from increasing paperwork and the competitiveness among them set by the system, exacerbating relationships in the workplace.

As in any other profession, teachers have the opportunity to approach their work. They can either actively make changes and be innovative (as the system allows them), or they can only think about making changes, saying that changes would be good, but remain passive about them, accepting existing rules and maintaining the traditional values of education. If they are not motivated by society, then that society cannot expect top performances. Teaching is a mission, yes, but can we ask teachers to sacrifice themselves? Can teachers be devoted to their work in current conditions? I feel that society requires teachers to perform at minimum cost; this is a modern exploitation. Why does the Czech Republic now have a teacher shortage? Why has this situation not been discussed until now, when it is serious? Many teachers from my neighborhood are leaving the profession. Again, people without a pedagogical education will teach, or only with a minimum to meet the demand for teachers to teach. (This problem was solved in Portugal 20 years ago, and now there is a teacher surplus.) It's a big step back.

Teachers have the will to make changes at different stages in their professional careers, depending on their personal prerequisites as well as the personal lives and then on the environment in which they work. As I describe in my work, I think "Grammar of Schooling" means firmly rooted tradition and stereotypes, not only in schools, but first in society. These are prejudices of society, not only of teachers and schooling. Critical educators like Paulo Freire take a similar view. The school serves politicians, the state. Teachers are not independent, working for society. They have identities as social agents⁸, with dialectical tension between "what we inherit and what we acquire" (Freire 1998, p.70)

According to Popper, the state is unable to determine what is good and not in education, and therefore he argues in favor of liberal education. "It is the duty of the state to ensure that its citizens receive education to enable them to participate in the life of the community and to use every opportunity to develop their specific interests and talents" (Popper, p.122). This opinion is related to the now often-discussed issue of fair access to education which I consider one of most important recently in school and in society.

What is equal, and what is unequal? It is very relevant to critical education, to society and to school, especially to daily life and the teacher's problems in the class and their relationships to the individual children. A clear, unambiguous answer does not exist.

⁸In social science, **agency** is the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices. By contrast, structure is those factors of influence (social class, religion, gender, ethnicity, ability, customs, etc.) that determine or limit **agents** and their decisions.

The elementary teacher must always find the courage to behave appropriately toward each pupil (that behavior cannot always be the same; pupils are very different), and those relationships often seem unfair from the point of view of the environment. Teachers' freedom needs to be discussed, and so does respect for their decisions from others (pupils, parents, headmaster, colleagues). Does the teacher have the freedom in class to decide what's right? Can teacher attempt to building a solid foundation for democracy in schools? Is there a place for shared values, partnership or collaboration in classrooms and faculty rooms? In my research I could see often the teachers were overworked, burned out and unwilling to engage. How can such a teacher participate in higher goals according to critical theory, such as taking part in strikes and thinking about all the political consequences, the positions of teachers in society, and working for future generations of teachers? Moreover, most of the teachers were educated in the Communist era and thus have never made serious objections to the reforms. Now they are easily silenced by a threat of job reductions, especially in Poland and Portugal).

Many changes in education have been made in the last thirty years since the 1989 regime change in Poland and the Czech Republic. Because educational public trying to do it and do not see a significant improvement, we are probably doing something wrong, or that the changes that have been started are not strong enough, but need to be different, more prominent, more courageous – perhaps something we will not like, especially at the outset. Then, the support of the political parties' policy should be more pronounced, especially the link with the culture of the country in general, and its habits, the issues the people are currently living in. I'm afraid society does not know what it wants as a society.

Let society, then, set clear objectives or, according to Popper, it will only decrease the damage. People can change the things that are not good enough; they can see if democratic rules have been violated. Each country should respond to the future needs of its people and prepare its children to meet those needs through the education system. What can society expect in the future, and for what do teachers have to prepare the next generation?

If less and less human work is needed in the future, people will have more free time. The school should offer and create meaningful activities and socialization so that the youth will stay in school as long as possible. For example, there exist views on the extension of compulsory education to age 25 (Christian Kern). However, I would like to point out that this extension should especially benefit children at the beginning of elementary school. They must hurry the most in the educational system, have to deal a lot of knowledge during the first years of schooling and their progress must be visible and often disproportionate to their possibilities, especially in the Czech Republic. But here is the obvious impact of all comparative tests and

surveys, especially international ones, that lead the director and the teacher to the main goal of prestige and the best results.

Again, it is in the hands of politicians whether, in the **long term**, they will consider it crucial to balance social differences and enable social mobility. I think every good teacher is inclined toward these goals, and elementary teachers try to downplay the socio-economic differences in their classes, even though it is often an elementary teacher who has to explain to children the inequalities they have not previously been able to perceive. With changes in the **medium term**, society should once again think of its social values. From the position of administrators, the public should hear clear goals and why it wants to change education – for example, what the content of education should be. Everyone interested in the education system should discuss these issues... And not just these. Even taxpayers in a given state can give their opinions about goals and structures in education if they are not indifferent to them.

In the short term, society should support all the good things in its schools., especially active teachers, as I mentioned in my work. I do not think schooling has a clear mandate from political parties; for teachers, it is difficult to adopt or not adopt the changes. Policymakers are really afraid of making fundamental decisions; they only adopt general regulations from the European Union. In the eyes of the public, teachers are responsible for most of the problems and uncertainties; the teacher is either too active or too passive and backward. Teachers stay in a situation where it is difficult for them to integrate such a divided society. In any case, the situation and the blame for unsuccessful educational results cannot lie on the shoulders of teachers alone.

At the end of my dissertation, I would like to assess the accuracy of the method and research tools used: **What do I see as the benefits of using phenomenography and critical education in my research?** From the beginning, it was my intention to do research on elementary teachers, and the combination of phenomenography and critical perspective was very useful, as they dealt with teacher awareness.

In my qualitative educational research, phenomenography, I deal with the ratio of innovation to tradition in elementary schooling, with the question of how willing teachers are to adapt or innovate their daily practices and if they are aware of it. I tried to explain if teachers respond to changing culture and society. From critical pedagogy, I was looking at whether if teachers are thinking critically about changes or about the present discourse in education, and if they accepted changes or could begin making changes in their practice. Specifically, I used Freire's three types of consciousness (*conscientização*) to describe teachers' thinking today

about changes and about various situations in the schools, their reactions, and their ability to problematize education and generate action.

In subchapter 7.2. I have given examples of practice in which teachers use all three types of consciousness. It seems that often, and not only by teachers but generally in society (parents, policymakers), nostalgia prevails, which is a feature of naive consciousness. I really could see that teachers, especially tired teachers, lacked interest in the investigation; they could be more emotional and practiced polemics rather than dialogue, were impervious to challenges, and perceived objects and situations in the environment very simply and unilaterally. Fortunately, some are aware of this situation and are able to criticize themselves.

Here I have to mention that I originally considered using action research in my work. Not only is action research supposed to lead to change, but the critical researcher should also similarly try to illuminate myths and illusions and help overcome certain injustices that can occur in society – in this instance, at school. A researcher forces teacher to think about the subject. Paulo Freire (1970) called the respondents in his research “partners.” He dived into their way of thinking and wanted them to think about their thinking. Together, teachers learned to think critically. These are the principles on which critical research is based; they are the background of this research, along with phenomenography.

I wanted to do qualitative research. In qualitative research it is permissible to reformulate research questions, to step back to supplement research methods or reconstruct a research sample. Because qualitative research is flexible, researchers use it to investigate phenomena they don't know enough about (Marco, 2005).

I thought I would do action research as a major part of my main research structure. But after studying and reading literature about qualitative research methods, at the same time I started my research interviews in Polish schools, I decided to completely replace action research with phenomenography. The main reason was that I thought I had no such relationship with teacher in which we could think of common changes, and I did not have enough time.

I assume the main goal of EDiTE members is to refine or create an appropriate and open relationship between the researcher and the teacher. We know it is not easy; teachers are often afraid of researchers (Czerepaniak-Walczak, 1997) and do not want to come under strong criticism. Researchers should convince them of their good intentions – about collaboration, about the necessity to have aims in common and show possible changes “from below.”

I wanted to rely on interpretive and participatory research methods, specifically the traditions of phenomenography and participatory action research. These methods suited my research question and intentions. “Phenomenography is an empirical research tradition that was

designed to answer questions about thinking and learning, especially for educational research” (Ornek, 2006).

Based on the results of the first, phenomenographic phase of my study, in the second phase of my research I wanted to rely on the methodological tradition of action research. My goal should have been to support teachers in implementing specific projects aimed at transformative teaching practices for better student learning. Action research is one of the formative research methods that tend to require and demonstrate one of the highest levels of involvement; researchers should be active, interactive, collaborative participants, initiators of change. I had to ask: should action research be essentially targeted at the participative transformation, where subjects and researchers interact in the production of new knowledge? (Ojha, 2013)

I perceived that the action researcher must be close to the teacher and to teaching demands. Burns contended:

AR practitioners must be simultaneously researchers and actors in the social situation. Thus, the scope and aims of the research need to be realistic and justifiable within the constraints of the teaching context. The research should show how it builds upon, rather than detracts from, practitioners’ major responsibilities for teaching. It should also show how it links to the notion of enhanced professionalism for educators and the personal and professional development of the participants. These criteria are closely tied to the notion of compatibility with educational aims and the concepts of reflexivity and praxis, in which theory and practice become mutually informing. (Burns, 2015)

When undertaking comparative research, I would not be able to create such a team of practitioners -- researchers who would focus on studying and transforming their own practice in a short time. This is why I changed the research method to phenomenography, which allowed me to know teachers’ ways of understanding and interpreting their own practice.

