TOMASZ WARCHOŁ

Inspiration activity of primary school pupils during non-formal education classes – Research report[1]

Aktywność inspiracyjna uczniów szkół podstawowych na zajęciach edukacji pozaformalnej – raport z badań

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Contemporary education is intended to stimulate the conscious and full self-development of a human being, not through encyclopaedic teaching, but through learning to understand, stimulate cognitive skills, sensitivity, curiosity about the world and readiness to act (Stańko-Kaczmarek 2013, p. 64).

At present, the implementation of these objectives in traditional formal education is difficult, for example due to the "rigid" approach to education through the implementation of the content of education, which is enforced by the core curriculum (Warchoł 2018, pp. 215–216). Teachers are required to complete all the content of the basic curriculum, which is often difficult to achieve within the teaching hours set for a given subject, and going beyond the curriculum is often impossible (Czajkowski 2005; Stępień 2015).

The search for inspiration of pupils to acquire new knowledge and skills (Koziarska 2019, p. 11–14) is perceived in non-school methods of education, i.e. non-formal or informal education (Sławiński et al. 2013).

Non-formal education is defined as institution-based learning, but outside education and training programs leading to a registered qualification (Fordhan 1993). As the report of the Foundation for the Development of the Education System points out, non-formal education may lead to qualifications that are not in the Integrated Qualifications Register (Szlęk 2013). Non-formal education also means all education and

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training programs, except those organised under the law governing education and higher education systems (Sławiński 2017, p. 13).

The main organisational forms of non-formal education include: subject, technical, artistic, sports clubs, trips, homework, activities in production plants and various workshops (Stalończyk 2014, p. 329).

Non-formal education is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and social competences through a variety of activities beyond organised forms of education. Non-formal education continues throughout life and is an unorganised and unstructured process in which people acquire knowledge, skills, beliefs and attitudes based on everyday experience and educational influences from the environment (Trempała 2011, p. 96).

The forms of education presented are an environment where there is a greater likelihood of inspiring pupils with content for which there is no time in traditional education.

This effect is mainly due to the freedom in the scope of the educational content, forms of organisation of pupils' work, as well as in the area of didactic aids, which are most often automated and modern technological solutions (Kamińska, Olszta 2016).

In search of inspiration for pupils to learn new knowledge and skills (Koziarska 2019), an experiment was prepared, which was carried out within the framework of non-formal education in the form of workshops. The aim of the experiment was to determine the inspiration activity of primary school pupils from the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. The research was carried out as part of the project: *The University of Rzeszów for young explorers*, in which 1149 pupils from 18 primary schools in Podkarpackie took part. The full characteristics of the test group are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of the test group

Gender	Number	Place of residence	
		City	Village
Girls	529	252	277
Boys	620	311	309

Pupils participating in the project had the opportunity to take part in a cycle of three classes conducted in the form of non-formal education. Mainly pupils who are inspired by constructing, designing and solving problems with the use

of *Lego Mindstorms* blocks enrolled in the classes. The main aim of the course was to acquire knowledge and skills in the field of design and construction of robots. The prepared project focuses on stimulating thinking and developing the computational thinking (Sysło 2014) of pupils participating in the classes.

The organised classes were prepared in accordance with the guidelines for non-formal education, i.e. with a developed curriculum that defined the goals, as well as with appropriately selected teaching aids, which included didactic sets of *Lego Mindstorms* programmable blocks, as well as devices enabling their programming, i.e. tablets and computers. The teaching process was supported by technical didactic aids, which included: an interactive board, a visualiser.

In the organised classes, the main attention was paid to the change in the inspiration activity of pupils, which is directly connected with extracurricular activities, e.g. non-formal education. In the case of inspiration activity, one of its most important elements is the proper motivation of pupils to learn, that is, their activation (Amborska-Głowacka 2004, pp. 423–424). According to B. Dyrda, motivation to learn is a component of active participation in the didactic process (Dyrda, 2006 pp.121–131).

Therefore, it should be assumed that the inspiration activity of pupils is determined on the basis of the characteristic behaviour of the pupil, which is defined by the manifestations of well-defined behaviours that lead to the development of the human being and to the internal achievement of their goals. A characteristic feature of this type of activity is the desire to develop oneself, abilities and interests. This type of activity is attributed mainly to out-of-school organisational forms (Warchoł 2021, doctoral thesis).

