

EDUCATIONAL VALUES IN CONTEMPORARY SCHOOL - THEORY AND PRACTICE

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Abstract

In my article I refer to the multistage research on educational values. I define them and present my own list of values grouped into four categories: cognitive-intellectual values, moral-social values, creative values, aesthetic values and health and ecological values. I also present shortly the results of my research considering didactic theory, social expectations and the core curriculum, as well as opinions of teachers and students dealing with this issue. Finally, I draw some conclusions based on the analysis of my research and suggest possible solutions to some of the problems which hopefully can be helpful in making the process of acquiring and realization of values at schools more effective or at least it can be a starting point about educational values because there is no education without them.

Keywords: values, education, teachers, students, attitudes

1 EDUCATIONAL VALUES IN CONTEMPORARY SCHOOL - THEORY AND PRACTICE

In this article I would like to present the results of my multistage research on educational values because all of my prior publications related to the subject matter have been in Polish - and I believe that it is an important and universal issue, worth sharing. Nowadays students are not only to acquire knowledge and skills, but also moral ethic. I was curious how much didactic theory, social expectations and core curriculum had in common. Additionally, I wanted to compare students and teachers opinions concerning educational values.

Values have always been an area of interests for representatives of many sciences, starting from philosophers who were wondering if values existed at all. And those who agreed that they did, were arguing about the source of values – which could be in an object, in a subject or beyond them. Then there was a dispute about the ways of their being: whether they exist in a real or ideal way. And finally philosophers argued about values' durability: some convinced that they had had an absolute, eternal and unchanging permanence. According to the opposite theory values had a temporary nature (discovered for some time), variability in terms of quality and position in the hierarchy, and relativeness (depending on changes of surrounding reality), and it was stated also that there were no absolute values. I accept that values exist in an object - but they come forward and show themselves in relation to the subject; they exist in both real and ideal way, and they are durable. It seems reasonable to say that people do not always realize the importance of a system of values and that we "discover" them sometimes and assign them a place in the hierarchy.

1.1 Educational values in didactic theory

There are many definitions of "value" – for example according to J. Homplewicz it is everything that men perceive as precious, in what they want to get involved in their efforts and will. That aspiring to values shapes human being, it is also able to settle their internal development, experiences and attitude throughout life (J. Homplewicz, 1996, p. 142).

S. H. Schwartz summarizes the main features of the conception of basic values implicit in the writings of many theorists and researchers (such as Allport 1961; Feather, 1995; Inglehart, 1997; Kohn, 1969; Kluckhohn, 1951; Morris, 1956; Rokeach, 1973, and others) as follows:

“Values are beliefs. But they are beliefs tied inextricably to emotion, not objective, cold ideas. Values are a motivational construct. They refer to the desirable goals people strive to attain. Values transcend specific actions and situations. They are abstract goals. The abstract nature of values distinguishes them from concepts like norms and attitudes, which usually refer to specific actions, objects, or situations. Values guide the selection or evaluation of actions, policies, people, and events. That is, values serve as standards or criteria. Values are ordered by importance relative to one another. People’s values form an ordered system of value priorities that characterize them as individuals. This hierarchical feature of values also distinguishes them from norms and attitudes” (S. H. Schwartz, 2007, p. 929).

Still, this is a general idea or understanding of values. And precisely what should educational values be perceived like? By educational values I consider values that are deliberately conveyed and delivered to students in the educational process of teaching. The teacher in that process must be a mentor, empathic counselor and a guide, competently caring for the full development of students. Simultaneously, the values are co-created anew by the students in their interactions with teachers. The educational values are reinforced through the use of didactic means, especially textbooks and obligatory books, as well as the peer environment and cooperation between school and parents. Students gradually learn the values and adopt them as their own.

As I decided to compare theory and practice, first of all I had to find out which educational values are exposed in didactic theory. To do so, I got acquainted with the extensive literature connected with axiological issues in education: books (older, classic and especially new ones), articles, conference materials, reports. Pedagogical, psychological, sociological and philosophical literature identify different perceptions and the multiplicity of categories and divisions of values. As far as education is concerned, I analyzed the situation in Polish reformed schools reading about it in books, newspapers and documents (and talking to some educators and teachers, in both cases very experienced ones). Also, I researched European modern educational trends, also concerning teacher’s role and the perception of their influence related to values, which is a great and not easy task. As K. Cenda says, contemporary European teachers “should apply to the principle of interdisciplinary education, because education in the spirit of tolerance, freedom, solidarity (...) cannot be limited to one subject” (K. Cenda, 2005, p. 193).