The big challenge in my research was creating categories and subcategories of description, in phenomenography terminology – pools of meanings. Then phenomenography was closer to me and more suitable for my purposes, especially after I learned about developmental phenomenography from Bowden. In addition, Francis convinced me about phenomenography. He refers to the aim of phenomenography ‘as that of being able to use samples of conceptions to construct categories . . . it is necessary to show that across the selected sample of individuals the sampling of conceptions has been achieved” (Francis, 1993). This

view implies that individual conceptions are directly available and somehow blended to form the categories of description.

I felt it was an advantage that I met my respondents several times and could prepare a good atmosphere and the needed mutual trust for the interview. I asked the teachers: “What is your problem in your everyday life in class, at school? Tell me about your feelings as an elementary teacher.” These were the first aims of my research. For some teachers, a phenomenographic conversation was some relief; they could share their feelings and problems. These interviews should also be the mission of a researcher and a motivation for those who are doing activities for society. The teacher-researcher relationship should work through mutual motivation. We did not share a common goal of changing their practice, but I gained their honest views on pedagogical situations and school life, which was important for my research. I could formulate my research questions. Although I do not know if the teachers have made any changes in practice since the interviews, I have certainly made them think more about things, as they have confirmed.

Within critical theory, I would like to highlight that aspirations to human rights and dignity are rising. Societies are undergoing deep transformation, and teachers and schools are being challenged, calling for new forms of education and creation of new competencies by pupils that societies and economies need. Several international organizations have devoted special attention to teachers’ initial preparation programs to generate studies that can support the definition of educational policies helping them adapt to the challenges. Society has called for well-prepared, committed teachers who can develop reflective capacity, critical investigation, literacy at the knowledge and media level, and strict involvement in learning communities. (Opfer, 2011).

Within my research topic (possible changes, innovations in schools, teachers’ mindsets, broken “Grammar of Schooling”), I ask what kinds of changes society expects from teachers. Does society make room to break the “Grammar of Schooling” and open the way for small and bigger changes? Can elementary teachers devote more time to teach social skills (e.g., cooperation between children) than to increase the volume of knowledge and ever-faster progress in reading, writing and counting? Do they have enough autonomy to set the stage for students to 21st-century competencies –the skills, attitudes and knowledge students need to succeed in school, work, and life?

Unfortunately, as often happens, when teachers want to break GoS, they often first have to break some rules and, in this case, put themselves at risk—for example, lying about completed parts of the curriculum, helping pupils with tests, replacing practical lessons with austere “banking”/ frontal teaching, simplifying some of the curriculum because of weak pupils, etc.

I could see that elementary teachers were aware of these essentials: about learning to live, learning more for greater justice, social equity and global solidarity (Carlson, 2013). I am convinced that teachers can lead the way, but they must have certain conditions, power and autonomy. It is not possible for teachers to make change when they are in straitjackets – for example, a strict full curriculum, rules that support competitiveness among teachers, and rigid assessment of pupils. In that process, the action research approach may become very helpful. I do not give up on this, but maybe just postpone it to my future research.

In the case of action research, I also would suggest a team of researchers working on similar topics. In my view the connection between researcher and teacher would be most advantageous to establish in advance the objective of what I would like teachers to try, how to change their practice, and how the researcher could describe and analyze individual steps.

Tyack and Tobin evaluated the Dalton School more as an unsuccessful or temporary project; I would not have seen it that way. The idea of individualization by the American teacher Helen Parkhurst (1886-1973) was obvious, and that is the concept educators are talking about that is currently being promoted in schools as teachers try to cope in practice. How can individuality be made a priority in an ordinary classroom in the Czech Republic, Poland or Portugal? What should be the ideal conditions for teachers to make individualization in class successful? The Dalton plan should have replaced teacher-centered lockstep teaching. Good intentions failed generally because of an unreasonable burden on teachers, “laboratory” work, and challenging preparation.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Parkhurst wanted to break rooted GoS. She believed that when students are given freedom to direct and pace themselves, and when they help one another, their motivation increases considerably and they learn a lot more. She prepared a new, unusual manner of classroom management.

Similarly, in today’s graded school, all children are expected to master the same curriculum content for the year; at a given grade level, they must have some knowledge prescribed in the curriculum, which most teachers have to evaluate with grades before the child can move to the next level. What was previously regarded as an equal approach in the graded

school -- the same for everybody -- nowadays seems to be the main obstacle to individualization. Equality is not perceived as giving everyone the same, but offering everyone what he needs, according to his abilities or interests, also equally. The introduction of the graded school took hundreds of years, and so today's society might have developed other approaches.)

Although teachers have a chance to evaluate children differently and be less demanding toward them, common plans and curricula remain. This question is all the more complicated at the elementary level because their children learn really crucial knowledge, without which they cannot function in everyday life (the "3Rs"). The curriculum is important and connected, and from year to year they continue building on the knowledge they have acquired. That is why I think it is important, as I emphasize in my work, to give children more time. People are different, and everyone has his own pace, abilities, cognitive development and possibilities of mastering basic reading, writing and counting.

I find it unfair, at least from the Czech point of view, that a system of education gives space and time to high school and college students, who can quite often change schools, take more time to study or have a gap year. But children at elementary level don't have this time or possibility within ordinary schooling and are forced to handle everything as quickly as possible. For many children, it is necessary to ensure school success -- that is to say, to put them at ease and let them enjoy school. From the beginning, educators should not let them harbour a negative attitude toward school when they cannot handle its demands. These "slower" children can see that others are better off, even though they make less effort.

While they are trying, successes come slowly and their handicaps grow stronger. In addition, their "effort" is often reflected in the evaluation, often negatively, especially when they are graded. The child should be taking the first years of education as a predominantly positive experience from.

Research questions

In the previous subchapter, I expressed more about my secondary research questions (Summary, Table 1). Now, in conclusion, I would like to recall my main research questions:

What kind of "Grammar of Schooling" do teachers in the Polish, Portuguese and Czech schools internalize and practice?

How does “Grammar of Schooling” inhibit teachers from changing their consciousness?

Even more generally, I would like to summarize the attitudes of elementary teachers toward changes in their work and their thinking in relation to theories (“Grammar of Schooling”, Freires’ kinds of consciousness).

Plainly, the kinds of “Grammar of Schooling” – the kinds of tradition that are internalized and then practiced in the consciousness of Polish, Portuguese and Czech teachers – are most influenced by educational policy, teachers’ personal experience and role, and their relationships with parents, who are very often obstacles to change. Teachers are willing to make many changes, and I have introduced them in all of my description categories (space, time, evaluation, parenting, relationships in the schools, authority, self-criticism, curriculum, hidden curriculum, inclusion). Nonetheless, teachers often follow traditional approaches or make changes temporary. They don’t have a clear signal, and at the same time, they don’t have a free hand, more autonomy or the conditions from educational policy to work in an innovative way.

Over the last 30 years, since regime change, new laws have been adopted. They have found opponents and adherents; they have meant advantages and disadvantages for individuals in society. Just as there is no ideal society or regime, there can be no ideal education system that suits everyone.

As Europeans, we generally have to realize that beside “some commonalities exist a wide variety and diversity of approaches that reflect not only differences between countries but also between experts themselves, their perspectives and conceptions, their personal judgment of what they regarded as important and worth mentioning” (VALENCIC, p. 108).

In education, there are not only short-term goals, but also long-term goals. And it is possible that we will not be able to accomplish anything. It is important to learn from experience and not stagnate.

Each country's prerequisites for change are different; every time; the recipe for change cannot be generalized. Countries have different histories and traditions; the natures of their people are different; school cultures are different. People should not forget about history and tradition, but society should look ahead. I very much like the school museums in Portugal, where: large and smaller schools have mini-museums, a room or a place in the school corridor where various artifacts of the past are displayed. But not only that: various teaching practices, subjects and methods are described; otherwise “the patrimony constituted by educational

materials runs the risk of disappearing in the face of the changes introduced in the school” (Mogarro, 2013). Children can see directly how school culture has changed.

History can be left and honored in these rooms, and teachers, parents and leaders can focus more on current trends and new challenges – which often draw on history

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Table 21: STRUCTURE OF CONCEPTUALIZATION OF RESEARCH

RESEARCH SUBJECT	“Grammar of schooling” internalized by teachers and used by them in their everyday practice.
MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION	What kind of Grammar of Schooling do teachers in the Polish, Portuguese and Czech schools internalize and practice? How does “Grammar of Schooling inhibit teachers from changing their consciousness?
	Because of the complexity of the Grammar of Schooling I have chosen only a part of it: educational interactions in a school’s teaching and relations with parents in early education as its core elements for creating a transformative and democratic community.
SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do Polish, Czech and Portuguese teachers understand and practice their role in educational interactions? 2. How do Polish and Czech teacher understand and practice their role in relationship to parents as subjects of education? 3. How does the Grammar of Schooling differ in the consciousness and practice?
METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH	Qualitative approach; phenomenography Theoretical underpinning: critical pedagogy, especially P. Freire’s types of consciousness
RESEARCH DESIGN	An approach to research: phenomenography Data collection: semi-structured interviews, narrative, non-participated observation. Data analysis: phenomenography

Table 22: SIX SPECIFIC TOPICS FOR INTERVIEW

PHENOMENOGRAPHICAL INTERVIEW – GROUPS OF QUESTIONS

YOUR JOURNEY TO TEACHING

WHY THIS PROFESSION? WHY CHILDREN IN THIS AGE? YOUR EDUCATION.YOUR PRACTICE. WHY THIS SCHOOL. TEACHERS JOB – IS IT DAMAGE IN COMPARE TO OTHER WORK. GAP YEAR IN POLISH SCHOOL.