Research procedures and methods used

The study was conducted using the observation method, which is the most frequently used method in social research, to determine the behaviour or activity of human beings (Krajewski 2006, p. 18).

The choice of this method is associated with the identification of characteristic behaviours or observations that the observer expects to occur. In the observation method, an appropriate selection should be adopted, and the criterion is defined in terms of the purpose of the observation (Apanowicz 2002, p. 81).

In the conducted research, the method of direct observation with the use of recording means, i.e. video cameras, was used. The recorded materials were analysed in terms of standardised behaviour.

The selection of characteristic behaviours was adopted in accordance with the study conducted by A. Gurycka, who observed primary school pupils, determining their activity through specific behaviours, assigning a point weight to each of the distinguished behaviours (Gurycka 1989).

The behaviours listed in Table 2 were adopted for the characteristic behaviours of pupils that define their inspiration activity during non-formal education classes.

Table 2. Acts extracted for the purpose of observing the behaviour of pupils that serves to determine the inspiration activity

No.	Type of pupil act	Short name of the act	Point value
1.	The pupil shows clear emotionally coloured inspiration activity	Aie	1.5
2.	The pupil shows clear inspiration activity expressed by asking questions	Pt	1
3.	The pupil shows a clear concentration of attention and focus on the subject matter implemented by the tutor	U	0.5
4.	Not showing any signs of inspiration activity	Ai	0
5.	The pupil does not show concentration of attention and focus on the topic implemented by the tutor	–U	–0.5
6.	The pupil shows reluctance to work	–Aip	–1
7.	The pupil shows a complete lack of emotional interest in the subject	–Aiz	–1.5

Acts of inspiration highlighted in the table can be divided into positive (Aie, Pt, U), neutral (Ai) and negative (–U, –Aip, –Aiz) acts. In addition, each of the acts presented has its own weight, which makes it possible to carry out an accurate and reliable analysis of the research results.

Observation of the pupils was carried out during the first and last classes. The collected material consisted of 405 hours of observational recordings (540 45-minute lesson units).

The recordings began with checking the presence of pupils, but in the form of reading out their individual number, which was assigned when the pupil was enrolled into the project. In this way, it was possible to identify pupils and record the standardised behaviours indicated in Table 2.

Of all the recorded video material, only 60 minutes were selected and divided into four quarters of an hour. Each of them was designated on the basis of the implementation of the same educational content. In this way, reliable and comparable research material was obtained. The material was analysed by playing the recordings and noting the pupils' behaviour on the observation sheet for the designated quarters of an hour.

The main problem of the research carried out was the question: How are the inspiration activities of primary school pupils participating in non-formal education changing?

The specific questions concerned the following areas:

- Is there a change in pupil behaviour between the first and last classes?
- What behaviours characterise pupils in the first and last classes?
- What is the intensity of inspiration for pupils in the first and last classes?

The main objective of the research was to determine the inspiration activity of primary school pupils in the context of organised non-formal education classes.

For the above-mentioned purpose, the following scopes of detailed analysis were defined, which concerned:

- identifying changes in the number of positive and negative pupil behaviours,
- identifying changes in the types of pupil behaviours,
- identifying changes in the intensity of inspiration of pupils.

Only the acts recorded during the observation of the pupils were used for the analysis. The analysis of the research results has been presented in accordance with induction logic, i.e. from detailed to general.

Interpretation of the observation results in terms of positive and negative acts

The analysis of the results of the research in the first area concerned the change in the number of acts of inspiration for pupils in the context of their participation in the first and last classes organised in the form of non-formal education.

The overall results of the research carried out in this area show that during the initial observation the average number for positive acts was 10 and for negative acts 15. This means that during the first class, pupils showed negative behaviours much more often, i.e.: *the pupil does not show concentration and focus on the subject matter presented by the tutor (–U), the pupil shows reluctance to work (–Aip), the pupil shows a complete lack of emotional interest in the subject (–Aiz).* This may mean that they were not adequately inspired by the realised content or that their level

of knowledge in the initial classes was higher than that which was realised. Additionally, it should be noted that the first classes were largely theoretical, which may translate into a lack of inspiration activity demonstrated by the pupils.

