

PEDAGOGY OF EXPERIENCE IN ETHICAL EDUCATION AT LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION

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Abstract. Slovak school system has undergone a process of transformation from a centralist, social and unified school system to a democratic, diversified and humanistic school system. Based on the nature of ethical education, we believe that it creates a suitable space for the implementation of experiential forms and methods of education. Concerning ethical education, it applies more than in other subjects that the primary thing is not the amount of knowledge, but a direct reflection and the inner acquisition of attitudes for practical life.

Keywords: ethical education; experiential learning; experiential methods; lower secondary education; Slovak school system

At present, experiential teaching is being increasingly implemented into various subjects in primary schools. It is often presented as something innovative not only for pupils but also for teachers. The presented study focuses on experiential teaching in ethical education. We deal with the meaning and justification of experiential teaching. The first chapter is aimed at clarifying the concepts of experience and pedagogy of experience. In the second chapter the concept of ethical education in the context of Slovak school system is described. The final part of the study deals with the pedagogy of experience in the teaching and learning of ethical education. Learning by experience can seem to non-specialist to be fun, chaos, indiscipline of pupils or unmethodical teaching. The study will prove that this way of teaching and learning is of irreplaceable importance in schools. Concerning the role of a teacher, it requires a responsible preparation and organization of the lesson, setting goals and division of tasks. The concept of the lesson is more demanding than in classical teaching. Therefore, a committed and motivated teacher, who considers experiential learning to make sense, is required.

1. Some remarks on terminology

The concept of experience has been presented in philosophy since the end of the 19th century. It was introduced in the W. Dilthey's theoretical principles of

experience, which are immediacy, unity and tension. Several foreign authors with a non-pedagogical focus have engaged in research and theoretical approaches in the field of a relatively new branch of pedagogy dealing with experience in teaching and learning and the use of this experiential element in teaching. We consider the psychological and psychotherapeutic approaches of M. Erickson as well as his followers, such as S. Bacon, M. Gass or CH. Itin to be beneficial. The direct research of the theory of experience was carried out by the Hungarian psychologist M. Czikszentmihalyi. Concerning sociologists, the German G. Schulz and the American J. Coleman contributed to the research of experience.

In the context of contemporary teaching, experience is primarily a concept based on learning by experience, experiencing anachronisms in a society as well as on the unity and setting and overcoming limits and possibilities. It builds a relationship with one's own body through activities and, based on feedback; it offers opportunities to use the acquired practical experience not only in the classroom, but also in a real life (Slavík 2007, 37). The purpose of the pedagogy of experience is to teach today's pupils to face the problems of contemporary reality, to be able to express themselves on problematic areas resonating in a society and create their own values, which together with personal qualities represent a contribution to the future of global society within their own country and the whole European region to which they belong.

Johann Amos Comenius was one of the most significant personalities in pedagogical sciences who made an effort to arouse pupils' interest in teaching and learning. His objective was to achieve that the pupils perceive the teaching and learning process as a game and not as learning. J. A. Comenius promoted an idea that if a pupil has to learn something, they should try it and experience it. The Enlightenment and the subsequent French Revolution brought a change into education. School and education were perceived by the Enlightenment as important tools in the struggle for making people more educated, especially children. John Locke was the first scholar in the period of the Enlightenment to present his educational theories. As stated by Bokorova (2013), J. Locke spread an optimistic idea in which a person's happiness depends primarily on themselves. He emphasized the illustration in teaching and an example in education. He suggested that the child is prepared for life by exercising his/her mental abilities. J. Locke's pedagogical starting points form the basis of both, the principle of pedagogy of experience and the concept of creativity and humanism itself. However, a real revolution in Pedagogy was made in the 17th century by Jean Jacques Rousseau (Bokorova 2013, 68 – 69). He presented his views and opinions on education in his work “*Emil, or On Education*”. According to him, education is best when it allows the child to develop. Jean Jacques Rousseau strongly protests against learning, in which pupils have to learn a large amount of curriculum. Methods of experiential pedagogy a priori reject learning from textbooks and memorization. They prefer learning based

on personal experience, abilities and skills. The most well-known approach within the experiential education of the 20th century is J. Dewey's pedagogy of experience. In his opinion, passive memorization of knowledge and information at school is insufficient and it is necessary to involve the experience and personal experience of the problem into the teaching and learning. In the 1920s, it was this pedagogue who began to prefer alternative teaching methods in which the pupil was the centre of instruction. The pupil was not only a passive recipient, but an actor teaching himself. The teacher was the coordinator and organizer pupils' learning activities. At the end of the 20th century, C. R. Rogers significantly influenced the newly emerging branch of experiential education. According to his principles, the school is focused not only on external motivation, but also on the internal one oriented towards the need for self-improvement (Rogers 1998, 112). Concerning the history, it clearly shows that the pedagogy of experience is nothing new as several philosophers and educators dealt with the idea of learning by experience.