EVERYDAY SCHOOL-LIFE

YOUR CLASS- TEACHERS. WHERE ARE YOU TEACHING – ONLY YOUR CLASS? WHY? BETTER – WORSE CLASSES? DOES IT EXIST? RITUALS IN CLASS. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN YOUR CLASS – RELATIONSHIP OR EXCELENT HIGH ACCOMPLISHMENT? RELATIONSHIP IN THE SCHOOL – WITH COLLEAGUE. HOW IS IT IMPORTANT FOR YOU?

CURRICULUM

SCHOOL CURRICULUM FOR YOUR GRADES 1.-3. IN YOUR COUNTRY OVERLOADED OR INADEQUATE IN SOME FIELD, IN SOME SUBJECT, IS SOMETHING USELESS. WHAT IS YOUR POINT OF VIEW, WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE, WHAT WOULD YOU ADDED, WHAT WOULD YOU LEAVE OUT FROM OUR CURRICULUM?

ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION

ASSESSMENT OF PUPILS USED IN OUR SCHOOLING IS FAIR, JUSTY, OBJECTIVE? HOW DO YOU TO DEAL WITH IT ON YOUR OWN? DO YOU LIKE IT? IS IT FOR YOU A DIFFICULT PERIOD IN SCHOOL YEAR, WHEN DO YOU HAVE TO GIVE ASSESMENT? WHAT POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE REVIEWS? IT IS WRONG TO ASSESS CHILDREN NEGATIVELY? EVALUATION OF CHILDREN WITH SOME EXCEPTIONS?

INCLUSION

INVOLVING THE WEAKER PUPILS TO PROCES... WHAT IS FOR THESE CHILDREN IMPORTANT IN THE CLASS?

PARENTS

DO YOU THINK THAT PARENTS' ACCESS TO SCHOOL CHANGES OVER THE YEARS? ARE PARENTS INVOLVED IN SCHOOL LIFE IN YOUR CLASS SPECIFICALLY? GOOD AND BAD EXPERIENCE

Table 23: INTERVIEWS GUIDE (TOPICS AND QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS)
YOUR JOURNEY TO TEACHING
1. Can you tell me something about your education, study and practice ?
2. In how many schools did you teach, and where were you the longest?
3. Why are you an elementary teacher? Did you not want to teach older children?
4. What influenced you in choosing this profession?
5. Do you remember your first teacher?
EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE
7. What is your most important everyday practice in the classroom?
8. Do you have some specific approach in teaching? Can you use it in this school?
9. Are you satisfied with the class you are teaching, or would you prefer a "better class"? And what does "better class" mean to you?
10. In your class, do you have some “rituals“ you use during lessons?
11. Why are you teaching in this school? What do you appreciate here?
12. Is it important to you to have good relationships with colleagues?
CURRICULUM
13. What do you think about curriculum for your grades 1 to 3 in your country?
14. What is your opinion of the number of teachers per class in YOUR? elementary school (pros and cons)?
15. Are you teaching only in your class?
ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION
16. Do you think pupil evaluation in our schooling is fair, just, objective? How do you deal with it on your own? Do you like it? Is it a difficult period in the school year for you? When do you have to give assessments?
17. Do you grade children in 1 - 3 classes? Do you feel this has advantages? Why?
18. What do you think about the routine and standardized tests that compare the results of skills among classes, schools and countries?
19. Do you give both positive and negative evaluations? What positive and negative evaluation? It is wrong to assess children negatively?
20. How do you grade such subjects as . . . as music, art and physical education?
21. Do you like to teach them rather than the essential subjects? What's easier for you?
INCLUSION
22. Is it easy for you to deal with the evaluation of exceptional children, those with special abilities or needs, or the exceptionally talented ones?

23. What do you think about involving the weaker students in the classroom?
PARENTS
24. Do you think parents' access to school has changed over the years?
25. Are parents involved in school life in your class specifically?
26. What access do parents have to the assessment system?
27. Have you had negative experiences with parents?
QUESTION FOR NARRATIVES
In your opinion, what is most distinctive change that has taken place in Polish education during your practice as a teacher, and what was its effect?
Have you made any fundamental change in your class, or in your approach to pupils, parents and colleagues, during your teaching experience?

Table 24: AGE AND CLASSES AND ISCED IN CR, POLAND, PORTUGAL

		CZECH REPUBLIC	POLAND	PORTUGAL
ISCED 0	EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION	KINDERGARDEN To age 6	KINDERGARDEN To age 6,7. “zerówka” -last year before 1. class – in some polish primary schools	KINDERGARDEN To age 6
ISCED 1	PRIMARY EDUCATION	CLASSES 1-5 (age 6-11)	* CLASSES 1-3 (age 6-9)	CLASSES 1-4 (age 6-9) CLASSES 5-6 (age 10-11)
ISCED 2	LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION	CLASSES 6-9 (age 12-16) GYMNASIUM for 8 years (age 12- 19)	CLASSES 4-6 (age 9- 12) Gymnasium (12-14)	CLASSES 7-9 (age 12-14)
ISCED 3	UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION	(from age 15-16 till 19-20)	(age 15- 19) lyceum	

*new structure starting in 2019/20: Primary education: grades 1-3- early school education ISCED 1
grades 4-8 -teaching by subjects ISCED 2

Gymnasium or lower secondary education is phased out. Secondary education starts after primary education (single structure), secondary schools – 4. types: 4- year general secondary school
5-year technical secondary school
3- year sectoral VET school – stage I
2- year sectoral VET school – stage II

Table 25: MAIN AIMS OF EDUCATION 2011 IN ISCED

ISCED 0	EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION	<p>Is designed with a holistic approach to support children's early cognitive, physical, social and emotional development and introduce young children to organized instruction outside of the family context.</p> <p>No duration criteria, however a programme should account for at least the equivalent of 2 hours per day and 100 days a year of educational activities in order to be included;</p>
ISCED 1	PRIMARY EDUCATION	<p>Programmes designed to provide students with fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics, established a solid foundation for learning and understanding core areas of knowledge, personal and social development</p> <p>Duration typically varies from 4 to 7 years. The most common duration is 6 years;</p>
ISCED 2	LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION	<p>First stage of secondary education building on primary education, typically with a more subject oriented curriculum.</p> <p>Duration typically varies from 2 to 5 years. The most common duration is 3 years;</p>
ISCED 3	UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION	<p>Final stage of SE preparing for tertiary education or providing skills relevant to employment.</p> <p>Duration typically varies from 2 to 5 years. The most common duration is 3 years;</p>

Table 26: MANUAL DATA ANALYSIS	
Transcription from Czech Republic: interviewed: CR1KO	
CODES	POOLS OF MEANING
Assigning Codes to Categories- interviewed: CR1KO	
CATEGORIES OF DESCRIPTION	
1. Main features of common graded school – changes within GOS	
a. time	
b. space	
c. assesment	
d. parents relation	
2. Relation in the schools	
a. among pupils	
b. teacher-pupils	
c. relation to direction, among colleagues	
3. The teacher’s personality	
a. self-criticism versus authorities’	
b. relation to curriculum	
c. hidden curriculum	
4.Inclusion	
5. Changes yes or not	
a. tradition	
b. innovation	

Table 27: CODES FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC

CODES		POOLS OF MEANING	CR1 KO	CR 2 KO	CR 3 KO	CR 4 SS	CR 5 SS	CR 6 TR	CR 7 TR	CR 8 TR	CR 9 CH	CR 10 CH
1A	Variable lesson length		A	A		A		A	A			A
2.A	Teaching in another class			A	A	A	A	A	A		A	
2B	Too many pupils per class		A		A			A	A	A	A	
3A	Advantages and disadvantages of grading			A	A	A	A		A			A
3B	Giving a grade		A		A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
3C	Only high grades			A	A	A	A		A		A	A
3D	Too much positive evaluation		A	A	A	A	A	A	A		A	A
3E	Grades throughout the year and final grades							A	A	A		
3F	Testing, exams		A		A		A	A	A		A	
3G	Individual evaluation		A	A			A	A	A	A		
4A	First communication with parents = "rules"		A		A	A			A	A		A
4B	Bullying from parents				A	A		A				
4C	Meeting with parents		A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
4D	Bad experiences with parents			A	A	A	A		A			A
4E	Help from parents		A		A	A	A	A		A	A	
4F	Parents in the classroom		A	A	A	A		A			A	A
4G	Parents' bias about school, children		A	A	A	A		A	A	A		A
4H	Interactions between parents		A		A	A			A		A	
5A	Problem pupils		A	A	A	A		A	A	A	A	A
5B	Weak pupils		A	A	A	A		A	A	A	A	A
5C	Naughty pupils		A	A		A		A	A		A	
5D	Disabled pupils		A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
5E	Relations in the class			A	A	A	A	A	A		A	A
5F	Problem class		A	A	A		A	A			A	A
5G	Grouping children by skills		A	A			A	A				
6A	Positive feelings of teacher		A	A	A	A			A	A		
6B	Negative feelings of teachers		A	A		A	A		A	A		A
6C	Teacher's fatigue			A	A	A		A		A		A
6D	Teacher's extracurricular activity		A		A	A	A			A	A	A
6E	Self-criticism			A	A	A	A	A		A	A	A
6F	Own family			A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
6G	Self-confident teacher		A				A	A	A			
6H	Satisfied teacher		A	A	A	A	A		A		A	
6I	Teachers' approach to education		A	A	A	A				A	A	A
7A	What teacher wants and what she must teach					A		A		A		A
7B	Curriculum overload		A	A	A	A		A	A			A
7C	Time to chat		A	A	A	A				A	A	
8A	Motivation of weak pupils		A	A	A	A		A	A	A	A	A
8B	Using new or different methods		A		A	A		A			A	A
8C	Learning what makes pupils happy			A		A		A			A	