The analysis of the final observation of pupils shows that the average number of positive acts increased and amounted to 18, and the average number of negative acts decreased to 12. This means that during the final classes, pupils much more often showed that their inspiration activity was stimulated because they were interested and motivated to carry out tasks.

Figure 1 shows the results for the studied pupils broken down by gender, presenting the division of positive and negative acts of pupils in the initial and final observations.

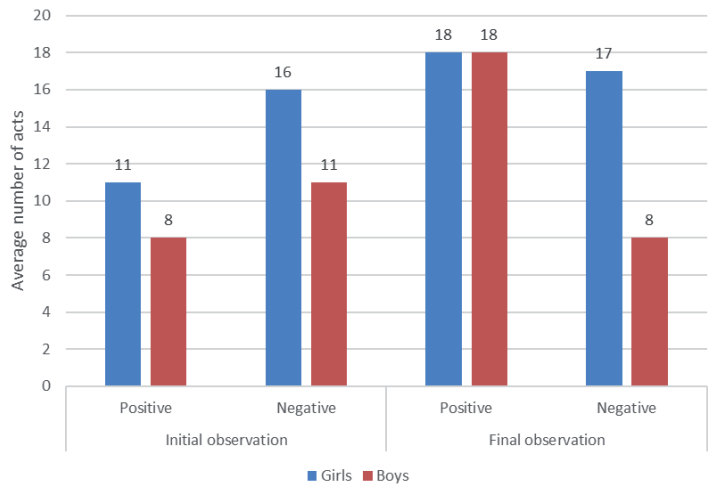

Figure 1. Distribution of the average number of acts of inspiration in the initial and final observations, broken down by gender of the pupils

The analysis of the data presented in Figure 1 shows that both boys and girls showed a similar number of positive acts of inspiration in the final observation and that the number of negative acts in girls was much higher than in boys. It should be added that the number of negative acts in girls increased compared to the initial observations. The data obtained from boys shows that there was a reverse relationship in their case. This is indicated by the number of positive acts revealed in the final observation, which increased by more than 100% compared to the initial observation. In the case of negative acts, their number decreased by 30%.

The analyses carried out with regard to the distribution of pupils by place of residence show that a greater number of positive acts during the final obser-

vation was observed in pupils from rural schools, which proves the higher inspiration activity of these respondents in relation to the respondents from city schools. It may be added that during the conducted observations no differences were observed in the number of revealed acts between girls and boys from rural schools. The outcome of this observation may indicate that non-formal education has been satisfactory for both sexes.

Based on the conducted observation, differences between the number of positive acts in girls from city schools and girls from rural schools were also noticed. Girls from rural schools showed twice as many acts as girls from city schools. This may seem to be the result of a different approach to learning.

The observations carried out indicate directly that non-formal education should include rural schools, as it brings greater benefits to pupils from these schools. This seems to be a good argument for the so-called equalising educational opportunities (Stępień 2015). This may be due to the use of practical and problem-based methods that are rarely used in rural schools, as well as a different form of education that stimulates inspiration activity in pupils.

Interpretation of the results of observations in terms of standardised pupil behaviour

Another area of research was the analysis of pupils' inspiration activity in terms of the types of acts of inspiration occurring during the initial and final observations. Figure 2 shows the average number of behaviours standardised during the initial and final observations.

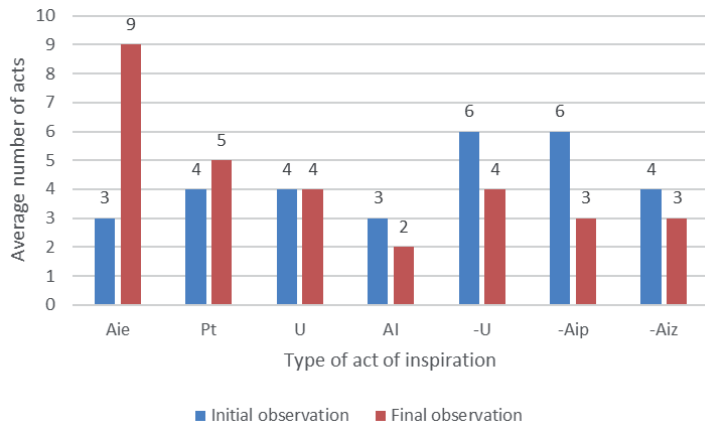

Figure 2. Distribution of the average number of acts of inspiration observed in pupils during initial and final observations