The German philosopher and pedagogue Kurt Hahn (1886 – 1974) had a significant influence on the origin and development of the pedagogy of experience. His reform approach was based mainly on social knowledge and practical judgment. He carried out his ideas in an educational house at Salom Castle in the countryside. In 1933, due to his Jewish origin, Hahn left Germany and founded the “Gordonstoun” boarding school in England, where he continued to promote his ideas and opinions. He saw the solution of the development in the so-called short-term schools, in four-week courses for young people aged 16 – 21. Under the name “Outward Bound Schools”, similar facilities have spread to various parts of the world since the 1940s. Hahn points to a holistic approach in education through experience by means of three symbols: heart, hand and mind, which are interconnected. The heart refers to experience and the hand symbolizes an activity or action. The mind that enables both control and learning represents the intellect. Concerning education, Hahn sought to develop the physical and mental aspects in unity with the environment, which is harmony with the ancient ideal of *kalokagathia*. He considered the main shortcoming of traditional teaching to be the fact that it does not affect the emotional sphere, as it is based on memory learning and the acquisition of knowledge only by reason and the activity component remains behind (Münster 2009). K. Hahn's experiential education develops the following selected areas and competencies (Münster 2009, 5): better listening; developing social competencies and empathy; preventing conflicts; developing self-confidence; eliminating feelings of fear and frustration; developing creativity, values and goals; building relationships; developing communication competencies, initiative and ability to self-reflection and expression of one's own feelings etc. These are competencies that help young people to cope with everyday situations more easily. By means of experiential learning they have mastered certain patterns of behaviour and action.

In the last twenty years, there has been an increasingly intensive development of experiential education. It is also becoming of greater interest concerning pedagogical practise in Slovakia. However, theoretical instability and conceptual diversity and ambiguity are still often present in this branch of pedagogy. Nevertheless, many authors dealing with the pedagogy of experience agree that its primary goal is all-round development leading to a harmoniously developed personality.

In Germany, the pedagogy of experience was applied in village educational institutions – (H. Lietze), and also the so-called Waisenhaus – Kurzschulen (W. Neubert). An important role in the development of “*Erlebnispädagogik*” in Germany was played by prof. Jörg W. Ziegenspeck, who published the magazine “*Zeitschrift für Erlebnispädagogik*” and was responsible for the inclusion of *Erlebnispädagogik* into higher education. According to W. Michla, “*Erlebnispädagogik*” can be defined as a method focused on active action in which young people are exposed to physical, mental and social challenges that support their personal development and responsible relationship to their own lives. *Erlebnispädagogik* can be limited by other attributes: it takes place in nature, requires physical effort, participants feel the consequences of their actions, go through challenges and overcome subjective boundaries. Typical outdoor activities blend together with indoor activities. The program also includes games of confidence and problem-oriented activities. Experienced activities are evaluated by reflection.

English-speaking countries began coping with terminology around the early 1970s, when several major conferences on a given issue were organized, especially in the United States. Discussions at these events led to a proposal to establish a national association, which was implemented in Colorado in 1977. In this way, the Association for *Experiential Education* (AEE) was established. The proper name of the organization, which today indicates a global trend, has to a large extent stabilized the basic terminological designation of the young branch of pedagogy. Ten years later, individual professional sections, specifying various types of issues, began to work within the association. The section focused on the use of adventure in therapeutic work, the Therapeutic Adventure Professional Group (TAPG), is especially important to our interest and comparison. Another inspiring name for us can be the name of the European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning (EOE), which was established almost twenty years after. It follows from the above mentioned facts that in English-speaking countries, a broader term *experiential education* is used for the full range of specializations. In relation to therapeutic goals, especially the term *adventure therapy* is applied. However, other terms such as *adventure based therapy*, *adventure programming*, *adventure based counselling* or *wilderness therapy* are commonly used. This is a consequence of the fact that even a more terminologically stable English language environment is in its development.

Another approach that opens up the possibility of implementing experiential education is the approach of American pedagogues and social pedagogues, who

perceive experiential education as learning in the form of a project and adventure. In this way concepts such as the *workshop* (although it was originally used in the UK) and the *Outdoor project* or *Adventure Based Counselling* were created. At present, their representative and promoter is, for example, G. Tulley, who founded an innovative school in St. Barbara in California. His work "Fifty Dangerous Things You Should Allow Your Children to Do" raises the question of children's need for experience and adventure in both formal and non-formal education. He holds several patents in the field of experimental teaching and experiential learning. Tulley teaches at the innovative school Brightworks and his approaches to teaching and learning are also known in the Czech Republic. The workshop is a method that does not know a specific founder. Originally the word workshop was used in the slang designation of practical demonstrations, first in the field of psychotherapy, and later it was used to designate a creative process within artistic professions. It is based on the interpretation of pupils' experience, which after the introduction of the topic leads to the preference of a certain solution and its testing in practice. In addition to Tulley, several scientific journals address this issue, including the "Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning", in which authors from the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand publish their research and findings. As to Europe, experiential education is discussed in a German scientific journal "Erleben und lernen".

Experiential teaching and learning is also frequently discussed in a professional journal "Gymnasion", which is published in the Czech Republic. The journal offers texts related to the branch named pedagogy of experience. It touches on other branches of pedagogy and psychology. Concerning its nature, it is classified by some experts as alternative pedagogy. This creates a space for anchoring the branch as a science, which, of course, means a long-term process of clarifying the terminology, defining methods and research work. "Gymnasion" is not aimed at competing with academic texts but it tries to get the current pedagogy of experience as close as possible to both professional and layman public. It examines in detail the sub-topics of theory, methods and practice, thus acquiring a creative bank of ideas.