8D	Motivation when the aims are too high		A	A	A			A				A	
8F	Motivation through successful activity		A				A	A	A		A		A
9A	Support from direction		A	A	A	A	A		A		A		
9B	Freedom in teacher's work		A		A	A		A	A		A		
9C	Good relations among teachers		A		A			A			A		A
9D	Poor relations among teachers				A			A	A		A	A	
10 A	Tendency to vary approach				A	A		A	A		A	A	A
11. A	Pupils leaving school for poor results or mutual antipathy		A			A		A		A			
12 A	Assistant in the classroom		A		A			A	A	A	A	A	A
13 A	Money for							A			A	A	

Table 28: CODES FROM POLAND

CODES		POOLS OF MEANING	PL 1S	PL 2S	PL 3S	PL 4S	PL 5AT	PL 6Z	PL 7Z	PL 8F	PL 9F	PL 10F
1A	Variable lesson length	1.Time			A	A	A		A	A		
2.	Teaching in another class	2. Space				A	A	A	A	A	A	A
2B	Too many pupils per class		A		A	A	A	A	A	A		A
3A	Advantages and disadvantages of grading	3.Assesment	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	A	A
3B	Giving a grade			A			A	A	A	A		A
3C	Only high grades									A		
3D	Too much positive evaluation			A				A				
3E	Grades throughout the year and final grades			A		A		A			A	
3F	Testing, exams		A	A		A		A	A		A	A
3G	Individual evaluation		A			A	A		A	A	A	A
3H	Autoevaluation and another method evaluation- formative assesment		A	A	A	A			A	A	A	A
3I	Common evaluation whole class		A	A	A			A			A	A
4A	First communication with parents = “rules”	4.Parents relation	A	A	A	A	A	A				A
4B	Bullying from parents				A	A	A			A	A	A
4C	Meeting with parents		A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
4D	Bad experiences with parents		A	A		A	A	A	A	A	A	A
4E	Help from parents		A	a	A	A	A	A	A	A		
4F	Parents in the classroom		A				A		A	A		
4G	Parents’ bias about school, children		A	A		A	A		A	A	A	A
4H	Interactions between parents		A		A	A	A	A	A	A		A
5A	Problem pupils	5.Relation to pupils		A	A	A	A	A	A	A		
5B	Weak pupils		A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A		A
5C	Naughty pupils					A	A		A	A		
5D	Disabled pupils			A	A		A	A				A
5E	Relations in the class		A	A	A	A		A	A		A	A

5F	Problem class				A	A		A		A		
5G	Grouping children by skills or other way		A		A							
6A	Positive feelings of teacher	6. Teacher's personality	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
6B	Negative feelings of teachers		A			A	A	A	A	A	A	A
6C	Teacher's fatigue				A	A	A	A	A			
6D	Teacher's extracurricular activity		A	A	A		A		A	A	A	
6E	Self-criticism				A	A	A	A	A		A	
6F	Own family		A	A	A	A	A		A	A	A	
6G	Self-confident teacher			A					A	A	A	
6H	Satisfied teacher		A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
6I	Teachers' approach to education			A	A	A	A		A		A	A
7A	What teacher wants and what she must teach	7. Curriculum	A		A	A			A	A	A	A
7B	Curriculum overload										A	A
7C	Time to chat		A	A	A	A			A		A	
8A	Motivation of weak pupils	8. Motivation	A	A					A	A		
8B	Using new or different methods		A	A	A	A	A		A		A	
8C	Learning what makes pupils happy		A		A		A		A			A
8D	Motivation when the aims are too high			A			A	A		A		A
8F	Motivation through successful activity		A	A	A		A	A		A	A	
9A	Support from direction	9. Relation in school	A	A	A	A		A		A		
9B	Freedom in teacher's work		A	A	A	A		A	A	A	A	
9C	Good relations among teachers		A	A	A	A		A	A	A	A	A
9D	Poor relations among teachers									A	A	
10A	Tendency to vary approach	10. Changes	A		A	A				A	A	
11.A	Pupils leaving school for poor results or mutual antipathy	11. Leaving school	A			A	A		A	A	A	
12A	Assistant in the classroom	12. Inclusion	A		A		A	A		A		A
13A	Money for	13. Money	A	A	A		A		A		A	

Table 29: CODES FROM PORTUGAL						
CODES		POOLS OF MEANING	PT1	PT2	PT3	PT4
1A	Variable lesson length	1.Time			Y	
1B	All day in the school		Y	Y	Y	Y
2.	Teaching in another class	2. Space	Y	Y		Y
2B	Too many pupils per class					
3A	Advantages, disadvantages of grading	3.Assesment	Y	Y	Y	Y
3B	Giving grades		Y		Y	Y
3C	Only high grades		Y			
3D	Too much positive evaluation					
3E	Grades throughout the year and final grades				Y	Y
3F	Testing, exams		Y		Y	Y
3G	Individual evaluation		Y	Y	Y	
4A	First communication with parents = “rules”	4.Parents relation			Y	Y
4B	Bullying from parents		Y			Y
4C	Meetings with parents		Y	Y		
4D	Bad experiences with parents		Y			Y
4E	Help from parents		Y	Y		
4F	Parents in the classroom		Y	Y	Y	Y
4G	Parents’ bias about school, children					
4H	Interactions between parents			Y	Y	Y
5A	Problem pupils	5.Relation to pupils	Y		Y	
5B	Weak pupils		Y			
5C	Naughty pupils					
5D	Disabled pupils		Y		Y	Y
5E	Relations in the class			Y	Y	
5F	Problem class		Y		Y	Y
5G	Grouping children by skills					
6A	Positive feelings of teacher	6.Teacher’s personality	Y	Y	Y	
6B	Negative feelings of teachers			Y		
6C	Teacher’s fatigue		Y	Y		
6D	Teacher's extracurricular aractivity			Y	Y	Y
6E	Self-criticism					
6F	Own family		Y			
6G	Self-confident teacher			Y	Y	Y
6H	Satisfied teacher		Y	Y	Y	
6I	Teachers’ approach to education		Y	Y		Y
7A	What teacher wants to teach and must teach	7. Curriculum	Y	Y	Y	Y
7B	Curriculum overload			Y	Y	Y
7C	Time to chat		Y	Y	Y	

8A	Motivating weak pupils	8. Motivation	Y	Y	Y	
8B	Using new or different methods		Y	Y	Y	Y
8C	Learning what makes pupils happy		Y	Yv		
8D	Motivation when the aims are too high		Y		Y	
8F	Motivation through successful activity					
9A	Support from direction	9. Relation in school	Y		Y	
9B	Freedom in teacher's work		Y	Y		
9C	Good relations among teachers		Y	Y	Y	Y
9D	Poor relations among teachers			Y		
10A	Tendency to vary approach	10. Changes	Y	Y	Y	Y
11.A	Pupils leaving school because of poor results or mutual antipathy	11. Leaving school	Y			
12A	Assistant in the classroom	12. Inclusion	Y		Y	Y
13A	Money for	13. Money	Y	Y	Y	Y

Appendix 1: RESEARCH AND INFORMED CONTENT IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Souhlas s účastí na výzkumu – seznamte se, prosím, s níže uvedenými informacemi, a potom vyplňte datum a podpis na prohlášení o souhlasu.

INFORMACE O VÝZKUMU

Výzkum je součástí projektu „European doktorat in teacher education“ (EDiTE), financovaného Evropskou komisí v rámci programu Horizont 2020 (akce Marie Curie - smlouva číslo 676452).

Téma výzkumu v programu EDiTE: TRANSFORMATIVE TEACHER LEARNING FOR BETTER STUDENT LEARNING WITHIN AN EMERGING EUROPEAN CONTEXT.

Účel výzkumu: pochopení toho, jak učitelé učí; učitel - vzdělavatel .

*Oblast výzkumu: zaměřena na: 1) povahu odborných znalostí učitelů
2) kolektivní nebo sociální povahu učení učitelů
3) role vedení vlastního výzkumu ze strany učitelů*

Ve spolupráci s cílovými skupinami (školy i mimoškolní organizace) se výzkumníci pokusí identifikovat jejich potřeby a zavést do praxe spolupráci učitelů s výzkumníky ku prospěchu celého vzdělávacího systému, v duchu pravidel transformačního výzkumu.

V rámci projektu (2015-2019) se partneři prostřednictvím výzkumu a spolupráce snaží vytvořit fórum pro sdílení teoretických znalostí i jejich zdrojů a pak systém pro shromažďování dobrých příkladů z praxe.