My analyses reassured me that while reflection on values had been growing, it seemed that there were still no references specifically to values of education. I believe this is an essential ethical gap in the study of values that needs further development. That is why I created my own list of thirty two educational values along with their characteristics based on the analysis of the mentioned literature. I found here Jacques Delors’ report for UNESCO - *Learning: the Treasure Within* - quite helpful to start from as the author describes the four pillars of future education (*Edukacja. Jest w niej ukryty skarb*, 1998, p. 85-97). I distinguished three groups of values:

- First group, connected with two pillars - “learning to know” and “learning to do” – includes ten cognitive-intellectual values: truth, objectivity, cognitive utility, cognitive interest, cognitive independence, criticism, rationality, efficiency, effectiveness, communication skills;
- Second group, connected with the third pillar – “learning to live together, learning to live with others” – includes ten moral and social values: good,

altruism, responsibility, social commitment, patriotism, tolerance, partnership, subjectivity, autonomy, human relationships.

- Third group, connected with the fourth pillar – “learning to be” – includes twelve values divided into three subgroups: creative values contain self-fulfillment, self-study and self-shaping (meaning a person working on his or her attitudes, character and behaviour) and creative thinking. Aesthetic values contain: beauty, association with art, aesthetic experience. Finally, health and ecological values include physical health, mental health, fitness, safety, protection of physical and mental environment.

1.2 Educational values in social expectations

G A. Larue notices: “It is one thing to propose values, but how are they to become known and adopted? One way is through education. The word "education" comes from the Latin root *educare* which means "to lead out." As an educator, it is my task to "lead out" (*educo*: I lead out). "Leading out" involves the dismantling of barriers which impede humanistic ethical growth, while bringing others to a place where new ethical horizons can be seen, recognized, appreciated and approached. Education calls for belief in what is to be shared, commitment to the ideals embraced by humanistic values, and hope for the future. So many are disillusioned and without any belief in the possibility for change. The educational program, which can be instituted as part of curricula in classes ranging from kindergarten to university and also through the public media should include the following“ (G A. Larue, 1998). The more integrated actions, the more can be achieved for that matter.

The next step in my research was seeking which educational values appeared in social expectations of education. I connected searching for an answer to this question, in terms of keywords *values* and *education*, with the analysis of the articles, written between 1999 and 2002, from the two most widely read then newspapers: "Rzeczypospolita" and "Gazeta Wyborcza". In their archives, there were a total of 444 such texts. After eliminating those which, despite the presence of these terms, did not have any connection with the values of education, I handed in the analysis to forty publications' content: eleven by "Rzeczypospolita", and twenty nine of "Gazeta Wyborcza". I found out that the majority of texts (75%) were current affairs items. It is needs to be marked that axiological problems appeared in them usually on the occasion of the problems relating to the education system or the individual schools which are rather vague. Educational values were mentioned relatively rarely, and they were treated mostly as secondary subjects.

Most articles contained the cognitive-intellectual values (they appeared 92 times). The greatest emphasis was placed on cognitive utility; it was also found in the greatest number of texts - 14 times. A little less weight was assigned for efficiency (12), criticism and rationality (11 each). The next according to the frequency of appearance were efficiency (10), objectivity (9), cognitive independence (8), cognitive interest (7), truth (6) and communication skills (4).

Given the high "listing" to the cognitive utility, a lower score for the cognitive interest was quite surprising for me, especially being aware that it is one of the most effective methods of encouraging students to learning. Similarly, a low meaning of communication competence was not exactly clear. However, when it comes to the truth which is one of the most important values of that group and appeared rather seldom - a rare mention of it could have been caused by an approach according to which this value in regard to education seems to be so obvious, that it shall be omitted in the considerations about the school.

The moral-social values gave an almost equal measure to cognitive-intellectual ones: they appeared 89 times. The most frequently mentioned values here were patriotism (14), then

successively: responsibility (12), social commitment and human relationships (11 each), good and subjectivity (10 each), tolerance and partnership (7 each), autonomy (5) and altruism (2). In this collection the most surprising was a small number of considerations related to the autonomy. Perhaps it happens to reflect the state of the Polish education, where students still do not have great influence on making significant decisions.