When comparing English and German terminology in our context, we notice one peculiarity. Where English uses a very ambiguous term *education*, but also where it uses the exact term *therapy*, the German language uses the term *Pädagogik*. In this case, the choice of the term "*pedagogy of experience*" is a kind of confirmation of the expression which various experts in the Czech Republic and Slovakia tend to use. In addition to the strong influence of German culture in the Czech Republic (compared to Slovakia), another fact plays an important role. Although professionals from various fields of science were present in the early stages of the development of pedagogy of experience in the Czech Republic, the influence of experts in pedagogy was very significant. Therefore it is logical that they applied the closest term for

them – “*pedagogy*”. This concept was implemented also in Slovakia due to the historical and cultural ties of our nations as well as in effort to easily and quickly create Slovak terminology. Its use is also conditioned by the fact that one of the first “post-revolutionary” Slovak organizations focused on the creation of educational outdoor activities, “Studio of Experience”, was established as a sister organization of the Czech Holiday School Lipnice. “Studio of Experience” also largely took over its methodology and terminology. In Slovak school practice, various terms are used – *learning by experience*, *experiential learning* and *experiential teaching*. However, based on Kurt Hahn’s theoretical approach, these terms are not concise enough. If our work is really mainly pedagogical and the main types of work are experiences and not borderline experience, stress or the feeling of existence outside the personal comfort zone, then this concept is adequate. Several authors declare that the preferred word should be a multi-word, but at the same time, more precise term “adventure and experience-based approaches”, which meets the above-mentioned criteria.

The main argument for the ambiguous terminology is the widely developed methodology of education based on experience, the growth of theoretically based works as well as the existence of thematically oriented journals, organizations and associations. Therefore, the pedagogy of experience can be understood as an applied pedagogical and scientific discipline, whereas the application framework is a specific method through which general educational goals are applied in the process of education.

2. Ethical education in the context of slovak school system

Communist ideology, which prevailed in Slovakia for 40 years, ruled in all spheres of people's lives, and thus in education. It was based on two principles: the principle of class struggle in the name of the “power of the working class” and the principle of the international unity of the proletariat movement. At the beginning of 1990, preparations for a change in the education system began. L. Lencz (1993) speaks of a new cultural paradigm, after the distorting ideology of the class struggle in the time of communism, and that is prosociality. According to L. Lencz, prosociality is a new ideal of happiness for the demanding. He saw it as a sober intoxication of spirit, a clear source of joy, a peaceful ecstasy. Several authors from the USA, Poland and Israel agreed that prosociality is a crucial key factor in the development of the character of the educated young person. The ethical education contributes to prosocial education in the conditions of the Slovak Republic. It is based on rich scientific experience and practice in several countries around the world with the application of the content of the term “prosociality”. Its goal is to prepare children and young people for responsible civic and human happy life. The way of implementing the ethical education is democratic. The teacher is a facilitator and the students are equal partners.

Slovak society, including Slovak education, has undergone a process of transformation from a centralist social and unified school system to a democratic diversified and humane school system. The humanization and democratization of the educational process have become the basic principles of the transformation process. The goal of humanization was to form a creative, free, proactive person with moral qualities. Democratization was focused on the development of each individual so that this individual freedom was connected with moral order and social needs with active participation. In Slovakia, considerations regarding education have gradually changed since 1989 due to the need to remove the ideological ideas of previous years. The result of the new effort was the humanistic orientation of education.

The humanistic theories include all directions, schools, and concepts that emphasize the human side of holistic upbringing and education. According to Zelina (1996), the model of creative-humanistic education is a kind of attempt to inspire a new systemic approach to education. At the top of cognitive processes is the creative thinking of the personality as the most complex and powerful system. According to Lomnický (2010), the goal of creative-humanistic education in ethical education is to understand the personality as a unique human being that should be formed from inside. The goal of creative-humanistic education is a real dialogue which enables to build an authentic and spiritual personality as well as encouraging and supporting the personality to create and give away the humanity. It should also aim to restore humanity and build a personal relationship. The bond between the superior and the subordinate should be in the dialogue partner form, it should also develop empathy, sensibility and emotion, co-responsibility, tolerance and cooperation, positive behaviour and harmony in interpersonal relationships. This also includes promoting the man's trust and activating him to prosocial meetings, to call for openness, communion with others on the principle of justice and solidarity, to understand the personality as creative, which has its value and is aware of what is moral and immoral.

Eurostat (2016) states that the age structure of teachers working in primary schools in 2014 in the European Union represented 11% of teachers under 30, 32% around 50 and over. In Slovakia, it was 28% of teachers aged 50 and over, which shows the representation of teachers who studied at the end of the 20th century in completely different conditions than today. The modern (21st century) school seeks to solve the problem of how to ensure that teaching serves not only to acquire knowledge and certain skills contained in traditional subjects, but also to develop all components of the student's personality, senses, feelings or creative abilities, prerequisites for creating positive interpersonal relationships, developing communication skills. It is not easy to get acquainted with the tangle of innovative forms and methods of teaching, as in an effort to achieve a certain change in schools, many concepts have begun to be applied from abroad. Conceptual changes

in individual schools depend primarily on the personalities of the teachers of the school and their willingness or effort to do something beyond their responsibilities. Gradually, there is a change of generations in the Slovak education system, which makes a significant contribution to changes in the approach to the student, but also the changes in the teaching process itself.