Metodologie: Kvalitativní výzkum - etnografický výzkum, akční výzkum, individuální rozhovory, focus group rozhovory, zkoumání dokumentace.

Odborné vedení: doc. Hana Červinková (Profesor DSW Wroclaw)

Doba trvání studie: červen 2016 - prosinec 2018

Upozornění: Účastníci studie mohou být také nezletilí. Tyto studie budou provedeny v souladu se zákonem o ochraně osobních údajů (zákon ze dne 29.08.1997, o ochraně osobních údajů, sjednoceného textu:.. Sbírce zákonů z roku 2014, Poz.1182 ve znění pozdějších předpisů). Data shromážděná ve studii projdou anonymizací (skutečná jména budou nahrazena pseudonymy nebo kódy), shromážděná data a materiály budou archivovány způsobem, který zabraňuje přístupu třetích stran.

Kontaktní údaje na instituci provádějící výzkum: dr. (Professor DSW) Hana Červinková, EditeProject Manager, děkan, člen Mezinárodní komise vzdělávání a výzkumu fakulty pedagogických věd University Dolního Slezska, ul. Strzegomska 55, 53-611 Wroclaw. Etické požadavky tohoto výzkumu zaručuje Etický výbor výzkumu University Dolního Slezska, ul. Wagonowa 9, 53-609 Wroclaw

Účastníci mají právo nahlížet do svých dat, na jejich opravu a právo na odstoupení z účasti na výzkumu.

PROHLÁŠENÍ O SOUHLASU PRO DOSPĚLOU OSOBU

Já (Jméno a příjmení) jsem byla informována o názvu a cílech výzkumu a potvrzuji účast na výzkumu Lucie Bucharové s titulem: GRAMMARS OF SCHOOLING IN THE POSTAUTHORITATIVE CONTEXT. COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CHANGES IN TEACHING PRACTICES IN CZECH, POLISH AND PORTUGUESE SCHOOLS

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Místo a datum Podpis účastníka výzkumu

Appendix 2: RESEARCH INFORMED CONTENT IN POLAND

DEKLARACJA ZGODY NA UDZIAŁ W BADANIACH

Prosimy o zapoznanie się z poniższymi informacjami, a następnie wypełnienie danych i podpis w deklaracji zgody.

INFORMACJE O BADANIACH

- Nazwa badań: **TRANSFORMATIVE TEACHER LEARNING FOR BETTER STUDENT LEARNING WITHIN AN EMERGING EUROPEAN CONTEXT.**
- Cel badań: zrozumienie, w jaki sposób nauczyciele uczą się o uczeniu się innych osób. Uwaga w badaniach będzie skupiona na: 1) naturze profesjonalnej wiedzy nauczycieli, 2) kolektywnej lub społecznej naturze uczenia się nauczycieli, 3) roli prowadzenia własnych badań przez nauczycieli. Szkoła stanowi naturalny kontekst, w którym zachodzą procesy uczenia się nauczycieli (tzw. transformatywne uczenie się), dlatego jest miejscem prowadzenia badań.
 - Metodologia badań: badania jakościowe - badania etnograficzne, badania w działaniu, wywiady indywidualne, wywiady fokusowe, badania dokumentacji
 - Kierownik badań: dr hab. (Prof. DSW) Hana Cervinkova
 - Czas trwania badań: czerwiec 2016 – grudzień 2018
- Możliwe ryzyka: uczestnikami badań mogą być również osoby niepełnoletnie. Badania zostaną przeprowadzone w zgodzie z ustawą o ochronie danych osobowych (ustawa z dnia 29.08.1997 r. o Ochronie Danych Osobowych; tekst jednolity: Dz.U. z 2014 r., poz.1182 ze zm.). Dane zebrane w badaniach poddane zostaną anonimizacji (prawdziwe imiona i nazwiska zostaną zastąpione pseudonimami lub kodami), zebrany materiał będzie archiwizowany w sposób uniemożliwiający dostęp osób trzecich.
 - Źródła finansowania badań: program Horyzont 2020.
 - Dane kontaktowe instytucji prowadzącej badania:
dr hab. (Prof. DSW) Hana Cervinkova, Kierownik Projektu EDiTE, Prodziekan ds. Międzynarodowej Edukacji i Badań, Wydział Nauk Pedagogicznych
Dolnośląska Szkoła Wyższa, ul. Strzegomska 55, 53-611 Wrocław
 - spełnianie wymogów etycznych niniejszych badań gwarantuje:
Uczelniana Komisja ds. etyki badań naukowych Dolnośląskiej Szkoły Wyższej,
ul. Wagonowa 9, 53-609 Wrocław
 - Uczestnikom przysługuje prawo wglądu do swoich danych, ich korekty oraz prawo do odwołania zgody na udział w badaniach.

Badania stanowią część projektu “European Doctorate in Teacher Education” (EDITE) finansowanego ze środków Komisji Europejskiej w ramach programu Horyzont 2020 (działania Maria Skłodowska-Curie – numer umowy 676452).

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miejsce i data

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podpis kierownika projektu

DEKLARACJA ZGODY dla osoby pełnoletniej

Ja niżej podpisany/podpisana zostałem/zostałam poinformowany/a o nazwie i celu badań i wyrażam zgodę na udział w badaniach pod tytułem : **GRAMMARS OF SCHOOLING IN THE POSTSOCIALIST CONTEXT. COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CHANGE IN TEACHING PRACTICES IN CZECH AND POLISH SCHOOLS** prowadzone przez Lucie Bucharová.

.....

.....

miejsce i data

czytelny podpis uczestnika/uczestniczki badan

Appendix 3: RESEARCH INFORMED CONTENT IN PORTUGAL

GRAMMARS OF SCHOOLING IN THE POSTAUTORITARIAN CONTEXT. COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CHANGING TEACHING PRACTICES IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN CZECH, POLISH AND PORTUGUESE SCHOOLS

Informação chave

Nome da investigadora: Lucie Bucharová

Universidade base: University of Lower Silesia Wroclaw, Poland

Universidade de mobilidade: Instituto de Educação, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal

I am a PhD student at Universities in Lisbon and in Wroclaw (Poland), previous elementary teacher with practice for almost 20 years in the Czech Republic. My dissertation is supervised by professor Maria Czerepaniak-Walczak from University of Szczecin and ULS Wroclaw, Poland and by professor Maria João Mogarro from ULISBOA, Portugal. In my thesis I describe a possible changes in elementary education in these three countries.

Breve descrição (short contextualisation of your project)

My research is based on the borrowed metaphor of the "Grammar of Schooling" proposed by David Tyack and William Tobin who argue, that both language and schooling have their own „grammar“, which teachers tend to take for granted and which makes schooling practices resistant to change. History has shown that systemic changes in education were rarely sustainable and their persistence was rather fragmentary.

Objetivos e metodologia (aims of fieldwork and methodology)

The goal of my research is to explore the “Grammar of schooling in the post-transition context of Poland, Portugal and the Czech Republic. I am interested in exploring *the grammars* in everyday school-based practices in the schools, in finding out how teachers can respond to systemic changes. How deeply can they be part of them and to what extent are they willing to get involved? How are teachers rooted in traditional education? Can they incorporate, internalize new methods in their practice? Methodologically, my qualitative research is grounded in phenomenography based on the analysis of specific cases, which focus on the views and feelings of teachers toward the continuing changes.

Confidencialidade e consentimento informado (confidentiality and informed consent)

The participation in my research is voluntary and every participant can withdraw data or leave the study at any times. There is ensured full anonymity and confidentiality for the participants during the whole process of research. The name of participant will not be used. The

findings are only going to be used for academic purposes- doctoral dissertation or academic publications.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I

.....
.....(name and surname) have been informed on the title and aim of the research and I agree to participate in the research by Lucie Bucharová : ***Grammars of Schooling in the Post Authoritative Context. Comparative Study of Changing Teaching Practices in Elementary Education in Czech, Polish and Portuguese Schools.***

I understand that the interview will be recorded, that my personal data will be anonymized, and that I can withdraw from the study at any moment without the need to justify.

Place and date:

Signature of the participant

Appendix 4: THE QUESTIONS FOR NARRATIVES

QUESTIONS OF CHANGE FOR ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

I would like to ask you to briefly consider your past practice, focusing on two questions:

The first concerns the changes decreed from the top (regulations from the director, from the Ministry of Education, bills and laws, etc.) and the issues that forced you to adapt your teaching and classroom work. You may describe them positively, negatively or both. Whether changes are less (classification of children, rings, grading, methods, etc...) or more extensive (class assistant, other teaching methods, etc.), you may write your opinion on them.

The second question concerns yourself and the changes you have made during your teaching experience: when and why you changed your mind about what you have done during your practice; what you would have done differently; what influenced you, positively or negatively.

Appendix 5: THE EXAMPLE OF THE NARRATIVE

Dear Lucie,

As promised, I'm sending my insight into the evolution of education and changes from my point of view over the last 35 years.

In college I had been prepared for a so-called new concept: sets. I was enthusiastic, full of plans and expectations and the pleasure of doing a meaningful job.

I came to the elementary school in the district town, a detached building on the outskirts of the village. The welcome I received was less than lukewarm -- without interest, halfhearted. In this school most of the teachers were 40 to 50 years old.-- graduates of the teachers' colleges, committed communists with fear of the regime in their spine, and unskilled girls who had begun studying at the Faculty of education. I felt I was not welcome.

