Bullying and Special Needs. A handbook

edited by:

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Introduction

This publication concerns two closely related issues: **peer aggression in schools (bullying)** and **special needs arising from conditions** such as ADHD, hearing impairment, intellectual disability and learning difficulties.

Why have those two areas been presented together in a single volume?

The main reason lies in research data (pretty scattered in the literature) showing that children and adolescents with special educational needs are relatively often victims and perpetrators of peer aggression. Such problems may occur particularly when special needs students and students with no such problems learn together within the same educational setting.

Due to this we believe that an awareness of individual and social mechanisms that can lead to peer aggression when special needs children become perpetrators or victims is vital for every professional working with such children.

As editors of this publication we have been coordinating two scientific teams for the past 1,5 years.

In the Pedagogy Academy in Lodz, Poland the researchers have been working mostly on issues of selected groups of special needs children and their connection to peer aggression. Additionally, they focused on electronic aggression (cyberbullying) and socio-cultural factors that may cause aggression in schools. In Norway , the team at the University of Stavanger worked directly on the topic of bullying – its definition, causes and consequences. The researchers there also worked on the presentation of Program Zero, which is a comprehensive prevention and intervention solution to bullying in Norwegian schools.

We have compiled a total of 10 educational modules – four of them have been prepared by the Norwegian team and six of them by the Polish team.

Each of the modules consists of:

1. A text based on the most recent research data concerning the subject of the chapter

2. An educational film – with reference to the module, it presents educational methods, mini-lectures, interviews with practitioners, etc.

3. A workshop conspectus – the scenario that can be used for training of teachers or other professionals working with special needs students.

4. Test questions concerning the issues presented in the chapter.

The publication may be treated as a comprehensive course concerning bullying and special needs. At the same time individual units may be used as components of other courses, e.g. a special education course where the particular disabilities are studied. Materials may also be used for self study – practitioners may broaden their knowledge on the issues presented in the book.

We encourage everybody to take advantage of the materials and hope that they will contribute to reducing the number of incidents involving special needs young people as victims or perpetrators of school bullying.

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Illustrations

Ben wakes up with tummy ache. Again. He usually does. Not at weekends or during the school holidays, but on the days he has to go to school. It is particularly bad the days he knows the boys in the other year arrive at the same time as him. Like today. As so many times before, Matt and John are waiting for him behind the garage at the end of the lane. First they jump out and frighten him. And he is frightened. Really frightened! Because he knows there is more to come. Matt pulls his bag off him. As he does so, he yanks Ben's arm round so it hits John. That's all John needs. 'Hit me, would you?' he yells. 'No,' answers Ben.

'Ben tells lies too,' says John. So Ben deserves the beating he gets. Matt and John run off to school. Ben drags along afterwards. The teacher notices that Ben seems out of sorts in the first lesson. Is he staying up too late in the evening maybe?

The girls in 6A are skipping together at break time. They stand in two long rows, jump in from alternate sides, pass each other, and then out. At the back of one row, stands Laura. The girls in front of her bunch together. They don't want to touch Laura or her clothes. Then it is Laura's turn to jump in. From the other side, it is Chloe's turn. But as Laura jumps in, Chloe stands still. When Laura has jumped out again, the others carry on. Nobody wants to jump with Laura. It's always the same. In the corridor, nobody wants to hang his or her coat too close to hers. If her coat comes to close, they move their things away to a safe distance. They don't often say anything nasty to Laura, but they often bunch closer together and whisper when she comes near. Around her it is like a charged electrical field, which keeps others at their distance. In the art room, they sit two to a table, except Laura who sits alone. It's been like this since year 2. Laura often wonders if it will be different at secondary school.

It is nearly time for lunch. The pupils in woodwork take a break. Sam is happy with the box he is making. It is almost finished. They get out their lunchboxes in the canteen, but Sam can't find his. He knows he had it in his bag, but now it's gone. He looks in the bin and finds it there. This isn't the first time. After the break, they are to carry on with what they are making. In the corridor outside the classroom, Paul and Josh make remarks about Sam's hairstyle and clothes. They make everyone laugh. Sam tries to take it in good part, and laughs too, but that must just look stupid, because then they laugh even more. Someone adds that Sam eats out of the bin too. Sam is faced with a mixture of disgust and laughter. Back in woodwork, he finds his box. Someone has been 'helping'. The box, which looked really good an hour ago, is completely destroyed. Sam sighs. He has experienced things like this before. Yet again, he has to take a piece of messed up work and ask the teacher for more

materials. The teacher is irritated because Sam, who occasionally shows some ability, continually upsets the teaching plan! With a resigned sigh, he starts Sam off again, asks him to pull himself together and use his ability. Sam just stands there and listens helplessly.

Sam, Laura and Ben are victims of bullying. Paul and Josh, Chloe, the other girls around Laura, Matt and John are all active participants in bullying. They are bullies.

Background

A Swedish doctor of medicine, Peter-Paul Heinemann (1973) was the first to describe bullying among humans, and he did this based on his own observations in school yards. Shortly thereafter, the Swedish psychologist and professor Dan Olweus, published his now famous study of bullying among Swedish preadolescent boys (1978) and concluded that approximately 5% were victims of serious bullying. About the same percentage bullied others persistently. In addition, he identified a much smaller group, the bully-victims that had both roles. A third Swede, psychologist Anatol Pikas, followed up with the first book written on how to stop bullying (1976). These three books obviously had a great impact in the Nordic countries. In Finland professor Kjersti Lagerspetz and colleagues started around 1980 a strong research tradition (1982), which not at least professor Christina Salmivalli (2005) and colleagues have carried forward in an excellent way.

Council of Europe hosted the first international conference on bullying, which was arranged in Stavanger, Norway, in 1987. This event was obviously very important for the spread of interest and competence in Western Europe, as about 35 researchers, professionals and policy makers from the member countries worked together for one week under the supervision of the council official representative, Mona O'Moore, now professor at Trinity College in Dublin (O'Moore, 1989). Few of the researchers present were at that time particularly familiar with the topic of bullying, but their theoretical competence on different forms of antisocial behaviour was crucial for taking up research and practical work on bullying, which many did. A book in English mostly based on the conference lectures, was published (Roland & Munthe, 1989).

Since about 1990, research and public concern about bullying has become international, and this interest continues to spread.

The OECD-conference "Taking fear out of schools" took place in Stavanger, Norway, in 2004 with participants from all parts of the world. The need to focus on bullying was highlighted, and the need to learn from each other. The Prime Minister of Norway presented the Norwegian Manifesto against Bullying, and meant that it was his government's task to do everything they could to prevent bullying and violence in schools and in other sectors of society.

Some nation's policy in the work were presented and the need for more research to find out which working models will give good results. The conference showed that the work against bullying and violence is international and there is a need to disseminate the research that is carried out to policymakers and practitioners. Use of international networks could be a good help in this task (Munthe et al., 2004).

The "Kandersteg Declaration Against Bullying in Children and Youth" was made in Kandersteg, Switzerland, in 2007 by researchers from the whole world. They estimated that 200 million children and youth around the world were abused by their peers. They stated among other things that every child and youth had the right to be respected and safe and that it is a moral responsibility of adults to ensure that these rights are honoured and that healthy development and citizenship are promoted.

The researchers strongly recommended to:

- Stop bullying immediately.
- Start prevention efforts early and continue these.
- Educate and empower all adults involved with children and youth.
- Use policy and prevention programs, based on scientific research.
- Provide ongoing assessment and monitoring necessary to evaluate the success of policy and programs and to guarantee the rights of children and youth (www.kanderstegdeclaration.org).

Facts about bullying

What Is Bullying?

By bullying, we mean mental and/or physical abuse of a victim, carried out by individuals or groups. Bullying assumes an unequal power relationship between the victim and the victimiser, and that the episodes are repeated over time (Olweus & Roland, 1983; Olweus, 1993; Rigby, Smith & Pepler, 2004; Roland, 1989).

For research purposes, a problem has to occur a number of times before it is counted as bullying. In research, we normally talk of bullying when the problem occurs weekly or more often, or around 2-3 times a month. However, for the child being bullied, episodes, which occur less frequently than once a week, can also be a considerable burden, and bullying which occurs less frequently should still be met with an active response from adults in schools. Physical bullying, exclusion and teasing are the most common forms of traditional bullying.

From the definition above, bullying usually implies repeated episodes of aggression. However, events which affect a pupil only once can also have the characteristics of bullying.

In recent years a new kind of bullying has arisen – electronic bullying, with the use of mobile telephone, PC and the Internet. Today there is a widespread use of new technology for communication purpose. It is technically possible to communicate to anyone anywhere. This opens for an easier and more extended contact between people, and is used for many positive purposes. Unfortunately it is also possible to use digital means to hurt others, for instance by bullying. This can take the form of unpleasant conversations, text messages, sending pictures and small films of episodes, exclusion from web sites, etc. In these cases bullying is different from traditional bullying in that the bully and the victim are not face-to-face when the bullying is carried out. For the victim it is difficult to find a place free from bullying (Shariff, 2008).

It appeared, when electronic bullying research was in its early stage, that to a certain degree different children were involved in this type of bullying compared to the traditional forms, even though there was a certain overlap (Roland, 2002b; Auestad & Roland, 2005). Recently, however, it seems that those who are victim in cyberbullying weekly or more often, almost always are victims in traditional bullying also (Auestad, in press).

The causes and mechanisms in mobile phone bullying have not been researched in the same way as ordinary bullying. In Module 5 you can read more about electronic bullying.

Prevalence

On the basis of several studies of bullying, we can conclude that 5-10% of pupils of primary or middle school (age up to 16) are bullied weekly or more often by fellow pupils. This is around 10% of the youngest pupils and around 5% of the older pupils (Olweus 1993; Roland, 2003; Smith et al., 1999).

The main tendencies for victims of bullying:

- boys are slightly more likely than girls to be victims of bullying;
- the occurrence of bullying decreases with age, but the decrease is smaller for boys than for girls;
- verbal bullying is the most frequent type of bullying experienced by both girls and boys;
- boys are more likely to be victims of physical bullying than girls, but girls are slightly more likely to be victims of exclusion

(Olweus, 1993; Roland, 1999; Smith et al., 1999).

We can, on the basis of several studies, assume that at least 5% of pupils in primary or middle school take part in bullying fellow pupils weekly or more often (Olweus, 1993; Roland 2003, Smith et al., 1999).

The main tendencies in those who bully others:

- boys are more active than girls, and this difference increases with age;
- the number of boys who bully fellow pupils increases noticeably as they get older;
- the number of girls who bully fellow pupils is relatively stable at all ages;
- boys use physical bullying more than girls and girls often use exclusion;
- both boys and girls use teasing

(Bjørqvist, Lagerspetz & Kaukiainen, 1992; Olweus, 1993; Roland, 1999; Smith et al., 1999).

Bullying and Sexual Orientation

In many parts of the world homosexual and bisexual persons are discriminated systematically. They are denied fundamental rights, and homosexuality is forbidden by the law (Barne-og likestillingsdepartementet, 2008). As a group homosexual and bisexual persons are vulnerable, and there have been little research about bullying and this group. We think it is important to have knowledge about this and will therefore report the results from a survey in Norway.

The last years there have been a special interest in Norway and other countries to find out more about bullying and sexual orientation. Homosexual and bisexual persons may have a good life, but as a group they suffer more than others from drugs, psychiatric problems, depression and risk of suicide. Homosexual and bisexual persons have been marginalized, they have been seen upon as not normal, and they were condemned by the church and risked to be put into jail (Cochran, 2001; Barne- og likestillingsdepartementet, 2008).

In 2008 Centre for Behavioural Research carried out a survey on behalf of the Norwegian Government among 3046 Norwegian pupils in year 10, 16 years of age. The pupils were asked about their sexual attitude and whether they were bullied or bullied others themselves.

92.5% were heterosexual; 94.2% boys and 90.8% girls. 3.1% had homosexual orientation: 3.2% boys and 2.7% girls. 4.5% were bisexual: 2.7% boys and 6.6% girls. The bisexual and the homosexual pupils had very high scores on depression and anxiety compared with the others. It was also found that bisexual and homosexual pupils were victims of bullying much more than heterosexual pupils in all ways: by traditional ways, by mobile phone and by the Internet. Overall 6.6% of the heterosexual pupils were bullied 2-3 times a month or more often, 15.2% of those who were bisexual and 34.8% of the homosexuals. The homosexual boys were victims far more than the homosexual girls. 48% of the boys were bullied 2-3 times a month or more often and 17.7% of the girls. For the bisexual boys and girls the figures were 23.8% against 11.5%. The correspondent figures for heterosexual pupils were 7.3% and 5.7% (Roland & Auestad, 2009).

It was also reported that bisexual and homosexual pupils, especially boys, bullied others much more often than heterosexual pupils. 52% of homosexual boys bullied others 2-3 times a month or more often, 20.5% homosexual girls, 26.2% bisexual boys, 2.1% bisexual girls, 10.3% heterosexual boys and 3.8% heterosexual girls. Further analyses showed that the sexual orientation alone was not an important factor for bullying others. The most important factor was being a victim. The second factor was anxiety. Both bisexual and homosexual orientation has effect on being a victim and to be anxious. In that way the sexual orientation have an indirect impact on bullying others (Roland & Auestad, 2009).

Characteristics of those involved and causes of bullying

It should be stressed that average tendencies cannot be seen as a description, which makes it easy to pick out either victims or bullies. There is great variation and many victims or bullies will not fit the average descriptions. Similarly many pupils who display the characteristics described below will not be involved in bullying at all. The characteristics described must therefore be treated with caution. Also, there will often be a problem of cause and effect. This is particularly the case with victims of bullying.

Victims of Bullying

To the surprise of many, appearance does not seem to play an important role in who gets bullied. Boys who are bullied are less physically strong than average. This characteristic does not seem to affect girls. Among children of the same age, victims of bullying are often less popular than average and they are often more lonely at school and in their free time than other pupils. Their friends are often younger than they are (Olweus, 1993; Roland 1999; Smith & Sharp, 1994).

Emotional problems are more widespread among victims of bullying than among others of the same age. This includes, for example, symptoms of depression, suicidal thoughts and sleep problems. Victims of bullying often suffer more from physical problems, such as muscle pain, stomach ache, headache and colds (Bru et al., 1998; Olweus, 1993; Roland, 2002a). Being bullied is probably an important reason for these sufferings, but not a significant reason for being bullied (Roland, 2002a).

Most victims of bullying are slightly anxious. They often show signs of powerlessness in stressful social situations, by being afraid or crying easily when things go against them. Victims of bullying may do less well than average at school and have a worse self-image than normal (Olweus, 1993; O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001). These traits are partly caused by being bullied in the past. At given point of time, however, they are also a risk factor for being bullied (Roland, 2002a; Salmivalli, 2005).

Even if the general picture of a victim of bullying is a vulnerable person, anyone can in principle become vulnerable. For example, we sometimes see socially strong pupils, who may be potential leaders, being bullied by other pupils who feel their own leadership role threatened. Some children probably try to disarm a possible competitor by bullying them, thus retaining their own position of power. Such a competition for power between bullies is, however, a question for further research.

Those Who Bully Others

As a group, bullies are quite similar to the average in both appearance and school performance (Olweus, 1993; Smith et al., 1999).

Among boys, bullies are as a rule physically stronger than average. There does not appear to be a similar variation from the norm among girls who bully others (Olweus, 1993; Roland, 1999).

The self-image of bullies does not differ greatly from the average. There is, however, some discussion about the extent to which a bully's self-image is normal. Some studies show that bullies score normally on tests of self-image while other studies show a certain negative tendency among bullies (Björkqvist, Ekman & Lagerspetz, 1982; Olweus, 1993; O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001). The variation may have to do with what one considers relevant to the concept of 'self-image'. Bullies report, for example, higher levels of depressive symptoms and suicidal thoughts than pupils who are not involved in bullying (Roland, 2002a).

Bullies are on average almost as popular among fellow pupils as others. However, it does appear that a considerable amount of this recognition comes from other bullies, or so-called 'co-runners' both within and outside of their own class at school. This pattern of popularity can become a negative environmental factor, which contributes to continued bullying. Relationships to negative models outside school can also contribute to a continuation of bullying (Olweus, 1993; Roland 1999; Svennson, 1999).

We know that bullies have a considerably higher chance of developing criminal behaviour than other pupils (Olweus, 1993). In some cases, bullying can be a step in the development of more extensive negative behaviour patterns. Bullies as a group show a higher level of aggression than the norm. We will come back to this in a later chapter.

Who Bullies Who?

Boys bully boys and girls. They bully pupils in their own year group and other years. Girls mainly bully other girls and most often girls in their own year group (Olweus, 1993; Roland, 1999).

These variations are gender typical.

Boys' companionship is often linked to activity, i.e., you are together because you are doing the same thing. This does not necessarily presuppose a close relationship between the boys. You are 'mates'

because you play football together. When the pattern of companionship is mainly of this type, you may choose a victim you don't really know very well. Bullying itself can also be the activity you have in common with each other (Bjerrum Nielsen & Rudberg, 1989).

In girls' companionship, the relationship is often the most important element. You are together because you are friends. You do an activity together because you want to be together. The activity is, to a certain extent, secondary to the relationship (Bjerrum Nielsen & Rudberg, 1989). With this as the starting point, bullying for girls has the greatest effect when it is directed towards someone you have a relationship to, preferably someone who wants to be with those doing the bullying. Then the exclusion becomes extra painful and clearly shows who is in and who is out.

Some pupils are both victim and bully (Olweus, 1993; Svennson, 1999). These so-called bully-victims (Olweus, 1993) may be difficult to help if they are allowed to go on as bullies. One reason is that it is easy to justify bullying them by saying they deserve it.

Family Relationships

When we look at average tendencies, there is little that distinguishes the families of victims from families of children not involved in bullying. There is, however, a possibility that some victims of bullying are overprotected by their guardians. It is easy to understand how certain protectiveness can result from parents seeing that their child is bullied. But again we cannot say with any certainty whether this relationship is caused by the bullying or whether this type of behaviour in the family makes the child more likely to be bullied (Rican, 1995; Roland, 1999; Svennson, 1999).

The family relationships of those who carry out bullying are varied. Bullies come from families with higher or lower social ranking. However, we do know that difficult family relationships are associated with all types of antisocial behaviour including bullying. On the whole, the families of children who bully differ from the average in that the children experience more discord and less stability between the adults, less warmth and positive support from the adults and more unstable and inconsistent boundaries or rules for what is right and wrong (Olweus, 1980; Rican, 1995; Svennson, 1999).

The parents or guardians of some bullies are probably negative role models for their children in the way they talk about other children and adults, and in the way they behave. These tendencies create a causal relationship for bullying which is linked to basic learning in the family (Wasserman & Seracini, 2001; Roland, 1999).

Psychology of Bullying

The Swedish pioneer, Peter-Paul Heinemann, thought that bullying was a group attack against a kid who disturbed ongoing activities in this group. Heinemann then obviously adopted a frustration-aggression approach to explain bullying. Another term for this mechanism is reactive aggression, which means that the attack is fuelled by anger and that this anger is trigged by an aversive event, for example goal blocking, threat or humiliation (Berkowitz, 1993; Dodge, 1991; Dodge & Coie, 1987).

Heinemann was not completely wrong, but more recent research has revealed that bullying is predominantly proactive aggression (Roland & Idsøe, 2001; Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002). This aggression is not anger driven, but conducted to achieve some social rewards. Consider the figure below (Roland, 2007).

Figure 1.

Proactive aggression and interactions in bullying
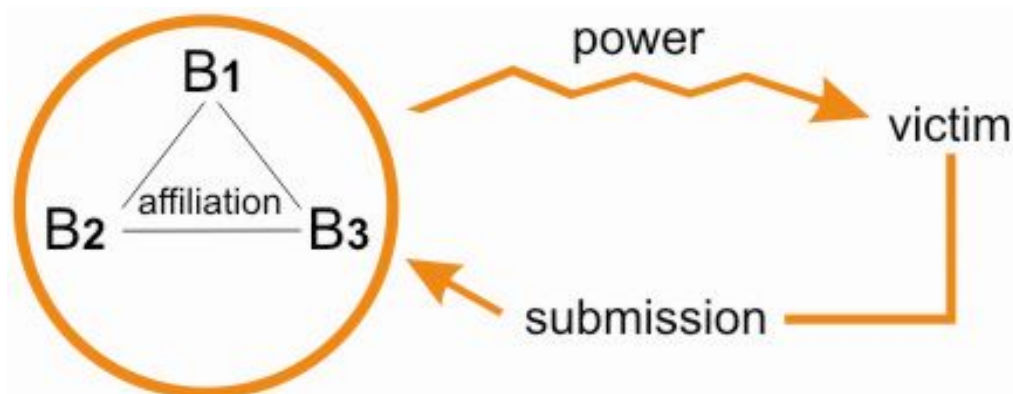
B1, 2, 3 means bullies who jointly attack a victim. One main reward for the bullies lies with the bully-victim interaction, which is power by observing submission from the victim. Such signs of submission may be tears, fear, anxiety or general helplessness. The reward is a special form of power, then, namely that coming from seeing another person being humiliated. Many researchers have addressed this power dimension of proactive aggression and more or less explicitly regarded it as the main reward (Vitaro & Brendgen, 2005; Roland & Idsøe, 2001). However, it is also theorised that another main reward is to be found in the interactions between the co-bullies, and they suggested a two-factor

model for proactive aggression. During the bullying event, they argued, the bullies expose to each other a common dislike of the victim, which will momentary increase the in group feeling – or affiliation – between them. The reward is not conceived as ordinary affiliation, then, but a special form coming from common antagonism.

The main conception, then, is that aggressive behaviour, for example bullying, can be predicted from particular motives for certain rewards coming from aggressive acts. These motives will vary in strength from person to person.

Roland and Idsøe (2001) measured the motives for these particular rewards related to proactive aggression, power (ProPow) and affiliation (ProAff) and found that both predicted bullying strongly in secondary school. At this age (14-16 years old), reactive aggressiveness (ReAgg) did not predict bullying.

In primary school reactive aggressiveness (ReAgg) predicted bullying significantly and substantially, but the joint predictive power of ProPow and ProAff was stronger than that of ReAgg.

For young kids in primary school, the Swedish pioneer Heinemann (1973) was not completely wrong, then, by stating that bullying was reactive aggression. The most correct description is probably, however, that some bullying among young kids is anger driven while the majority also at this age is proactive aggression.

Inhibitions

Despite their own behaviour, most bullies believe that bullying is wrong. They often dissociate themselves theoretically from the type of actions they carry out and they feel some form of guilt (Rigby, 1997; Roland, 1999). There are three fairly automatic mechanisms, which reduce this sense of guilt and inhibitions (Olweus, 1993; Roland, 1983; 1999).

First, the group issue is important again. Group behaviour seldom gives the same sense of responsibility as individual behaviour does. A certain diminishing of responsibility occurs when others are also involved in an action. The individual's experience of guilt is reduced by the fact that 'all the others' are doing it too. Thus the individual's responsibility disappears in the shadow of the group (Olweus, 1993; Roland, 1999).

Second, those doing the bullying will, over time, develop a psychological distance from the victim. This involves defining reality in such a way that negative actions are put into a context, which makes them more acceptable. The bullies will, for example, emphasise qualities or behaviour in the victim, which make the victim different from themselves. When this is taken to an extreme, we see that the victim is almost denied human characteristics, and becomes so 'different' from the others that it becomes 'legitimate' for the bullies to do things to the victim that they would not otherwise find acceptable to do to anyone. Thoughts are created, an image of reality, which the bullies use to reduce their own sense of guilt. Negative actions are no longer so wrong, because they are done to a person who does not deserve any better. One's own responsibility is explained away. When this happens, the pain the bully experiences at committing the deeds becomes less. When episodes are repeated, this too breaks down inhibitions. The bully gets used to doing such things to the victim (Roland, 1999; 2007).

Third, in particular as the bullying continues, the bully will, the whole time, gather new reasons to carry on bullying.

"The victim provokes, asks for bullying or deserves it for some reason or other".

Everything the victim says or does, or does not say or do, can be used against him or her and excuses new episodes of bullying. If, for example, the victim replies to a negative comment defending himself or herself, he or she can be accused of lying or being cheeky. If the victim is silent or 'takes' the bullying, she or he can be accused of not answering when someone talks to her or him. In this way, the bullies can turn their actions into 'justice' when they punish the victim in new episodes of bullying. Each situation can be ended with 'unfinished businesses' and threats of further follow-up (Roland, 1999; 2007).
At the same time, as the bully's inhibitions are reduced, something is often happening to the victim.