The essence of the content reform in education in Slovakia in 2008 is legislatively defined in Act 245/2008 Coll. on upbringing and education. This so-called The Education Act replaced the Act from 1984. It mainly concerns the curricular transformation of education and is based on the Concept of the Development of Education in the Slovak Republic for the next 15 – 20 years (Millennium Project). The subjects were divided into individual educational areas. Ethical education, together with religious education was included into the area the Man and Values. The two subjects mentioned above have an alternative character and the status of a compulsory elective subject.

At present, the Slovak Republic has the hierarchically highest Innovated State Educational Program (2015) – a program project for education in Slovakia. The ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education, which is followed in Europe and is also accepted by other international organizations (UNESCO, OECD)) was used to develop the Innovated State Education Program according to the individual levels of education. It includes the framework model of the graduate, the curriculum framework of the school level and expresses the main principles and objectives of the educational policy of the state, as well as the democratic and humanistic values on which the national education is based. It defines the general goals of schools as the key competencies in balanced development of students' personalities. The state educational program supports a comprehensive approach to the development of students' skills how to get to know, act, evaluate and communicate and understand at a given level of education.

It is a starting point and a binding document for the creation of an individual school educational program, which takes into account the specific local and regional conditions and needs. The State Educational Program of Ethical Education declares the importance of the subject also in the primary prevention of behavioural and learning disorder¹⁾.

The goal ethical education is to educate personalities with their own identity, internalized ethical norms, with mature moral judgment and behaviour. It is determined by their own beliefs unaffected by external pressures, with a positive relationship to other people, and therefore it is able to cooperate with others and initiate the cooperation. Ethical education was for the first time as an optional subject in primary schools as a part of the curricula in 1991 and the content and objectives were modified by the Curriculum for the optional subject – ethical education approved by the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic No. 5198/1991-20 valid from 1. September 1991. The decision of the Ministry of Education and

Science of the Slovak Republic in 29 June 1993 (No. 3795-30) included ethical education into compulsory elective subjects at the 2nd grade of primary schools and in the first two years of secondary schools and as the optional subject at the 1st grade of primary school from the school year 1993/1994.

Ethical education was included as a compulsory elective subject in primary education by Decision no. CD2004-5691 / 11376-1: 096 in the school year 2004/2005. Ethical education was introduced to our schools in the 1990s as part of revolutionary change. L. Lencz had and still has had a great deal of credit for the development of ethical education that chose the system of R. R. Olivar (1992) from the existing systems of prosocial education and developed it. The school reform also brought changes that were not explicitly declared in the changes, but they could be seen in the new Curriculum. The negative change was in shortened subsidy of lessons for the educational area of Man and Values. Until September 2011, ISCED 1 had a subsidy of 3.5 lessons and ISCED 2 4 lessons, that is 1, 5 lesson less than before 2008. Since the school year 2011/2012, half of the lesson has been increased for ISCED 1, but ISCED 2 has remained unchanged. The State Educational Program was also adapted.

A certain threat also appears in the structure of the annexes to the State Educational Program, which are focused on content and performance standards. Ethical education has resisted this tendency for years. In the end, however, it was necessary to cope with this requirement, and thus structured requirements for individual ISCED levels were created, where both the conative and socio-affective standard are stated within the performance standard. These elements are part of prosocial education, but they are not optimal. It is difficult to enter the student's personality and notice what is happening inside. Ultimately, this is not even the goal of ethical education. Requirements like these may lead the teacher to formalism or may disturb the teacher's approach to the student. The Innovated State Education Program is brief and the philosophy is pragmatically oriented - the required performance is important and not the content, or the method that leads to it. The content site of the subject is without the change.

If we compare the structure of the methodology of ethical education and the classical system of didactics, from the very beginning of the formation of the methodology of ethical education, there are used different concepts than traditional. Less attention is paid to e.g. organizational forms that are used in general didactics. However, these differences do not mean that ethical education in the field of teaching theory is somehow impoverished. The most observable terminological difference is the fact that ethical education is conceived in four essential areas that form the basis of its methodology.

The basic domains contain (Podmanický 2012): the vision of ethical education, educational program of ethical education, educational style of ethical education and methods of ethical education. Based on the character of ethical education, it is

clear that it creates a suitable space for the implementation of experiential forms and methods of education. In the subject of ethical education, it applies more than in other subjects that the primary thing is not the amount of knowledge, but direct reflection, the inner acquisition of attitudes for practical life. Ethical education is not defined just by one subject, but has an “integrative educational mission” (Khun 1999, 39), which should be reflected in the entire educational system. The fact that ethical education is primary about the value orientation of students, the acquisition of attitudes and values that can improve interpersonal relationships in the classroom, at school and society in general. There is a direct relationship to solve the problems of different cultural and ethnic identity and finding multicultural and interethnic mechanisms for civic coexistence.