To my colleagues, my work methods seemed suspicious, or at least they looked that way. The environment was stifling, ruled by fear of the boss and of possible repercussions from the party. My initial excitement greatly decreased.

The building was perhaps from the first Republic, with a massive staircase in the middle and classrooms with high ceilings and bright windows that faced the busy road. There was no gym at school. In the basement was a classroom equipped with mattresses, benches and equipment that could be used as a gym. When the weather was pretty good, PE was taught outside on the field. The supply room cabinet was equipped with posters, and film strips projectors. It was a very disturbing, damaging device and sometimes caught fire during class! Film loops were created for the topics that were discussed, and some were very successful. Sometimes it was possible to use radio or television broadcasts for schools, but not often.

I coped with my dissatisfaction and unfulfilled expectations by mothering and building my own family. For a short time I helped in higher classes between my two maternity leaves. There were more free-thinking people on the team (with exceptions, of course), and I felt that the work was calmer, more relaxed. I could have better reached my goals.

Even though I was placed in a „problematic“ class, the problems did not happen. The children were grateful for the attention I was willing to devote to them; they were working and cooperating very well. The joy of the work was spoiled by only one person: the director, who was acting from the a position of power and served the regime we lived in.

After three years we moved to a small town in the J. mountains. The situation changed greatly. We had new leadership: a kindly, respectable and demanding director, a well-organized vice-director and a good „teacher mix.“ Totalitarianism had started to change, and so had the people. The school was a component that greatly influenced the town's public life, sports and social events. Here I finally experienced that a teacher can be a favorite person loved by people around her/him.

Instead of political training, I was given training that interested me and benefitted my teaching. I was involved in art education and educated in health and physical education. I was allowed to teach art after school and an optional subject: medical PE.

These were taught according to the curricula and thematic plans created by the Ministry. The rules were the same for all. For some reason, the number of lectures in the Czech language had been reduced. Apparently the number of foreign-language classes was increased. In my early days children were taught one lesson of Cz.L. and Reading + one hour a week for writing . There was plenty of time to discuss and exercise knowledge. The school was well equipped; during my time there, the gym was renovated.

There was a high level of driver bicycled traffic education and excellent cooperation with the staff of the transport field in F.... Children could take swimming lessons regularly.

A large Roma minority lived in the town. Already at the end of the 1990s, the school offered a preparatory class for Romany children, who were provided with basic school supplies for their work, including snacks. I think we were the first in the country at that time to start such activities. Throughout my practice, I did not notice that a Roma children were sent to special schools as soon as they enrolled.

November 1989 brought many changes and, above all, optimism and new hope.

There was money for equipment, for new textbooks; these could be chosen from several newly created publishers, and schools could build libraries. I had the feeling that our profession could finally breathe freely, that the teacher could fully focus and be optimally evaluated for it. At that time, the average teacher could have a nice personal appraisal.

At this time I could already teach in blocks, do projects, teach outdoors in nature -- just for myself and for the children. I enjoyed the methods when they were getting together, and the children could learn, perceive knowledge from many different angles. Everything was allowed and respected, even well appreciated.

In 2000, I moved again, and the last stage in my professional life began. Again it brought changes. Schools have been competing with offers to get as many pupils as possible. The promises in these offers have sometimes been kept, but often not. Often, promoting the school has been more important than educating children. Teachers have been overwhelmed by a number of other activities that they cannot really avoid: creation of SEP (School Education Program), increase in computer literacy, dual administration (electronic and paper), templates (whose valuation somewhat did not correspond to the initial promises). There has been disillusionment that in school they cannot really earn salaries comparable to those other college-educated professions.

The last straw is at this time inclusion. You get three children with serious disabilities in your class, and the problem is, you can't „jump“ -- jump for a snack or on the toilet -- because the children required present supervision. And the assistant is not here; he can't be here all the time! But you want to follow the rules... work! All for a basic salary, without claiming a merit raise or other salary increase. How it is possible, when the school receives money for these children?! After 36 years of experience, your own children earn more money than you -- a rather sad reality.

I'm not talking about how I enjoyed my middle age. Though divorced, I was happy bringing up my three children. Now I can see I have been a witness to the ways young teachers with children and families collapse, physically and mentally. I know the trend of increasing employee requirements is everywhere in society. But maybe we should wonder whether that trend makes sense and where it is going.

I feel sorry that the joy of creativity disappears from schools as a whole. Everything is purposeful and strictly purposeful -- deliberate. How much joy and satisfaction can the children with disabilities experience in a group of children who don't want to accept them? What about the parents when they look at the progress of other children and can never see this progress in their own?

Conclusions:

New changes may not always be meaningful. So many new concepts have been abandoned in my time.

The personality of the director plays a key role in the lives of the education staff-- his or her honesty, flexibility, openness, willingness to solve problems and listen to the opinions of others; not being driven just by quantity but also quality in education; leadership methods and ability to motivate teachers.

There is a need to increase the prestige of educators in society.

Increased financial support. Maybe a change of system.

The current state of affairs will lead to the creation of elites. Private elementary schools are focusing on the development of talents. In the primary schools will be children from the middle and poorer strata of the population, who will lose the opportunity for equal education.

I am convinced that children are still the same. They should look forward to school and experience feelings of happiness and belonging, even if they are not rewarded as winners. This is the task of the teacher! Only this way can people make progress In life, -- people with an ingrained sense of order who are not harmed by school. **Without work, you just do not cake ...** The teacher without motivation cannot manage.

Obstacles to education are, very often, dysfunctional families, parents who cannot bring up their children well or just do not have or make time for them. Their attention is often driven by communication technologies, personal interests. And grandparents, too, are working! They have no choice.

The child is left to fate and must manage the situation somehow. This is the beginning of unstable, unanchored, always unhappy individuals -- people who see a problem in everything, even though the solution is sometimes very simple; people who don't like school and hate the teachers

I know the current concept of education is not optimal: large classes, complex collectives , often inappropriate spaces.

It is up to each of us how much joy we can find in our work. It is a proficiency not to bend to the various pressures around us, and to try to maintain flexibility (which is important to every teacher and thus health).

I have not been indoctrinating myself for 36 years. I am doing my job this way so that I can enjoy it. That does not mean that I do not make a lot of effort. The fundamental idea of my entire career was that children at school must feel good.

Greetings,

I hope that everything you do has made sense and brought positive changes to our work.

R. S. Trutnov

Appendix 6: THE CORE INFORMATION ABOUT EDUCATION IN RESEARCHED COUNTRIES

(resources from Eurydice , Overview on August 2017)

SCHOOL IN POLAND

Educational reform in Poland is being implemented since the beginning of 2017. Its main goal is to offer students a solid background of general education required for further personal development and the needs of contemporary labour market. The key elements of the reform are as follows:

- **change in the school structure:** introduction of a long, **8-year primary school** as well as 4-year general and 5-year technical secondary school,
- **an obligation for 6-year-olds** to attend 1 year of pre-primary education in order to acquire basic skills before they start school at 7 (this education, as it is the case for the school education, is financed from the general subvention from the State budget),
- provision of textbooks free of charge,
- strengthening secondary education – **both general and vocational** – through the extension of secondary programmes by 1 year,
- introduction of 3-year sectoral VET learning (to obtain a professional qualification) with a possibility to continue education for further 2 years at the second stage of sectoral VET school in order to upgrade qualifications and to prepare for the matriculation exam,
- promotion of dual vocational training in cooperation with the business sector,
- extending the participation of employers in co-financing of vocational education through the establishment of the Fund for Vocational Education Development.

The reform will be implemented between 1 September 2017 and the school year 2022/23.

The new structure includes:

- 8-year primary school,
- 4-year general secondary school,
- 5-year technical secondary school,
- 3-year sectoral VET school (stage I),
- 2-year sectoral VET school (stage II),
- 3-year special school preparing for employment,
- post-secondary school.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Starting 2017 a new structure of school education is being implemented in which full-time compulsory education will last for **9 years** (the last year of pre-school education and 8 years of primary school education).

In the Polish education system full-time compulsory education and part-time compulsory education are defined. Full-time compulsory education (obligation to attend primary and lower secondary school – old structure, and primary school – new structure) applies to pupils aged 7-16 years (7-15 in the new structure) while part-time compulsory education (obligation to be in education) concerns pupils aged 16-18 (15-18 in the new structure) and it may take place either in school settings (a student attends an upper secondary school) or in non-school settings (e.g. a student follows vocational training offered by employers).

EDUCATIONAL STAGES

Institutions for children aged 0-3 years - crèche (*żłobek*) and kids club (*klub dziecięcy*).

Attending a crèche is not obligatory, crèches are not a part of education system as they are supervised by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy.

Institutions for children aged 3-6 years - pre-school (*przedszkole*),

- pre-school class in a primary school (*oddział przedszkolny w szkołach podstawowych*),
- pre-school unit (*zespół wychowania przedszkolnego*),
- pre-school centre (*punkt przedszkolny*).

Starting September 2016 pre-schools are optional for 3-, 4- and 5-year-old children and obligatory for 6-year-olds. Every 4- and 5-year-old has an entitlement to a place in a pre-primary setting, and as of September 2017 – every 3-year-old. As of the school year 2016/17 compulsory education in grade 1 of primary school starts at the age of 7. Parents of 6-year-olds have a choice – they can enroll their children in the 1 grade of primary school or keep them in a pre-school institution.

Primary education - new structure (single structure education ISCED 1+ISCED 2)

8-year primary school is compulsory for all pupils who are usually aged 6/7-15.