Creative values (44) and aesthetic ones (16) often overlapped over each other, mainly in the context of the culture. Self-fulfillment and creative thinking occurred here most frequently, although their quantity (each appeared 8 times) is almost twice as low as the most prominent values of other groups. Further places are: association with art (7), self-study and aesthetic experience (5 each), beauty (4) and self-shaping (3).

It needs to be noted that aesthetic values appeared primarily in relation to the culture – mostly to the art; aesthetic experience occurred mainly rather implicitly than directly. Recently self-fulfillment and / or creative thinking are very popular topics. On the other hand, 8 compared to 14, the number of appearance of patriotism in the text, doesn't impress that much. These results can probably be explained by tradition: patriotism is a notion persisted through history, while self-fulfillment and creative thinking are new values, emphasized only in recent years. Beauty was mentioned the least number of times, but it should be taken into consideration that the newspapers do not have the task of shaping our sensitivity.

In the group of health and ecological values (33) the most attention was given to the physical and mental health (11 times each), although greater emphasis here was put on the physical aspect. The protection of the environment gained a relatively low score (6 times), taking into account how much recently has been said about pollution and devastation of the nature. Fitness was almost completely ignored, in line with the fact that our country's physical education seems to be still insufficient (2).

1.3 Educational values in curriculums

In order to learn about the assumptions in some officially accepted programs, I checked which educational values were based in the education curriculum. I decided to concentrate only on the lower secondary school / junior high school (in Poland that stage is called “gimnazjum”) because students at that age have a lot in common with values; their personality is being shaped, they have to make more and more choices, they learn a lot about other people as well as about themselves, their attitudes show their character and sensitivity, and their system of values starts to consolidate slowly.

I analyzed the following documents: fourteen secondary schools training programs, edited after the reform of 1999 and issued by WSiP, one of the largest Polish pedagogical publishers, and ten core curriculums - two for elective classes and eight for interdisciplinary courses. I had created guiding instructions which I used for the analysis of documents. I distinguished three groups of items: a) required classes, b) ethics and religion, and c) interdisciplinary paths.

In the fourteen of the above school curriculums, the biggest emphasis has been laid in the cognitive-intellectual values. In total they appeared 119 times: truth - 14, cognitive utility -14, operability - 14, cognitive interest - 12, cognitive independence - 12, communication skills - 12, objectivity - 11, criticism -11, rationality - 11, and efficiency - 8. Moral-social values were listed a bit less (65 times): responsibility-11, partnership-10, subjectivity-7, human relationships - 7, good - 6, social commitment - 6, patriotism - 6, tolerance - 6, autonomy - 4, altruism - 2. The remaining groups of values appeared much less often. The creative value appeared 28 times: self-fulfillment - 9, creative thinking - 9, self study - 5, self-shaping - 5. The least likely aesthetic values were mentioned 14 times: aesthetic experience - 6, beauty - 5, and association with art - 3. In ethics and religion mainly moral-social values were attributed

to the one of particular importance; in the interdisciplinary paths cognitive-intellectual values have been most heavily exposed, next were moral-social values, and then the others.

So, the general results of the analysis of the articles and the curriculums were quite similar (with leading role of cognitive-intellectual values and moral-social ones), but they differed when it came to the details. Any way, I approach towards the obtained results with a great caution. Analysis of the documents is a method that aims only at approximation of certain trends. Because this kind of qualitative research, where every step is accompanied by doubts and questions, certain results can always be disputable because every researcher looks through the prism of their own knowledge and their own (so different) experience. In addition, some values may result from the other kind of "by the way". Others can be considered something obvious (like, for example, truth), therefore, they are not stressed in programs. Finally, the curriculum program provides only the basis, while in reality the teacher's actions and personality, their way of delivering subjects, students' environmental conditions, student's abilities and attitudes learned at home, or the existence of a hidden program at school – these are only part of the aspects which may affect the final result of the didactic and educational process. They might be quite different in one school than in another, given the reliance on the same program.