L. Joplin (1995) pointed out two definitions expressed in different concepts of experiential pedagogy: on the basis of a typical multi-level model of learning, on the basis of specific features that distinguish experiential and non-experiential learning. The model of ethical education in Slovakia consists of four-level model of experiential education – cognitive and emotional sensitization - moral reflection – classroom training – transfer (Lencz 1992) and has been used in ethical education since 1993. Cognitive and emotional sensitization is a process where the main goal is to increase students' sensitivity to morally relevant stimuli.

The secondary intention is to induce a suitable psychosocial climate in the classroom. Moral reflection occurs in various forms within ethical education (writing a diary, quiet thinking, joint discussion, analysis of implemented activities). Classroom training is the direct activation of students through specific situations (scenes, role-plays, etc.) and should also lead to transfer. Transfer represents the goal of ethical education - that the desired behaviour practiced in the artificial conditions of ethical education lessons is transferred to the ordinary life of students. It is advisable to return to the tasks from this phase on an ongoing basis and evaluate them.

3. Pedagogy of experience as a part of ethical education

Ethical education brought a new perspective on the educational process, and so it started to work with such methods that teachers had not used before. These educational methods seem to be more demanding and are not the way to quick success. They assume a different approach to pupils, which, according to Lencz (1993), is characterized by such features as unconditional acceptance of the child, showing affection towards the child, attribution of positive qualities and inductive discipline (pointing out the consequences of behaviour and action). There is a certain risk for teachers in terms of loosening the discipline. On the other hand, thanks to new methods, students will not stop behaving ethically even when they leave school, which means a great success not only for ethical education. Ethical education cannot do without developing and observing strategies of courtesy,

effective communication, meaningful discussion, constructive cooperation and critical thinking. Few methods occur in practice in a pure form, most activities combine a larger number of approaches.

Based on the analysis of methodological manuals (Valica-Fridrichova et al. 2011), we found out that the preferred method in classes on ethical education is the dialogue and discussion, play, research methods and projects, staging and situational methods, or methods of creative drama comprehensively. Other recommended methods of ethical education, through which students' learning activities are carried out, are interpretation and explanation, as well as the solution of moral dilemmas and common life situations and survey methods etc. In order to develop required behaviour and draw attention to required values, it is necessary to link experiential methods and systematically guided discussion. In this way, the pupils continuously learn to think and consider several possible solutions to situations. According to the authors of the publication, moral dilemmas and their solutions can also become a part of the teaching of ethical education from primary education because they show pupils that each of our decisions has a certain consequence and, therefore, leads to the education for responsibility. Methods of experiential learning are also very suitable means of arousing interest. The result of every situation in which we participate is a certain experience. Thanks to it, we gain experience and remember much more than from the teacher's interpretation. This teaching has its basis "in playful forms of presentation of knowledge by teachers" (Karikova 2006, 89). Learning can only be discussed if a more lasting change in behaviour is manifested. When implementing these methods, pupils can easily fall into the temptation that they will soon begin to recall various associations, and in this way they will neglect the basic stage of the exercise, which includes the perception of objects and persons and associated experience.

According to D. Kolb (2015), effective learning assumes the need to remember the cyclical process of experiential learning (Fig. 1), in which it is essential to go through all phases of learning – from experience and activity, through reflection, to drawing conclusions from experience, i.e. theoretical conclusions. Experimentation or questions and tasks for the application in a specific situation can draw learners' attention to the fact that even theoretical conclusions are "useful" because we can use them to solve a problem and look for ways to use them.

Experiential learning in ethical education is carried out by using techniques and activities, i.e. by using already mentioned structured games led and guided by the teacher. Their goal is to enable their own experience. This learning makes ethical education exceptional because pupils learn to live and live together. Moreover, their cognitive processes are also developed to some extent. The centre of the experiential basis in ethical education is the proper activity of a person, based on which a person gains experiences, as well as their physical and mental involvement as this learning requires expending a lot of physical and mental energy. Therefore, it is more

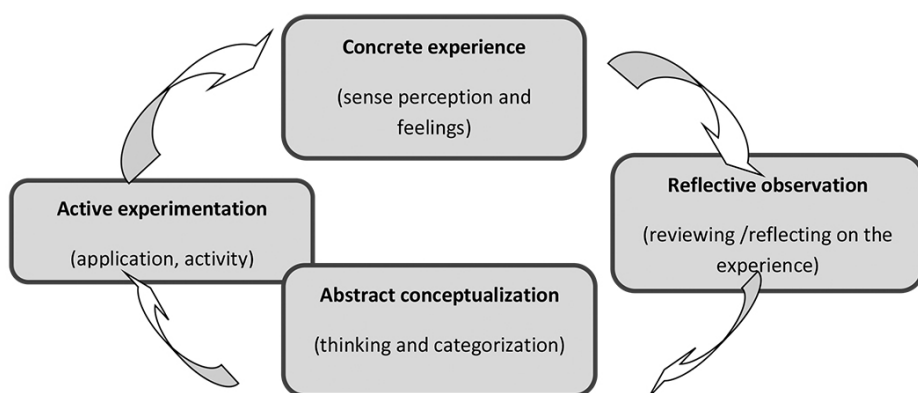


Figure 1. Phases of experiential learning according to D. Kolb (Kolb 2015, 32)