It includes two stages:

- grades 1-3 (early school education),
- grades 4-8 where teaching is done by subject.

Lower secondary education - starting in 2017 the 3-year *gimnazjum* (lower secondary school) will be phased out. Pupils graduating from the 6th grade of primary school become pupils of grade 7 in a new 8-year primary school. The compulsory external exam will take place in grade 8 of primary school and its results will influence admission to secondary schools.

Upper secondary education - although this stage of education is not compulsory (or in fact compulsory part time up to the age of 18) vast majority of students continues education in upper secondary schools.

There are three types of upper secondary schools :

- 3-year general upper secondary school (*liceum ogólnokształcące*),
- 4-year technical upper secondary school (*technikum*),
- 3-year basic vocational school (*zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*)

Pupils attend upper secondary schools at the age of 16-19 (16-20 years in case of the technical upper secondary school).

New structure (starting in 2019/20 to be completed in 2023/24)

The new reformed structure of upper secondary education envisages the following types of schools:

- 4-year general secondary school,
- 5-year technical secondary school,
- 3-year sectoral VET school (stage I),
- 2-year sectoral VET school (stage II).

Students of vocational schools – basic vocational schools and technical upper secondary schools – may take exams confirming vocational qualifications in a given occupation during the course of study or upon completion of school to receive a diploma confirming their vocational qualifications.

Graduates of general upper secondary schools and technical upper secondary schools may take the **external upper secondary school leaving examination** (*egzamin maturalny*) to obtain the Matura certificate, which gives access to higher education.

Post-secondary education is considered to be a part of secondary education. Post-secondary schools (*szkoła policealna*) are intended for graduates of general upper secondary schools who wish to obtain a diploma confirming their vocational qualifications.

The schools offer courses lasting from 1 to 2.5 years. The students of post-secondary schools and students of basic vocational schools and technical upper secondary schools take vocational exams of the same type.

HIGHER EDUCATION -there are two types of Higher Education Institutions:

- university-type (*uczelnia akademicka*),
- non-university-type (*uczelnia zawodowa*).

They both offer first- and second-cycle programmes as well as long-cycle Master's degree programmes while only university-type HEIs can offer third-cycle programmes (doctoral studies) and are authorized to award doctoral degrees.

Studies are organized in the form of full-time (*studia stacjonarne*) or part-time (*studia niestacjonarne*) programmes.

First-cycle programmes lead to two types of degrees:

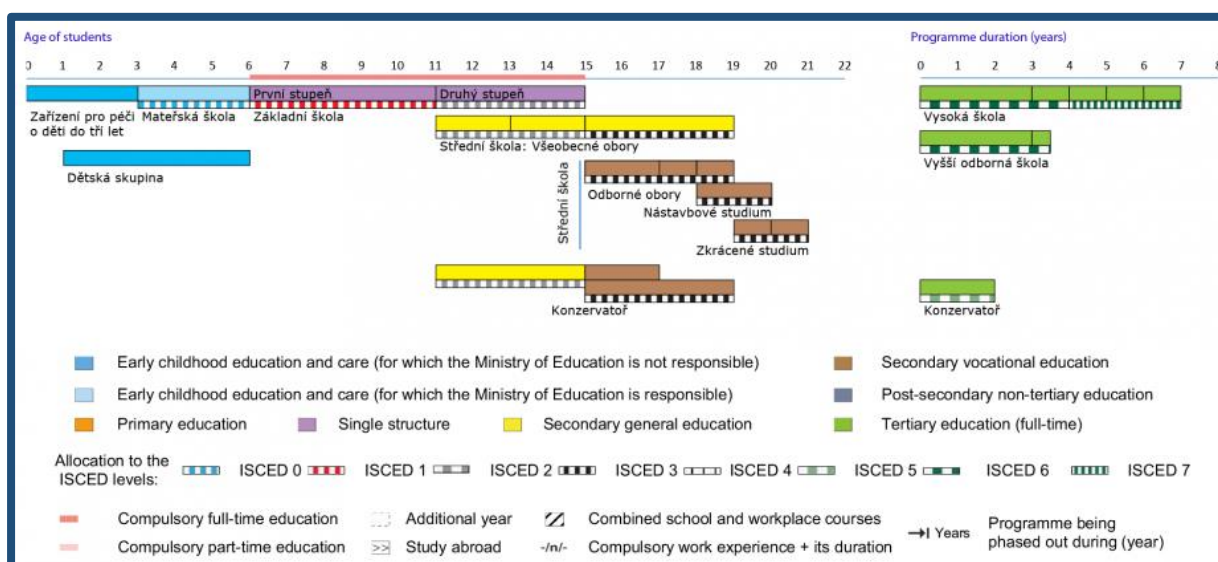
- *licencjat* (equivalent of Bachelor's degree) – 3-4 year programmes,
- *inżynier* (equivalent of Bachelor's degree) – 3.5-4 year programmes.

Holders of the Bachelor's degree can enter second-cycle programmes, which take 1.5-2 years depending on the area of study.

Only several fields of study offer long-cycle Master's degree programmes that last for 4-6 years. First-cycle, second-cycle and long-cycle Master's programmes end with a diploma examination and students who have passed it are granted a relevant degree.

The Master's degree (*magister* or its equivalent) entitles its holder to practice a given profession and provides access to third-cycle studies. They are organised in HEIs or research and development institutions other than HEIs and last for 3-4 years.

SCHOOL IN CR



In the Czech Republic, schools are administered within the general administration. The responsibilities are distributed among the central government, regions and communities. **The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports** is responsible for the state administration in education and for the state, conception and development of the education system. The Ministry allocates financial resources from the state budget, sets out the qualification requirements and working conditions of teachers, determines the general content of pre-primary to secondary education and approves educational/study programmes of schools at the tertiary level.

Regions are responsible for education on their territory (from pre-primary to tertiary professional level) and for the allocation of financial resources to schools. Regions are organising bodies of upper secondary schools (*střední školy*), conservatoires (*konzervatoře*) and tertiary professional schools (*vyšší odborné školy*) (ISCED 3–6). The communities establish nursery schools (*materšské školy*) and basic schools (*základní školy*) (ISCED 0–2) and ensure the compulsory schooling. The schools usually have a legal personality (subjectivity), they are employers of teachers and are responsible for their own management. The schools teach according to the school educational programmes prepared on the basis of **the central framework educational programmes**. In the case of tertiary professional schools (*vyšší odborné školy*) they teach according to their educational programmes accredited by the Ministry. In addition to public schools established by regions and communities, there are also state schools (specific types, e.g. schools for children with health disabilities; police or military schools, etc.), and private and church schools.

Higher education institutions (vysoké školy) (ISCED 6–8) are usually independent legal entities with a high degree of autonomy. Their self-government responsibility includes among others labour relations (including the amount of wages), management and preparation and realization of study programmes based on accreditation. Public and state (police and military) higher education institutions are established by law, private higher education institutions have to obtain a state approval for their existence.

EDUCATIONAL STAGES

The youngest children can attend facilities for children under 3 years of age or a child group (*dětská skupina*) for children from 1 year to 6/7 years of age. Care for children under 3 years of age is provided outside the education system, mainly by private entities.

Pre-primary education (předškolní vzdělávání) is provided for children aged 3 to 6 in nursery schools (*mateřské školy*). Children in the last year have a legal entitlement to education. The attendance is very high. From 2017, the last year of pre-primary education will be compulsory and children from 4 years of age within the catchment area of the nursery school will have the right to be admitted preferentially.

Compulsory schooling starts at 6 years of age and lasts 9 years.

Primary and lower secondary education (basic education) is organised mostly within a single-structure system in nine-year basic schools (*základní školy*). The age of pupils is usually 6 to 15 years. Lower secondary education can be provided also by multi-year general secondary schools (*víceletá gymnázia*) and eight-year conservatoires (*osmileté konzervatoře*). **Basic schools provides basic education (ISCED 1+2)**. It is divided into a five-year first stage (primary education) and a four-year second stage (lower secondary education). Upon completion of the first stage (ISCED 100), pupils who show interest and succeed in the admission procedure may transfer to a multi-year general secondary school (*gymnázium*). They may continue in an eight-year general secondary school after the fifth year or a six-year *gymnázium* after the seventh year or after the fifth year to a dance conservatoire and complete their compulsory schooling there. After completing primary and lower secondary education the pupils attain the defined level of education *základní vzdělání (ISCED 244)*. Pupils completing the *základní škola speciální* targeted at pupils with moderate and severe mental disabilities attain the defined level of education *základy vzdělání (ISCED 244)*.

Upper secondary education (secondary education) is provided by upper secondary schools (*střední školy*) in general and vocational fields. The age of pupils is usually 15 to 18/19 years. School leavers acquire one of the three levels of education:

- a) secondary education with a school-leaving examination (*střední vzdělání s maturitní zkouškou*),
- b) secondary education with an apprenticeship certificate (*střední vzdělání s výučním listem*),
- c) secondary education (*střední vzdělání*).

The secondary education with a school-leaving examination can be attained in general (*gymnázium* and *lyceum*) as well as vocational fields and it is a prerequisite for entering tertiary education. Upper secondary schools provide also a follow-up study (*nástavbové studium*) enabling holders of the apprenticeship certificate to acquire secondary education with a school-leaving examination, and a shortened study (*zkrácené studium*) in which the school leavers with school-leaving examination or apprenticeship certificate gain qualification in a different field. A specific type of school is the conservatoire (*konzervatoř*) which provides lower and upper secondary as well as tertiary professional education with emphasis on art.