Every curriculum should assume fulfilling the basis learning needs. E. Jenkins quotes the definition of such term produced by the Jomtien Conference on Education for All in 1990 - it says that they comprise „both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem-solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development , to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning” (E. Jenkins). Then the author goes on, underlining: “Such grounding will need to help young people deal with the environmental, economic and technological challenges they will face. However, more than knowledge and skill is required here. A critical moral and ethical dimension is fundamental if education is to help to bring about a more just world, in which human worth and dignity have their rightful place. (...) Society needs to share with its young people a vision of the kind of community and world in which they are to grow up and to promote strategies and mechanisms to ensure that this can be done. In the learning society, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, asking worthwhile questions will be as important as coming up with solutions, and the ability to work co-operatively and successfully with others valued highly. The diversity of human talent, imagination and creativity will be recognised and welcomed within communities that look outward to what might be and not inwards to what has been done“ (op. cit). Let us see how the two main subjects of educational process - teachers and students – appreciate working together, forming the basic learning content, especially implementing values.

1.4 Educational values in school practice

The main stage of my research was a survey, carried out among 170 teachers and 713 students (in urban and rural environments) from lower secondary schools in the Lesser Poland Voivodeship. Both groups had to fill in analogue questionnaire survey containing among others questions with estimated scale. The only difference was that the teachers had to relate their answers to their school work, and the students - to the school reality observed and experienced by them every day. I carried some statistical analysis to the numerical data obtained by the development of the research material.

As far as the meaning given to educational values in school practice was concerned, it turned out that there were differences in the assessment of the importance attached to the values of

education in the respondents' statements. In most cases, the average of teachers' and students' evaluations differed by one degree (4,0 to 4,4 concerning the adults and 3,3 to 3,4 concerning experience of the youth, with the exception of aesthetic values – 2,0). Teachers indicated that the meaning of most of the categories was higher than "rather high", while in students' opinion it was higher than the "average". The exception are aesthetic values, rated the lowest by both surveyed groups. In all cases there is a statistically significant difference between the opinions of teachers and students.

Ways to implement the values of education in school practice respondents evaluated in relation to the content, methods, forms of didactic work and students' work, and learning resources. In the case of content, both groups of respondents assessed as the most relevant and useful topics dealing with moral-social values, so unlike before they were leading here. The second item were cognitive-intellectual values, so again the two categories of values seem to be appreciated the most. The difference here was definitely bigger in students' answers (39% to 19%) than in teachers' (29% to 23%). The remaining results were approximately close.

With regard to the methods students' assessment were only little different from teachers' ones. The first three spots were the following methods: discussion, chat, and educational games. The last "shared" place was taken by description.

Respondents consider lesson activities and trips as the most useful forms of organization of didactic work, with relatively more teachers indicating lessons, and more students indicating trips. Extra-curricular activities and homework were considered as less beneficial for the implementation of educational values.

In relation to organization of student's work, both groups of respondents were consistent. They decided that the most useful for implementing educational values in practice was indirect form, namely a group work. It was indicated by half of all respondents (48% of teachers and 51% of the students). The teachers definitely preferred the form of diversified work over unified one. Collective work, just after group work, was the most frequently chosen by the students while individual work - by the teachers.

Accepting the division of teaching and learning resources to visual, audio, and audiovisual I conclude that the most popular among all respondents were audiovisual resources. In both groups video/DVD, computer and Internet were mentioned the most often (18 – 29 %), and in addition students pointed to the TV. Tables and charts, cassette/CD or literature were indicated less often (5 - 11 %). The posters and boards were selected by 7% of the teachers and only by 1% of the students. Other educational aids were less popular (1 - 3%).

Respondents differed on the issue concerning assessment of the effects of implementing educational values in the training. The average (on a scale of 1 – 5 points) is much higher in the teachers' than students' answers, making consecutively 3.6 and 2.9. The teachers gave also less extreme reviews: in the vast majority, they evaluated the implementation of educational values in school practice "rather high" or "average", and no one really judged negatively. More than half of the students chose the answer "average" but all other alternative answers were also indicated by them, and the assessment of the "very high" hit to the lowest.

Respondents mentioned the positive factors influencing the implementation of the educational values in training, associated primarily with the teaching process, teachers' characteristics, students' characteristics, family environment and the cooperation with specialists and local environment. The most common choices of teachers were: cooperation among the teachers - 12%, dialogue and cooperation between teachers and students - 11%, cooperation with parents - 10%, training aids - 8%, students' involvement - 7%, extra-curricular activities, properly selected material / methods, working with the local environment, trips - 4% each.