From experiencing the bullying as an assault, the victim's self-image can be affected so they begin to see themselves through the bully's eyes. This can lead to feelings of both shame and guilt. By now the bullying has reached the stage where both parties' reactions affect the other. The bullies see that the victim is giving in and this gives the incentive to go on. The bully's image of the victim has become logical, because the victim confirms the image by their reaction. When this happens, the bullying is experienced as justified and the victim becomes the guilty party. This view of events will be apparent in the bullies' comments and arguments when they are confronted with their behaviour (Olweus, 1993; Roland, 1999; 2007).

It is therefore vital that the person talking to those who have bullied understands the function these arguments have taken on, and does not get involved in any discussion as to how true or untrue they are. Such arguments should in no circumstances be used to justify bullying.

Audience

There is often an audience when bullying occurs. On some occasions, they only register that something is happening without really being near it. In other cases the audience sees and knows that bullying is happening, but does not actively take part on any side. Sometimes a gang may stand round and watch someone tease or physically attack a fellow pupil and somehow join in the bullying (Cowie, 2000; Roland, 1999; 2007; Salmivalli et al., 1996).

Usually most of those looking on are against bullying. Some does not intervene because they are afraid of the bullies. But another phenomenon is also the case. Bystanders often misinterpret each other's reactions to what is happening. The individual observer believes that the others are more positive about the bullying than they really are. Such misunderstandings prevent the onlookers from supporting the victim. They think they are the only one to dislike what they see and therefore do not dare to speak out about how they really feel. This can lead individual observers to side with the bullies against the victim (Roland, 1999; 2007).

The bullies also misinterpret the situation and often believe that the observers support their actions (Roland, 1999; 2007). They are allowed to continue in this misapprehension because the observers so often remain silent.

Victims often misinterpret the audience's reaction in a similar way. For the victim, the suffering is increased when they feel that 'all the others' go along with the bullying. The bullies, the victim and the audience between them create a collective illusion. What they all think all the others believe has importance for the way they behave in the situation (Roland, 1999; 2007). It increases the likelihood of new episodes of bullying. If the audience intervenes and supports the victim, it may effectively end the bullying.

There are often more children in the audience than those actively involved in the situation, and we can see them as the silent majority. If this silent majority begins to act and speak, we might avoid a lot of bullying. Because there are many in the audience, they form an element of power or strength.

Context

Aggressiveness, in particular the proactive type, in some pupils and vulnerability in other pupils is a combination that increases the risk of bullying.

However, the amount of bullying varies considerably depending on the context.

The Class

The prevalence of bullying varies from class to class, but the greatest differences between different classes cannot be explained just by average variations in home relationships (Roland, 1999; 2007).

Differences cannot be explained by class size either. There can be as much bullying in small classes as in large ones, when considering the percentage of victims and bullies (Olweus, 1993; Roland, 1999; 2007). The social pattern in the class develops in part distinctly from issues like size and it is this pattern which first and foremost influences the prevalence of bullying (Roland, 1999; 2007).

Classes which have behaviour problems and bullying are characterised by a general insecurity among many of the pupils, the creation of cliques and isolated pupils. Such classes also commonly have unclear routines for how they should work in lessons. There is often disturbance and poor concentration on schoolwork (Roland, 1999; Roland & Galloway, 2002).

The norms in such classes are often based on misconceptions of what the others think – so-called false negative norms. In an unclear and insecure atmosphere like this, pupils have to fight for position, for influence and belonging. Bullying of fellow pupils is one way of achieving this, often choosing victims from among those who are socially weak to start with. In particular, this kind of climate is a danger to those pupils who, from basic influences at home, are more inclined to bully others when circumstances 'permit' (Olweus, 1993; Roland & Idsøe, 2001). These pupils can quickly find each other through joint negative actions against a fellow pupil.

Weak leadership from the teacher contributes to a negative atmosphere in the class. Potentially aggressive pupils are sensitive to leadership, and they get much more room to manoeuvre when the teacher's leadership is unclear. Active and focused leadership from the teacher affects the social structures in the class, preventing bullying and other problem behaviour (Roland, 1999; Roland & Galloway, 2002; Galloway & Roland, 2004).

The School

There are considerable differences between schools with regard to the amount of bullying. Of course, there can be more families with difficult home relationships in certain school catchment areas, but this does not explain the fairly large differences between schools. Differences cannot be explained by urban or rural setting either, or by the size of the school (Olweus, 1993; Roland, 1999; Vaaland, 1994).

Poor cooperation between colleagues and weak leadership contribute to the extent of bullying in the school (Roland, 1999). Lack of cooperation between teachers in a school does not help professional development. Nor does it give the individual teacher the necessary support when teaching in the classroom or dealing with bullying. The teaching staff has probably difficulties in appearing consistent and in agreement with each others towards the pupils.

Conclusion on Causes

Negative relationships at home can contribute to proactive aggressiveness and a habitual tendency to bully others. The class teacher and other staff are important for the atmosphere that develops in the classroom. Bad relations between pupils, cliques, unclear routines and negative norms in the classroom can in themselves create the foundation for bullying. Weak classroom leadership and poor classroom atmosphere combined with negative personality characteristics increases the likelihood of the personality characteristics resulting in bullying of fellow pupils.

The school's leadership and the relationship between staff partly set the conditions for classroom management and for the teachers' behaviour at break times. Cooperation between home and school as well as the pupils' free time environment probably also affect the extent of bullying, although more research is needed on this.

The causes of bullying lie partly, then, outside the influence of school and teachers. Pupils bring with them their personal dispositions and what they learn at home. But there are also areas within the school's framework and the teachers' everyday work, which can affect the extent of bullying. A shared and explicit idea, of which conditions are within the control of the school and teachers, is a prerequisite for successful work with bullying. The school can achieve this by concentrating on the quality of

classroom leadership and school leadership. These areas can, to a considerable extent, compensate for the individual attitudes to behaviour that pupils bring to school with them.

Bullying, Other Behaviour Problems and Vulnerable Pupils

When we look at the causes of other types of problem behaviour, such as disruption in lessons, truancy, vandalism and criminal behaviour, we find similarities with the causes of bullying (Loeber & Farrington, 2001). This strengthens the arguments for carrying out preventative work on a broad basis. But another issue is also important. All schools have pupils who are vulnerable, for example those with severe learning difficulties, those with reading and writing difficulties, children with different kinds of disability, children with psychological problems and those from homes where there are problems with care. These pupils are particularly vulnerable if the school suffers from bullying and other kinds of behavioural problems. A friendly and inclusive school is a prerequisite for the real integration of vulnerable pupils. This broader perspective can give added motivation and greater stability to work preventing bullying, both for the staff and the pupils.

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Prevention of bullying

Principles of Prevention

Adult Responsibility

It is the adults at school who in principle are responsible for the social welfare of the pupils, in other words responsible for stimulating an inclusive and non-bullying school culture.

For the headmaster and all staff, the most human and effective way to do this is to take a position of clear adult authority towards the pupils by:

A. defining an inclusive and non-bullying standard
B. live up to this standard themselves, and
C. execute a combination of support and control towards the pupils related to this standard.

Such an authoritative standard is quite opposite to an authoritarian style, which means to rule by brutality and fear.

Direct and Indirect Impact

Authoritative leadership will have a positive direct impact on the pupils. One important element in this is that each pupil knows the standard and sees adult models living up to it. The direct impact also comes from support towards the individual pupil, which improves the pupils' loyalty to the adults and the expected standard. The standard and the loyalty will then make it easier for the adults to execute control and to do this in a respectful way.

Further, authoritative leadership will have a substantial indirect effect on each pupil via its impact on the peer group culture. The figure below illustrates this.

Figure 1.
Relations between adult authority, peer group culture and bullying (Roland & Galloway, 2002).

The figure suggests that adult authority has a direct impact on bullying among the pupils and an indirect impact via its influence on the peer group culture.

When testing this model in primary schools in Norway (Roland, 1999; Roland & Galloway, 2002), all the relations were significant and the two variables – adult/teacher authority and peer group culture – predicted a substantial amount of the differences between classes on bullying. It also appeared that a project to improve teachers' authority reduced bullying among the pupils and also improved all other investigated social and academic markers significantly (Roland, 1999; Roland & Galloway, 2004).

Bullying-focused Prevention

Most anti-bullying programs are highly or almost entirely profiled on direct prevention, by which we mean to address the pupils explicitly, and in various ways, about bullying. Such programs, or program elements, are called cognitive/social skills training approaches (Smith, Pepler & Rigby, 2004). This should be done in a structured way some 10-15 minutes each weak by the head teacher of class, according to general guidelines (Roland & Vaaland, 2003).
Bullying-focused prevention is valuable, but presupposes teacher authority and general prevention.

Initiatives at class level

For simplicity, we use 'class' to describe all stable units of pupils, and 'class teacher' for the person who has the main responsibility for the class or unit.

A Structured Start to the School Year

All schools should aim to train pupils systematically to take responsibility for themselves and their fellow pupils to prevent bullying.

This can best be achieved by starting with teacher-led activities in class, then gradually delegating responsibility as the pupils gain the necessary skills. The first lesson and the school day in the autumn are particularly important. This is when the class teacher and other teachers have the best opportunity to establish themselves as the class leader, which is vital for future developments. A clear and structured start is also very important for preventing bullying.

It is a minimum requirement that the class teacher has the first lesson after school start with the class. The teacher stands at the door when pupils arrive, greets each of them and welcomes them. The pupil is shown to his or her place, which is marked with a name label. Pupils should not sit in groups at the beginning.

The class teacher presents him or herself and the subject that will be taught in this lesson. Other teachers, subjects or material should not be presented as these take the focus away from the first meeting between the teacher and the class. After this, the subject work should start, led clearly in a structured way by the teacher. It is important that the teacher is well prepared in the subject matter, the method and the practical issues. The teacher should finish and sum up the lesson a short time before the end of the lesson, so nothing is left unclear. The pupils should leave the classroom in an orderly way. This standard should be kept up the rest of the day, and the various teachers who teach the class should show that they are in agreement about the set-up. The teacher, who has the last lesson, sums up the day with the pupils and shows that he or she has been informed by the other teachers about how the day has gone. Things that need to be improved should be mentioned, but it is obviously helpful if the message is mainly positive.

After a few weeks, when the class teacher sees that the class is ready, teachers can gradually bring in ways of working which demand more independence, such as work plans, group work and project work. The teachers of the class should coordinate this gradual increase in the pupils' responsibility and the year or subject teams are a good place to discuss this. Pupils should only be placed in groups when this is relevant for the work being done, not otherwise. It is important to maintain the basic routines and the structured start and end of each lesson throughout the school year.

This structured procedure helps much to avoid negative leaders among the pupils – often potential bullies – to take control in class. It also improves the possibilities for positive pupils to have status.

Authoritative Class Leadership

Good class leadership is central, and there are two main reasons for this. First, good class leadership has been shown to have a preventative effect on bullying (Roland, 1999; Roland & Galloway, 2002; Galloway & Roland, 2004). In addition, a good class leader, with authority and the confidence of the pupils, will be able to discover and stop bullying much more easily.

In a class which functions well, there are good relationships, clear routines and positive learning experiences and norms. This tends to be the result of authoritative class leadership (Roland & Galloway, 2002).

Support

Authoritative teachers put great emphasis on giving social support to each pupil. This means keeping sight of the individual, whatever their skill, motivation or manner. The pupil should feel warmth, positive interest and a sense of being wanted. The teacher is interested in the pupil as a person, both in disappointments and joys. The small, but important marks of attention come naturally and the pupil notices it. The authoritative teacher shows the pupil respect, even when correcting the pupil.

A skilled teacher knows that all communication with a pupil is important, both public in the classroom or playground or on a one-to-one basis. The teacher also knows that much of this communication occurs spontaneously and it is about seeing the opportunities. In addition, the skilled teacher plans initiatives, for example, showing pupils attention on their birthday.

Praise gives energy. The class should notice that all individuals get praise for good standards. The authoritative teacher talks about pupils with respect, both when the pupil is present and when he or she is not. This is the case when talking with fellow pupils, with teaching colleagues and with parents.

Each pupil who is able to write should have a logbook. In this, the pupils can write anything they want to their class teacher, who comments on the text from the pupil and follows up important messages.

Subject Support and Organisation

Schools and teachers who focus on the pupil's subject achievement have the best social results (Eriksen, 2001; Roland, 1999).

Authoritative teachers introduce clear guidelines for the work in the lessons, so the progress of work is predictable for the pupils. Skilled teachers are well prepared, so pupils notice that the teacher has a clear plan. Lessons start on time, and in a way that gains pupils' attention.

The pupils know what is expected of them and how they should work. Lessons end, not in an uncontrolled disintegration, but in a quiet and tidy manner. The class or group is well organised and the teacher is a clear resource for pupils.

Control

The authoritative teacher makes clear demands and this gives a clear reference point for him or her to praise pupils or correct what is not good enough. The teacher follows the way the pupil works in the subject and the results, and gives feedback.

The pupils know that the teacher is aware of how they behave socially, and that the teacher is able to step in and deal with problems in the class. The authoritative teacher often speaks to individual pupils and not to a lot of pupils at once, with clear messages when something is not up to standard. These messages are often a sign, which the pupils understand. It can be eye contact, or a calm, physical movement towards the pupil. The message is as short as possible, so the flow of the class's work is not disrupted. The message is clear to the pupil, but it is respectful.

Classroom Environment

Authoritative class leadership directly contributes to decreased bullying and indirectly to an improved classroom environment (Roland & Galloway, 2002). This indirect effect relies to a large extent on the classroom environment being continued out to the playground.

Relations between pupils are an important part of the environment. When the teacher has a good relationship with each of the pupils, this will help good relationships between the pupils (Newcomb, 1961; Roland, 1999). Learning support and good organisation also contribute to a good classroom environment. Pupils notice that they can achieve something themselves and can work together. This gives a positive joint learning experience. Communication between pupils is calmer, and fighting for position and attention is avoided. And perhaps most importantly, the relationship between the teacher and the pupil is less prone to negative communication – nagging, telling off or surly answers from pupils. Clear routines give good working conditions and a friendlier atmosphere, which serves both teacher and pupils. Not least, the teacher's control and ability to step in will contribute to a good environment in the classroom. It creates a sense of security to know that the teacher has control in the room, and it sets clear standards for the norms, which are acceptable.

Relations between pupils, their shared experience of competence and the social norms are, in other words, central elements in the classroom environment, and an authoritative class leader contributes clearly to the development of this (Roland, 1999).

Bullies' actions to victims are a negative force. The victim's protests and despair are a force against the bully, but often a weak one. A third force is found in the other pupils and this is important (Cowie, 2000; Salmivalli et al., 1996). In a class with a negative environment, this third force can turn against the victim.

In classes, which function well and have clear guidelines from teachers, the third force can form a strong protective influence for pupils who might otherwise be vulnerable to bullying. A positive third force is also invaluable to teachers if problems should arise. This is a very important reason why authoritative classroom leadership is emphasised so strongly in Zero.

A good classroom environment means that to a large extent the 'neutral' pupils themselves include those who are vulnerable to bullying or who are bullied. Neutral pupils can also set boundaries for bullies. Authoritative leadership and a good environment gives the teacher greater opportunities to actively raise awareness in the neutral pupils, especially the informal leaders, to take responsibility generally and specifically if they see bullying. When observers step in, it can be very effective.

At after-school clubs, the same principles apply.

Bullying-focused Prevention

In most anti-bullying initiatives, the focus is prevention of bullying itself (Smith et al., 2004). However, class meetings, action days, etc., can easily be a waste of effort if the norms they suggest are not the same as the norms pupils experience in daily school life. We emphasise that the everyday, long-term work is important in its own right and that this standard forms the best basis for bringing up issues about bullying specifically.

The class teacher should take up bullying as a topic in the classroom on a regular basis. Normally there is no need to spend a great deal of time, but the pupils should know that the class teacher and other teachers focus on bullying once a week. This can be done in a specific lesson as part of the ordinary class work or in combination. See the section on Consistency later.

Spontaneous Initiatives

In the ordinary teaching situation, there are many opportunities to prevent bullying. The subject work can be used by an aware teacher to this purpose, as can the social actions. Of course, the idea is not to nag and overrun pupils with such comments. The point is to make pupils aware that bullying, and

also positive standards of behaviour, are in the teacher's consciousness. The teacher uses opportunities to show what he or she stands for and what standards are acceptable.

Integrated Initiatives

By this, we mean planned communications about bullying, which are woven into the normal teaching activity. For example, a text in literature, that directly or indirectly touches on bullying. Texts about ethics and morals in religious studies are also often appropriate, and there are many other opportunities to use text as a starting point. Film offers further opportunities.

The pupils themselves are invited to write about bullying and related themes. Our experience shows that the process of writing raises awareness in the writer. The teacher also has good opportunities to influence further, by comments in the margin or at the end of the written product. Another option is, with the pupil's permission, to read aloud the text for the class or let the pupil read it. Both options bind the pupil to what he or she has written and can also influence other pupils. It is important to consider carefully who is exposed in this way.

All the methods above can be combined, i.e., starting with a text or film, inviting pupils to make texts individually or in groups, finally reading them to the class, or making role plays or similar activities.

'The End of the Week'

Organisational psychology emphasises the positive effects on groups of 'rounding up' routines. This effect is particularly good if the group's formal leader participates actively and constructively. Therefore it is an important routine in Zero that the class teacher, in the last lesson with the class in the week, rounds up the week together with pupils. This 'rounding up' can vary from 10-15 minutes to an entire lesson. The point is that the pupils know this happens every week and that bullying is always discussed. It is also important that the teacher does not 'overdose' on bullying as a topic, but weaves it into a larger framework. It can be enough sometimes to use a minute, but other times go into more depth. However, the class teacher should always give their impression of bullying to the class. For example, 'I haven't noticed anyone being teased this week, and I haven't heard anything from the other teachers either.' Or, 'On Thursday, there was an unpleasant event and you (pupils' names) know what I and the school think about that, don't you?' Always ask afterwards if anyone has anything they want to talk about. The teacher should follow up there and then, and if necessary afterwards, if any pupil does have anything to say.

A good introduction to this focus on bullying is to sum up the weekly subject work, give the class or pupils praise for something. The rounding up should also be about things other than bullying. The teacher can read from a book to the class, or discuss plans for the following week's school, etc.

Pupil Conversations

The class teacher should have a structured conversation with each pupil relatively soon after the start of the school year. The following questions should be covered and parents should be aware of the questions (see below about Parents' Meetings).

How is it going with your schoolwork?
How do you like school?
Are you bullied or teased by other pupils?
Do you know other pupils who are involved in bullying?
Do you bully or tease other pupils?

It can be effective for the teacher to have a sheet of questions and take notes during the conversation. The pupil and the teacher sign the sheet, which is put into a file while the pupil watches.

The questions about bullying show the pupil that the class teacher is following up on this issue and the pupils will talk about it between themselves. The preventative effect may be considerable. If a pupil gives information about bullying, he or she should be given recognition for showing openness about it. The issue should be followed up immediately. See below for more on this.

The pupil conversations should be repeated in March/April.

Conclusion

Bullying-focused initiatives can have a very good effect if the school has grasped the main principles. Firstly, an important pre-requisite for bullying-focused initiatives, is authoritative adults who cooperate on the standards acceptable in the playground, after-school club and in the classroom. Secondly, reminders about bullying must arise spontaneously and as a natural part of the learning. Finally, certain set times, i.e., pupil conversations and 'rounding up' the week are tools which create routine and maintain issues throughout the year.

It is the combination of these activities, which gives a sense of integrity and creates the culture in the school. It has not been shown that action weeks or similar tactics have any effect on their own.

Parents' Meeting for the Year Group

For the new pupils starting school, the class teacher should carry out the parents' meeting in the spring, preferably a few weeks before the summer holiday, after which the children will begin at the school. When the meeting is this early, the teachers have a good opportunity to create a good first impression and set a good standard. It is important that every parent is met positively when they arrive and it is helpful if the teacher knows who they are and who their child is.

The meetings for parents of the rest of the school, and the second meeting for those who just have started, come shortly after the beginning of the school year, before the pupil conversations (see above).

The parents should sit in groups of 4-6, with name cards in front of them. The first part of the meeting is a short and clear explanation by the teacher of the set-up for the first few weeks of school and the principles this is based on. The teacher should emphasise that the pupils will receive good subject learning and that they should feel happy and secure.

Then bullying should be discussed. The class teacher refers to the pupil survey, which was carried out in the spring, and says that results will be available for parents as soon as they are ready. Then a film about bullying could be shown.

The teacher then goes through what bullying is and how prevalent it is on a national basis. He or she will also go through the main principles of anti-bullying work. The teacher should emphasise prevention first. This is the time to inform parents about the pupil conversations, and the form they will take. Parents should also be informed about how the school deals with bullying.

After this, parents normally get a drink and simple snack. The conversation round the table will in all likelihood be about bullying and related issues. After a suitable time, the parents are invited to discuss some questions in groups. They are informed that the conclusions from the groups will be fed back to the plenum and the class teacher asks one member of each group to take on this task.

The three questions are:

Should pupils tell parents and teachers what they know?
How should we talk to our children at home about bullying?
How can parents cooperate if pupils are involved in bullying?

One from each group feeds back the conclusions. The class teacher leads this session and helps to formulate one main conclusion per question. The teacher then gives brief information about what the school does if bullying is discovered (see below). The teacher also encourages parents to talk to their children about the meeting and the conclusions, which were drawn.

The meeting closes with the teacher saying that this theme will be followed up in the personal conversations with parents and at meetings for the parents of new pupils. This is said even if this conclusion has not arisen in the group discussions. The class teacher has the responsibility for writing minutes and sending these out to parents. It is vital that the class teacher shows clearly that he or she is personally in agreement with the work against bullying.

The day after the meeting, the class teacher informs the pupils about the parents' meeting and the conclusions of the meeting.

In parents' meetings, bullying should always appear on the agenda, but normally as one of several points. It is very important to maintain the emphasis on the issue, but to weave it into a larger framework. The class contacts (parents representing the parents of that year group) should generally be given responsibility for some of the content in the meetings and should generally be brought into the work of cooperation between the school and parents.

Consultations with Individual Parents

The class teacher should routinely take up questions of bullying in all personal consultations with parents. This is an important signal that the school and the teacher take it seriously and it gives the parents the opportunity to talk about things they may otherwise have found difficult to raise.

If the parents say that there has been some bullying, the class teacher must take the matter seriously without exception. The teacher can listen to the information the parent gives, and ask questions to clarify. The teacher should not give opinions on other teachers or other pupils. The teacher can also take the opportunity to bring up issues they want to raise.

This is a bullying-focused initiative, but with the same principle as for the work in class and at meetings for parents of the year group. The theme always occurs, but put into a broader framework. The individual meetings with parents necessarily also deal with other issues. The first individual meeting should come early in the autumn. It is important to say that bullying will also be discussed at the next individual meeting.

The pupil can take part in the conversation. However, there may also be a need for a talk just between the adults.

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Intervention to stop Bullying

The intervention method is inspired by the original Pikas model (Pikas, 1976), but modified according to theory about proactive aggression on the part bullies (Dogde, 1991; Dodge & Coie, 1987; Roland & Idsøe, 2001; Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002) and evidence about the victims of bullying (Olweus, 1993; Roland, 2002; Salmivalli, 2005). By method we mean structured communication with the victim, the bullies and the parents.

It is important that the intervention is logical according to a clear standard that everyone at school knows: that bullying is not allowed.

The method

Bullying is not a conflict but a systematic abuse of a person who is not able to defend him or herself in the actual situation (Olweus & Roland, 1983; Smith, 2005). Therefore episodes of bullying should not be solved by mediation (Olweus, 1993; Roland, 2007). Although victims of bullying often are insecure and vulnerable (Olweus, 1993; Roland, 2002), it does not mean that all victims are weak or helpless pupils in general. Victims may be strong in the subjects, strong in empathy and in general personal character. Not to be able to defend oneself when the bullying situation builds up, may be due to many causes. An obvious one is that the bullies may be several (Roland, 2007).

It is vital that the person dealing with the situation has the respect of both parties. In Zero, the norm is that the class teacher or head of after-school club deals with solving problems. However, the situation can demand that someone else should do it. This could be someone from the school management or the school's psychological/counselling service.

The conversations with the pupils should normally take place in this order:

- conversation with the victim,
- conversation with each bully on their own,
- conversation with the bullies together.

Then continue with follow-up conversations with each party. At the end, the parties can meet. Parents are involved in a planned way.

Episodes of bullying vary, and it is important to use common sense to decide which conversations to have first and how the parties should be brought together. In the scheme below, we show examples of different ways to approach this. The main principle in the conversations with pupils, however, is to support the victim and make demands on those who bully without negotiating with them.