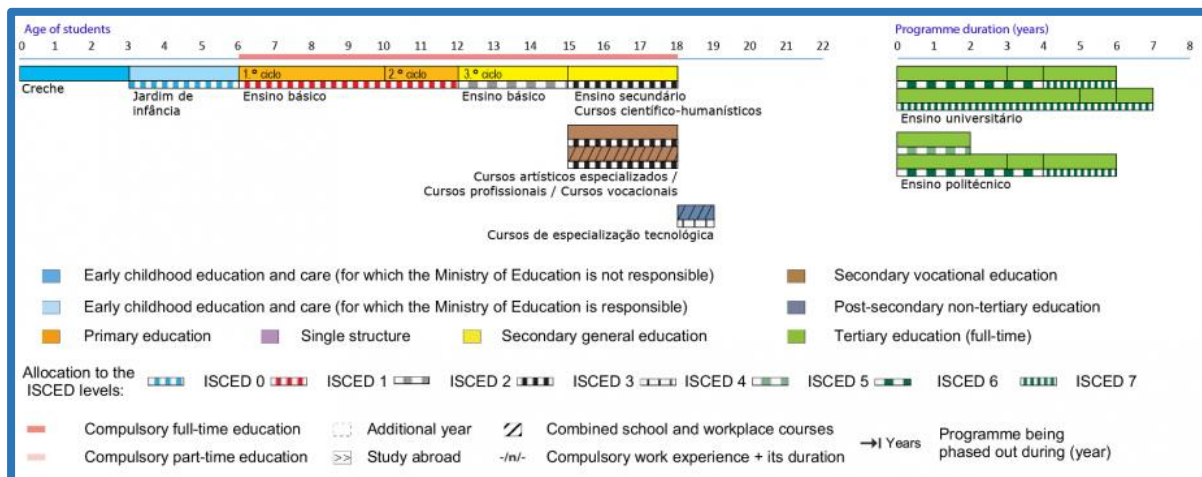
Tertiary education is carried out by tertiary professional schools (*vyšší odborné školy*) and higher education institutions (*vysoké školy*). Tertiary professional education is usually attained in three-year programmes. Higher education is provided in the first, second and third cycle programmes (Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degree programmes), or possibly in non-structured long Master's degree programmes. **Adult education** includes general education, vocational education, special interest education

and other education.

The higher education institutions (*vysoké školy*) provide education in three study programmes: Bachelor's (ISCED 645), Master's (both ISCED 746 or 747) and Doctoral (ISCED 844) following Master's. **Bachelor's programmes** aim to prepare students for a profession or to continue to Master's programmes. The standard duration is three to four years. **Master's programmes** are aimed at gaining theoretical knowledge based on current scientific findings, research and development and putting them into practice and developing skills for working creatively. In Arts they focus on advanced artistic training and talent development. They last between one and three years. Where relevant, accreditation can be granted to Master's courses which do not follow on from a preceding Bachelor's course, in which case the minimum requirement for entrance is secondary education with a school-leaving examination and the course will last between four and six years (usually 5 years, or 6 years in the case of medicine, veterinary medicine, stomatology, pharmacy, art and architecture).

Doctoral programmes focus on scientific research and independent creativity in research and development and independent theoretical or creative activity in art. They follow a Master's programme and have a standard duration of three to four years. All three types of programmes may be studied on a full-time, part-time or distance basis or in a combination of these.

SCHOOLS IN PORTUGAL



The Ministry of Education (ME) is responsible for general non-higher Education in Portugal. The vocational and professional paths are the joint responsibility of the ME and the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security (MTSSS). Higher education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education (MCTES), which is also responsible for defining and implementing policies affecting the science and technology system. Adult education and training is the joint responsibility of the ME and the MTSSS. The duties of these three ministries are provided by services that are part of direct state administration, indirect state administration bodies, advisory bodies, and other organisations and entities within state-owned enterprises.

The school network is organized in **school clusters** are made up of schools that offer all education levels from pre-school education to secondary education. The Portuguese education system is very **centralized** in terms of organization and funding. However, pre-school and basic and secondary education schools have some autonomy, namely at pedagogical level, as well as with regard to timetables and non-teaching staff management. Higher education institutions enjoy a high level of **autonomy**.

Compulsory education lasts for 12 years, starting at 6 and ending at 18 years of age or with the conclusion of secondary education (ISCED 3). Public education is free and universal.

There is a single professional career for teachers of all non-higher education levels, which requires candidates to have a second cycle degree (ISCED 7 –Master's).

Pre-school Education covers children from 3 years up to the age of compulsory schooling. There is a public and a private network of pre-school education institutions, which are complementary. The public network is made up of education institutions under the **ME** and the **MTSSS**. The private network is composed of for-profit and not-for-profit education institutions. The former are private and cooperative education institutions, while the latter are private institutions for social solidarity (IPSS)

Basic Education lasts for nine years and is divided into three sequential cycles. Each cycle should complete and build up on the previous one, within a global perspective:

The first cycle corresponds to the first four years of schooling;

the second cycle corresponds to the next two years (these two cycles together make up primary education)

the third cycle lasts for three years and corresponds to lower secondary education.

In basic education besides general basic education pupils may attend specialized artistic courses in the areas of music and dance. Basic education can also be concluded and certified through different paths adapted to the profile and specific characteristics of the students, such as:

Education and Training Courses

Alternative Curricular Pathways

Integrated Education and Training Programme

Education and Training Courses are an opportunity to conclude compulsory schooling via a flexible path adjusted to the interests of each individual, either to pursue studies or become qualified for the labour market. The Alternative Curricular Pathways are an exceptional measure (created in 2006) to be used when students show no progress in terms of school results, even after the adoption of measures promoting success, whose goals are school re-orientation. The Integrated Education and Training Programme encourages competencies for citizenship and social, community and solidarity activities, based on practical and differentiated work methodology, in order to promote education and vocational development.

Secondary Education lasts for three years and corresponds to upper secondary education. It is organised into different forms according to different aims, either focusing on access to further studies or preparation for working life. The permeability between these two paths is guaranteed.

The Scientific-humanistic Courses are focused on access to higher education

Professional and Vocational Courses – vocational courses which last two school years – are geared towards students’ professional qualification for working life, which also allow access to further studies;

Depending on the artistic area in question, Specialised Artistic Courses are geared towards further study (music) or both entering the workplace and further studies (visual arts, audio-visual and dance);

Courses with specific curriculum offered by some private schools submitted to the Ministry of Education for approval.

Law also states that, as part of the diversification of training provision, other professional education and training qualification provision can be offered, such as adult education and training courses.

Higher Education is structured according to the Bologna principles to ensure solid scientific and cultural preparation, plus technical training that qualifies students for professional and cultural life, while developing their capability to innovate and apply critical analysis.

Portuguese higher education system is a binary system that includes the **university** and the **polytechnic** systems. Universities are geared towards offering solid scientific training, gathering the efforts and competences of teaching and research units, while polytechnics focus on vocational and advanced technical training for the world of work. University studies are taught at universities, university institutes, and all other institutions within university education, and polytechnic studies are taught at polytechnic institutes, and other institutions within polytechnic education, and both are offered by public, private and cooperative institutions. Despite this binary division, there are some polytechnic institutions that are part of universities.

Adult education and training provision varies and is geared towards specific aims and target groups: **Recognition, Validation and Certification of Skills** –Processes in the Qualifica Centres involving the recognition of academic and vocational competences acquired by adults and that provide academic and/or vocational certification;

- **Basic Competences Training Programme** – Designed for adults to acquire basic reading, writing, maths skills and information and communication technologies competencies (ICT);

- **Adult Education and Training Courses** – These courses aim to boost adult qualifications via dual certification;
- **Modular Training** – Permit the conclusion of basic or secondary education and the acquisition of academic and vocational competences, in order to return to or progress in the labour market;
- **Technological Specialization Courses** –These courses are designed to respond to socio-economic needs for middle level staff and provide an alternative for improving young people’s qualification and retraining of the working population;
- **Secondary Education Completion Paths** - Aimed at those who attended but did not courses whose syllabuses no longer exist or will soon disappear;
- **Recurrent education** – Designed for adults who have not completed their primary or secondary education at the usual age;
- **Portuguese for Speakers of Other Languages** – Designed to meet the legal requirement of knowledge of Portuguese language to acquire Portuguese nationality, permanent or long-term residence, as well as to promote proficiency in reading, writing and speaking.

Within the context of adult education and training, the Qualifica Programme was designed for adults whose objective is to improve adult education and training, improving the population’s qualifications and individuals’ employability. The Qualifica Program is based on a qualification strategy that involves educational and training solutions, as well as a range of tools that promote adult qualification and an extensive network of providers. As part of this programme, the Qualifica Passport was created as an electronic record of courses already done and guidance for new courses, based on training completed and skills acquired, offering the chance to complete a qualification or obtain others and advance academically and professionally. At the beginning of 2017, a National Credit System for Vocational Education and Training was also implemented, which allows credit points to be assigned to qualifications in the National Qualifications Catalogue (Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações - CNQ) and other certified training courses, provided that they are registered in the Information and Management System of the Education and Training Offer (SIGO) and comply with the quality assurance criteria in force. This system incorporates the principles of the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), promoting mobility within Europe.