The most common indications of the students were: dialogue and cooperation between teachers and students - 14%, friendly atmosphere and proper teachers' attitudes - 11%, human relationships - 8%, trips - 7%, extra-curricular activities and the use of didactic materials - 6% each, students' involvement, interesting classes and kind teachers - 5% each, disciplining students - 4%. More than half of the inquired subjects in both groups included elements of the teaching process, especially the cooperation and friendly relations between people. It seems that the pursuit of dialogue in teaching was, however, closer to the students, especially given the emotional context. The teachers had more rational approach and emphasized mainly the formal requirements, although the word "cooperation" seemed to be the key one in their responses word - in relation to other teachers, parents, and students. Other factors were mentioned much less frequently. Characteristics of teachers were found to be more significant in students' evaluation than in teachers' one, while both groups listed the characteristics of the students with equal frequency. The teachers were only ones who turned their attention toward factors concerning family environment; the students discounted also the cooperation with specialists and a local environment.

With reference to negative conditions, respondents mentioned the similar categories, but for example only the teachers blamed the family environment for the unsatisfactory implementation of educational values. The teachers also perceived far more obstacles than the students in the external factors. The most common indications made by the teachers were: too large number of students in a class - 13%, passive or reluctant attitude of students - 11%, lack of lab classrooms and educational materials - 10%, difficult cooperation with parents - 8%, motley levels of students and overcrowded curriculums - 6% each, the lack of financial resources and the negative attitude of youth to the values - 5% each, lack of instilling values in family home, the negative impact of media and the widespread crisis of values - 4% each. The most common indications by the students were: inappropriate attitudes of teachers - 17%, lack of students discipline - 14%, passive or reluctant attitude of students - 12%, lack of lab classrooms and educational materials - 8%, an authoritarian attitude of the principals, the injustice of the teachers, their lack of commitment, incompetence, negative attitude to students, overcrowded curriculums - 5% each, intolerance - 4%.

Among the most common negative conditions teachers pointed out elements of the teaching process (nearly half of the surveyed) which the students listed in a second place (33%). Most of young people complained about the factors associated with the teachers' traits (38%; e.g., lack of commitment, incompetence, injustice, negative attitude to students), while the teachers themselves did not share these views. The young respondents also specified some of the students' faults (e.g. their passive or reluctant attitude, unruliness, negative attitude to the values). One would perceive that teachers set more store by the formal requirements than creating and caring about human relations (factor pointed out only by the students). Young people verbalized some critical opinions of their teachers: not only of their characteristics, but also in terms of substance, stressing the need for more effective verification of the teaching staff, as well as further training of those already working in this profession.

It seems to be acknowledged that teachers are expected to show concern for the development of the interests of students, and raising awareness amongst young people on the values. Involvement during school hours should be increased. And this applies to both parties. Also It can be added that nowadays both teachers and students live and work in intercultural dimension which requires specific competence. In addition to standard qualifications gained during their studies, developing cross-cultural competence is necessary. E. Pająk-Ważna points out that there are more possibilities to develop such competences in the mainstream of non-formal education such as workshops, trainings, conferences; it should also be noted that

in Poland non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play the leading role in organizing the courses focused on such themes (E. Pająk-Ważna, 2012, p. 319).

It is not without significance, probably also for the results obtained through my research, that teachers profession has been getting gradually lower appreciation. School has been losing its prestige, and the teacher ceases to be authoritative. A strategy which would aim to change this state should be rethought. School and teacher images should be taken a special care. The problem of lowering the status of teachers seems to have appeared not only in Poland but also in other European countries. G. Neave writes about it and tries indicating the reason for this. In his opinion such situation may be caused among all by the fact that the quality of education is more and more determined by the recipient-consumers rather than professionals; parents, industry and the state acting on their behalf (G. Neave, 1992, p. 114 and 135). Of course a lot depends here on teachers themselves – students have a different view of those individuals who have high competence and the appropriate personality, than other cases, which unfortunately also happen: poorly educated individuals representing characteristics or behavior that should disqualify them in that difficult profession. Still, it is important for parents to shape appropriate attitudes of their children towards those who teach them. Saying that education is important will not be enough if at the same time they undermine the authority of teachers and they show the lack of respect, also in front of their own children. A lot of good could be done by media – it is not without the reason that they are called “the Fourth Estate”. Having an impact on both the younger and the older generation, they could be very useful and helpful in shaping a better image of the teacher.

The last step of my research was finding out respondents’ ideas about desired changes in school practice for a more efficient implementation of the educational values.