Initiatives with the Victim of Bullying

Individual Conversation with the Victim

The teacher first has a conversation with the pupil who is bullied. The conversation can have several starting points. In some cases, the victim has told the teacher that he or she is being bullied. On other occasions, the parents may have done so. It may be that other pupils or staff have given information or that the teacher has observed the bullying.

The teacher should arrange a meeting with the victim in a discreet way without much warning, i.e., telling him or her during the break time just beforehand. The teacher does not need to say what the meeting is about. The meeting should take place in a room where the teacher can be alone with the pupil.

The meeting should not be started like an interview, i.e., asking how things are going at school. The reason is that many victims of bullying avoid the issue of being bullied because they are afraid or embarrassed. They will often say, then, that things are OK. Such a start makes it difficult for the teacher to address the issue of bullying.

Instead, the teacher starts with explaining the reason for the meeting, which is that the pupil is being bullied. The teacher should say this, and consequently not put pressure on the pupil to say it or confirm it. It is therefore important that the teacher has gained an overview, so it is not necessary to interview the victim.

Another important element of this conversation is that the pupil should experience the teacher's support. It is extraordinarily important not to say anything that can make the pupil blaming him or

herself for being a victim of bullying. The teacher should clearly show that he or she will not accept further bullying and will take responsibility for putting an end to it.

This leads to relief in the victim, but also a need to know what will happen now. Many victims of bullying fear a reaction from the bullies when the teacher takes up the issue. Therefore the teacher must give clear, precise information, and not leave it to the victim's imagination to work out what will happen next. In conversation with the pupil who is bullied, it should be stated that the bullies will not be contacted yet, and that the victim will be told before this is done. The teacher should also, during this conversation, agree follow-up with the victim including a time for a new conversation.

There should not be too long a time from the first conversation to the follow-up. Depending on the case, the seriousness and the pressure on the victim, it should take place within a week.

Then the teacher should tell the pupil that his or her parents will be contacted straightaway, if they are not already involved.

Generally, the victim should be informed in advance of everything that is going to happen. This does not mean that the victim can decide over the process or accept or decline. The aim is to avoid making the victim responsible for the process, while giving them the security of being informed of what is happening and when.

It is the teacher who says at the beginning of the conversation that he or she is clear about what is happening. In the course of the first conversation, the teacher should also listen to whatever the victim has to say about the situation, without putting on undue pressure. Certain victims of bullying will be afraid to say anything for fear of retaliation. But many will tell a certain amount because somebody has finally taken the initiative to help them. The teacher should listen, show understanding and ask any questions needed to get a clear idea of the situation.

The bullies should not be talked about negatively as people. It is the behaviour we want to get rid of, not the pupils. The first conversation with the victim should cover the following points:

- clarifying the situation,
- showing support,
- promising to keep the victim informed of what is happening at every point,
- agreeing a time for the next meeting with the victim.

The Parents of the Victim

Parents of a victim may have contacted the school because their child has been bullied. Any contact of this type must always be taken seriously, and the school must follow up the child concerned and any other children involved. It may be that the school discovers the bullying. In this case, it would be normal to carry out a conversation with the victim first, as discussed above, and then contact his or her parents the same day.

Whatever the starting point, the parents will be in a difficult position (Westergård & Galloway, 2004). In the same way as with the victim of bullying, the school should make it clear to the parents that bullying is not accepted.

In many cases, the parents of the victim will be able to cooperate in a very useful way. However, the school must be prepared for individual parents accusing the school or the teacher of lack of care or something similar. Another understandable reaction is for the parent to want extremely strong or other inadequate action against the bully and maybe his or her parents. The parents of the victim may also wish to take action towards the bullies or their parents themselves.

The rule is to listen carefully and respectfully to the parents, guarantee that the school will take the matter up and make a clear agreement on how things will be carried forward. It is important that the parents accept that the school has this role. Things can easily go wrong if the school and the parents each try their own solution. If the teacher is unsure of how things will be carried forward, it is best to agree to meet again in a few days, when the school will put forward a plan.

Follow-up Conversations with the Victim

Constant contact with the victim is important because this gives the pupil the experience of having adult support. These conversations can also be used in a considerate and careful way to get more information, which may be used to work further with the case.

In the course of the follow-up conversations, the teacher should try to get general information about the pupil's class and/or school. This is particularly important if it is not the class teacher who is having the conversations with the pupil. The adult should also get an overview of the victim's friends at school, the names of the bullies, the names of pupils with status in the environment and a description of the situation when the bullying takes place.

It can sometimes be useful to let the questions range around the victim's own behaviour before, during and after the bullying episodes. It can feel less dangerous to the victim to talk about him or herself than about the bullies. However, more useful information about the bullying, the time, places, actors, etc., will probably come out anyway. In addition, it is important to get an impression of how the victim's behaviour or reactions may contribute to stimulating the bullies and thereby maintain the bullying. Reactions, which encourage the bullying, can be discussed with the victim to give them an insight. This must be done in such a way that the victim does not get the blame for what is happening.

In some cases, it can be a good idea to work with the victim to create goals for how to react in the bullying situation. Work can be done on situations the victim may find himself or herself in and the follow-up conversations can be used to help with this. It is useful for the teacher to know if the victim has other adults or fellow pupils as support or as someone to talk to, for example, if they have talked to their parents about the problem.

The main rule should be that the teacher informs the victim's parents or guardians about the problem and about what the school will do. To what extent the parents should become a regular part of the conversations, or how active they should be if this is the case, should be considered in each case. The pupil's age and the characteristics of the case are important elements to consider in making this decision.

Normally, two or three meetings with the victim are enough before contacting the bullies. As mentioned, the pupil who is bullied must be informed before the conversations with the bullies take place. The teacher should say whom he or she will talk to and when this will happen. Normally the parents of those who bully will also be contacted as set out below. If so, the victim should also be told of this beforehand, and the information should be given in a positive way. Contact with the victim should continue after the bullies are brought in to the case.

Initiatives with Those Who Bully

It is important to have information about what has happened before meeting those who bully. This is often gathered from the victim, and can be filled out with observation from the playground, etc.

It is vital to talk to the bullies individually first (Pikas, 1976; Roland, 2007), as belonging to a group is part of what drives bullying (Roland & Idsøe, 2001). By dealing with the bullies as a group, each bully is protected by the group. The teacher could even strengthen the group in dealing with all together in this early stage of the intervention. By having individual conversations, first the relationship and protection between the members of the group will be weakened, which is the purpose at this stage. Afterwards, these relationships can be built up again, but with positive behaviour as a meeting point.

If there are several bullies, the conversations with them are carried out one after the other without any opportunity to talk to each other before all of them have talked to the teacher. The individual conversations and a group conversation with all of them together should be carried out within a single or double lesson, while another teacher has the class or classes involved. If there is only one bully, the conversation is carried out with him or her according to the same model.

Individual Conversations with the Bullies

After agreeing it with colleagues, the teacher should go into the classroom and say that he wants to speak to the particular pupil. The teacher should go with the pupil to a meeting room or similar without getting into too much conversation on the way. The bullying episode(s) should not be mentioned. If the pupil asks, the teacher should say that the pupil would get to know the reason in a moment.

The teacher starts the conversation by confirming the situation, i.e., by saying he knows that Ben is being bullied. The conversation could start in this way:

'I want to talk to you about Ben, who has been bullied a lot. I know that you have been taking part in the bullying.'

There should not be any discussion about the extent to which this is the case or not. The teacher has laid down a fact, which forms the basis of the conversation. But the teacher should give the pupil the chance to express him or herself. It helps if the teacher can use a decisive but not unfriendly tone. The teacher should be accepting in relation to the pupil without accepting the bullying. The pupil will more easily enter a constructive dialogue if he or she notices that the teacher has confidence in him or her. Confidence does not mean that one is unclear in any way about the negative behaviour.

The bully's stress level will usually be high before the conversation. Bullies will also tend to try to justify their actions. Typically the bully will play down his own role, not remember too well, describe the bullying as a game, and focus on and overplay the role of others. Many bullies will also emphasise the victim's responsibility for the bullying. The victim's behaviour is often presented as provoking, aggressive or stupid. It is important here that the teacher is not tempted to agree with the bully on these points, even if he may know that the bully has a certain point. It can, of course, create contact with the bully by supporting him or her in these views but the gain is short lived. The bully will notice the teacher's critical view of the victim and in some situations this can be misused. There is no point in getting into a discussion of the bully's role or the role of others. The pupil no doubt knows most about this and the teacher will soon lose any discussion. The teacher should at this point have a neutral view towards what the bully says about herself or himself, the victim and other pupils. The bully's views and opinions must stand-alone here, without reaction. This attitude from the teacher will make the bully a little unsure of what and how much the teacher really knows. This uncertainty can be a benefit.

After this, the aim is to work towards finding a solution for the bully. The teacher may have to have several attempts at this during the conversation, but the adult's role here is to look out for some form of constructive solution from the pupil's side. For example, the teacher might suggest a possibility.

'I want to talk to you because I know you have been involved in bullying Ben, and I can't accept that. But I also know that we have had sensible conversations lots of times before. You are a nice girl and I think you would like to help make things better for Ben.'

One could continue, 'Have you, for example, seen anyone from any other classes being nasty to him?'

In this way, the teacher can circle around until the pupil comes up with something that they can build on. Then the teacher has the basis for inviting the pupil to cooperate. The teacher could ask, 'What would you suggest as a way to stop the bullying?'

There is a good chance that the pupil who bullies will come up with some constructive suggestions. These should be grasped and turned into something concrete. The goal is that the pupil will promise to stop the bullying and to do something constructive when anyone teases or bullies Ben.

To sum up, we can say that the teacher focuses in this conversation on:

- confronting the bully with the seriousness of the actual situation,
- not getting into a discussion,
- getting the pupil to dissociate himself or herself from the bullying,
- and possibly to agree to behave positively towards the victim.

The conversation finishes. The teacher goes back with the pupil to the classroom and the next is fetched in the same way. The conversations with those who bully are carried out one after the other without any opportunity for the pupils to communicate among themselves. Then the whole group of bullies and the teacher meet to make a decision about how they will behave.

The Order of the Conversations

The most important thing is that the conversations are carried out individually. However, the order can also have an effect. The following two issues should be considered:

- Who is likely to be most cooperative?
- Who has the greatest influence in the group?

If one pupil has considerable influence over the others and is likely to be cooperative, he should be talked to first. If this conversation goes well, the teacher has a good starting point for the next conversation. Information from the first conversation can be used talking to the next pupil, to contribute to a constructive attitude from them.

Group Conversation

When the conversation with the last bully has been carried out, this pupil should be told to wait in the meeting room. The teacher should then go to the classroom and fetch the others.

The teacher now takes the lead in building up the group to stop the bullying, and in developing a positive attitude. Even though the teacher has given each of the pupils some information gained from the others, none of the pupils in this situation will be sure what the others have told or how far they have cooperated with the teacher. Most will believe that they have been more cooperative than the others. The teacher therefore begins the conversation by referring to 'what has come up in the individual conversations'. He or she can then conclude with an agreement in the group to do something positive about the situation. If, for example, one of the bullies has been negative or secretive in the individual situation, the teacher should not make too much of this, but say, for example,

'You, Andrew, seemed a bit unsure about how you can support Ben.'

The planned change of behaviour is put into a concrete form so the group together can agree to it. This will, in all likelihood, also bring in Andrew.

At around this point, the teacher should say that he or she has taken up the issue with the victim and that this pupil has been informed about this meeting. The teacher should put across that it is the teacher and not the victim who has taken the initiative. In addition, the bullies should be told that their parents would be informed today. They can be encouraged to talk to their parents themselves when they get home.

The teacher now repeats the main message. The bullying will stop immediately and instead the pupils will support the victim. The teacher then says he or she will follow the situation closely and the head teacher will be informed at all times.

At the end of the conversation, the teacher can prepare the pupils for future 'temptation' (Roland, 2007).

'What will you do, Ella, if anyone else bullies Ben? Wouldn't it be easy for you to join in?'

The pupils will normally deny this. The teacher should hear each of them say aloud that they won't participate in bullying again. The pupils can then be sure where they all stand in this, and they have committed themselves socially in relation to the rest of the group and the teacher. If there is only one bully in the case, the teacher uses this kind of strategy in the first conversation. This can take the form of a question as above or a statement where the teacher uses knowledge of the pupil and 'unveils' their likely reaction in certain situations.

In addition, it is useful to talk to the bullies about what happens when they meet the other pupils in the class. Classmates will almost certainly ask what the talk with the teacher was about. The teacher should ask each individual what reply they intend to give. The teacher can also talk about the first meeting with the victim. What have the bullies thought to say in that situation? The teacher can, if necessary, give them a suggestion.

Then the teacher arranges another meeting with the bullies for them to report back how things are going. This meeting should be within the next 2-4 days.

To sum up, the group conversation should contain the following points:

- information,
- commitment,
- more detailed information,
- warning of follow-up,
- a time for the next conversation,
- a talk about future reactions.

Sometimes the victim can be brought in to the final part of the meeting with the bullies. The advantage of this is that the teacher is present and can control the communication. For this, the victim must be in a state to cope with such a meeting and be willing to do it. The victim must in any case be informed of the time of the meeting.

The teacher concludes with the bullies that the bullying will stop and that the bullies will, preferably, start to support the victim. Then the teacher says that he or she is thinking about fetching the victim and asks what the bullies think about that. Experience shows that the bullies agree and the teacher discusses with them what they will say to the victim. The teacher then takes the bullies to the door of the classroom, fetches the victim and goes back with them all to the meeting room.

At this point, the teacher would normally let the bullies speak, help the conversation along if necessary and make sure there is a constructive conclusion. A technique, which can be useful, is for the teacher to say at the end that he or she expects it to go well, that what happens will be watched and the head will be kept informed.

Part of the conclusion can be that all parties go back to the classroom together and the teacher or the teacher and pupils inform the class about the conversation and about the agreement which has been made.

The conversations with the individual bullies should not be too long – 5-10 minutes. The group conversation with the bullies should be about the same. In addition, there is some time to-ing and fro-ing from the classroom to the meeting room. A school lesson, around 45 minutes, is usually sufficient. If the victim takes part at the end of the meeting, a double lesson, without a break, should usually be allowed.

The Parents of Those Who Bully

In general the parents of those who bully should be informed and this should happen the same day as the conversations have taken place with their children. A practical way to do this is that the class teacher phones the parents or calls them in for a meeting the same evening. Then they can be asked if their child has told them what has happened. In any case, they should be told briefly about what has happened and the conversation with their child. The victim's parents should also be informed and they should know that the name of their child would be mentioned.

Often there are several bullies and the principle of anonymity must be considered along with how the specific group of parents will function. The following models can be used according to judgement:

1. The bullies' parents are called in to a joint meeting. The teacher makes it clear that this will mean other parents knowing that their child is involved. If parents don't agree to this, they should be called in separately.
2. The parents of each bully are called in independently. Then the teacher concentrates on the behaviour of each child, and does not discuss the other bullies.

The principles are the same for each type of meeting. The parents must be welcomed in a friendly way, preferably offered a cup of tea or coffee. They should be told about the conversations with the victim and the victim's parents, and about the conversation with their own child, as well as the result of this. The teacher has to explain here in a sober way, that the bullying has actually occurred. The teacher should, still in a polite way, be very clear that bullying is absolutely not acceptable. It is very helpful, at this stage in the meeting, to say that the pupils have promised to stop the bullying immediately; if this is the case and eventually that they also have promised to support the victim. The parents should also be told that their child's behaviour will be followed up and how this will happen. This explanation should be brief and precise.

Then the teacher should move straight on to cooperation, by asking the parents to talk seriously with their child and to follow what is happening in the future. In most cases, the parents will support what has been done and be positive to following up. Sometimes the atmosphere in the conversation is such that initiatives for including the victim better in the class or making a better class atmosphere, etc., can also be discussed.

Sometimes parents will ask about how far their child or teenager has been involved in the bullying, or if bullying has actually occurred. It is not helpful to get involved in long conversations about this, but to say briefly that the future situation is the most important. If the parents still feel unhappy, a new meeting can be suggested, just with them or with the head teacher present. However, often the other parents will be supportive in a way that solves the problem. If model 2 has been used, model 1 can be used to follow-up after a week or so.

With model 1, the parents of the victim can be included at the first meeting or a subsequent meeting. For this, the teacher must be sure that all the parents will be able to handle this situation and prepare them. In many cases, the parents of those who bully will feel a need to have contact with the parents of the victim, and this should be discussed at the end of the meeting with the bullies' parents if the victim's parents are not there. It is important to get across that all parents need support, not accusations. Generally, it is a good idea to agree on future communication and arrange a new meeting in a while to ensure a positive development.

The school may, after careful consideration, decide that the case can be solved without involving the bullies' parents. They can be informed afterwards or not be informed at all.

Bringing Together the Bullies and the Victim

If the victim is not brought into the end of the first meeting with the bullies, a separate meeting should be arranged fairly soon afterwards, with the teacher involved. Both the victim and the bullies should be clearly informed that the other party is having parallel conversations with the teacher. When a solution is in sight, which the teacher is happy with, it is time to bring the victim and bullies together in a joint conversation with the teacher. The theme of this conversation should be to go through what has happened, hear the victim's satisfaction with the current situation and plan the future. Sometimes other pupils can be brought into this conversation. But this is not always the best solution.

Follow-up

The group conversations with those who bully should continue until the problem is solved and the situation has stabilised, but the time between meetings can be increased gradually. The teacher shows by this that she or he is following what is happening and taking the issue seriously. The teacher must also follow up the victim, at least by asking regularly how things are. Joint meetings between the bullies and the victim can be arranged as part of the follow-up. The parents of the victim and the parents of the bullies should also receive continued communication.

The idea is that the teacher does not just step in, but shows that he or she is following developments closely. Some cases are serious or complex and they demand a lot of follow-up. Other cases can be followed up with short questions or reminders, to show that the teacher is watching. This can be important in prevention.

Reactions

If the group does not follow up the agreements made, the teacher should again deal with pupils individually and not the group. Each of them must be held individually responsible and the parents informed. If the teacher does not manage to solve the problem, and the bullying continues, there must be a reaction towards the bullies. Here, the teacher and the school as a whole must have thought through in advance what responses they can use and how to use them. There should be a list of initiatives, which involve stepping up action. Staff should consider which initiatives to use

from this list in each case. Responses are important whether the bullying is dealt with as an individual problem or a group problem.

Examples of responses are:

- the behaviour of the bully is made public in class,
- the behaviour of the bully is discussed in class,
- the bully meets the victim's parents, together with the teacher,
- a meeting is held between the bully, his/her own parents, the victim's parents and the teacher,
- the bully has to stay with the teacher on duty during break times,
- the bully has to stay in the staffroom during breaks,
- one or more bullies are put into another class for a period, but not into the same class as each other.

The bullies can, in some cases, be informed early in the process that necessary action will be taken if the issue is not resolved. They do not need to be informed at the start what the reactions will be. The point is that the pupils know the teacher and the school will use whatever legal response is necessary until the matter is resolved.

In each case, it is important to use initiatives, which are experienced by the individual pupil as a response. When the bullies are faced with this reaction, the conversation should not take place in a group, but individually. The response does not need to be the same for several bullies. Conversations with the whole group, or identical initiatives used for them will normally gel the group together in a negative way.

Other Pupils

There are often other pupils who witness bullying and the teacher can find out who they are. The teacher can talk to these pupils individually to make them aware of the responsibilities they have. Often there are particularly reliable or caring pupils in a class. When these pupils have a high status in the group, it can be especially useful to mobilise them to support the victim. When bullying occurs, it can have a strong effect if witnesses defend the victim. Other pupils in the class can also be encouraged to show friendship towards the victim.

Boys and Girls

When bullying is carried out by boys, or boys and girls together, it will often be more obvious than when just girls do the bullying. Particularly when girls bully another girl, the bullying can be complex and difficult to identify. It is therefore often easier for girls to get away with it, and the teacher can get involved in a hopeless search for proof.

In all cases, it is important that the teacher states to the bullies that bullying has occurred, and demands that it stops immediately. This starting point is the key to solving the issue, even more so in bullying between girls. The teacher should just listen to any explanations that arise and then repeat the demand for an immediate stop of the bullying. This again emphasises the importance of preparatory work. When the bullies are called in for conversations, the teacher should be sure of the grounds and stick to them. An important psychological technique is not to discuss the past, but to concentrate on the future.

In particular diffuse or complicated cases it is possible to concentrate almost entirely on the future. In other words the teacher can say that whatever has happened, no bullying will be accepted in time to come. This strategy can be used with both girls and boys who bully.

Complex Patterns of Bullying

The discussion above has assumed a single pupil or group bullying one victim. This is not always the case. A single pupil or a group can sometimes bully several individuals. On other occasions, several individuals or several groups of pupils can bully a single pupil.

If the school detects that a pupil or a group is bullying a particular pupil, it is not unlikely that other individuals or groups are also bullying the same pupil. This should be investigated while dealing with the case in hand. In the same way, it is important to be aware that bullies can have more than one victim. In such cases, several teachers and other staff often need to work together to gather information and take action. This cooperation can have a strong, positive effect on large parts of the school environment.

Problem Solving in Class

When considering whether a case of bullying should be taken up by the class, teachers need to consider how the class generally functions. In some cases, there has been good work developing the class as a social group. There are good norms and a clear standard for behaviour established. In such a class, it will be easier to have a constructive class meeting than in a class where groups of bullies have a strong position.

Some classes will have strong, negative subgroups, which affect the general attitudes in the class. In such cases, it will often be effective to work with this group first. In the class meeting, this group can commit themselves in relation to all the fellow pupils in the class. This will increase the social control and the likelihood of the positive behaviour continuing.

Sometimes only one pupil or a few pupils in the class are involved in the bullying. Maybe there is only one victim in the class with the bullies in a different class. Then the teacher can sometimes choose to work with problem solving directly at a class level.

We will briefly mention the different phases of dealing with bullying issues in a class meeting.

Clarification

It can often be useful to start with a general discussion of what behaviour can be termed 'bullying'. The aim is to create a group norm. Although this part of the conversation is of a non-specific nature, a general reaction from the class rejecting bullying has a major effect on the bully. She or he will realise that their actions do not have the support of the class.

Specifics

When the desired group norm is established, the teacher should judge the extent to which it is sensible to go into specific details. Should the victim and the bullies be named? Should they identify themselves? Or should the case be discussed in an anonymous way?

If the teacher has already had conversations with the victim or bullies, this point in the class meeting can have been prepared. The teacher and the pupils can agree on whether to use names in the class meeting and, if so, which of them should make the names 'public'. If names are to be given, the teacher should ensure that individuals are talked about respectfully. Those who bully should be accepted as people, but not bullying as a type of behaviour.

Alternatively, specific details can be limited to a statement that bullying has taken place within the class. The type of bullying and place can be given and what witnesses are doing, without using the names of pupils involved.

Evaluation

The aim of the conversation is to get the pupils to think about and discuss the problem behaviour. Relevant questions can include whether bullying is wrong, and why. It is important to let the pupils take an active part in the discussion and conclusion.

Planning

The next phase is to plan how the pupils in the class should respond to bullying. The pupils probably know which situations are critical for the victim, and they should plan what the class members can do or not do in those situations. It may also be possible to use some of the class to form a social network for the victim.

Commitment

Finally the pupils should commit themselves to a plan of positive behaviour. The commitment should happen on the pupils' terms if it is to have any value over time.

Commitments which are written or publicly declared to fellow pupils and teachers, have a stronger effect than a silent acceptance of a general conclusion. In some schools, this commitment can be followed up with a reporting system. This can increase the commitment to the planned positive behaviour.

Maintenance

The issue should not be dropped for good, even if the class meeting yielded a positive result. The teacher should make sure that the change in behaviour is maintained by focusing on it regularly. He or she can then be sure that the bullying is no longer occurring and also be sure to get any information, which would mean taking up the issue again.

This shows how the class meeting can be used when bullying is a problem. The class meetings can, with a similar structure, be used in preventative work against bullying.

Parents' Meetings for the Year Group

If a specific episode of bullying is discussed at the parents' meeting for the year group, the victim and his or her parents must have agreed for this to happen, and the way it is done. For example, in the letter calling the meeting, the school can write that there are concerns about certain aspects of the class environment and that there is a need to discuss this. This can be a useful method if the bullying is carried out by a number of pupils in the year and has almost become a negative culture aimed against an individual or a few pupils.

The meeting should be well prepared and should start with a general introduction. Information from the Zero pack can be used for this. Then the meeting should move on to the specific case. The teacher or the pupil's parents say who has been bullied and put across the situation of the victim. There must be a clear strategy in place for dealing with questions about who is doing the bullying. One solution is to state at the beginning that this meeting is not going to discuss individuals.