effective – the more energy a person expends, more powerfully and intensively the experience is instilled in the memory. We can say that such an approach is in contrast to the classical passive method of acquiring knowledge, which is much less effective. However, the proper activity of a person is not sufficient for acquiring knowledge. Similarly important is the reflection and subsequent consolidation of the acquired knowledge or experience. This is presented in already mentioned Kolb's cycle, which is based on the principles of experiential learning and combines experience, receptivity, cognition and behaviour. Emotions, imagination, physical body and intellect are involved as well. Kolb's cycle presents four phases of learning: 1. Concrete experience in which we experience something; 2. Reflective observation – thinking about what happened, how we dealt with it and how we felt about it; 3. Abstract conceptualization refers to our evaluation – what we did well and what went wrong; 4. Active experimentation - a plan of changes, how we will proceed next time and test our theory in practical conditions. After the fourth phase, we return back to the first one (Kapsova 2008, 4). The experience reflects the importance of what a person went through. However, it does not mean that emotions are emphasized in the processual side of ethical education at the expense of rational reflection. Their relationship is balanced and includes emotional and cognitive moments. Without rational reflection and generalization, experiences do not have a positive effect on pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Reflection means mirroring (Podmanicky 2012).

Experiential learning and related methods cover a wide field of activities and contribute to the development of personality both in the social field and in the field of attitudes. They also include fun and pleasant memories. In ethical education, the experiential basis is important because "it is not enough for a person to know as much as possible and to rely on the fact that this knowledge will lead them

to the desired behaviour. A person also needs to gain experience. It is good to know what love is, but one must love someone in order to appreciate its value” (Lomnický 2007, 41).

The misunderstanding of ethical education was initially often related to the use of innovative experiential methods. Teachers from neighbouring classes were often surprised at the sound and noise coming from the class during the lesson on ethical education. Non-traditional teaching increased the attractiveness of the subject. At present, the situation in this area is different. Experiential methods are also used in classes by other teachers. The school reform confirms this trend by giving the teacher a free hand when expanding the curriculum and choosing methods and tools. We can see that ethical education is moving from the position of an exclusively “innovative” subject, specific for its methods and educational strategies, to become one of a number of subjects. The attractiveness of the subject for pupils is disappearing, but at the same time, the fact that experiential objects are also used in other lessons can significantly support the goals of ethical education as education for prosociality.

The educational process, which should promote the values of tolerance, respect, solidarity, empathy or prosociality, has no effect if it is promoted by authoritative methods. According to L. Lencz (1993), learning based on the following methods is characterized by features that include a positive assessment of oneself and others and participatory learning in which the active subjects of the learning process are not only teachers, but also students, or parents. Moreover, cooperative learning, experience-based learning and creative learning are included as well. Ethical education is a subject that has a demanding system of goals based on the development of personality, in which “the basis is not the knowledge, but the reflection of experience” (Valica, Fridrichova et al. 2011, 84). Therefore, experiential methods become the key methods in lessons on ethical education. Their essence is experience.

The change in the understanding of the child’s personality brought a new approach to the play as a teaching method. The basis of the play is the experience, the activity that the child naturally needs. The play is, but at the same time is not a “real” one. And, this is probably the basic starting point of why the play is so often used in ethical education. The play is a play only if it meets several requirements: it must have clearly defined rules and these must be kept; it must have a limited space and time; it is based on the principle of voluntariness; in some way, it is based on spontaneity and it must be a source of joy for participants. If the play does not meet these attributes, it is not possible to talk about the play. For these reasons, it is evident that typical school conditions related to the use of play have to be changed, including the position of the teacher in the play. According to the authors of the work “Models of Teaching Ethical Education and Competence Profile of the Teacher of Ethical Education” (Valica, Fridrichova et al. 2011), the play is

characterized by “balancing” of roles. The teacher loses their dominant position and becomes a participant in the play. Teacher’s position is becoming equalized in terms of the role he/she has in the play, or, the teacher is only the one who supervises the compliance with the rules. In this way, a change in the relationship between the teacher and pupils is encouraged. The advantage of the play in the educational process is presented by its activating function resulting from the way, in which a child enters the play. In most cases, the child takes the role in the play seriously and with great interest, which encourages their responsibility for the role in the play. The most common types of plays in ethical education are: thematic, dramatic, role-playing as well as social games with rules. As stated by P. Vacek (2011), the teaching of ethical education also includes plays with moral content and simulation. Board games with rules played in lessons on ethical education show pupils the importance of rules for maintaining order. While playing board games, the pupils learn the principles of fair play, and they learn to accept the defeat and experience victory. Board games allow players to communicate freely and observe non-verbal expressions of classmates. Therefore, they are a suitable means of developing social skills.