The analysis of the research results shows that the pupils during the initial observation were not properly *focused* (–U), that is, the following behaviours were observed: conversations about topics unrelated to the class, no response to the tutor's instructions, performing activities in a hurried and careless manner. In addition, the pupils showed a *reluctance to work* (–Aip), which was indicated by daydreaming and even symptoms of drowsiness. It is worth adding that during the initial observation, *a complete lack of interest in the subject* was also noted, *which was intensified by the pupil's negative emotions* (–Aiz), e.g. arrogant behaviour towards the tutor, persuading other pupils to act badly, insulting a friend, verbal taunts. The listed behaviours mean that during the initial observation some of the pupils were not adequately inspired and motivated to acquire knowledge and skills.

During the initial observation, there were also behaviours indicating *that pupils were concentrating on the subject of the work being carried out* (U), i.e. focusing on the activities performed and the teaching content conveyed. Equally often *questions were asked* (Pt), which showed that the pupils were interested in the subject of the classes. Lack of *inspiration activity* (Ai) was observed less frequently, i.e., e.g. not showing reaction to questions addressed to the pupil, as well as *emotionally coloured inspiration activity* (Aie), e.g. when giving a correct answer, joy could be seen in the pupil.

The final observation was dominated by behaviours showing a clear, *emotionally coloured inspiration activity* (Aie), which constituted 30% of all the acts of the observation. It is also worth adding that this behaviour shows that pupils have knowledge and motivation to share it with other pupils. On the basis of the observation performed, it can be assumed that the participation of pupils in non-formal education activities stimulated deep internal motivation in them (Czajkowska 2005). It should also be added that during the final observation a large number of *questions* (PT) of an explanatory nature and behaviours demonstrating *concentration* (U) were observed.

It should be noted that the non-formal education activities did not eliminate negative acts, i.e. *lack of concentration* (–U) and *reluctance to work* (–Aip). It is worth remembering that each group contains pupils who, whatever the content, methods and forms of education, have a negative attitude to learning. It is possible that some of these behaviours were represented by these pupils. It is also important to note that recorded behaviours may have occurred due to a lack of interest among the pupils.

The analysis of acts of inspiration recorded during the initial and final observations proves that the conducted classes inspired only some of the pupils participating in them. It can be assumed that the inspired group of pupils was

motivated by deep motivation, because the dominant behaviour was *emotionally coloured* inspiration (Aie). It is also worth adding that the number of negative acts had decreased by the final observation, which is a positive indicator of the impact of organised classes on the pupil's inspiration activity.

The analysis of the observation carried out was also conducted in the context of the gender of the examined pupils, the results of which are presented in Figure 3.

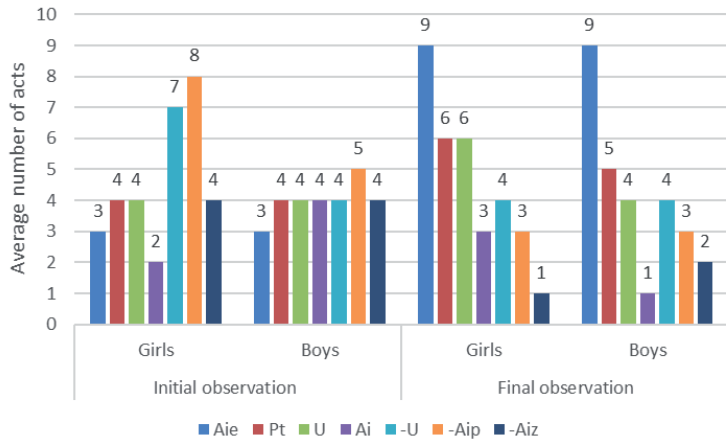

Figure 3. Distribution of the average number of acts of inspiration in the initial and final observations by gender of pupils

The obtained results indicate that during the preliminary observation, there was a large number of negative acts manifested by girls in terms of *reluctance to work* (–Aip) and *lack of concentration* (–U). This may indicate that girls were not initially interested in the subject matter of the class. Acts related to *asking questions* (Pt) and *emotional approach to the content being implemented* (Aie) constituted a smaller number. In the case of boys, the acts were distributed evenly, which shows that they were interested in the subject matter of the class.