The aim of the meeting is to get support from the parents. A good way is to let groups of parents discuss certain issues in groups put together by the teacher or parent representatives, then discuss the groups' answers in plenary and draw conclusions.

Obviously, this approach can be demanding, and the class teacher may need help planning and carrying out the meeting from the head, the resource group or the school psychology service. Also, good contact in advance (see the points about cooperation between school and parents above) will form a good basis for a meeting of this type about a particular case.

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Follow up

For the victim, bullying is a violation. Their happiness is decreased and their self-image is threatened. After-effects such as fear and depression can affect some. For the bullies, the situation is also negative. Their respect for the rights of other people can be decreased and they can develop negative habits, which may lead them into social problems later in life. Some bullies also suffer psychological difficulties.

It is very important for a school to have an effective structure to stop bullying. This has a strongly positive effect on the whole school environment and the confidence in the school. In addition to stopping the bullying, it is important to follow up the involved pupils well. This will help prevent repetitions. For the child who has been bullied, maybe for some time, it is good to know that the class teacher and other adults in the school are keeping an eye on what happens. Some victims of bullying need structured help to rebuild psychologically or to be included in the class and at the school.

The bullies must also be followed up, for example, by the teacher asking them regularly if they are keeping to the agreement. This means control, but also it means care, if it is done in a respectful way. In Zero, we emphasise the importance of a clear demand to stop the bullying, but also that the bully as a person is treated in a respectful way during the work with the case and afterwards. Many who bully link a part of their identity to the role of bully. By showing the pupil respect as a person and getting him or her involved in constructive tasks, the school does this pupil a service and shows the standard expected. Individual bullies also need a more planned follow-up, for example, working with the educational counselling or psychology services.

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THE ZERO PROGRAMME:

A whole school approach

It takes a whole village to bring up one child.

African proverb

A whole approach towards bullying is based on this wisdom; that consistency in all parts of the school is crucial. Another important principle is that consistency in anti-bullying attitudes and efforts is stable over years to bring good results.

The ZERO program, worked out by Centre for Behavioural Research, Norway, is a whole school approach to prevent and stop bullying. While most programs to improve pupils' behaviour are pupil centred, in other words social-cognitive training of individual pupils (Smith, Pepler & Rigby, 2004), ZERO addresses the school as an organisation. This automatically brings in the significance of the whole school context; management, staff, parents and pupils, and not only those pupils directly involved in bullying (Roland, 1999).

Consistency

Both consistency between the adults and consistency in all parts of the school's daily activities to prevent and stop bullying are important.

Adult consistency

Yes, it takes a whole village to bring up one child.

When the pupils continually see that the adults are friends and work together, it will reinforce an image of authority, respect and support. It is important that the teachers, other adults at school and parents demonstrate this cooperation. In particular, the head and the other leaders in the school have an important role in showing friendship and cooperation in the adult environment, so the pupils see it.

Consistency between the adults' attitudes is important, then, but the content of such attitudes is also significant. The pupils must recognize key attitudes such as general support and control, and not at least a zero-tolerance against bullying.

Consistent Focus on Bullying

All programmes against bullying have initiatives or elements, which clearly focus on the problem itself. An example from the Zero programme is structured conversations about bullying with each pupil, carried out early in the autumn and in the spring. Another similar element is letting the children work with literature in which bullying is a theme. Both these elements are planned and it is obvious to all that they deal with bullying. There is also consistency between the two initiatives.

Zero also has several other elements, which are clearly related to prevention of bullying, for example, individual parents' consultations and parents' meetings for the year group. There is consistency between these two initiatives aimed at parents. In addition, there is a consistency between the anti-bullying initiatives aimed at pupils and those aimed at their parents. Both groups of initiatives are aimed at teachers, pupils and parents who belong to a unit within the school, namely the class or year group.

An example of a school-wide anti-bullying initiative in Zero is the pupil survey before the programme is started and after a year. This shows consistency between work at a class or year level and at the school level, and increases the effectiveness of the work.

The schools' overall activities

Many well-intentioned initiatives, including those aimed at preventing bullying, fail because they are not placed in context or linked to the school's overall activity. This comes across as a lack of consistency which can lead staff, parents and pupils to view the initiative as something time limited, something which will pass (Roland & Munthe, 1997). Far better results can be expected when work to prevent bullying is consistent and is, at the same time, woven into the everyday activity of the school (Roland, 1999; Roland & Galloway, 2004).

In the short term, the effect will be much greater when the school shows consistency between different aspects of the anti-bullying programme, for example, between initiatives based in the playground and those based in the classroom. This focuses attention consistently on the same issue.

Also in the short term, but particularly in the long term, the best results are expected when prevention and initiatives against bullying are seen as a natural part of the school's everyday activity. This can be called 'general consistency'.

Linking

A practical method to establish consistency is to create a close link between two or more themes to show how they hang together. For example, the head teacher visits class 8B and talks to the pupils about both bullying and about the great effort the class has made recently on project work about Australia. This is a 'bullying focused' initiative but also something else besides. The head is indirectly saying that bullying cannot be reconciled with the good standards he or she wishes the school to achieve. Such linking can place bullying into a larger context for pupils, and the linking also means that the theme of bullying is taken up more often, more naturally and with more conviction. Another positive effect is that the adults get used to using many different types of opportunity.

If the class teacher is also present during the head teacher's conversation with the pupils, there is an opportunity for another linking of relationships. The pupils see that the head and the class teacher are on the same team, particularly if the head refers to information received from the class teacher about the good project work. This shows consistency in the way the adults work together. The head can do this with out-of-school clubs, etc.

The school can achieve this kind of thematic and relationship 'linking' about bullying in many different ways if the staff is conscious of the principles involved. In the class and at after-school clubs there are numerous ways to create thematic links. They can occur even if the adult uses very little time on the theme of bullying but in the right context. If you can show the pupils that the adults are working together, the work becomes consistent and meaningful.

General Consistency

The method of thematic and relational linking, as discussed above, allows staff to touch on bullying as well as other things in a short space of time and demonstrate agreement between staff. This demonstrates consistency, but not enough on its own. Pupils will actually, more or less unconsciously, make these links themselves. What they see happening, tells them something about how convincing the situation is. The same is true for the adults. General consistency is a coherent standard, which affects the school's entire activity.

This is a major reason why Zero puts so much stress on the everyday work in the classroom. Good classroom leadership is prevention itself (Roland, 1999; 2007). In addition, it creates a good basis for anti-bullying initiatives, thematic links to bullying and problem solving. Much of the same applies to after-school clubs.

Zero also stresses initiatives in the playground. This is of course not just because such initiatives are effective in reducing bullying, but also because they contribute to creating a general sense of security and enjoyment. In this way, the initiatives demonstrate general consistency.

Continuity

A vital factor in allowing Zero to be effective in your school is that the focus and standard is maintained over time. A short, intensive effort, which is subsequently dropped, has little meaning. This is a classic mistake, which many schools make when they want to raise quality. They concentrate on something for a time, forget it and replace it with something else, which also often loses its focus after a time. The school creates the impression that it wasn't really serious about the issue in the first place. This can be very destructive both for the individual initiatives and for the culture in the school generally.

The Zero program lasts for one school year. The following action plan ensures continuity through this year. The plan has two main elements – an organisational model and activities linked to the school calendar. The activities follow one after each other in a specific order so the first ones set the conditions for what comes after (Roland, 2007).

The groundwork for Zero is prepared in the spring and the programme becomes operative from the first school day in the autumn. A thorough preparation is important for continuity. It is also vital that the start of the operative part of the programme is marked in a way which focuses the whole school. The first day of the autumn term is chosen for good reasons. This day is special to start with, and the standard that meets the pupils that day tells them how the school year is going to be. It is very important that the first step in the programme is planned and carried out properly and that it has a noticeable effect. This creates the motivation to go forwards, for the continuity. However, a good start in itself is no guarantee of continuity. There needs to be a planned progression in the programme plotted into the calendar. In this way, new elements of Zero are phased in throughout the school year. The earlier parts are not put aside, quite the opposite. They are maintained and developed and create the groundwork for the new elements.

In Zero, some initiatives and routines are set at certain times. The aim is to help focus over time and in a systematic way. However, Zero is not a programme full of great detail. From the principles in Zero, the school itself needs to find solutions and activities, which maintain focus and develop skills. The head teacher and his or her resource group have a key role here.

Organisation

Integrated model

When a school decides to start anti-bullying work, a useful principle is using a simple organisational model. In practice this means using the school's normal organisation where possible.

This is referred to as an 'integrated model' rather than a 'project model'. The danger with an integrated model is that the work does not become visible. Other programmes use a project model, which means building up a comprehensive apparatus for pushing the work forward. The advantage with this is that the programme becomes more visible. The disadvantage is that it uses more resources and there is a danger of the activity collapsing when the project structure is dismantled. We encourage schools to use an integrated model as far as possible. When the anti-bullying work relies so much on the normal structure of the school, it assumes that this structure functions and that the initiatives themselves will become visible.

The resource group described below may be regarded as slight deviance from the integrated model, as this group often comprises also other people than the head teacher and deputies. However, the core of the resource group is the ordinary leadership at school.

Resource Group

The head teacher has the overall responsibility and should head the resource group. The core of the resource group should be the same people as ordinarily make up the leadership team. In addition to the head, there can be deputy heads, head of after-school clubs, advisors and team leaders. This model means that the school's normal leadership team also has responsibility for the anti-bullying work. This is what we call an integrated model. In larger schools, the leadership group should be supplemented by two or three members from the school who have particular professional competence, for example, from a planning group or a special needs team. The resource group consists therefore of the head, other leaders and two or three others. The resource group needs to have the necessary administrative and professional skills. Parents' representatives and the student council should also be represented in the resource group.

The resource group's role is to oversee the implementation and follow-up of the anti-bullying work. They do this by involving staff, parent representatives and student councils. As part of the programme, the group members get full training in preventative work and in methods for introducing new initiatives. The group then functions as a support for the teachers and non-teaching staff (after-school staff, etc.) in specific situations. The resource group also has responsibility for the information strategy both within the school and externally.

The advantage with the integrated model is that anti-bullying issues go directly into the leadership team's ordinary meetings. When anti-bullying matters are under discussion, the other members of the resource group join the meeting. Regular meetings are essential.

By linking themes in the action plan to the meetings of the resource group and the wider group, a systematic approach can be achieved.

Teams

If the teachers are organised in teams, for example linked to year groups, the model is that anti-bullying material forms part of the team's ordinary work. The integrated model ensures the link between the resource group and the teams. Team leaders must set aside time in meetings to discuss the anti-bullying literature and material available. This should be done thematically and discussed section by section in the meetings. Each section should be read in advance. The work with the book must be completed before the staff goes into action (see below).

Team meetings must be used throughout the year to plan and discuss current preventative initiatives in classes and to solve problems. The best results will be achieved when the preparation and discussion at the meetings are used directly to plan the work with pupils and parents, as well as exchange experiences. If anyone in the team discovers any bullying, the team must be informed about who has been involved.

The resource group also has responsibility for making sure the staff of after-school or breakfast clubs have the chance to discuss anti-bullying issues in a systematic way. The head of the after-school clubs has the same function to his or her staff as the team leader.

The team leaders and after-school leaders report to the resource group about the work in the teams and after-school clubs, both about the themes to be taken up and the current issues. In this way, the resource group is kept informed of the work in the teams and has the opportunity to give support.

If teachers are not organised into teams, e.g., in small schools, the school must find another forum for the work described above.

Teaching Leadership Group

The Teaching Leadership Group, management and team leaders, is used to work out the school's action plan against bullying, based on the Zero template. The group meets six times for two hours.

Student Council

There is separate Zero material available for student councils. This consists of a book of ideas (one for primary/middle school and one for secondary) (Munthe et al., 2003). In Norwegian schools, a teacher who possesses resources for this work assists the students' council. This teacher, the student councils' deputy, together with the resource group, is responsible for getting the student council to work with the Zero material.

Representatives of the parents

Zero has not developed separate material for the parents' representatives or parents in general. A book for parents concerning bullying is, however, available (Roland, 1996). The resource group has responsibility for ensuring that parents' representatives are brought into the Zero programme and for supporting the parents in their work as described below.

Other Partners

The school should involve other relevant partners, such as school psychology services, child welfare agencies, school nurses, so these groups can use their meetings with pupils and parents to reinforce the effect of Zero.

Group of Schools

In Zero, each school joins cooperation with 3-5 other schools in the area. All the professional support from Zero centrally is given to the group of schools together. One aim is to make the programme as cheap as possible for the schools. In addition, this pattern allows good opportunities for cooperation between the schools. This cooperation is most concrete between the resource groups from the schools during their joint meetings with Zero. Cooperation between meetings is also important for exchanging experiences.

Professional Support

The schools could benefit much from professional support; one or two qualified staff in the form of seminars and advice. The anti-bullying work should start with a seminar for the resource groups in the spring. Here the principles and organisation are discussed. After this there is a meeting for all staff in the schools either later in the spring or in the autumn before school starts. The course covers bullying, prevention and methods.

Throughout the school year, seminars led by qualified personnel should be for the resource groups and staff. Each school should also be entitled to some hour's advice by phone or email from the advisors.

Initiatives at school level

Transfers from Lower School and a Good Start

The transfer from pre-school/nursery to primary school and from primary to middle or middle to secondary is important. During these transition phases, negative roles can follow certain children. Cooperation between the links in the chain, and use of the school psychology services, can help such pupils to get onto track again.

Schools should plan the make-up of new classes.

In a major study in Rogaland county in Norway, the way new classes were put together in year 1 in primary schools and in year 7 (now year 8) in secondary schools were studied (Roland, 1989). The 'continuity principle' led to year 1 pupils being put together according to where they lived, i.e., children from the same area or part of town. For the year 7, the continuity principle led to classes being put together according to year 6 classes, so 6A became 7A. The 'divide principle' led to year 1 pupils being put together regardless of where children lived, so fewer pupils in the class knew each other. In year 7, the 'divide' principle was to split up year 6 classes, so the year 7 classes were put together freely.

The results showed that there was between 40 and 50 percent more bullying in the schools which used the 'continuity' principle, when compared to those which used the 'divide' principle. The 'divide' principle can use a lottery system or it can be useful to use information from the previous institution (nursery or school). It is important to make sure those pupils with bad relationships, or negative influences between them don't end up in the same class, while trying to maintain good friendships within the same class.

The overall aim is to give the class a good mixture of pupils. Staff must use their judgement here.

The 'divide' principle means that the class is not established as a group when the new institution takes over. The teachers then have more chance to influence the class in a positive way. The early period is particularly important, and the school should have a clear plan for how the teachers can work with the classes during this period. For all classes, the period after school holidays is important, as is the time when the class gets a new teacher.

Some schools have the year group as the organisational unit, rather than the class, but they still have base groups of pupils. This solution gives good opportunities to practise the 'divide' principle. If the school has normal classes, parents of new first years can find the 'divide' principle very dramatic. Even if there is a gain in the 'divide' principle, the introduction of this system needs to be communicated well to parents. Otherwise the gain can be lost in conflict between the school and parents or between parents.

The 'divide' principle does not mean that the classes should split up again and again, for example each year. The principle is to give the pupils a new start when attending school, and the teachers a good opportunity to form the class, and then maintain a certain degree of stability.

Pupil Surveys

The school should carry out an anonymous survey among pupils in the spring, including central questions about bullying. The aim is to chart the extent of bullying, and find out where bullying normally occurs. The survey also gives the opportunity to see how bullying is spread between age groups and between boys and girls. The results of such surveys inevitably contain errors because some pupils do not answer truthfully or misunderstand one or more questions. The latter is more often the case for the youngest pupils than for the older ones. However, the survey will still give a good picture of the situation at the school. The anonymous survey does not identify individuals who are involved in bullying.

The results should first be presented to the staff of the school, then to the student council and the parents' representatives, and other groups as relevant. The parents' representatives are encouraged to present the results to the parents as a whole as soon as possible. Presentation of the results should form part of a broader presentation of the anti-bullying program, the work carried out so far and the plans for the future. The meeting should be planned and carried out as a joint venture by the school, the student council and the parents' representatives. The meeting provides a very good opportunity to bring in others, for example, school nurse, head of the local council or mayor and the caretaker. Where there is one, it is essential that the breakfast and/or after-school club participate.

It is very important that the school does not become either defensive about bad figures or complacent about good figures. The school may invite the media to the meeting, and should at least be prepared for media presence. This should be discussed during the planning of the meeting. It is a good idea to have written information prepared for the journalist(s).

The survey is repeated at the same time the following spring. This forms the basis for seeing the effect of the programme and for future work. The school also gets the results from this survey. After the end of the programme, the school can itself carry out a pupil survey every year as part of its work to prevent bullying.

The Playground

It is in the playground and the common areas of the school that most bullying takes place (Olweus, 1993; Roland, 2007), and visible strategies here can have an effect. Schools have to ensure that there are sufficient teachers in the playground to see what is happening. Common areas within the school building should also have good adult coverage. The dangerous places, which may have been revealed in the pupil surveys, should be followed up. Gym changing rooms and toilets are often difficult places for some pupils, and the school must find solutions that do not hurt or embarrass individual pupils.

Groups of teachers on duty should be put together from several year groups, so as many pupils as possible know someone on duty. The teachers on duty should concentrate on the pupils, not on each other. They should not go round together but spread out so they get the best possible overview. When pupils come to school on the first school day, and every day afterwards, as many as possible should be met by an adult, who sees the pupil and greets him or her individually. In all breaks, the adults should strive to get in quick contact with as many pupils as possible, while showing that they maintain an overview.

The adult should step in when any negative behaviour occurs – either of a general nature or bullying specifically. The adult should mark his or her adult authority by behaving calmly and in a focused way. When several pupils are acting together, it is worth dealing with each in turn, not the whole group together. Teachers should use the pupil's name or ask for it. If the pupil does not want to give their name, the adult should say that he or she would remember them and find out who he or she is. In this way, each involved pupil is dealt with by turn. Smaller incidents of unfriendly behaviour should not be tolerated. Serious behaviour should be followed up afterwards by bringing in the pupil's class teacher and the head. When the pupils experience this or observe that the adults are following up, it will show them clearly what standards are expected. It is therefore helpful if this can be shown in the early period after pupils have joined the school.

A small but important strategy is that the adults in the playground may wear a jacket with a clear and visible colour. Experience with this tactic has been very good, both at primary and secondary level. When this is used from the first school day in the autumn, it is a clear sign to the pupils that they are meeting something new. The jackets give the adults a symbolic authority as well as making them visible to pupils and to each other.

The Head Teacher

As soon as possible, the head teacher should visit each class. This should occur by preference when the pupils are with their class teacher. In addition to a general conversation with the pupils and the class teacher, the head should ask about bullying. The head teacher should also inform pupils that he or she will visit the class again, and in particular ask about bullying again. The head should also visit breakfast and after-school clubs in the same way. On these visits, it is important to show pupils that the head, the teachers and the after-school staff are in agreement. The head must make such visits a routine, not just at the start of the school year.

The head must also be visible regularly in the playground, show an interest in the pupils and show cooperation with the teachers.

Other leaders in the school and the resource group should also find opportunities to show themselves in similar ways.

The Student Council

In Zero, it is the adults who have the responsibility for preventing and stopping bullying.

The student council booklets, one for primary and one for secondary level, have ideas for how the student council can support the programme. One possible strategy which is not described in the student council booklets, but which we ask schools to consider, is the pupil's playground patrol.

Playground Patrol

Pupils who form a playground patrol can be a very constructive element in anti-bullying work.

The playground patrol is a group of pupils who are given a specific role in developing the collective atmosphere during break times and other times. First and foremost, these pupils contribute to a feeling of security in break times. In addition, they can take on responsibility for different activities indoor and outside.

The main function of the patrol in the playground is to be visible. The members are presented to the school's other pupils and preferably wear a bright armband during break times. They should not intervene in serious cases, but warn the teachers. In smaller episodes, they can make contact with those involved and ask what is happening. Their role must be explained and the members must have a seminar or similar course with the teachers responsible for them, for example, the resource group.

The playground patrol can consist of four pupils for each break time, where they go round in pairs. Altogether, some 10-20 pupils can have the role and they can each have responsibilities on different days. The pupils should apply in writing for the role, and the playground patrol should be linked to the work of the student council.

Buddy System

The school can choose to introduce a buddy system as part of Zero. This works by giving older pupils a specific responsibility in break times. This can be done on a class basis, i.e., pupils in 9A have a collective responsibility for pupils in 8A, or on an individual basis, i.e., each pupil in 6A has responsibility for a specific pupil in 1A. The teachers using common sense should put these pairs together.

Information Strategy

A well-planned strategy for internal and external information is an important element. The aim is to help maintain focus and create a sense of commitment.

The head teacher has the responsibility for raising anti-bullying work as an issue regularly with the whole staff, pupils and parents. A good strategy is to ensure that different parties keep each other informed. For example, the leader and deputy of the student council inform the staff meeting about what the student council is doing.

The school should also have a central point for important information, e.g., in the staff room. This is the place for information on milestones, seminars, meetings, pupil surveys, etc. The head teacher can link this to verbal information, which he or she gives or invites others to give.

An important principle to remember is to inform staff internally first, and then, as necessary, outside groups. Parents are a very important target group and they should receive information about the program in the spring together with a form asking for permission for their child to take part in the pupil survey. The school collects this material. Another central time for informing parents is when the results from the pupil survey are available. Information at the parents' meeting (see above) should be supplemented by written information, which is sent home with the key results, minutes from the parents' meeting and signed by the head. Parents should also be given information regularly by the

school and the class teacher. This information can easily be sent out with other information to parents. This sends a consistent message and avoids an 'overdose' of information about bullying.

The media will, in all probability, be interested. To get across accurate information, it is worth being prepared. Inviting the media and having a plan of how to give correct and interesting information can do this. In this way, the school can avoid negative effects of the media and instead, give a boost to the work. Attention from outside the school often helps bring focus, engagement and continuity to the project.

Action Plan

This is the school's most important document for the anti-bullying work.

The school may use a template (Midthassel, 2003) and the resource group should be given the task of using it to form the school's action plan. The staff groups discuss the concrete plans and the resource group has the role of coordinating the work and producing the final document. The aim is to create a systematic content for the work of the staff and at the school, so focus can be maintained throughout the year. The aim is also to create a sense of ownership of the principles and methods. In later years, the action plan will provide good routines and opportunities for improvement.

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Electronic Aggression and Cyberbullying.
An Old House with a New Facade?
New Communication Technologies
in Young People's Lives

The widespread use of new media (mainly the Internet and cell phones) has altered many areas of life of adults as well as children and young people. Great many of them view this change either as positive or neutral, e.g. in Poland as many as 49% citizens believe that the advent of new technologies has made the world a better place, to 30% it is neither better nor worse and only 13% believe it has now become worse (CBOS, 2008).

However, a new picture emerges when we approach the issue of young people using new technologies. Research shows that a significant number of parents and adults are deeply concerned about the impact of the Internet and cell phones on young generation. At times, they are convinced a prevalent access to new media is going to dehumanise personal relations; equally devastating might be its impact on their life in communication and generation-raising areas (Nissenbaum & Walker, 1998).

In the course of the 1990s a number of researchers in social sciences reiterated their concerns about negative impact of new technologies on young people with regard to social relations they establish as well as their general psychic well-being (Valkenburg & Peter, 2009). Do we now find those concerns justified or were they exaggerated? What exactly did the impact of new communication technologies change in young people's lives?

Research confirms that adolescents are the population group which most often uses the Internet: in Poland, 97% of children aged between 11 and 19 admit they use new technologies, and sharing a household with school-age children is an important factor behind the decision the computer at home should be provided with an Internet access.

The Internet takes up a large portion of time in young people's lives: Polish pupils aged 13-16 are online approximately 17.5 hours per week (Diagnoza szkolna, 2009); young people with special educational needs use the Internet no less often (Lathouwers, de Moor & Didden, 2009). An important remaining question is not only how often young people use the Internet but also what this use is based on.

The authors of Living and Learning with New Media (Ito et al., 2008), a report based on in-depth qualitative research (mainly interviews and observations), have determined that young people use so-called computer-mediated communication (web portals, instant messaging services, chat-rooms, etc.) mainly to sustain and develop relations with peers they know from the real world. New technologies give those relations a continuity of a great degree. In consequence, many young people remain online virtually all the time and practically never lose touch with their group of friends, a boyfriend or

a girlfriend (Ito et al., 2009; Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008). On the other hand, a significant number of young people surf the Internet looking for social networks which may help broaden their personal interests (e.g., in music, art or hobby). In this case, joining a social network is less important than personal interests which come to the fore (Ito et al., 2008). We can therefore claim that young people not only use new technologies very frequently but also do so in order to reach goals which are important to them and to their social functioning. It is therefore obvious they are going to be exposed to advantages of new media as well as to negative consequences of their use. Multiple factors confirm that the negative opinions on the impact of the Internet commonly expressed by researchers in the 1990s were unfounded. Moreover, the results of a currently conducted research demonstrate that the very quality of social relations may benefit from acts of communication established by young people with the use of new technologies. This phenomenon may as well have a positive future impact on the functioning of young people in a broader social context (Valkenburg & Peter, 2009).