Thematic, dramatic and role-playing games have a common denominator in living life “as if”. The play becomes a play in the original sense because in its essence it is about imitating the life of adults and about imitating the real world. Thematic plays are typical for pre-primary and lower grades of primary education. In addition to imitating the real world, the thematic plays naturally develop the child’s imagination and their perseverance or patience. At the age of entering school, children start to look for a company of peers in thematic plays, which develops interaction, cooperation and communication. Dramatic as well as role-plays bring a new dimension to the pupil’s learning activities in classes on ethical education: experiencing one’s own feelings and feelings in a world that immitates reality, and therefore it allows the pupil to explore it from different approaches.

The third type of plays that we present are plays with moral content and simulation. P. Vacek (2011) states that the main reason for the inclusion of this type of plays in classes on ethical education is the possibility of using direct experience in the process of moral decision-making. It is appropriate to include this type of plays before discussing various topics.

The play as a teaching method in ethical education is based on the principle of changing the relationship between a teacher and a pupil. It uses the activation of interest and spontaneity that the student shows while playing (barriers fall because it is “just” a play). Moreover, it uses also an important moment consisting of the possibility of leaving the play (the play is a voluntary activity; no one can force anybody to play ...). Playing in ethical education requires thorough preparation of the teacher. The teacher must decide in advance what his/her position is, when and whether he/she will enter the play as a participant or will only direct partial

activities, observe the behaviour of children, make comments etc. Any unprepared and ill-considered play can cause chaos, and the effectiveness of the play is lost in any case. The play accompanies a person throughout the entire life. It evokes various experiences in a person, which, according to the authors of "Models of Teaching Ethical Education and Competence Profile of the Teacher of Ethical Education" (2011) "support the development of personal and social competencies, develop creativity and imagination and maintain positive interpersonal relations. Therefore, it should be present in all its forms in the teaching of ethical education not only in primary but also in secondary education".

Standard or recommended methods are used at each stage of the classes on ethical education. According to P. Fridrichova (2009), their primary task is to arouse a personal involvement of pupils. Its degree depends on the extent of pupils' activation as well as on their personal conditions, needs and interests. Experiential learning methods are suitable means of arousing the interest. The result of every situation, in which we are actors, is a certain experience. Thanks to it, we gain experience and remember much more than from any interpretation of the teacher. Learning can only be considered as learning if it is related to a long lasting change presented in behaviour. When implementing these methods, pupils can easily fall into the temptation that the associations will be presented too early in their mind, and thus they will neglect the basic phase of exercise – the perception of objects, people and related experience. Experiential learning is carried out through various didactic plays and methods of creative drama, which are, therefore, mentioned as the following ones. Concerning the lessons on ethical education, it is necessary to implement such methods that connect the school with everyday life. Such methods include project teaching and research methods. The role of these methods is to enable pupils to look at the topics that are addressed in classes on ethical education within the sensibilisation from the perspective of real life. Pupils reflect in them the reality and continuously work with it within the value reflection and consequently propose solutions in the training phase.

Project teaching is a long-term method in which a pupil or a group of pupils work on solving a problem. It is a way of teaching and learning in which the starting point is a meaningful and interesting task that students want and need to solve. The way of solving a problem is largely left up to pupils. Pupils achieve the result by applying their own experience and skills and a number of new developing activities: theoretical and, especially, practical ones, individual and cooperative, and independent of the traditional division of subjects. The difficulty of assigned project tasks depends on the age, abilities and skills of the pupils. It is appropriate for the teacher to suggest to pupils the structure of the project and monitor the development of pupils' work and consult with them on their partial results.

It is also possible to implement various types of **research activities** into project teaching. Pupils learn to examine a set of data (analysis), formulate hypotheses

(creativity), and verify their own findings (assessment). Concerning research activities, it is important that the research is authentic, in other words, students should not know the result of their research before carrying it out. Authentic research is relevant only if the teacher also has no idea what results will be obtained by pupils. The methods of this group are less common but the knowledge and skills that pupils acquire are evident and cannot be doubted. It is a group of methods that are based on discovery or controlled discovery. Pupils are required to come up with the principles or procedures themselves. The teacher provides pupils with the essential knowledge on which the success of the task depends. Pupils understand what they are required to do. The vast majority of pupils must be able to complete the task, and the teacher monitors the work of pupils and gives them enough time. At the end of the activity, it is necessary to summarize what the pupils should know. They can work individually, but also in smaller or larger groups. Research activities (Lencz 1993) include, for example, a descriptive research (what are the things like now?), historical research (what were the things like in the past?) and experimental research (what happens if ...?). There are no limits to innovation and creativity in this area. Every single method is a proposal for working with children and young people. It is not necessary to take them as something directive. It is possible to work with them, complement them and implement our own ideas.

Creative drama is a method that can be implemented in all educational and didactic components of the pedagogical process. Creative drama is a set of the following methods, procedures and tools: interpretation of work of art, dramatization of a text, creative solution of life situations, creative acquisition of knowledge at school, education of teachers as well as acting and dramaturgical preparation, creation of a staging form and creation of work of art. These methods encourage playful activity and effectively develop pupils' thinking, creativity, activity and aesthetic and moral feeling. Ethical education is not closed to other subjects and disciplines. Many methods were "borrowed" from creative drama. According to L. Lencz (1993), role-playing and modeling of situations is common. It is basically an open-ended experimentation because pupils do not have a pre-assigned scenario but only a situation and individual roles. Dramatization allows pupils to play the role required by the goal of education. By identifying with the new role, the pupil acquires the ability to show the empathy. When playing roles, pupils practice situations they may experience during their life. It can be stated that many methods of drama education help in "fulfilling the conative performance standard and partly also the content standard of ethical education" (Fridrichova 2009).