The results of the final observation show that the conducted classes in the form of non-formal education resulted in the standardisation of pupils' behaviours, which were dominated by clear, *emotionally-coloured inspiration activity* (Aie). *Questions were asked* (Pt) equally often by both girls and boys. In addition, greater *concentration* (U) on the content was observed for both sexes.

The results of the study show a clear change in the inspiration activity of both girls and boys in the class. It is worth adding that the behaviour displayed by pupils in the final observation proves that participation in such classes inspired them to learn and aroused deep motivation in them.

The obtained results, broken down by type of school, confirm the observations made so far and show the particular need to organise such classes for pupils from rural schools.

Interpretation of the observation results in terms of changes in the intensity of inspiration of the pupils

The final scope of the analysis of the pupil's inspiration activity was to determine the intensity of inspiration during the 60-minute initial and final observations. Figure 4 shows the average inspiration activity of pupils during the initial and final observations.

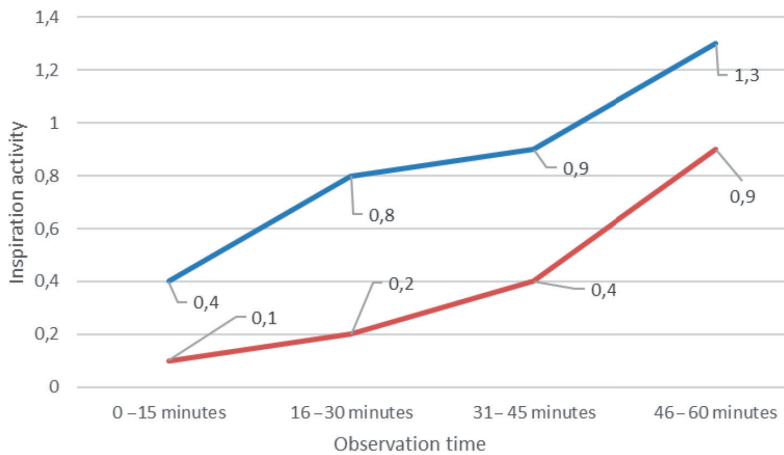

Figure 4. Inspiration activity of pupils during the initial and final observation

Analysing the course of inspiration activity in individual quarters during the preliminary observation, it shows that the highest value of inspiration activity was achieved by the pupils in the last quarter of an hour of preliminary observation. The average value of the achieved inspiration activity in this quarter of an hour indicates that the pupils displayed behaviours such as: *pronounced emotionally coloured inspiration activity* (Aie), as well as a clear desire to learn by *asking questions* (Pt). It can be assumed that the occurrence of the highest value of inspiration activity in this quarter of an hour was associated with the performance of practical tasks. Another high degree of inspiration activity took place during the third quarter of an hour of observation. The pupils mainly demonstrated behaviours related to *explicit inspiration activity expressed by asking ques-*

tions (Pt). It seems that the occurrence of these behaviours was caused by the discussion of the elements of the *Lego Mindstorms NXT 2.0* set and the *questions asked* (Pt) were mainly of an explanatory nature. The lowest value of inspiration activity was obtained by the pupils in the second quarter of an hour of observation, which may be the result of the lack of courage to ask more questions.

During the final observation, high values of inspiration activity were maintained for the same quarter-hour observation, similarly to the initial observation. However, it should be added that the pupil's inspiration activity was much lower than in the first class.

It can be said that pupils' inspiration activity increased with observation time. This is a very interesting conclusion, as pupil activity in traditional classes is considered to decrease over time. In this case, the effect of the participation of pupils in non-formal education was the opposite.

The observation results were also compiled in the context of the gender division of the studied pupils, and the observation results are presented in Figure 5.