The fact that we should not overgeneralise the negative impact of information technologies in general and the Internet in particular should not make us insensitive to potentially dangerous aspects of Internet use to which children and young people are likely to be exposed. Electronic aggression is one such aspect. In broad terms, it stands for hostile actions committed against others by means of the Internet and cell phones (Pyżalski, 2009). In certain cases – we are going to explore them further below – electronic aggression may take the form of cyberbullying (electronic mobbing).

Electronic Mobbing (Cyberbullying)

Peer-to-peer aggression has not been brought on only by the widespread use of modern communication technologies. It existed before the arrival of the Internet and cell phones as well as in a time when their use was far less common than it is nowadays. Simply, their impact on the lives of children and young people was more limited. Bullying (mobbing) is a type of peer-to-peer aggression which brings on the most profound negative consequences for persons who are engaged in it, for its perpetrators as well as victims. Not each act of aggression classifies as bullying (Stassen Berger, 2007). The authors of a review of the research over the last twenty years on the problems of mobbing (Monks et al., 2009) indicate that the majority of researchers agree to the following: bullying is an act of aggression, in which hostile intentions of a perpetrator or group of perpetrators are acted out on repetitive basis; due to psychological or physical advantage of aggressors, a victim finds it extremely difficult to defend oneself. Moreover, the authors indicate that aggressive actions may include physical

aggression (beating, pushing, etc.), verbal aggression (name-calling, offending, etc.) or can aim at isolating and excluding the victim from a group of peers (Monks et al., 2009).

Therefore, cyberbullying can be regarded as a typical act of bullying which is perpetrated by means of contemporary communication technologies. However, here arise two particularly pregnant questions with regard to prevention and intervention issues. Firstly, we should consider whether and how cyberbullying and bullying differ in respect to their forms and consequences. Secondly, we should ask whether preventive measures and interventions applied in the context of traditional peer-to-peer aggression are going to prove equally useful and effective in the case of electronic forms of aggression.

Before exploring the issue any further, let us note at the outset that 'electronic aggression' is an umbrella term which includes multiple and diverse hostile actions. However, they are all linked by one denominator, i.e. in all of those cases technology is used in order to perpetrate aggression.

Multiple Forms of Electronic Aggression

Research findings on the experience of Polish teenagers aged 14-15 as perpetrators of electronic aggression well demonstrate abundant possibilities of perpetrating those acts (tab. 1) – at this point, I do not yet wish to determine whether they have been directed against peers or whether the three aforementioned characteristics have been present, i.e.: intentionality, repetition and imbalance of force. The research was conducted on a large (N=2143) sample collected all over Poland[1]. The top rows of table 1 show forms of electronic aggression chosen by the largest percentage of adolescents. The data provides an overview of the diverse methods for perpetrating electronic aggression; we may also observe which forms of electronic aggression are most common.

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Table 1.

Students of Polish secondary schools (gymnasium) who have become perpetrators of electronic aggression (N=2143)

		It never happened to me	It did not happen over the past year but it happened before	Over the past year			
				One or more times over the past year	One or more times over the past month	One or more times over the past week	One or more times over the past day
		%	%	%	%	%	%
1.	I insulted others during a chat conversation.	55,9	16,4	15,3	5,1	3,2	4,1
2.	I sent messages through instant messaging service in order to offend or scare other people.	60,3	16,9	13,7	4,8	1,9	2,3
3.	I commented on posts by others in order to ridicule/embarrass/scare them.	61,5	13,6	17,2	4	1,5	2,2
4.	I offended/insulted others while playing online games (e.g., Tibia, World of Warcraft, Counter Strike).	63,2	7,3	9,1	5,4	4,8	10,1
5.	I purposely excluded or not accepted a person to a 'group of friends' in the Internet in order to tease him/her.	68,7	13,2	11,8	2,5	1,3	2,5
6.	I sent text messages to tease/annoy/scare other people.	69,1	13,1	12,4	2,4	1,3	1,6
7.	In order to distress others I made comments on their online profiles on web portals such as nasza-klasa.pl, fotka.pl or on their blogs.	71,4	12	10,6	2,9	1,4	1,9
8.	I lied to other people in the Internet/by phone in order to distress or ridicule them.	73	13,8	9,4	1,9	1	0,8
9.	I sent unpleasant messages or links to disturbing content even though other people did not want it.	77	10,5	7,4	2,4	1	1,7
10.	I created a false account, which was embarrassing for other person on web portal (e.g., nasza-klasa.pl, fotka.pl or other).	84,3	6,4	5,7	1,1	0,6	1,8
11.	Without permission, I used other person's Internet account/phone/messenger in order to send unpleasant messages to other people.	84,8	7,2	4,8	1,5	0,8	1

		It never happened to me	It did not happen over the past year but it happened before	Over the past year			
				One or more times over the past year	One or more times over the past month	One or more times over the past week	One or more times over the past day
		%	%	%	%	%	%
12.	I purposely sent out content containing computer viruses to other person.	86,8	5,9	3,5	1,5	0,9	1,5
13.	I posted in the Internet or sent via e-mail the picture of other person, which I had taken in a situation which was embarrassing for him/her.	87,8	5,9	4	1,1	0,2	0,9
14.	I gained access to someone's e-mail/messenger and divulged his or her personal information.	88	5,7	3,4	1	0,6	1
15.	I posted private pictures/conversation in the Internet, which belonged to other people and did so against their will.	88,1	6,1	3,1	1,1	0,6	1
16.	I altered/posted in the Internet or distributed among friends a film or image of other person showing him/her in an unfavourable light.	88,2	6,2	3,3	1,1	0,4	0,9
17.	I posted in the Internet / distributed among friends a film or images of a person, whom I had provoked to behave in a strange way.	90,4	4,3	2,8	0,8	0,5	1,3
18.	I placed a false ad with information about other people in dating services portals.	90,6	4	3	1,1	0,3	1
19.	I sent e-mails in order to insult/scare other person.	91,1	4,5	1,8	1,1	0,5	1
20.	I created a web-site presenting other person in an unfavourable light.	94	2,6	1,8	0,5	0,3	0,8

As we can observe, although the use of the Internet or cell phones links all the above-listed forms of aggression, there are many important differences between each particular method of perpetrating aggressive acts: some are based on a direct contact with the victim (e.g. name-calling in instant messaging services), others involve posting material about the victim (e.g. creating a ridiculing profile

on social service web-sites) (Hanewald, 2008). The present research still lacks a complete typology of the acts of electronic aggression with regard to the means by which it may be perpetrated. Yet, in order to clarify that point, I shall present a summary of one the first overviews provided by Kowalski, Limber & Agatson (2007). Table 2 shows a brief overview of the types which were distinguished by the authors, to which I add an additional type of 'technical' aggression.

Table 2.

Typology of electronic aggression by Kowalski, Limber & Agatson (2008) (modified).

Flaming	Flaming is an aggressive word exchange among users in communication channels, which are public by their nature, e.g., chat-rooms and discussion forum. This type implies the participation of two or more persons.
Harassment	Harassment is sending hostile messages (e.g., aggressive, derisive) to the victim through electronic communication channels (instant messaging services or short text messages). This type of aggression is also present in online gaming. Harassment implies there are only two agents directly engaged in the act; it differs it from flaming.
Impersonation	Impersonation or identity theft means the aggressor takes on the identity of his victim in the cyberspace. This can be achieved by obtaining someone's e-mail, messenger or profile password (aggressor can either steal it or get it from the victim's friend). The aggressor may impersonate his victim in order to perpetrate aggression against a third party, e.g., by using a stolen account to send offensive content to peers or teachers.
Outing	Outing refers to divulging private information about or belonging to the victim, which the aggressor had intercepted (e.g. chat history, letters, images) and made electronically accessible to a third party. The content is either stolen from the victim's computer or cell phone, or was obtained by the aggressor during the time he or she was on close terms with the victim, who showed their trust and was willing to share their secrets (e.g. over a chat on instant messaging service).

Cyberstalking	Cyberstalking means stalking of an individual and flooding them with unwelcome messages. This type of aggression happens most often in cases when the victim and aggressors previously maintained a close relationship, e.g. former boyfriend or girlfriend (Spitzberg & Hoobler, 2002).
Happy slapping	It refers to provoking and attacking a person and recording this event on film or pictures. Further on, the aggressor publishes the embarrassing content in the Internet.
Denigration	It means publishing of false and denigrating content by means of electronic media or any other material related to the victim, e.g., altered images suggesting the victim engages in sexual acts, or false information about events in which the victim presumably participated.
Exclusion	Exclusion is an act of a deliberate excluding/banning of the victim from a list of Internet contacts (e.g. a list of friends on social service web-sites).
'Technical' aggression	The aggressor directs actions towards the victim's computer, software or electronic infrastructure (e.g. a web-site) rather than directly towards the victim. This action includes deliberate spreading of computer viruses as well as hacking other peoples' computers.

Although a young person may act as victim or aggressor in all aforementioned types of electronic aggression, not all cases can be classified as acts of cyberbullying (electronic mobbing). Firstly, not each case is an act of peer-to-peer aggression. For example, 83% of 14 and 15 year olds who, in the year previous to the research, had committed acts of electronic aggression, indicated their action was directed against their close male and female peers (circa 26%), but also against young people from school and home area that they hardly knew. In all of those cases they indeed engaged in acts of peer-to-peer aggression. However, their victims could as well be strangers whose choice was purely accidental (24%), teachers (9%), celebrities (e.g. actors, sportsmen) (11%), or even entire groups of strangers, e.g. fans of a particular music band (15%).

Moreover, not each act of electronic aggression in which children and teenagers participate either as aggressors or victims fulfils the criteria of intentionality, repetition and imbalance of force between the victim and aggressor. And yet it is those three features that collectively determine whether a given act may be classified as an act of bullying (Stassen Berger, 2007). It is worth stressing that at least in a number of occasions these criteria are going to prove contentious. Let us then take a closer look at 'repetition': in the case of bullying, it means an individual aggressor or a group of aggressors

perpetrate their actions against the victim on a repetitive basis. This criterion may be equally valid in cases of electronic mobbing; however, it may so happen that the aggressor performs his/her act once only, e.g. by posting offensive content on the Internet. Later on it is copied by other users, therefore becomes accessible to a wide and practically unlimited audience. This means the suffering to which the victim was initially exposed is now multiplied despite the fact that it is no longer inflicted directly by the original aggressor. Equally disputable is the criterion of the intentionality of the aggressor's action. The research conducted in Poland, which we have referred to earlier, demonstrates that as much as 37% of teenagers admit that on one occasion or another they had indeed sent out messages (either on the Internet or by cell phones) which in the end turned out to have a harmful effect on other people although the aggressors did it for no other reason than fun. This in turn means that many aggressive and therefore harmful actions are the result of a sheer lack of imagination and/or ability to foresee consequences. As regards the third criterion: imbalance of force in a school environment may be a result of the victim being physically disadvantaged, outnumbered by the aggressors, or demonstrating less effective communication skills. However, in electronic media the imbalance of force may be determined by the peculiarities of the computer-mediated communication, such as the anonymity of the aggressor. We should point out that these descriptive complications will concern only certain cases of electronic mobbing. Therefore, encountering a case when the characteristics of electronic mobbing should be interpreted in different terms than in the case of bullying, should be seen as a purely hypothetical possibility only.

How can electronic mobbing (cyberbullying) differ from bullying?

Researchers of electronic mobbing as well as practitioners working on the issue find it a valid task to determine whether the phenomenon is accompanied by circumstances and mechanisms which are not at work in cases of bullying (Dooley, Pyżalski & Cross, 2009).

In the literature on the subject we come across the following set of criteria describing cyberbullying, which may distinguish it from bullying: anonymity, continuity of affect, unlimited or so-called invisible audience, and a cockpit effect (Walrave & Heirman, 2009).

Anonymity

The anonymity of cyberbullying may provoke disinhibition of aggressor's behaviour. Under cover of anonymity, the aggressor is able to engage in perpetrating actions which otherwise he/she would not perform, e.g. in face-to-face contact with their victim (Joinson, 2009). By reducing the risk of being identified and punished, in certain cases anonymity may as well create the feeling of one's being beyond punishment. Also the victim is now confronted with new circumstances, therefore the toll taken by aggressive anonymous actions may be more severe. According to Walrave and Heirman (2009, p. 32), when this happens, one has no knowledge whether the attack comes from a single person or a group, whether the aggressor is a boy or a girl, a fellow student or a stranger. Estimating a possible threat becomes even more complicated (Mishna, Saini & Solomon, 2009).

The continuity of affect

The continuity of aggressive action means that the access to the victim is practically unlimited and one has no place to hide (Slonje & Smith, 2008; Walrave & Heriman, 2009). In cases of traditional aggression, which does not involve new media, the picture is much different: a person who is attacked in a school environment may seek refuge in places such as one's home, where one remains out of reach for potential aggressors. The continuity of aggressive action is particularly strong in cases which involve publication of embarrassing material (such as an image or texts) on the Internet. When this happens, the victim remains constantly aware that the content is accessible to other users and each new access may be experienced as yet another act of victimisation. The continuity of aggression therefore means that it is restricted neither by time nor by space (Walrave & Heirman, 2009).

Unlimited audience

In certain cases, cyberbullying involves, in Boyd's terms, the so-called unlimited or invisible audience (Boyd, 2007). The term refers to all Internet users who may gain access to the uploaded content: if it contains compromising or offensive information, the victim is going to suffer great mental strain (Dooley, Pyżalski & Cross, 2009). Worse, the latter may become aggravated far more than in the case of bullying, due to the range of access as well as to the sheer number of potential viewers who become witnesses to the victim's humiliation.

Cockpit effect

An act of communication between the aggressor and his victim is mediated by computer screen and computer or cell phone's keyboard. The communication channel is restricted to written text while non-verbal channel, which in regular circumstances transmits emotions, remains extremely limited. This means that certain people may engage in aggressive actions with no conscience they may harm other people (Pyżalski, 2009). This in turn may create a so-called cockpit effect. Walrave and Hairman (2009) compare the perpetrator of an aggressive action to a bomber pilot who can bomb entire cities because he does not directly witness the suffering of his victims.

To conclude the present comparison of electronic and traditional aggression, I would like to point out that each of 'new' attributes may only potentially appear in a given act of electronic aggression. This means that none of them can become a clear-cut metric for unambiguously differentiating between acts of electronic and traditional aggression.

A good example of the potential character of these characteristics is provided by research results on the anonymity of the acts of electronic aggression. According to Hinduja and Patchin, who conducted their research in the United States (2009), as much as 80% of all victims were able to identify people who attacked them on the Internet. Juvonen and Gross (2008) provide similar results. According to them, as much as 2/3 of all victims knew their aggressor, with nearly half of interviewees pointing out to students attending the same school. The Polish research concerning students aged 14-15, which we have quoted earlier, indicates that only one third of the children who became victims of electronic aggression in the previous year have been able to identify their aggressor.

All the aforementioned criteria may apply in equal measure to acts of traditional aggression (in which new media are not involved), as they too may be perpetrated anonymously or involve a larger number of people. What we can do is to rethink the quantity-related aspect of the issue, i.e. proportions between acts of electronic and traditional aggression in which the aforementioned characteristics appear.

The consequences of experiencing cyberbullying

It is beyond any doubt that young people who have been subjected to traditional bullying pay large psychological costs in form of mood swings, clinical depression, concentration problems, fears, feeling helpless (Griffin & Gross, 2004; Monks et al., 2009). Electronic aggression may be associated with similar consequences if only by the fact that in a number of cases its victims experience other forms of traditional peer-to-peer aggression at school (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004). According to Kowalski, Limber and Agatson (2008), only few students became victims or aggressors of cyberbullying without being simultaneously subjected to traditional bullying. This means that in a number of cases we are going to deal with a situation in which an act of electronic aggression continues and strengthens the victimological aspect inflicted by traditional bullying, for example, by the presence of one or more of the above-mentioned mechanisms.

Recent research carried out in Poland by Łukasz Wójcik (2009) confirms the emotional consequences of experiencing violence on the Internet. The victims of aggressive actions pointed to a wide range of negative emotions they had experienced. Almost 60% of those who were humiliated, ridiculed or denigrated on the Internet, confirmed this experience had made them angry, 42% felt sorrowful, 18% were scared and 13% embarrassed.

The emotions which result from experiencing various kinds of electronic aggression have different frequencies depending on a given kind of aggression. According to both Polish and international research (Wojtasik 2009; Slonje & Smith, 2008), the most negative emotions are experienced by those who become victims of aggression which involves publication of visual content (films and images) on the Internet.

To summarize, cyberbullying, just like traditional bullying, leads to many short- and long-term negative consequences for its victims.

Is a threat of cyberbullying particularly relevant
to young people with special educational needs?

Children and young people with special educational needs, just as their fully-abled peers, live in the cyber era. Contemporary research on the issue is limited, however it confirms that the amount of time and the range of use of new communication technologies are similar for both groups (Lathouwers, de Moor & Didden, 2009; Plichta, 2009). Therefore, one should not expect that the dangers of electronic aggressions will not affect young people with special educational needs. It is worth adding that cyberbullying in this population group has rarely been investigated in previous research work (see: Plichta, 2009).

Yet, the research data confirm that certain individuals with special educational needs may be more prone to become victims as well as perpetrators of electronic aggression, which may be a consequence of at least two reasons.

Firstly, children and teenagers with special educational needs are more likely to fall victim to every type of peer-to-peer aggression. They attract attention of potential perpetrators and are very often easy targets, with serious difficulty undertaking adequate self-defence (e.g. Hershkowitz, Lamb & Horowitz, 2007; Plichta, 2009). Some young people with special educational needs may as well easier become perpetrators of electronic aggression. One reason for the latter is that they give in more easily to the pressure exerted on them by their peers (this may refer, among others, to mentally disabled persons).

Secondly, it may be that young people with special educational needs use new media in a specific way. A good example is provided by quality research by Plichta (2009). On the basis of interviews with young people aged 13-17 with mild mental disability, he devised a few usage patterns in this regard.

Many of his disabled interviewees construed of their online behaviour in a particular way, often linking it to the way they functioned in the off-line world (e.g. school environment). The extent of their engagement in electronic aggression was quite substantial: 1/3 of the respondents confirmed they had been aggressors, while c. 50% were aggression victims. At the same time, the interviewees seemed to comprehend the dangers connected to electronic aggression mostly in terms of 'technical' threats, such as computer viruses or a possible explosion of the screen. We may therefore conclude that a lack of awareness of possible dangers by members of this particular group may signify their being more prone to victimisation.

At this point it is worth adding that possibly unique patterns of use of contemporary communication technologies by other groups of children and young people with special education needs have not yet been sufficiently analysed to-date. Therefore, it is difficult at this stage to devise any specific recommendations to prevent electronic aggression for these groups.

What can be done in school about cyberbullying?

The work on preparation and testing prevention methods which might become an efficient tool in preventing cyberbullying among students is still very much in progress and there is much to be done in this area. However, some actions which may help reduce the spreading of electronic mobbing and limit its negative consequences have already been devised and at least partially put to the test. These can be classified as follows:

1. Measures promoting positive use of new communication technologies in didactics and within a broader context of communication in educational environments

A prerequisite for teachers – if they are to take measures and initiate actions in this field – is to gain knowledge about the ways of using communication technologies by children and young people (DSCF, 2007). This knowledge is certainly a dynamic field which needs to be constantly updated. Many schools which are aware of the dangers of using new technologies apply solutions based on banning or significantly limiting the use of those technologies by students in the school. Many factors, however, suggest that such measures do not bring satisfying effects. Banning the access is difficult to enforce; moreover, the school becomes a sole environment where new technologies are prohibited while their role in the lives of young people is nonetheless significant. Such prohibitions also strengthen the 'digital divide' between teachers and students; meanwhile the causes underlying electronic aggression are left untouched until a real problem of aggression occurs in a given school community.

The measures which have a chance to change this situation are school projects in which the use of new technologies is required, e.g. taking pictures, making cell phone films, building web sites as well as using electronic communication channels in order to contact other students (e.g. in online class

forums); they may also include activities in which students take on the task informing and educating their teachers about how they use new technologies. The latter may be carried out by means of an online demo session conducted by the students.

An educational environment which works according to these principles facilitates both effective communication and intervention when a dysfunctional use of new media becomes the issue.

2. Programs/lessons focused on the specificity of new media as well as safety issues regarding their use

An often-proposed solution regarding prevention of cyberbullying or electronic aggression understood in broader terms are educational programs whose content refers to the accompanying use of new media. Those measures may be divided into two kinds: the first one is focused on an analysis of negative aspects and a demonstration of possible dangers; the second promotes responsible and thoughtful use of new media. We need to be aware that the results of the first program, particularly when it is not conducted professionally, may turn out to be directly opposite to ones intended. For example, a presentation of various kinds of electronic aggression may be interpreted by some students as a form of instruction for perpetrating aggression. On the other hand, the programs focused on safety issues in using new media as well as on norms of behaviour abiding in cyberspace (so-called netiquette) do not pose such threats. Other issues regarding the use of new media, such as its technical aspects, may also be included in this sort of program, e.g. how can one safely set up an account to prevent others from accessing it or how to block phone numbers to prevent unwelcome text messages. Also, peer-to-peer educational programs which have been devised for younger peers may bring particularly promising effects. They focus on the same set of issues but are conducted by well-prepared older peers and require using new media in the classroom (e.g. educational games). These programs must certainly be well tailored to the children's age as well as to their particular educational needs (Plichta, 2009). An education focused on witnesses of traditional as well as cyberbullying is equally important as it teaches students how to react to attacks against others and how to behave in order not to give their support to aggressive acts (Salmivalli, 2010).

3. Co-operation with parents

The research data analysing the questions about whether young people talk with their parents about their experience of falling victim to peer-to-peer electronic aggression provide very coherent results. Only few students tell parents about their experience and even a smaller percentage inform their

teachers (Mishna, Saini & Solomon, 2009; Wojtasik, 2009). This is the result of many factors, e.g. worried parents might want to cut off the Internet access altogether and by doing so deprive a student of great many ways of communication with his/her peers. Moreover, a great number of acts of electronic aggression against peers happen outside the school environment although their consequences directly influence relations among students within their school. For that reason, being open to the threats posed by the use of new media as well as providing professional support to parents so that they can effectively deal with any such problems are necessary ingredients of any efficient prevention of cyberbullying as well as of a meaningful intervention when aggression does take place. The measures in this field may as well include providing professional education to parents with regard to social aspects of using new media by their children. Such an educational program should certainly be tailored to the IT competencies of a given group of parents.

4. Technical solutions

Cyberbullying is directly connected to the use of new communication technologies; we should therefore look for prevention methods also in the field of technical solutions which might be applied at school. Stachecki (2009) offers a framework for a comprehensive school policy with regard to those issues. Such a policy should include the following:

- Separating the administrative network from the computers used by students; this prevents students from gaining access to private data, e.g. personal information about their peers.
- Creating clear rules regulating the use of electronic infrastructure in school. These rules should equally apply to students, teachers and administration workers.
- Students should have no access to teacher's workstation.
- Providing safety to school Internet services – the content uploaded by students should be supervised, e.g. material which might be hostile to other students and teachers should be blocked.
- When the school has an internal online forum, it should have a moderator; the most active students may be entrusted with this task; they will monitor if the standards of the discussion are sufficiently high.
- Avoiding anonymity; each user of the school web should be provided with an individual name and password; by limiting the anonymity we may hope to lower its negative consequences, e.g. the aforementioned disinhibition.

To summarise the present discussion of technical solutions, I should stress it would be pointless to limit the preventive measures only to technical aspects without applying other educational solutions we have already talked about earlier on.

5. Incorporating the issue of electronic aggression into internal school regulations and procedures, as well as gaining expertise about relevant legal regulations

Official school documents such as the charter and school regulations should be reviewed with regard to issues of electronic aggression. Are there any procedures which should be applied when the most serious acts of electronic aggression take place? Does a school have employees with knowledge about current legal regulations in this field? Are school documents in compliance with any such legislation?

We should also point out that most of the specialists share the view that legal and penal solutions should only supplement educational solutions and be applied only in most drastic cases (Shoka & Thierer, 2009).