The use of verbal methods, especially dialogic ones, contributes to the development of pupils' communicative skills. Despite some positives, it is undesirable to prioritize verbal methods in teaching of ethical education or even to use them as the only methods. At the same time, the authors of "Models of Teaching Ethical Education and Competence Profile of the Teacher of Ethical Education" (2011)

add that storytelling, explanation, interview, discussion or analytical interview are suitable teaching methods in lessons on ethical education because they activate pupils' thinking, support their ability to formulate their own ideas and promote their own opinions. Moreover, they develop the ability to actively listen and critically evaluate information, respect the opinions of others, argue etc. Thus, personal, social and communication, as well as civic competences of pupils and students are comprehensively developed in verbal methods. At the same time, appropriately chosen topics of discussion develop moral thinking and reasoning. Narration, explanation and interpretation are the most commonly used monologic teaching methods in lessons on ethical education. The content of the lesson on ethical education very often consists of solving a particular problem. Pupils should know that they must not be scared of the problem, but should face it with the determination to solve it creatively. According to M. Zelina (1996), there are three ways how to learn – by trial and error, algorithms and heuristics. Heuristics is a methodology of creative problem solving and differs from an algorithm in that it contains the step of creative work. The pupil is faced with an obstacle of a theoretical or practical nature and he/she solves it on their own, with the help of a teacher or pupils in a group. The best known heuristic method is the method DITOR. Its author is M. Zelina (1996) and it consists of the following steps: D - define the problem and propose an ideal solution, I – be informed and find out as much information about the problem as possible, T – create the solution, O – evaluate the solution and choose the most suitable one, R – implement the solution. The following heuristic methods are also known: G. Polyu heuristic method, Philips 66, Hobo method and so on (Zelina 1996).

The solution of moral dilemmas belongs among the indicative methods of value education, more specifically, among the analytical discussion methods. The dilemma is a difficult and inevitable choice between two equivalent things. Avoidance – as the third option – is not possible. It is a decision-making under the pressure of an inevitable decision. According to the authors of “Models of Teaching Ethical Education and Competence Profile of the Teacher of Ethical Education” (2011), the dilemma in lessons on ethical education thematizes an inevitable value conflict in which one value suffers anyway (for example, protection of natural environment against the protection of one's own family; protection of human life against the truthfulness in hiding the politically persecuted person; friendship against the honesty when observing a thief in a shop etc.). An ethical solution to a dilemma requires a reasoned decision. Within the classes on ethical education, it is possible to consider the implementation of several types of dilemmas (2011). Their inclusion in the phases of acquiring the desired behaviour or value must be harmonized with their target requirements. Solving moral dilemmas is a teaching method of ethical education, which can be prioritized in the phase of value reflection, but also in the phase of classroom training. The advantage of this method is the activation of the

pupil's thinking in terms of developing his ability to analyze different situations, evaluate them and create alternatives to different solutions.

All children have the right to receive education at the right time and in a way that suits them, because all children deserve to live in a tolerant and understanding environment. We consider the use of experiential methods to be crucial concerning pupils, the attractiveness of the subject and, above all, the approach to ethical education as the opposite of religious education. We believe that the transformation of the education system in Slovakia will also bring a change in the teaching of ethical education aimed at experiential learning.

4. Conclusion

Globalization bringing innovative trends to teaching significantly affects the management and direction of Slovak schools. However, the use of the 20th century school still generally prevails. Teachers in lower secondary education rush from one class to other every 45 minutes, teaching in several classes every day. Due to the transfer of knowledge, there is no time left to develop interpersonal relationships that are fundamental pillar of every society. Ethical education opens the space for students to be educated in the form of experiential methods.

We focused on learning experiences in ethical education in the text. At the beginning of the study, the basic terminology of experiential pedagogy was presented and subsequently, we analysed the subject of ethical education in the context of Slovak education. In the next part of the study, we focused on experiential pedagogy as part of ethical education and presented the methods that we consider to be the key in the process of experiential learning. The change in the understanding of the child's personality brought a new perspective on play as a teaching method. The basis of the play is the experience, the activity that the child naturally needs. Ethical education is supposed to be a kind of port for the pupil, which provides safety, broadens horizons, allows everyone to express in the own way and, last but not least, it demonstrates that learning can also be the play.

The text is intended to point out the fact that ethical education has been based on experience since its introduction to schools. Initially, this triggered a wave of reluctance in the part of teachers, mainly due to the loosening of discipline in the classroom, increased noise and the apparent loss of the authoritarian teacher's status. Today, however, experiential teaching is becoming also a part of other subjects, so it is necessary to realize that ethical education, its content and concept, can become a starting point and motivation to learn in the form of experience for other teachers.

NOTES

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