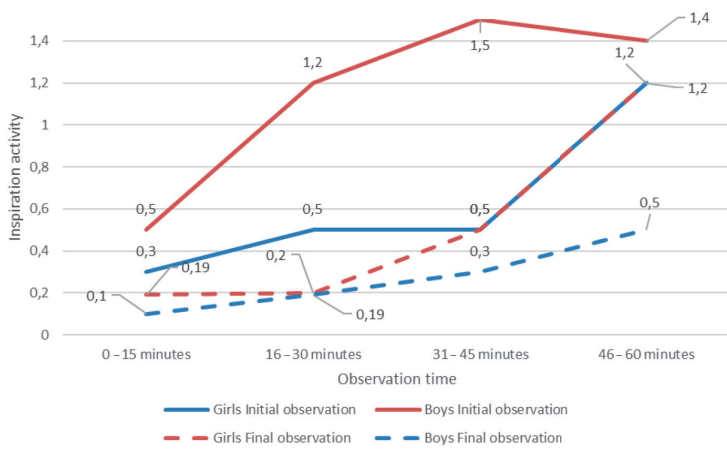

Figure 5. Inspiration activity of pupils during the preliminary and final observation, broken down by gender of the respondents

The analysis of inspiration activity broken down by gender shows that during the initial observation boys showed high inspiration activity in the initial phase of observation, unlike the girls. This seems to be due to their higher initial knowledge. In the case of final observation, girls' inspiration activity was significantly higher than boys' activity.

In the case of dividing pupils according to their place of residence, the obtained results are presented in Figure 6.

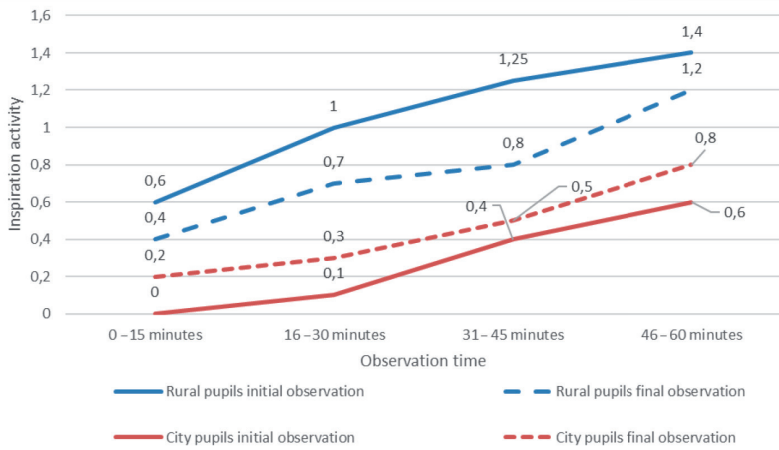

Figure 6. Inspiration activity of pupils during initial and final observations by place of residence

As regards the type of school, the inspiration activity for both groups of pupils increased with the time of observation; however, the inspiration activity of pupils from rural schools during the initial and final observations definitely exceeded the activity of pupils from city schools. This conclusion confirms the previous observations that classes in the form of non-formal education are more important in stimulating the inspiration activity of pupils from rural schools.

Conclusion

The conducted observational research confirms that non-formal education activities that concern a topic other than those conducted at schools can inspire and motivate primary school pupils to learn.

In the first part, it is worth noting that as a result of pupils' participation in non-formal education, their behaviour changed from negative to positive. The change focused mainly on the number of positive acts, which were noted significantly more often during the final observation. In the case of negative acts, their number in the final observation halved in relation to the initial observation. This research shows that non-formal education has a positive impact on pupils' inspiration activity. The research also found that boys displayed a greater number of acts. In the context of the division of pupils by type of school, a greater number of acts was recorded in pupils from rural schools. This may be

due to the lack of support for pupils from rural schools with additional forms of education, during which they are inspired and motivated to learn.

In the second part of the detailed analysis, it should be stated that during the initial observation, the majority of standardised behaviours are: *lack of concentration of attention* (–U), r*eluctance to work* (–Aip), *complete lack of interest in the subject* (–Aiz). These behaviours seem to have been the result of a lack of knowledge of pupils in terms of the content of the education, the form of the teaching and the methods used. The pupils were reluctant to work, as the beginning reminded them of the traditional form of school classes. The distribution of the acts of inspiration during the final observation was completely opposite. A predominance of acts of *concentration* (U), *questions* (Pt) and *emotionally coloured inspiration activity* (Aie) was observed.