In this paper we have provided only a draft overview of possible actions to be undertaken with regard to electronic aggression. Each of them lends itself to further localisations and practical applications. It is worth stressing that a number of methods tested out successfully in the context of traditional bullying will also be of use in the context of electronic mobbing. Certainly, the decisions about which measures should be implemented in a school should be preceded with a careful diagnosis of the local situation and necessarily involve an in-depth discussion involving those in charge of implementing such strategies in a given context.

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Intellectually Disabled Students
as Victims and Perpetrators of Peer-to-peer Aggression
– the Educational Context

R⊙BUSD

Introduction

What are the real abilities of people with an intellectual disability? What are the circumstances that condition their behavior which are not entirely comprehensible to us? In what sense do intellectually disabled people function differently in comparison to people with no such impairment? In what way is their functioning special? Are the patterns of aggression and risk of becoming a victim of aggression similar in both groups? Are conditions that cause aggression in people with intellectual disability in any way unique?

When we consider a specific phenomenon, person or object, we have a tendency to analyze and evaluate it by making reference to what is supposedly an ideal set of characteristics. On the other hand, we try to capture a given phenomenon by comparing it to behaviors and values which are typical for the general population. Such values include average intelligence and adaptation skills, and both influence the diagnosis of intellectual disability[1]. However, despite the adjective 'intellectual' in the name of the disability, subaverage intellectual values (IQ falling below the population average of 85 to 115 points) are not a sufficient ground for such a diagnosis. Two additional sets of factors are equally important, i.e. considerable deterioration of one's ability to function independently (to take care of oneself, an ability to communicate and learn), and developmental conditions surfacing by the age of puberty (i.e. until 18 years of age).

Table 1.
Approximate developmental abilities in people with intellectual disability in comparison to the abilities of people within the intellectual norm

Intellectual disability level	Maximum intellectual level achievable (in comparison to the typically developing peers)	Maximum level of social competence achievable (in comparison to the typically developing peers)
Mild **(IQ 52-67)**	to 12 years	to 16 years
Moderate **(IQ 36-51)**	to 8 years	to 10 years
Severe **(IQ 20-35)**	5 to 6 years	to 8 years
Profound **(IQ 0-19)**	to 3 years	to 5 years

Source: Data based on: Kostrzewski J. (1981), *Charakterystyka osób upośledzonych*, in K. Kirejczyk (Ed.), *Upośledzenie umysłowe – pedagogika*, Warszawa.

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[1] In this article 'intellectual disability' and 'mental retardation' are used interchangeably.

Certainly, these data may only serve as a rule of thumb guidance. The characteristics of intellectually disabled people in subject literature often do not reflect the real diversity of this group. Among people with intellectual disability there are individuals fully dependent on others in all areas of life, as well as people who are able to conduct independent life and require no continuous support. The attempt to describe people with mild intellectual disability is particularly difficult. Their capabilities and functioning are commonly compared to those of people with no such impairment and thus referred to as: late, limited, slower, worse, etc. However, as we are not able to precisely 'group' people within the intellectual norm, it is equally futile, or at least very difficult, to do so in the case of the group of intellectually disabled people. Large evidence confirms that functioning mechanisms are the same in non-intellectually disabled and intellectually disabled people. In the latter case, it is the biological and social situation that is more complex.

One of the most noticeable differences between both groups is a greater dependence of intellectually disabled people compared to non-intellectually disabled ones. We are going to focus on this issue in the course of our discussion below. The quality of life of those people is most often the consequence of the conditions which had been established for them by others.

The everyday dependence of intellectually disabled people is an issue worth additional discussion particularly when independence is perceived as a desired, wished-for state. In view of existing research, the milder the disability, the greater spectrum of possibilities of decision-making is. Also, regardless of intellectual level, the main source of satisfaction (or a lack of thereof) is the quality of relations with other people. In the case of children and young people, the main social benchmark is undoubtedly their peers. Research confirms that disability seriously encourages peer-to-peer aggression and victimisation.

Numerous data suggest that on a number of occasions intellectually disabled people also become perpetrators of aggression. This may be the result of becoming a victim of aggression in the past, including multiple forms of abuse, aggression, and bullying.

When it comes to perpetrating aggression and the risk of falling victim of it, we may distinguish the following situations:

- The perpetrator is a non-intellectually disabled person and the victim is an intellectually disabled person.

Since people without intellectual disability have advantage over people with intellectual disability and much greater freedom to plan and perpetrate their actions, this type of aggression should become our greatest concern. It may take place within a co-educational environment, in an ordinary educational setup, in one's home or in a special institution, e.g. when a staff member becomes the perpetrator.

● The perpetrator and the victim are both intellectually disabled.

This situation is most likely to occur in a special educational set-up. There are no grounds to suggest that peer-to-peer aggression in this context has different roots than aggression involving children and young people within the intellectual norm. This situation may also occur within inclusive educational settings, e.g. when two students with intellectual disability 'fight for' acceptance of the group of peers, a classmate or other important person, e.g. a teacher.

● The perpetrator is an intellectually disabled person while the victim is a person without intellectual disability.

This may occur in form of aggression against relatives, peers or institution workers where the intellectually disabled person has been placed. This kind of aggression may be the victim's response to aggression formerly inflicted by others. In this context, as in the previously described ones, one should bear in mind particular ease with which people with an intellectual disability may become aggressors. This may result from instigation, gullibility or desire to improve one's social standing.

The risk factors of becoming a victim of peer-to-peer aggression

Aggression among children has been a subject of intensive research for several decades. However, this work has been focused predominantly on the role of aggressor and much less on children who become victims of peer-to-peer aggression. Therefore in the present discussion I wish to focus on a learner with an intellectual disability as a potential victim of aggression.

According to Dan Olweus (1999) a victim is a person characterized by a relatively high level of fear and a lowered sense of security. A victim often reacts to aggression with outbursts of crying, or withdraws from interaction altogether. Olweus also maintains that victims do not constitute a homogenous group. This assumption has been confirmed in successive research. Within the group of victims there is a minority which may be described as 'aggressive' or 'aggression-provoking' individuals.

Intellectually disabled children are more often isolated or rejected by a group of their peers. They tend to have fewer friends at school or outside and become easy targets of aggression as a potential perpetrator risks less when they become targets. Hodges and Perry (1999) assume that having no close friends and being rejected by others are two crucial factors when it comes to one becoming a victim of aggression. However, aside from interpersonal relations, individual characteristics are equally important, e.g. a tendency to display fearful behavior, submission, or physical weakness.

As we have stated previously, intellectually disabled people become particularly easy targets of aggression (Mikrut, 2007; Hershkowitz, Lamb & Horowitz, 2007). According to Little (2004) and Hershkowitz research team (2007), the risk that intellectually disabled children (including individuals with learning difficulties and communication disorders) become abused is two to three times higher (including sexual harassment) than in the case of typically developing children. Therefore disabled people in general, and intellectually disabled ones in particular, are often referred to as 'safe targets', as the risk that the aggressor is going to be identified is significantly lower (Williams, 1995), and the victims or witnesses of aggression themselves are regarded as unreliable (Murphy, 2001; Gudjonsson, 2003; Milne & Bull, 2001).

Certain disability-related features may become additional risk factors which increase the likelihood of victimization, e.g. physical weakness, isolation from the society, disrupted relations with other people. Although the research on peer-to-peer victimization of intellectually disabled children has been limited to-date, several studies (e.g. Marini, Fairbairn & Zuber, 2001; Mishna, 2003; Whitney, Smith & Thompson, 1994) have already emphasized that children with an intellectual disability are at greater risk of becoming aggression victims; this research can serve as initial ground for further studies on this subject. This said, one also should stress there exists a body of research work that does not fully support the thesis about the higher victimization risk of intellectually disabled people (e.g. Benedict et al., 1990; Westcott, 1991).

Stigmatization and rejecting others

A violation of natural bonds between an individual and a group may take place at different stages of one's development, have different extent, and lead to diverse consequences. The most predominant instance of this violation is rejection of children with intellectual disability by their peers. Often it is the result of stigmatization based on systematic exclusion of certain individuals from the social activities of their classmates (Pospiszyl, 2003, p. 64).

For numerous reasons an intellectually disabled individual finds it more difficult to enjoy a high socio-metric position within a group of his or her peers. Research indicates that adolescents with mental retardation in a reformatory institution more often become scapegoats and targets of aggression, above all of the most humiliating acts perpetrated by others (Mikrut, 2007, p. 188). Also Perry and others (1998) stress the key role of rejection in victimization perpetrated by peers. Children who become isolated more often fall victims of aggression as their low social status makes it difficult to bond with peers and form friendships. In consequence, they become even more defenseless (Hodges & Perry, 1999). "Being rejected by peers is closely linked to aggressive and non-aggressive behavior problems (…). Individual status within a group (popularity, rejection), which can be measured in socio-metrical analysis, is fairly stable and in many cases has already been solidified in the preschool period" (Urban, 2005, p. 40).

Intellectually disabled students are particularly likely to become 'submissive victims' whose characteristic features according to Olweus include high anxiety, a sense of a lack of security, being excessively cautious, low self-esteem and withdrawal from the group. These qualities are complacent with other features of emotional and motivational sphere in people with lower intellectual abilities, such as: expecting failure, dependence on others, learned helplessness, regarding the instances of control within the outside, increased fear, emotional disorders, and non-adequate – commonly negative – self-image.

The rejection is the result of a mutual valuation process among peers. Although this may be manifested as a more or less open aggression, the total range of harmful effects is much wider. They may be divided into six categories:

- Rejecting or early termination of social interactions with a member of the group;
- Limiting one's access to important information or activities;

- Different form of aggression;
- Controlling and dominating the child;
- Demonstrating disapproval towards the child or his/her behavior(s);
- Disseminating gossip or offensive opinions.

In the case of certain individuals or groups the process of rejection develops as if 'naturally'. In regard to intellectually disabled, psychically ill or obese people we may talk of the so called 'primary deviance'. Stigmatization, on the other hand, is the result of interaction between the stigmatized individual and stigmatizing group. The theory developed by H. Beckert and current conceptions of social reactions allow for stigmatization to take place without previous primary deviance, i.e. to be induced solely by social reactions, with no objective causes residing within the individual (objective physical or psychic characteristics or behaviors are not necessary).

Is inclusive education always beneficial to intellectually disabled persons?

Within 'romantic' visions of inclusive education it is maintained that positioning non-disabled and disabled people in the same educational context brings indisputable advantages to the latter and poses no threat of conflicts arising among students. However, sharing the same space is a necessary but not sufficient objective. Despite the indisputable virtues of co-education (particularly for cognitive development of the intellectually disabled), when considering the interest of weaker and more defenseless individuals, we should remember the risks they might become victims of aggression. The research conducted by Władysław Dykcik (1979) confirms that direct contacts between both groups do not necessarily promote acceptance of the disabled by their peers with normal intellectual development. In view of this, the 'contact hypothesis' does not seem to have empirical grounds. "A mere co-habitation does not bring people together; it may equally lead them to drift apart" (Kowalik, 2001, p. 47).

In the case of disabled students who study within the framework of inclusive education, a likely form of peer-to-peer aggression is so-called relational bullying. It is partially indirect (hidden) and comes to the fore when an individual is isolated, others are encouraging to ignore his/her presence, or when gossip about him/her is disseminated, etc. The potential aggressor finds it much more complicated to engage in direct physical attack (such acts are more difficult albeit not unlikely) as the victim is protected by

their guardians or teachers. 'Soft' acts of rejection by the group are difficult to observe although they are equally likely to leave deep psychological wounds in the victim. Due to this difficulty the teachers are more likely to intervene in cases of direct physical acts of violence, rather than when indirect aggression occurs.

Research results compiled by Sadowska (2005, p. 96) bring a valid point into our discussion. Her analysis was based on a comparison of free associations by students of ordinary schools and inclusive education units concerning people with various developmental disorders. Despite the exposure to disabled peers, the students in inclusive units described disability as a much worse predicament in comparison to students in ordinary schools (for example: "disabled people are called names, things are stolen from them, they are beaten, picked on, ridiculed"). These associations were likely the direct consequence of the observations of disabled peers in the daily school reality.

Grzegorz Szumski points out in his comparative study of the effects of inclusive and non-inclusive education that – apart from the numerous advantages of co-education – "disabled students in non-inclusive educational units find it more difficult to achieve subjective understanding of happiness in comparison to those in special schools. They also tend to have fewer friends and classmates and as a rule their position in the class non-formal hierarchy is relatively low. Comparing oneself to non-retarded peers seems unavoidable and it brings a negative impact on self-evaluation, while confrontation with difficult challenges increases anxiety levels. Moreover, these negative personality characteristics tend to last in the adult life. Exponents of the idea according to which disabled people should first be protected against the burdens inflicted on them by the outside world may find in this research serious arguments in favor of segregational solutions" (Szumski, 2006, p. 156).

Another type of higher-risk situations are reactions to the presence of people whose disability is more severe or more visible to a broader audience. Kopeć (2009, pp. 133-134) insists that we can talk of a specific gradation of stigma within the group of disabled people due to which individuals whose disability is more severe are stigmatized twice: they are excluded from the group of already excluded persons.

In an analysis by Katarzyna Parys of social and emotional relations in inclusive groups (2007, pp. 233-278), synthesizing the conclusions from conference papers on special education, the majority of the studies reviewed confirm the tendency for disabled students both in inclusive groups and in special classes in ordinary schools to be rejected or isolated by their non-disabled peers. Regardless of educational level and disability, the socio-metrical status of disabled children and young people is lower in comparison to peers without intellectual disability. On the other hand, it is the intellectual

rather than motor disability that makes it more difficult to integrate socially with a group and create positive emotional relations with peers. Disabled children more often than their peers without intellectual disability fall victim of peer-to-peer aggression (Mikrut, 2004). These research results present no grounds for optimism as they are a proof of so-called superficial inclusion.

Intellectually disabled people as aggressors

Among many difficulties related to education, care, and upbringing of disabled people, it is aggression that is commonly perceived as one of the most serious and burdening problems. Aggression is the most prevalent barrier in becoming a self-sufficient individual and the reason for the failure of attempts to introduce disabled students into open environment. The image gets complicated further by the fact that aggressive behavior is commonly compounded by other difficult behavior issues and psychic problems and that it tends to prevail (Allen, 2000, pp. 41-43). However, according to David Allen (2000), there are no sufficient grounds to claim that basic factors which are responsible for aggression among disabled people are essentially different from those at work in the case of general public. Various environmental and individual factors may form a background for aggression. The learning process itself may escalate aggression, sustain it at a given level or diminish it. According to researchers, individual factors have biological basis, such as damaged nervous tissue (Davison & Neale, 1974; McCleary & Moore, 1965). The list also includes epilepsy, severe chronic pain, allergy, hormonal disorders, etc. These factors are no doubt at work in the case of people with a normal development. However, in the case of disabled people there is a great risk that those symptoms may pass unrecognized. Another topic in subject literature is the underestimation of the psychic health issues, illness and personality disorders in disabled people (e.g. Reiss, Levitan & Szyszko, 1982; Szymański et al., 1998).

Intellectually disabled children and young people often have limited social skills, which may also enhance the risk of aggressive behavior. These include limited communication skills and a compromised ability to distinguish and interpret emotional states of other people on the basis of facial expressions. Research demonstrates that intellectually disabled people are more likely to confuse signs of sadness and anger. They are likely to apply the term 'anger' in cases in which no appropriate symptoms of emotional expression can be detected (see: Walz & Benson, 1996).

Environmental factors

In our search for causes of aggression it is extremely difficult to isolate psychic and organic factors in their 'pure state', as we are usually exposed to an interplay of complex internal and external (environmental) conditions, including noise level, overcrowded institutions, frequent changes among teaching staff, inexperienced caregivers, a lack of reasonably organized activities, as well as the presence of people whose aggressive behaviors are subsequently imitated.

It is worth mentioning that foreign subject literature contains analyses of linkage between aggressive behavior of patients in institutional care and the behavior of the personnel, such as: ignoring the requests of their wards, forcing them to particular activities, or using aggressive language. These examples are part of a wider context of relations between aggression and aversive nature of social contacts.

In my attempt to analyze the specificity of the aggressive behavior of the intellectually disabled people I wish to stress that – in comparison to people within the intellectual norm – instrumental aggression in this group is less likely to occur. "Rejected children usually do not develop a controlled, proactive, and instrumental aggression. Metaphorically speaking, the aggression of children who have been rejected is more 'desperate', frustrated, and filled with unspecified feelings of hostility, a wish for revenge, and a not entirely conscious sense of having been harmed." On the other hand, people who have not been subject to rejection direct their aggression at a specific target (Urban, 2005, p. 83). In his analysis of the phenomenon of aggression of intellectually disabled people, Allen distinguishes between four types of aggressive behavior: instrumental, drive/sensitivity-related, sexual, and fear-related. The least common of the four is instrumental aggression (Allen, 2000, p. 43).

According to Kazimierz Pospiszyl (1970), intellectually disabled people are characterized by lower frustration threshold due to an imperfect rationalization and interpretation of a frustrating situation. An intellectual deficit and its social consequences in particular may become the cause of inhibition in fulfilling one's basic needs (a need to love, gain sympathy, enjoy respect of others and their appreciation of one's own behavior). Intellectually disabled people, especially those with a mild disability, often fear that they are going to lose love or interest of others. The milder the disability is, the faster one comprehends his/her state. Their difficult position should be viewed in respect to such issues as, e.g. being aware of one's inability to face many challenges posed by parents; experience of one's own otherness in contacts with peers, early problems at school and failing to achieve expected

results. School problems are a likely cause of deprivation in terms of one's need to be respected, held in esteem, and be socially significant in one's surrounding. It seems that the balance between success and failure in the life of the intellectually disabled persons is likely to shift towards the latter.

According to Bartkowicz (1995), disability should not be associated with an increased susceptibility to frustration. On the one hand, intellectual disability limits one's ability to comprehend frustrating conditions. On the other, the experience of former failures teach the disadvantaged people to avoid situations which potentially might be frustrating, even when there is a chance a given situation might actually be handled successfully. This results in their adopting a risk-avoiding strategy rather than orienting themselves towards a possible success. A real resistance to frustration may only be developed through a body of positive experience dealing with diverse real-life situations, whence the postulate to work with disabled people focusing on their sense of success and ability to act, and highlighting strong, healthy spheres of one's personality (Plichta, 2006).

The theory of social education provides yet another perspective on aggressive behaviors of intellectually disabled people. In subject literature we may find a claim that people with intellectual disability are particularly liable to influence of others. If this be the truth, this feature might also facilitate the acquisition of aggressive behaviors in the course of social learning. However, if a disabled person experiences learning difficulties, they should presumably also concern his/her mimetic capability (Mikrut, 2000a).

In our analysis of causes of aggression we come across research results which are contradictory. Older investigations which were based primarily on a sample of patients in psychiatric hospitals or large care institutions showed higher aggression level in comparison to people within intellectual norm. New research, however, does not confirm such differences in aggression levels, pointing instead at differences in the means or forms by which aggression is expressed in the two groups. In the reports of 13 investigations between 1983 and 2003, no differences were observed between people with intellectual disability of minor degree and those within the intellectual norm regarding so called general aggression which is the total of several indicators related to particular types of aggression (Mikrut, 2005, p. 103). Mikrut (2000b, p. 37) concludes his analysis by stating that to a greater degree aggression involving intellectually disabled people is the effect of instigation and pressure by peers as well as one's will to attract attention. More often than their non-disabled peers, intellectually disabled people feel they are the objects of aggression, therefore many of their own aggressive behaviors may result from defensive reactions and retaliation. The lower the intelligence quotient of intellectually disabled person, the greater is the likelihood of self-aggressive behaviors.

How can one help? Some recommendations

Multifaceted measures to eliminate the risk of victimization of intellectually disabled people in the peer environment should incorporate a number of steps, including actions focused on the disabled person, on a group of peers, on parents, and on teachers, taking into account broader social and educational politics. Faye Mishna (2003), among other researchers, stresses the necessity for such a multifaceted approach. The measures which we are going to present in the following sections do not provide a systematic preventive and interventional approach. They are an attempt to indicate certain areas which may be greatly influential in lowering the risk of victimization. The most important among them is the change of the approach to helping intellectually disabled people. Here we are going to discuss measures which predominantly refer to cases of mild and fairly light disability and people who have the greatest chance to fully participate in the life of their social group. This may be achieved by education in regular schools, in inclusive units or in one's home. Creating options for disabled children and young people which allow them to bond with their peers is no doubt advantageous, however, one should keep in mind that they are still going to be exposed to the risks of becoming peer-to-peer aggression victims. Children and young people with more severe intellectual disability most often attend 'segregational' institutions; it is not particularly common that they take part in social situations without supervision or protection, e.g. from a parent or teacher, who are likely to step in when a problem occurs.

The change of approach

When attempting to help intellectually disabled people it is vital to become aware of a certain paradox, concerning both the general philosophy and everyday practice. The paradox lies in the fact that these people experience a considerable decision-making deficit about their own well-being, and as such are more likely to be subjected to behaviors which aggravate their condition. Thus being overly directive when working with intellectually disabled children may hinder their future independent functioning by restricting the spectrum of informed self-made decisions. Such dependence cannot be overcome if the educational curriculum apparently focused on helping intellectually disabled people is based on 'hidden' presumptions which in effect strengthen their dependence on others. Certainly, this is not

a result of the ill will of caregivers, but rather a consequence of the unwritten assumption according to which it is better if decisions concerning the needs of intellectually disabled people are made arbitrarily rather than being a matter of their free choice, as this might supposedly expose them to further dangers. This predominant work model in dealing with people with intellectual disability has been called a 'let's fix it' approach by Guess, Benson and Siegel-Causey (2008). It leaves no place for the autonomy of the disabled person who is being 'fixed' while the goals and respective measures are set up by caregivers. A new approach should therefore be based on creating a consistent training in how to learn about available options and the variety of choices one is in the position to make, beginning with the most elementary ones. This in turn might have a great positive impact on the personal development of intellectually disabled children and young people, strengthen their self-assurance and create a positive attitude towards oneself and one's independence. These are the positive features which may help prevent disabled students from becoming victims of aggression.

Another vehicle of positive change might be getting rid of the dogmatic mode of thinking in pedagogy. Inclusion is not always the best solution for a pupil and 'segregational' education is not necessarily the undesirable option. We shall now recall the question posed in the title of the article by Anna Firkowska-Mankiewicz (2000): "May exclusive education have a positive effect on creating good life qualities?". The answer provided by the author on the grounds of a long-term comparative research study of intellectually disabled graduates in segregational (exclusive) and non-segregational (inclusive) schools is clearly positive. Firkowska-Mankiewicz demonstrates that in comparison to inclusive education, the exclusive model provides greater chances for creating positive self-evaluation, a key element of the general mental well-being. This point of view is also shared by Severina Luciano and Robert Savage (2007) at the end of their investigation. They believe that advantages of inclusive education do not protect students with educational problems from being exposed to the risks of becoming bullying victims.

How can one learn to say 'no' if it is not permitted in everyday life?

An interesting point which should be investigated further is the resistance of intellectually disabled people against activities which are offered to them. This is linked to another issue: of staff and caregivers' non-acceptance of such behavior of their wards. If a required skill regarding taking care of one's interests is a certain degree of assertiveness and an ability to say 'no' in situations which are dangerous or ambiguous, then the best area where this skill might be practiced is everyday

interactions with caregivers. Unfortunately, my own experience tells me that a situation when a pupil does not 'blindly buy' our suggestions or is not willing to subordinate is commonly construed by caregivers as an act of ingratitude. In most such cases caregivers reach for measures which involve the use of physical strength. However, if we want to limit the risk of victimization, we should provide our intellectually disabled pupils with a range of options through which they can acquire necessary experiences of decision making regarding themselves, even if these decisions might be contradictory to those we have envisioned. This can be both a therapeutic action and an expression of our own respect for another human being.

Everyone likes to show their best side

In everyday practice, including intellectually disabled people in the school environment very much depends on what kind of community a given classroom consists in. It is worth remarking that one of the ways to secure the interests of an intellectually disabled person may be preparatory work with the group devoted to, for example, creating a positive educational environment, building tolerance towards otherness and making space for the positive expression of each. When an act of stigmatization does take place, it is worth remembering that according to an approach devised by Kurzban and Leary people tend to act according to mechanisms which help strengthen their self-esteem, social standing or are meant to justify a given social structure – economic or political (Urban, 2005, p. 66). As we have demonstrated earlier, stigmatization and rejection do not always result from the features inherent in the 'Other' and their cause may lie in the social environment itself.

A successful presence of disabled person within the society should be grounded on their 'strong points' (Archimedean Point). Therefore, it can be largely ineffective when working with students who experience frequent educational failures to concentrate predominantly on their weaknesses, particularly if the pupils have already become 'resistant' to failures and see no point in making an effort. On the other hand, pedagogical activities focused on giving students the sense that they are in charge of their decisions and ones which create opportunities to achieve one's personal goals may be satisfactory and are likely to play a rehabilitative role.