The obtained answers were very diversified – I divided them into two categories: 1. concerning influence of the psyche and mental development of students, associated primarily with teachers as the main organizers of the teaching-learning process (e.g. changing approach of teachers towards students or towards their work) and 2. determining the quality and level of values implementation in school (reducing the number of students in classes, increasing funding for education, sufficient training of future teachers). In the course of the analysis of the research material I realized among others that youth had specific and quite high expectations of teachers, especially in regards to their approach to the students (23%), but also as to their efforts to make more appealing lessons (16%). These two factors were pointed by the enquired students most frequently. In the seventeen sets of proposals in the second category only every third was indicated by both teachers and students, and they concerned: finance, specialization track [“profiling classes”], friendly atmosphere and the trips. In addition, teachers emphasized the need to increase the amount of hours for classes, reducing the number of students, improving the supply of educational materials, while the students expressed a need for the exchange of staff, friendly atmosphere and more frequent trips. However two results seemed to be most visible and predominating others, namely the students expectations of teachers’ approach towards them which, in their opinion, should be changed (23%), as well as towards their work - first of all it would be desirable if they made more attractive activities (16%). It might be surprising that (again only) students (4%) were bothered by too little, in their view, discipline. The fact that teachers listed in the vast majority changes that did not depend on them - or only to a small extent - and more seldom those changes which they might be able to influence (69% to 31%), while the proportions between these categories in students’ answers were almost equal (52% and 48%), should prompt some reflection.

1.5 Final conclusions and completion

Analysis of the content of the literature dealing with the subject and the analysis of the results of empirical research that have been cited here only briefly, have enabled me to put forward certain applications useful for pedagogical research as well as for school practice. I will mention them shortly below.

With reference to the sphere of pedagogy: it seems that it would be beneficial to perform some more systematic and reliable research dedicated to the axiological issues in schools.

With regard to the curriculum: their authors should take into consideration both the basics of theory as well as pedagogical practice and experience and also the social expectations.

With reference to school practice: greater attention to some of the educational values should be paid, in particular the creative, aesthetic, and environmental health ones. And also considering teachers – they should continuously verify issues evaluated negatively by students, especially their attitudes and the way and the extent of realization the educational values; the two-sided communication must be improved by creating a friendly atmosphere and demonstrating commitment and willingness to dialogue. At the same time, however, it is necessary to ensure the consequence and discipline in the classroom.

With regard to lessons: the quality and content of the classes should be concerned. It would be beneficial to use more often interactive methods, such as discussion or teaching games, also more frequent use of educational materials is advisable, especially audiovisual ones, more frequent trips as an alternative to some lessons, and when it comes to forms of work organization for students – selection of group work.

With reference to the home–school collaborations: it is necessary to improve cooperation between parents and teachers as well as school administration because without the understanding, agreement and integrated actions of both parties, implementation of the educational values will always be tremendously difficult.

Considering materialistic sphere: increasing financial resources for education would be helpful in solving many problems (such as lack of teaching materials, lack of lab classrooms, too many and too varied classes, insufficient number of extracurricular activities, etc.).

With regard to cooperation of practitioners and theorists: it would be desirable to reach agreement and find ways for researchers and teachers to be able mutually benefit from their achievements and experiences. As S. Palka states: “Theoretical pedagogical knowledge which is built on a foundation of research achievements has a lot in common with school practice. This knowledge is created as a result of solving problems in the field of education, teaching and human self-shaping. (...) The school practice becomes more effective considering educational impact when it utilizes the research results obtained in pedagogy” (S. Palka, 2006, s. 126-127).

More details concerning all stages of my research on educational values, as well as particular analysis, had been described in my book entitled *Educational values in contemporary school* (M. Bereźnicka, 2010), however it is only in Polish language, so I hope that the summarized version presented here should at least signal the problem also to non Polish speaking scholars and make a possibility to compare it with their knowledge concerning this issue in their countries.

As a recapitulation, I would like to quote C. Wintermute who points out: „Now in education this hallowing of individualism results in a kind of cultural relativism towards values. I call this the wishy-washy bleeding-heart liberal attitude. It calls for each prioritizing his or her own set of values, sharing them with others and declaring all of them valid. The very act of

stamping all values as equal and personal is neither democratic nor ethical. It is pure unadulterated nonsense. There is no such animal as value neutral education. Values are intrinsic to the very notion of education“ (C. Wintermute, 1997). So it seems that we have no choice – there always have been and there will always be values taught through the educational process. The only choice we may think of is which values we want to accept, implement and how well prepared for that we are willing to be.

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