The girls from the start of the initial observation showed behaviour of *reluctance to work* (–Aip) and *complete lack of interest* (–Aiz). This may have been the result of their lack of knowledge in this area. It is worth adding that their behaviour changed during the workshop and they mainly demonstrated positive behaviour: *concentration* (U) and *asking questions* (Pt). The group of boys in the initial observation was very diverse and represented all kinds of acts of inspiration. As a result of the classes, their behaviours were manifested in the form of positive acts and were associated with *asking questions* (Pt) and *emotionally coloured inspiration* (Aie). The most important conclusion in the type of school is that urban school pupils did not show significant inspiration.

The final aspect of the study was to verify the intensity of inspiration during the observation time. The presented research results show that the inspiration intensity of pupils increases during non-formal education classes. This means that organised classes, in contrast to the traditional form of education, stimulate pupils' inspiration activity and motivate them to learn. It is worth noting that in almost all groups the effect of the increasing value of inspiration activity occurred. Therefore, regardless of the type of mediating variable, during the initial and final observations of pupils' inspiration activity, the inspiration activity of pupils increased with their participation in the workshops.

In conclusion, it should be stated that teachers looking for inspiration for their pupils should look for out-of-school forms of education, because, as the presented research results show, during classes in which the pupil pursues his interests, he gains knowledge and skills that are important to him and the inspiration activity he needs is properly stimulated and developed.

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SUMMARY

The article presents the results of research aimed at identifying the inspiration activities of primary school pupils in non-formal education activities. The article sets out the following research issue: How do the inspiration activities of primary school pupils participating in non-formal education change? The specific questions concerned the following areas: Is there a change in pupils' behaviour between the first and last classes? What behaviours characterise pupils in the first and last classes? What is the intensity of inspiration for pupils in the first and last classes?

The research was carried out by the method of controlled direct observation with the use of recording means, i.e. video cameras.

At present, teachers benefit from additional forms of education which are designed to support the teaching process. This is an interesting environment for research exploration because there is no research in this area in the context of inspiration of pupils. Therefore, it seems that in the future, education will be largely based on additional classes for pupils in the form of non-formal education.

Research shows that 1 in 2 primary school pupils participating in non-formal education have changed their behaviour from negative to positive. In addition, in the last classes the pupils were characterised by behaviours that were defined by the highest degree of inspiration. It is worth adding that the intensity of the inspiration of pupils increased during observation, from the initial to the final observations.

KEYWORDS: pupil, primary school, activation, non-formal education

STRESZCZENIE

W artykule przedstawiono wyniki badań mających na celu identyfikację aktywności inspiracyjnej działań uczniów szkół podstawowych w edukacji pozaformalnej. W artykule postawiono następujący problem badawczy: Jak zmienia się aktywność inspiracyjna uczniów szkół podstawowych, uczestniczących w edukacji pozaformalnej? Pytania szczegółowe dotyczyły następujących obszarów:

Czy nastąpiła zmiana w aktywności inspiracyjnej uczniów pomiędzy pierwszym a ostatnim?

Jakie zachowania charakteryzują uczniów na pierwszych i ostatnich zajęciach?

Jakie jest natężenie aktywności inspiracyjnej uczniów na pierwszych i ostatnich zajęciach?

Badania przeprowadzono metodą kontrolowanej obserwacji bezpośredniej z wykorzystaniem środków rejestrujących, jakimi jest kamera wideo.

Obecnie nauczyciele korzystają z dodatkowych form kształcenia, których zadaniem jest wspieranie procesu dydaktycznego. Jest to ciekawe środowisko do eksplo-

racji badawczej, gdyż brak jest badań w tym zakresie w kontekście inspiracji uczniów. Wydaje się zatem, że w przyszłości edukacja będzie w dużej mierze opierać się na zajęciach dodatkowych dla uczniów – w formie edukacji pozaformalnej.

Wyniki badań pokazują, że 1 na 2 uczniów szkół podstawowych uczestniczących w edukacji pozaformalnej zmienił swoje zachowanie z negatywnego na pozytywne. Dodatkowo na ostatnich zajęciach uczniowie charakteryzowali się zachowaniami, które przejawiały się najwyższym stopniem inspiracji. Warto dodać, że intensywność inspiracji uczniów wzrastała w trakcie obserwacji, od obserwacji początkowej do końcowej.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: uczeń, szkoła podstawowa, aktywizacja, edukacja pozaformalna

TOMASZ WARCHOŁ – Uniwersytet Rzeszowski

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