How can I express my needs when others decide for me?

Regarding the aforementioned ideas concerning the change in the very philosophy of helping, it is worth trying to answer the question why so often non-disabled people become representatives of the interests of the disabled ones. Certainly, there are cases in which no other choice exists, nevertheless, the scope of decision making by the disabled students should be considerably extended. "One of the most serious problems when working with disabled people that one needs to solve is how to strike a happy balance between the extent and character of the support offered and preserving the autonomy, subjective position, and control over the reality and one's life by the recipients of this support" (Podgórska-Jachnik & Tłoczkowska, 2009, p. 180). One of the ideas to be used in work with disabled people is self-advocacy, i.e. a movement whose goal is to promote abilities to represent one's own needs. "Self-advocacy or self-representation means direct expression of the interests of individual subjects with intellectual disability or their group by themselves." In Poland, the training of self-advocates is carried out by Polskie Stowarzyszenie na Rzecz Osób z Upośledzeniem Umysłowym. It prepares people with an intellectual disability in knowledge and skills necessary to express one's rights and needs, make decisions, and take responsibility for them.

A friend is someone who will stand up in my defense when I am in trouble

Another element which has been missing in the framework offered within inclusive or integrational education[2] is helping mentally disabled students who experience loneliness and whose social position is weak, as a result of which it is difficult for them to find a fellow student who may become a friend, soul-mate or supportive person. Such a person does not only positively impact on the self-esteem of the disabled person. Their presence is also an important signal to other people that the disabled person is no longer alone as that someone else "sticks up for him or her". According to a number of researchers finding a friend by an intellectually disabled person proves to be the most valuable protective factor.

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[2] In Poland, the term 'integrational education' is often used as a synonym of inclusive education although to some degree its meaning is different. Due to the purpose of this article, we shall not engage in elaborating on those differences. Those interested in further reading on the issue are referred to Grzegorz Szumski's *Integracyjne kształcenie niepełnosprawnych*, PWN, 2006.

The risk that an intellectually disabled person is going to be victimized, rejected or ignored by peers is particularly strong in people with low self-esteem, depressive, fearful and seclusive. Irena Pospiszyl (2003) and Bronisław Urban (2005) stress that having a friend may be a preventive measure protecting the child from victimization and its consequences. Therefore helping the child find a peer person who might offer support is a vital – if neglected – therapeutic method when working with children who are rejected or isolated by peers.

Another measure protecting the interests of the mentally disabled persons may be 'mentoring', i.e. an informal one-to-one educational set-up in which a mentor is a person with the relevant knowledge and skills, willing to share them with a person who seeks advice or help in solving problems regarding one's functioning in the world. The mentor does not have to necessarily be a specially trained person, but a volunteer or older student. Yet another way to help students with learning difficulties and limit their solitude is so called 'student tutoring'.

The understanding attitude versus labelling attitude, i.e. what I would like to say but I don't know how

One of the measures directed at teachers, and through them also at peer students, is creating a so-called understanding attitude (Olechnowicz, 1999) concerning the problematic behavior of children with intellectual disability, especially those with autism as an additional condition. At this point a few reasons and goals which encourage untypical behavior in students should be mentioned. In most cases learners want to attract their peers' attention, try to avoid situations which might be uncomfortable for them, or achieve goals which in normal circumstances are unattainable – in all these cases we should take into consideration a lack of socially acceptable means to communicate one's needs. Another likely goal may be self-regulation, i.e. a behavior of high communicative potential, which indicates a self-sufficient attempt to deal with an uncomfortable situation (e.g. motor hyperactivity may be the effect of some sort of anxiety currently experienced, rather than one of pathological signs of disability). "An understanding attitude makes it possible to respond to the hidden message sent out by the child. A pathological symptom is not something that should be fought against and extinguished as its energy may be used therapeutically. For example, persistent jumping may be turned into jumping together with the therapist and as such become one of the means of establishing contact. On the other hand, the labelling attitude may provoke disregard of the child or even punishment for its untypical and apparently incomprehensible behavior (e.g. fascination with strings,

pulling down glasses from someone's face, screaming, throwing things off the table, etc.). The efficiency of measures which derive from the understanding attitude can be demonstrated, for example, by a situation in which pinching one's mother or scratching the therapist have been substituted for careful touching of their faces, which already is the sign of non-autistic behavior" (Olechnowicz, 1999, p. 13).

Using the examples of good practice and tailoring them to one's needs

One example of such good practice is the ACCEPTS program (A Curriculum for Children's Effective Peer and Teacher Skills). A specific instance is a project, based on ACCEPTS' tenets, described by Marini and his team. It is focused on creating in intellectually disabled students three kinds of behavior or reactions in high-risk situations, for example, "No! Go! Tell!" – say no to people who propose something inappropriate, leave the place where something inappropriate is going on, report such an incident to an adult with a positive attitude.

Another subject we should consider in our discussion of the specificity of the functioning of intellectually disabled people is their gullibility. The deficit of attention from the social environment may enhance the risk of a wrong interpretation of somebody's attention. That puts a person with intellectual disability in danger of abuse. Zopito Marini (2001) highlights the usefulness of the model developed by David Finkelhor (1984) for preventing abuse of disabled persons, including bullying. According to this model all factors at work when violence against disabled people occurs can be divided into four groups. Level one – motivation of the potential perpetrator; level two – internal inhibitors which remain under the perpetrator's control and need to be overcome if the violence against the potential victim is to take place; level three – external inhibitors, e.g. teachers' supervision, family situation of the disabled child, as well as possible sanctions against the perpetrator; level four – resistance, i.e. the disabled person's ability to identify potentially dangerous situations and to take preventive measures to protect oneself from danger. The first two levels are related to the perpetrator; the third and forth are related to the disabled person and their caregivers. A set of efficient measures to limit the victimization risk should be based on solutions regarding all the four levels. According to Finkelhor, the most important area of prevention are the forth-level measures, i.e. helping the disabled person by giving him or her the power to resist negative behaviors by other people.

From the point of view of non-disabled peers

The research by Roberts and Smith (1999) has upheld the theory of planned behavior concerning the key role of being convinced that one is the master of the situation (one controls the situation). The fact that a given action is perceived as useful and easy to perform strongly influences the work in the classroom. In cases of aggression involving disabled students, it also heavily weighs upon the decision of the teacher whether to step in with positive solutions or withdraw from action. The aforementioned research has demonstrated that in the class with disabled students, peers without intellectual disability have not perceived their interaction with disabled peers as coming from their real inner motivations. Moreover, they experienced a lack of control in such situations. This reaction may stem from various sources, e.g. not feeling competent to communicate with disabled peers. This means prevention programs should also target non-disabled peers, focussing on developing their skills of communication with disabled persons (e.g. teaching them a system of augmentative and alternative communication, developing understanding of the meaning of untypical behaviors, helping others in moving around, etc.). Another suggested solution is to take into consideration students' perceptions: how easy, or how difficult it is for them to engage in positive actions with disabled peers. Roberts and Smith suggest that at least at the basic level in creating relations with disabled students, non-retarded peers should be encouraged to engage in actions which they can perform 'effortlessly' and without great involvement on their part.

There are really easy solutions, too

The spectrum of measures which strengthen the social standing of intellectually disabled children and young people is indeed very large. It includes solutions based on changing the helping approach but also very simple measures, e.g. taking care of the appearance of a disabled student whose dress-code should follow current trends in fashion, rather than emphasize their otherness. According to many researchers, the key dimension of the identification of the stigmatized characteristics is their visibility/non-visibility. This means that the more visible the symptoms of the intellectual disability, the greater the threat of stigmatization of such an individual is (cited in Urban, 2005).

Conclusions

The risk of becoming an aggression victim for intellectually disabled students is at least two times greater than for students in the intellectual norm (Baladerian, 1994). This is the main reason for elaborating on the issues of limiting the risks of becoming a victim in this group. In devising preventive and interventional programs, the measures proposed should be based on a possibly multifaceted diagnosis, which would take into account, among other issues, the dominant type of behavior among intellectually disabled children. For instance, in contrast to children displaying externalizing behaviors, depressive and fearful children are rarely rejected in the early developmental stages (pre-school period or early school). Clear-cut and very common rejection of such individuals takes place in childhood and early adolescence (Urban, 2005, p. 42) and this is the time which, regarding the goal of our investigation, is the key period.

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A Student with Hearing Impairment

as Aggressor and Aggression Victim

R⊙BUSD

Introduction

Before we embark on the discussion of causal links between hearing impairment and aggression in interpersonal relations, we need to make a few necessary clarifications. Deafness and knowledge of its consequences are rather poorly acknowledged in the broader social consciousness; instead, stereotypes harmful to deaf people unfortunately prevail. For this reason we should approach the topic with caution as it would be the worst turn of events, were the reader to be encouraged to perpetuate these stereotypes and picture deafness as an impairment which of itself leads to aggressive or harmful behaviour, or, for that matter, any other negative attributes of this condition. The latter is by no means the author's intention! In our attempts to understand a deaf student's needs and one's individual situation, we come across obstacles far greater than a mere communication barrier. Among these difficulties is no doubt many teachers' more or less conscious expectations that a deaf student shall fit ideally into set of pathological characteristics of a person with hearing impairment. Quite often this image accumulates all possible negative consequences stereotypically associated with deafness.

This may be the result of the following factors:

- a lack of scientific knowledge on deafness paving the way to attribution processes based on all sorts of fear-driven clichés, e.g. 'non-functioning ears', or 'mental devastation' (Lane, 1996, pp. 57-59);

- an overgeneralisation of one's sporadic experience with the deaf: all negative characteristics of one person with hearing impairment are being incorrectly transferred onto other people;

- scientific studies which gather all negative consequences of hearing impairment in one collective set of characteristics, yielding a supposedly 'typical' picture of deafness.

In order to avoid such dangerous generalisations, I wish to emphasise that no such image exists (K. P. Meadow, cited in Tomaszewski, 1998, p. 105), just as there is no typical set of characteristics defining a hearing person. Moreover, the developmental mechanisms which are at work in a person with hearing impairment are exactly the same as those operative in a hearing person, including the issue of aggression. Of course, among deaf people there are mature individuals fully controlling their behaviour as much as those who remain emotionally disturbed and are unable to control their reactions.

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However, the differences between them, as in the case of hearing people, are the result of varying individual developmental experiences. We can therefore presume that it is a set or similar factors which are responsible for aggression or a behaviour which leads to it, in both hearing and non-hearing people. However, one more stipulation needs to be made: over the course of their development, deaf and hard of hearing children go through an unusual spectrum of social situations, conflicts and problems, in which they are exposed to a number of psycho-social stressors (Gałkowski, 1993, p. 140). If the latter are not successfully resolved, they may indeed become the secondary causes of aggression-related problems. This is a subject area on which I would like to focus in this presentation as well as on other mechanisms and circumstances which may pose a threat of becoming secondary results of hearing impairment.

Hearing impairment
as a challenge to a teacher in an open-access school environment

Deafness and the problems faced by deaf people do not arouse particularly vivid interest in people's minds and remain widely obscure to the society despite the alarming statistics. According to them, in 1995-2005 alone there were 120 million new cases worldwide of diagnosed hearing impairment. These high numbers continue to grow. The total number of deaf people in the world has exceeded 560 million, of these as many as 70 million live in Europe (Davis, 2006). Of 6.5 billion people living on Earth, people with hearing problems make up at least 8.5%, which is a considerable figure. Moreover, in the United States one person in ten has some kind of hearing impairment; in the United Kingdom it is one in seven (Shield, 2006, p. 32). Even more troubling is the predicted increase: in the year 2015 the number of deaf and hard of hearing people worldwide is going to reach 700 million; in 2025 it can be as high as 900 million, of which 100 million in Europe. According to the American National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), while the majority of cases are the elderly, there currently is at least one student with a severe hearing impairment in every school (cited in Berke, 2007). If we take into account the predicted increase as outlined above, and a prospect of inclusive education, we will have more students with hearing impairment in our schools.

Is school really prepared for that? Multiple difficulties and fears concerning the full opening of regular schools to students with special educational needs are well known. Working with a deaf student is not an easy task even for trained specialists employed in special schools, not to mention regular teachers in public schools. The latter have no sufficient knowledge about deafness-related issues in order to

successfully deal with the developmental consequences of hearing impairment and challenges faced by deaf people in a school environment. One of such issues is aggression and bullying which involves deaf students. With regard to interpersonal aggression and the young people of school age, we face two equally worrying scenarios:

1. A deaf student as aggressor (this is the problem of over a half of deaf children; Triangle, 2007, cited in Miller & Kovic, 2009);

2. A deaf or hard-of-hearing student as aggression victim (victimological aspect concerns the majority [sic!] of deaf children; Miller & Kovic, 2009).

Let us begin our investigation with an attempt to define a deaf and hard-of-hearing person as even that is neither obvious nor easy a phenomenon to define. Hearing impairment, particularly a severe one, is not only a complex medical, psychological and pedagogical problem. It is also a complicated social or even cultural phenomenon; therefore it should not be investigated in separation. The classification of International Bureau for Audiophonology (BIAP) distinguishes between four levels of hearing impairment: mild (hearing loss between 20 and 41 dB), moderate (40-70 dB), severe (70-90 dB) and profound (90 dB or greater). The threshold of circa 70 dB is a practical border between hard-of-hearing and deaf people[1]. However, no measurement of hearing loss – no matter how precise – can diagnose the functional diversity of such people; neither does it reflect the diversity of their developmental and educational needs. Many hearing people are deeply astonished upon discovering that the majority of people classified as deaf do have a certain, albeit in a number of cases very limited, access to sound stimuli. Those who have never been confronted with deafness often become victims of such false assumptions (Podgórska-Jachnik, 2010): on one hand, they tend to underestimate the significance of sounds in the life of deaf people (e.g., role of sound stimuli in orientation; the remnants of hearing as support in lip reading); on the other, they overestimate them in equal measure (e.g., they question the diagnosis that a person is deaf once they realise that s/he reacts to certain sounds, such as a bell, dog's barking, certain instruments; a naïve belief that a person who wears a hearing aid hears well and understands everything said to him/her). We should stress that deafness does not stand for being entirely deprived of any access to the realm of sounds; rather, it involves a lack or a very limited access to the sounds of human speech, particularly if impairment's onset occurs during speech acquisition period when one learns the first language. According to the functional definitions used in the Polish surdopedagogics[2]:

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[1] The text is based on Polish contemporary classification. We can observe the trend to move the borderline to 90db.

[2] See above.

1. A deaf person is one whose hearing is impaired to the degree (usually 70 dB or greater) when understanding of speech even with a headphone and hearing aids is impossible (Perier, 1992, pp. 17-18); a deaf child cannot acquire speech in a natural way, i.e. by repetition (Eckert, 1997, p. 150).

2. A hard-of-hearing person is the one whose hearing is impaired to the degree (usually 35 to 68 dB) when understanding of speech with a headphone and with or without hearing aids gets difficult but is possible (Perier, 1992, p. 18); despite the perceptual limitations, a hard of hearing child may master speech in a natural way, i.e. by means of hearing (Eckert, 1997, p. 150).

However, in the educational praxis these distinctions prove insufficient. Apart from such factors as: type, extent and degree of hearing impairment, there are other key circumstances that may bring on varying developmental consequences in different people. These circumstances include: patient's age when onset of hearing impairment took place and of the diagnosis; hearing aids, rehabilitation period, rehabilitation methods, intensity of rehabilitation process; educational path; the choice of a communication method (considering whether one can communicate in sign language); the role of social environment (considering whether close family members, peers and teachers know sign language). The problem is indeed a complex one. Perhaps it is this complexity that, on one hand, provokes greater skepticism about opening regular schools to children with hearing problems, and on the other, may be the source of helplessness and disorientation experienced by teachers in ordinary schools. As the result of the interplay of all the aforementioned factors, we may come across an individual who, in spite of a severe hearing impairment, is doing well with regard to cognitive, emotional and social aspects of their existence; or another individual in whose case serious delays and development disorders result from the uncompensated hearing loss of a minor degree.

Equally difficult is the task to isolate the image of 'pure' deafness as hearing impairment is often accompanied by other disorders and combined impairments. I would like to emphasize that these additional disorders may indeed induce aggressive behaviour or emotional disturbance. However, associating them directly with deafness is unjustified: the key problem may lie somewhere else, for example, it may be the same cause – responsible for both hearing impairment and other disorders – such as common neurological background. The research by Z. M. Kurkowski on one-sided deafness confirms that negative emotional components such as imbalance in one's behaviour, predisposition to anxiety, depression, breakdowns, nervousness, and irritability occurred in 88.2% of the interviewees with left-sided deafness and only in 44.6% of those with right-sided deafness. The author points out that emotional problems in cases of left-sided deafness come to the front before difficulties related to language and learning process (Kurkowski, 1999, pp. 213-215).

The consequences of hearing
loss combined with mechanisms of aggressive and victimological behaviors

T. Basilier (1964, cited in Hindley & Kitson 2002, p. 286) was probably the first researcher who pointed out that behavioural disorders, impulsiveness and aggressive behaviour occur frequently among deaf people. Since then vast clinical research results on hearing impairment have been gathered which confirm behaviour disorders, emotional personality or even psychotic disorders (an extensive list can be found in: Hindley & Kitson, 2002; Perier, 1992; Tomaszewski, 1998). According to O. Perier (1992, p. 122), the most common emotional and social problems in people with impaired hearing include: immaturity, irritability, aggressiveness; anxiety states, depression and withdrawal from social sphere may occur as well. The research by Rutman confirms frequent aggression, impulsiveness and frustration states, however it does not link them directly to deafness but rather to the effects of the social interactions of the deaf people. In the summary of various research data, M. Meadow estimates that the index of emotional disorders among deaf people is 3-10 times higher than for hearing people (Perier, 1992, p. 122). We should bear these data in mind; however, they should not be overestimated as the research has suffered from numerous faults in theoretical assumptions and methodology (Lane, 1996, pp. 76-69). The greatest obstacles posed to the ongoing research are: limited possibilities for psychological and psychiatric diagnosis, an interpretation of verbal and behavioural indexes (Hindley & Kitson, 2002, pp. 281-287), limited communication with a deaf client (Harvey, 1989, pp. 142-181) as well as different behavior standards in the community of the deaf.

The potential secondary consequences of hearing impairment are implicated in the mechanism of perpetrating aggression or becoming its victim; they may as well be connected to untypical interpersonal relations and to the sphere of communication, particularly with:

1. language communication disorders;
2. specificity of sign language;
3. expressiveness of signed language and the specificity of non-verbal communication.

Ad. 1. Language communication disorders

One of the most serious developmental consequences of hearing impairment is a low communication competence in one's native language, i.e., the language used in one's surrounding. Popular belief has it that it is enough to write something down on a piece of paper in order to successfully communicate with a deaf person. In reality one can be very much surprised as many deaf people know their native language at a level comparable to the basic level of a foreign language, and their reading skills often remain very limited. Many research results confirm that the average literacy level among deaf people equals that of a 9–10-year-old (Allen et al. cited in Podgórska-Jachnik, 2005, pp. 157-166). The results of the research conducted by di Francesca on a multi-thousand sample of people are very disturbing. According to them, 30% of the graduates of American schools for deaf people remain functional illiterates (Podgórska-Jachnik, 2005, p. 88). In light of what we have discussed earlier, this picture may change. However, we still need to wait for the effects of new rehabilitation practices in which focus has been placed on earlier developmental stages as well as on modifications which took place within education strategies in recent years.

How do language communication disorders influence interpersonal relations of the deaf and hard-of-hearing people with their social surrounding? The main problem is a lack of knowledge of sign language as it means that in such a case there are no ways to communicate with deaf people. No less important role is played by the shock factor upon discovery that a deaf person does not understand what is going on. It is beyond an average person's expectations that an individual might attend school and be involved in the process of education and yet not be able to read a piece of written text. Even if this is eventually acknowledged, other generalization mechanisms may set it: if one is not able to understand a piece of written text, one's intellectual capacities are likely to by equally compromised. Since the deaf are often confronted with this attitude, we may presume that the mechanisms of aggressive behavior against them may have the same roots as they do in the case of aggression against people with mental retardation.

Ad. 2. Specificity of sign language

Hearing people do not know sign language – a means of communication natural to deaf people – or the specificity of its grammar. As a result, sign language is being discredited, even in scientific works, and the differences between sign and singed language (a sign-verbal system created on the basis of the grammar of a native language and sign vocabulary) remain hardly known to anyone outside a group of specialists. This situation is hopefully about to change as more and more new countries

engage in research work on sign language. It is now officially acknowledged as the language of the minority and new sign language classes are being organized.

However, the very image of people communicating in sign language in the street continues to cause many to stare. People are not aware that when they gape at 'this weird phenomenon of talking by means of hands', their behavior is as tactless as 'eavesdropping'. Also, when one accidentally discovers that a person is deaf (e.g. while asking them for time in the street or on a bus), often a swift and instinctive reaction sets in: growing distance and withdrawing from the interaction. The specificity of communication with the deaf erects a 'glass wall' and hardly anyone ever tries to pull it down. For many years it may separate deaf children from their hearing peers in a classroom, school or playground.

Ad. 3. Expressiveness of signed language and the specificity of non-verbal communication

When a person does not know sign language and the mimic expressions of deaf people, the meaning of its non-verbal components may be wrongly interpreted. Expressive gestures, however, do not only testify to a great concern given to an act of communication in order to make it distinct; they are also a part of sign language's prosody that makes an act of communication possible. They may therefore include large, swift and dynamic gestures of hands as well as occasional rapid body movements, banging of a hand against the table, clutching fists and vivid facial expressions such as frowned eyebrows and distorted face. These elements are equally diverse as the elements of a live phonic language culture, such as: alternation of the volume of voice, its intonation, individual characteristics, etc. However, a person who does not understand the specificity of communicating with deaf people, tends to associate signing's expressiveness with mere over-expressiveness, agitation, irritation, etc., and perceives an act of communication in sign language as weird and disturbing an image. Deaf people are aware that this image may at times provoke in a hearing person feelings of pity as well as comments which testify to a general lack of consideration, such as: "Oh my God, such a handsome boy and he's deaf!" or "Look, a deaf person; what a dreadful impairment for such a pretty girl!". Moreover, noticing that a person does not speak is often followed by underestimating deaf people's intellectual potential. This happens despite the fact that although the uncompensated hearing impairment poses serious threats to cognitive development, it does not in itself lead to the retardation of mental functions.

We can therefore see that disorders of communication process in people with hearing impairment are combined not only with a limited spectrum of possibilities of using language tools in interpersonal relations, particularly with hearing people; they may also lead to alienation and stigmatization. We may interpret both phenomena as linked to factors responsible for provoking an aggressive behavior and victimization. Rutman (cited in Shield, 2006, p. 46) indicates that the most common targets of anger of hard of hearing people are: doctors who provide the diagnosis, family and friends who show a lack of patience and support; as well as all others who stigmatize the deaf without understanding them. The research by Mencap (2007, cited in Miller & Kovic, 2009) confirms that disabled children who experience problems in learning more often become victims of bullying: this refers to 80% of cases, among which 6 in 10 involved physical aggression; in 4 in 10 cases, aggression continued after the intervention by adults. At first glance, people may not notice deafness, however the condition belongs to physical stigmata which may encourage bullying. Their visual aspects are:

1. communication in sign language;
2. hearing aid or an exterior part of cochlear implant placed behind ear;
3. a behavior which indicates that a hard of hearing person is not fully aware of what is happening: one does not respond to sounds, tends to stare for a longer time at something, does not understand what is being said, misinterprets the answers, acts inadequately to the situation.

A child with a hearing impairment may try to counteract the stigmatization by dissimulating deafness, refraining from communicating in sign language in public spaces, taking off a hearing aid. It is often a case with adolescents, but also younger students rightly identify the causes of stigmatization. Multiple testimonies confirm that: "Children laugh at me that I wear a hearing aid", "They laugh when I use sign language", "They laugh and don't want to play with me because I twist words". Further consequences, such as embarrassment, low self-esteem, and tensions in relations with others, step in. Meanwhile, people may not even notice that one conceals their deafness (the teachers are unaware that a student pretends before peers to understand everything; however, the denial to acknowledge a person's deafness also takes place on numerous occasions; see: Shield, 2006, p. 38).

