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The 5th International Scientific Symposium “The Well-Being as a Pedagogical Category”

*V Międzynarodowe Sympozjum Naukowe
„Dobrostan jako kategoria pedagogiczna”*

On May 12, 2025, the 5th International Scientific Symposium, entitled “The Well-Being as a Pedagogical Category”, was held. It was organized by the Department of Didactics at the Institute of Pedagogy of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. The event, which gathered over one hundred participants online, was held under the honorary patronage of the Rector of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Prof. Radosław Dobrowolski; the Chairwoman of the Pedagogy Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Prof. Agnieszka Cybal-Michalska; the Mayor of Lublin, Dr. Krzysztof Żuk; and the Lublin Education Superintendent, Tomasz Szabłowski. The introductory remarks, delivered by Dr. Teresa Parczewska, Prof. at Maria Curie-Skłodowska and Head of the Department of Didactics, briefly summarized the ten-year history of the symposia and presented the rationale for choosing this year’s theme. The event was officially opened by Dr. Stanisława Byra, Prof. at Maria Curie-Skłodowska, Director of the Institute of Pedagogy. Prof. Dr. hab. Agnieszka Cybal-Michalska, Chairwoman of the Pedagogy Committee of Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences addressed the participants with words of welcome.

During two plenary sessions, participants listened to inspiring presentations by international experts on issues related to student mental well-being, creativity, the neurobiological foundations of motivation, and educational innovation. The presentations of the international speakers were available for translation into Polish. The sessions were moderated by Dr. Urszula Oszwa, Prof. at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University.

The first part of the plenary session began with a presentation by Associate Prof. Lenka Sokolova, PhD (Institute of Applied Psychology, Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava). In her presentation, “The Role of School Variables in Adolescent Hedonistic Well-Being”, she presented the results of a study conducted among Slovak adolescents ($N = 9,697$), which showed that hedonistic well-being declines with age, especially in girls. A positive attitude toward school and social support were also strongly correlated with higher levels of well-being. Next, Dr. Ela Luria and Dr. Maya Shalon (Levinsky College of Education, Tel Aviv) presented a paper entitled “Neurobiological Insights into Motivation and Learning: Reimagining Self-Determination Theory”. The researchers cited neurobiological research showing that exploratory, rewarded behaviors activate the hippocampus through the release of dopamine, which promotes the formation of deep and connected memories. In turn, behaviors motivated by avoiding punishment stimulate the amygdala and lead to fragmented memories in the paramedical cortex. Before the break, Dr. Katarzyna Sadowska, Prof. at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (Faculty of Educational Studies), also spoke. In her presentation, “The Child in Jerzy Hamerski’s Poznań »Łejerska« Pedagogy – an Example of Good Educational Practices”, she presented a model of educational work used in a Poznań primary school, presenting the child as a subject of an active and communal learning process.

The second part of the plenary session included four presentations. Dr. Anna Ozga (Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce), in her lecture entitled “Student Mental Well-Being in Jesper Juul’s Pedagogy”, presented the concept of well-being as being associated with students’ mental health and developed psychosocial competencies. Next, Prof. Vilmos Vass (Budapest Metropolitan University) and Prof. Tímea Mészáros (J. Selye University, Komarno), in their presentation entitled “The Relationship Between Well-Being and Creative Thinking Skills in Education”, presented the CAT (Creative Analytical Thinking) model, demonstrating that a properly designed educational environment – based on four metaphorical “climates” – sun, storm, space, and soil – conduces both the development of students’ creativity and their well-being. The next presentation belonged to Prof. María Laura Angelini Doffo (Valencia Catholic University Saint Vincent Martyr, Spain), who in her presentation entitled “Teacher Education Through Integrated Dialogic and Simulation-Based Learning” emphasized the importance of integrating dialogue and simulation in teacher education. She believed that the quality of relationships within the teaching team plays a key role in creating an effective learning environment. The meeting concluded with a presentation by Josefin Winther (Rudolf Steiner University College, Oslo), entitled “Extended

Epistemology as a Foundation for Didactical Innovation”. The speaker highlighted the value of John Heron and Peter Reason’s extended epistemology as a foundation for didactical innovation, emphasizing that knowledge has a holistic and personal dimension, and that well-being is an integral part of the learning process.

The question-and-answer sessions and panel discussions proved particularly valuable, allowing for in-depth reflection and exchange of ideas. The plenary session was concluded by Prof. Teresa Parczewska, Head of the Department of Didactics, who invited participants to the next edition of the event in 2027.

In the afternoon part of the symposium, the participants had the opportunity to engage in practical activities that complemented the theoretical reflections discussed in the plenary sessions. In the intimate atmosphere of the workshop, the participants could experience various forms of activities supporting well-being in education. The workshop “The Benevolent (Active) Touch of Clay”, led by Magdalena Palec, MA, and Irena Rucz, MA, allowed the participants to discover the therapeutic potential of working with art materials. A parallel workshop titled “Dyslexia – an Ever-Current Problem” was held, led by Agata Matuszewska, MA, with passion and practical flair, highlighting current challenges and effective strategies for supporting students with learning disabilities. There were also activities for those who enjoy expressive movement. Marcin Snuzik, MA, invited the participants to participate in the workshop “Dance Animator in Preschool and School”, presenting dance as a form of support for children’s psychosocial development. In turn, Dawid Reja, MA, who led the course “Practice and Analysis of Free Movement Based on LMA (Laban Movement Analysis)”, enabled the participants to in-depth experience of the body and movement as carriers of expression, communication and well-being.

The regularly organized symposium has confirmed its importance as a valued international forum for the exchange of knowledge and experiences, presenting well-being as an important, multidimensional aspect of contemporary pedagogy.