Many aggressive acts against the deaf are committed in public space as a lack of somebody's reactions in the street or on the tram may be interpreted as an indication of disrespect, aloofness or mental disorder. Therefore a great care should be given to children on their way to and from school as child's home or playground peers may then engage into aggressive behaviors. Why then? M. T. Weiner and M. Miller (2006, pp. 64-68) indicate that a deaf child often falls victim of his peers in the areas with no direct supervision by adults. At school a deaf child remains under their protective

umbrella: in particular, a supportive teacher, assistant or sign language interpreter may unwittingly play the role of a personal bodyguard. However, separating a child from his/her fellow students does not encourage their bonding or getting to know each another. On the contrary, the protection is bound to end with the end of the class; and aggressors may see it as a moment from which on they are permitted to act with impunity.

Deaf children are easy victims not only to their peers but also to adults. The research by Sillivan and Knutson (2009) shows that they are exposed to aggression three times more often than their peers: they may be alienated (3.8 times more often), as well as subjected to other forms of abuse: physical (3.8 times more often), sexual (3.1 times more often) or emotional (3.9 times more often) (cited in Miller & Kovic, 2009). According to Kvam (2004), 45.8% of deaf girls (twice as much as hearing girls) and 42.4 % of deaf boys (three times as much as hearing boys) are threatened by unwelcome sexual contacts (Miller & Kovic, 2009). The research results are unambiguous: 45.8% of victims do not inform anyone about aggression and 11% of those who tell others are not believed (Miller & Kovic, 2009).

In other words, a deaf victim:

- does not inform others about becoming a victim of aggression;
- is not well understood while trying to alert others and is unable to explain sufficiently what has happened;
- informs others but is not believed.

Although no research supports it yet, a deaf child is likely to become a victim of other abuses, money extortions or services they are forced to perform for the aggressor who acts from the position of power. The key role in victimization is played by communication disorders and the silence of the victim.

Why does a deaf child become the aggressor? Oddly enough, this may happen in self-defense, as an attempt to create a protective shield against actions by others. An additionally adverse role is played by other school factors such as age diversity: due to delays in educational process, a deaf student is often older than his/her peers. S/he differs from them in terms of deafness, age and often learning results. Interactive mechanisms of the negative feedback between failures in learning and the process of social adjustment, whose aggressive behaviors are the main symptoms, further complicate the image. Their cause of aggression may be different for many children; however, one needs to consider the following issues:

- emotional disorders (we discussed them earlier in the text) which result from states of permanent frustration due to failures in the attempts to develop communication with people in the immediate surroundings and to express one's own needs; a deaf child is not understood by others;

- narrow-minded expectation that a deaf child is going to adjust to a group, at least in terms of communication means; some even believe that such adjustment may be beneficial for the deaf child. Contrary to that, research demonstrates that signing (albeit partial or only supporting oral communication) significantly enhances student's well-being and his/her performance in class activities; it also limits the number of cases of aggressive behavior (Marschark, 1997, pp. 83, 114);

- a lack of communication channel, which poses problems for developing empathy, leading to an egocentric, egotist and egoistic behavior; a deaf child is incapable of understanding others;

- the consequences of cognitive compensation mechanisms – in case language is not used or its use is limited – result in a different cognitive image of the world; varying experiences and different ways of comprehending the reality may remove grounds for common understanding, later on missed by in relations between a deaf child and his/her peers;

- a lack of the regulating function of language over a deaf child's behavior results in a weakening of self-control. It is a yet another result of the delay or disorder in social and emotional development;

- shaping one's own behavior according to its external appearances limits the role of moral reflection in education (greater problems in this respect regard deaf children of hearing parents, rather than deaf children of deaf parents);

- shaping one's behavior according to what other deaf children see also creates problems. Deaf students are witnesses or objects of aggressive behavior perpetrated by parents and teachers;

- using electronic media in aggression involving deaf people acquires a new dimension as very often electronic channel is the only means of communication for deaf people; the internet has become a true battlefield of various social clashes (a good example in this respect are 'wars' in online discussion sites between users of Polish radical exponents of natural sign language among deaf people and other users permitting other forms of communication);

- a limited influence on deaf children during puberty poses another valid educational problem; during that time they should be given extra support, e.g., when they look for their own identity, make major life choices, experiment with drugs, or engage in early and possibly unwelcome sexual experiences, etc. With no support from educators and parents fluent in sign language, and without developing close relations with them, deaf adolescents feel left alone in the process of growing up. This enhances the risk of developmental disorders and lack of social adjustment;

- an additional problem is a lack of therapeutic support in depressive or pre-psychotic states while 'mood swings' often occur in puberty.

The true causes behind aggressive behavior within both groups of deaf and hearing children are not always easy to determine. However, no such act should be left without reaction as it may provoke new ones. Moreover, it may also encourage unwelcome generalizations in the minds of other peers, that deafness and aggression are closely related. This might close down the path towards mutual understanding later on in life and of developing satisfactory relations. The following description regarding a deaf girl in a pre-school integration unit has been produced by her educator. It provides a good example of such dangerous early generalizations concerning deafness:

> In our class there is a little girl named Adrianna; she is deaf. (…) Most of the time she is in good spirits and quite sweet; at times though she can get quite aggressive. I know that her aggression isn't an inherent aspect of her deafness; more likely it is linked to her inability to communicate since early age. Now she only just starts using signed language. Some of the hearing children in the group don't understand it yet and I am sure in their minds her aggression gets directly connected to being deaf. They start to complain they don't want to play with her because she is deaf. I am sure it happens because her impairment is the only visual sign of difference between her and them and at their developmental level making such an association is the easiest way to comprehend it. I only wish we had more deaf children in the classroom, with various personalities and temperaments (Solit & Bednarczyk, 1999, p. 81).

The indications for teachers

Our overview is just an introduction to a wide range of problems regarding social and emotional functioning of deaf people. I do hope we have managed to touch upon its complexity. It would also be appropriate to try do draw a few practical conclusions which might guide teachers in their work with students with hearing impairment by facilitating the recognition of their needs and helping protect them from aggressive behavior.

These suggestions regard the following:

- teachers should avoid stereotypical transposing information about one deaf child onto other deaf children;

- teachers should avoid oversimplifying their interpretation of the deaf child's behavior and not build up prejudices in their own minds; most importantly, they should not consider deafness a tragedy and source of all evil; instead they should try to strengthen the student's compensatory potential and other positive features in the area of his or her personal development; they should keep in mind that a deaf student has been living with a feeling of loss from the very beginning of their life;

- they should not consider deafness only in terms of the medical aspects but instead see its cognitive, social and emotional consequences together with the cultural context;

- they should try to recognize the subjective position of a student with hearing impairment in all of its individual complexities;

- they should be open to working with other specialists and parents and not be afraid to ask questions about the real consequences of deafness in each particular case in terms of student's limitations as well as their prospects; these are the ground for the compensation process and effective educational strategies;

The process of getting to know a deaf or hard of hearing child should involve: becoming aware of possible developmental threats regarding hearing impairment; understanding their mechanisms and being able to identify them in the context of the individual setup of negative components (which later may limit development or become obstacles to attaining later developmental levels, e.g. create a barrier of social integration in adult life) as well as positive ones (which provide support during development and offer an opportunity for the compensation of existing limitations or even of their permanent effects). With regard to a student being an aggressor, one should:

- distinguish between true symptoms of aggressive behavior and ones which are falsely interpreted as aggressive;

- be careful not to underestimate the first signs of aggressive behavior and try to recognize their mechanisms with regard to the role of aggressor and victim;

- limit or remove causes for frustration, such as the communication barrier, e.g. to work out channels of communication with a deaf child by creating communication environment in the classroom; in particular, a teacher should provide other hearing students with possibilities due to which they might become interested in sign language, and encourage them to learn it; this task is a feasible one as even a knowledge of dozens signs or only dactylographic alphabet opens up a path to getting to know each other and starting to communicate; sign language can indeed become – and in fact it is - very attractive to children; it is important to demonstrate a positive approach to a sign communication as the attribute of the deaf people community;

- try to support a student with hearing impairment by creating in him the mechanisms to control his emotions and reactions towards others; this it not an easy task as mechanisms of control are linked with language competence; teachers and therapists who know sign language, and deaf pedagogs/educators in particular, play here an important role; the cognitive construct of 'two worlds' of the deaf and hearing ones makes the acceptance of a deaf person into the world of hearing students more difficult;

- develop positive features of a student with hearing impairment and strengthen his real self-evaluation as it plays a key role in interpersonal relations, particularly in confrontation with otherness, functional otherness and cultural one; to provide a deaf student with reasons he can be proud of himself because of his personal achievements as well as achievements by members of the community of deaf people.

With regard to situations in which a deaf student might become victim of aggressive behaviour one needs to:

- monitor his/her relations with other students outside the classroom, in particular during lessons breaks;

- be aware that a deaf student will not always complain about becoming victim of aggression; therefore one should be very careful about any symptoms which might testify to aggressive behaviour by others; these symptoms include a change in behaviour pattern, e.g. the student's withdrawal from cooperation, refusal to take part in a class game, loss of friends, loneliness, worsening of grades, tearfulness, nervosity, impulsiveness, fear of school, avoiding going to school, pretending to be sick, getting late to the class, general tension and being fearful about at

the end of the class, getting late home, staying in the classroom during breaktime, keeping close to the teacher during breaktime, torn and dirty clothes, disappearing clothes items and other personal items, unexpected cuts, bruises, attritions; refraining from meals in school (which may indicate money being lost), etc. (*Bullying and Deaf. A guide for schools,* 2009);

- cooperate with child's parents; in particular to take care of a child on the way to and from school;

- talk to a deaf child about their relations with peers; a deaf specialist fluent in sign language can play a valid role here; one needs to show their trust to the child, try to seek for potential cognitive distortions of the situation; one also needs to remember that a child might be lacking in language competence to fully comprehend and describe the situation (e.g. description of the feelings that are the result of lobbing, sexual harassment) and might crave for support in that area; diagnostic methods that use drafting/images and projection mechanisms may be of use here;

- attempt to deal with the difficult dilemma of whether or not to offer protection to a deaf student and by doing so take the risk of turning this protection into yet another form of isolating a child from a group of his peers.

In cases of children perpetrating aggression and those who are victims of it, the most important task on the teacher's part is to build positive relations in the classroom, create opportunities for them to work together, involve them in cooperative games so that they get to know one another, exchange opinions and build up their mutual respect. This should become the basis of not only an in-place recuperative action, but also of long-term strategic endeavors.

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Appendix

Developmental consequences of deafness in the area of cognition (Podgórska-Jachnik, 2010):

- a limited extent of perceptual information on the sensory entry and a limited extent of sensory experiences in students;

- difficulties in sensory integration based on the multi-sensory cognitive attitude – a threat posed to the development of the cognitive basis (e.g. forming one's body shape, orientation in space), key learning skills (e.g. reading, writing); researchers talk of the avalanche-like effect of elementary perception disorders in children with impaired hearing; the risk of unqualified analyzer; degradation of higher-rank structures resulting from a lack of stimulation;

- low level of language competence, including low ability to comprehend written text and grammar structures;

- specificity of deaf people's attention: low attention span due to concentrating mainly on visual stimuli; easy distraction by unexpected visual or touch stimuli; this requires elaboration of a particular mechanism of dividing attention among three elements: I – other subject – object;

- specificity of memory features in deaf people: dominance of simultaneous memory (simultaneous presentation of objects) over the sequence memory (objects presented one after another), imaging mode, analyticity (remembering details, difficulties in creating synthetic images), lower verbal and logical memory;

- inability to demonstrate one's full intellectual potential due to low language competence. At times the true level of intellectual capacities of a deaf student is difficult to estimate using words as a tool used by hearing people. Selective delays of some of intellectual capacities. Such qualities describing thinking, which often are confirmed by research results, as: imaging, stereotypicality, schematism, rigidness, imitation, passive cognitive attitude – nowadays are regarded as the result of implemented educational methods, rather than the hearing impairment itself; one should also fight the myth that deaf people are not able to think in an abstract way, although the very process of abstraction may indeed be more difficult.

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**Learning Disability
as a Source of Adjustment Problems
and Peer-to-Peer Aggression at School**

ROBUSD

Learning-disability-related problems will occur in any school, regardless of location. In any group of pupils, be it made up by British, French, Norwegian, or Polish students, we will surely discover individuals who, in comparison to their peers, have greater difficulties in reaching goals posed by the educational curriculum. Today, two definitions of learning disability are commonly in use.

The first was adopted in 1981 by the National Joint Committee for Learning Disabilities, and defines **learning disability** as:

> a broad term that applies to a varying group of disorders which manifest themselves in significant troubles in acquiring and application of skills of speaking, reading, writing and comprehension of mathematic operations. The disorders have the internal origin and seem to be conditioned by abnormal functioning of the central nervous system. Due to this, additional disorders may also be present (e.g. sensory defects, mental retardation, emotional and social development disorders). They may also result from the impact of the surrounding environment, e.g. cultural differences, inadequate or inappropriate behaviour, as well as psychogenic factors. However, they are not a direct consequence of those factors (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1988).

The second definition, which was coined by The Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities, applies to a slightly different group of people with difficulties in learning. In order to keep this difference clear, it is referred to as the definition of **specific learning disabilities (SLD)**:

> a prolonged state, most likely of neurological origin, which selectively manifests itself in a disturbance of development, integration, and verbal and non-verbal skills. SLD is a kind of impairment which is present despite average or even above-average intelligence, well functioning analysers and good motor ability. These difficulties may take many different forms in terms of their extent and level of intensity. In the course of life they may influence one's self-esteem, self-image, education, occupational or social activities or daily life (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1988).

Both definitions indicate the causes and consequences of learning disability. They pose a few important questions, however. The answers might help eliminate, at least to some degree, some of the adaptational consequences.

- Does learning disability influence the social functioning of a young person at school and in the outside world, and if so, how?

- Should we fear that a pupil with learning disability is going to be dangerous to him or herself (in the sense that he/she is going to act against his/her own interests) or to other people with whom he/she interacts?

- Can learning difficulties become the reason for exclusion of a child/pupil from participation in the social life?

These questions are going to be answered both in the positive and negative by a group of practitioners (teachers, pedagogues, educators). The latter claim that all-out generalizations are unjustified. Each child merits an individual approach, taking into consideration possibly complex family, social and cultural factors. In order to explain contradictory takes on the problem, we should examine the mechanisms which fuel the process by which learning disability is created and sustained, as well as focus on at least a few causes and circumstances of the impairment.

Although there are multiple pedagogic, sociological or psychological theories and concepts regarding learning disability, once a child starts experiencing troubles in learning, frequently – by means of first associations that come to mind – the first solutions applied include either a specific therapy, or taking initiatives focused on the individual (in this case, a pupil). If the aforementioned concepts are examined further, such actions prove to be either insufficient, or express one-dimensional approach in solving the problem. In contrast, an examination of learning disability, based on a sociolinguistic theory (an analysis of language codes), cultural reproduction theory, or labelling approach theory opens up a new perspective in which we may rethink such important aspects as a significance of social attitudes, processes, interactions between the child and his/her close or more distant surrounding, cultural aspects, and finally, the process of social change, which takes place in the contemporary world.

The theory of learning disability
as an individual developmental disorder

In pedagogical and psychological literature, learning disability is commonly linked to an individual dysfunction. Educational reality shows that in every school there are pupils who, with no difficulty, face the requirements of the curriculum, and others who, despite their effort and no differences in physical appearance in comparison to their peers, are unable to achieve similar results. Both common sense

and everyday knowledge then fuel the conviction that there must exist some constitutional differences between the two groups, which are linked to variations in individual developmental capacities. According to certain psychologists, pedagogues, or physicians, these differences most frequently include disorders associated with the malfunctioning of the central nervous system (CNS) (Johnson & Myklebust, 1967; Francis-Williams, 1975; Michałowicz & Ślenzak, 1982). In the 1980s, William H. Gaddes (cited in Brzezińska, 1999) composed his own list of individuals who are likely to experience troubles in learning. The list includes persons with: organic brain damage (which shows distinctively during neurological examination), and minimal damage of brain tissue, or minimal brain dysfunction (MBD). The latter are difficult to diagnose due to indistinct and ambiguous symptoms and they are also termed the borderline dysfunction (borderline MBD). Persons within the second group often display developmental disorders, late development of speech, partial deficits, excessive anxiety, difficulties in spatial orientation, poor visual-motor co-ordination, clumsiness of movement, abnormal EEG results. Gaddes also defined another group of people who do not display the symptoms of the CNS dysfunction; in this case, the likely cause of learning disability is genetic disorders. Troubles in learning may also be experienced by people with emotional disturbances (of organic origins and as the results of pathological changes due to, for example, chemical poisoning). All these cases support the thesis of the individual conditioning of learning disability. However, the classification by Gaddes also includes 'normal' people with no symptoms of the CNS dysfunction.

In the 1970s Helmer R. Myklebust (cited in Brzezińska, 1999) tried to estimate the relevant variable and introduced into pedagogy the concept of **learning quotient**. It is a measure of the correlation between a pupil's intellectual capacities and his/her achievements at school. In this research, the intellectual capacities were measured by the intelligence scale for children by D. Wechsler (WISC); school achievements were measured by standardised tests of school achievement (for example, in reading or numerical skills). Then, a so-called 'expected age' was calculated as the mean value of intelligence age (IQ), biological age, and of so-called 'age of class' (i.e. the average biological age of the pupils in the class). The learning quotient is the relation between the age of a given skill and the expected age. The results were then interpreted on similar grounds as the intelligence quotient: values below 90 (100 is the average result) indicated that a child showed difficulty in learning. In such a case special help programs were administered. According to Gaddes himself, this index was indeed a useful tool in detecting children's specific learning disabilities. However, the most commonly used approach in estimating learning disability is a measurement of intellectual capacities. In the middle of 1990s, Howard Gardner, professor of pedagogy at Harvard University, proposed a theory of seven multiple intelligences: **linguistic intelligence** is a facility with reading, writing and communication, using words. In school, this type of intelligence is going to manifest itself as a cognitive preference for using words and for spoken communication. Pupils with high levels of linguistic intelligence usually do not experience spelling

problems, they have good memory for details and broad general knowledge. **Logical-mathematical intelligence** has to do with reasoning, calculations, numbers, and logic. In school, it is going to be visible as a preference to act by solving problems, experimenting, looking for new ways of doing things, breaking fixed schemes and routines. These pupils find it easy to learn using modern technologies, e.g. they are able to work on a computer and use the internet in their daily schoolwork. The majority of traditional intelligence tests refer only to these two types of intelligence. Additionally, almost all over the world, teachers focus on developing pupils' skills predominantly in these two areas.

However, according to Gardner, this approach does not exhaust all the capacities. Therefore, he argues, there is a need to focus on the development of all other areas of intelligence as well. Among skills that significantly describe human preferences to act, he defines **visual-spatial intelligence** as the preference to think with images and need to visualise information with charts or diagrams. **Kinaesthetic intelligence** is a preference to learn by doing things and by touch, i.e. it is easier for a pupil to remember things that are performed rather than discussed or even visually demonstrated. According to Gardner, there is also **musical intelligence,** which has to do with high sensitivity to rhythms, sounds, and emotional content of an act of communication. A student with this preference is going to perform better in school activities if they are made rhythmical and are accompanied by emotions. The last two types of intelligence are **interpersonal intelligence** and **intrapersonal intelligence**. They have to do not only with ways by which we learn about the world but rather with one's relationship with the world and with oneself. Interpersonal intelligence has to do with easiness to make new contacts with people and the effectiveness of communication. It is frequently identified with social intelligence, i.e. an ability to decipher the intentions of other people, place oneself in their situation, and feeling empathy. The intrapersonal (introspective) intelligence, on the other hand, has to do with self-reflective skills, a facility to decipher one's own motivations and get to know oneself. In certain cases, people with this type of intelligence also exhibit great intuition. This facility allows reaching into a body of information that resides in the subconscious. It is a unique ability to rightly assess one's own qualities and flaws, strong and weak points.

The information regarding qualities or preferences that are dominant in a person may be greatly significant in planning educational strategies. According to the basic educational assumptions, each child is skilful, albeit in many different ways. Therefore pedagogues and psychologists should recognise personal preferences of a pupil and plan relevant actions by which the former can be well used and further developed. A preference for the way of processing information is directly correlated with a preference for a given learning style. Research findings confirm that we learn 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, 30% of what we see, 50% of what we see and hear, 70% of what we say, and even 90% of what we see and do. If we now take a closer look at learning styles which were

typical for a representative group, the most common one is the **tactile style**, i.e. learning by moving around, manipulating objects with one's hands, and doing things. This is the most effective learning style for circa 37% of pupils. The next commonly used style is the **auditory style**; it is predominant in circa 34% of the pupils examined. Finally, there is the **visual style**, which is typical for 29% of pupils. Kinaesthetic students perform better when they engage in doing things, move around, experience something personally, and experiment. Students with the auditory style prefer learning by sounds, speech and music. For visual students it is the easiest if they learn something they see (Dryden & Vos, 2000, pp. 100 and 130).

Michael Grinder (1989, cited in Dryden & Vos, 2000, p. 351) claims that in a typical 30-pupils class in a school, twenty-two pupils can acquire information equally well by different senses, i.e. when information is presented in a visual, auditory, or kinaesthetic way. Six pupils (20%) display only visual, only auditory, or only kinaesthetic preference, therefore they experience great troubles acquiring at least one-third of the learning content, provided that the teacher uses all three communication channels to an even degree. According to research findings, it is kinaesthetic pupils that experience the greatest learning difficulties. They constitute 26% of persons who do not graduate. Grinder has also distinguished a smaller group of 2-3 children per class who experience troubles in learning as the consequence of other than school-related factors.

The origins of these troubles are most commonly explained by linking the phenomenon of learning disability to the conditionings inherent to the child development. According to the parents of children with learning disability, child's troubles stem from the developmental disorder (these opinions were collected in the framework of the ROBUSD project) – this point of view is shared by as much as 37% of parents. They particularly refer to cognitive problems, or malfunctioning of basic thinking operations (memory, concentration, motivation).

Figure 1.
Causes of learning disability.
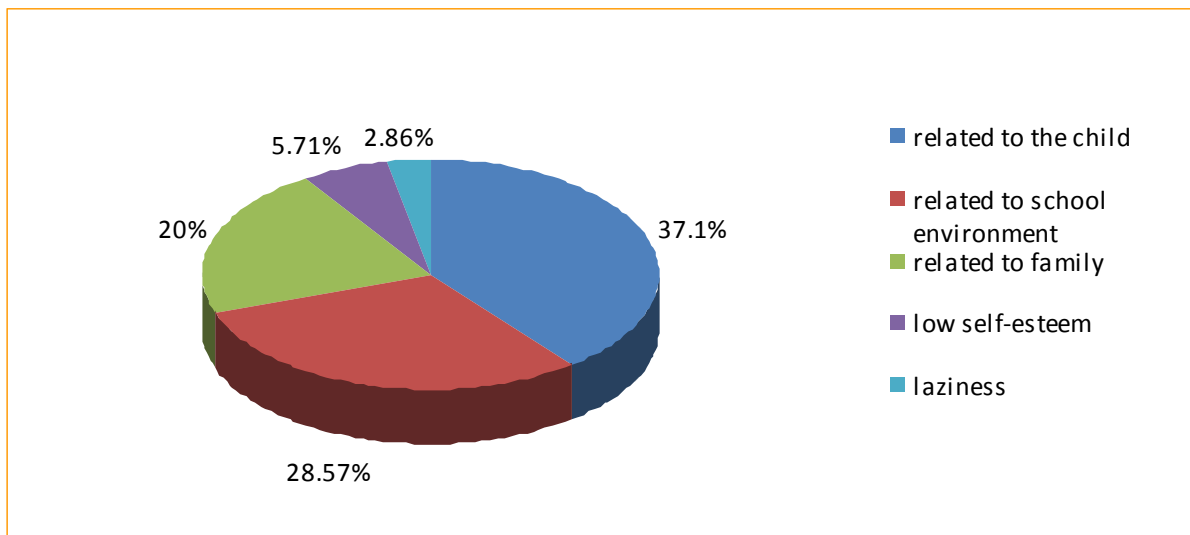
According to parents, a child's capacities are limited due to slow development. However, two of the least common causes (according to parents), i.e. **low self-esteem** and **laziness**, may be regarded as particular consequences of a developmental disorder. The latter is included in the diagram in order to point out that such may be an approach by parents and we should consider it when attempting to deal with a problem of a child's learning disability.

Learning disability as the effect of marginalization and exclusion

The problem of learning disability was noticed and began to be examined in the 1970s. However, as early as in the 1960s a body of research was collected on differences in the processes of socialisation of children due to the social background that were likely to affect individual educational prospects. Research results confirmed more limited developmental options of children coming from socially neglected families (Werning & Lütje-Klose, 2009). However, H. Roth claims that:

Conscious and unconscious rearing and socialising processes that take place in a family before a child starts attending a school are probably much more important for one's intellectual development (…) than the abilities inherited from grandparents (H. Roth, cited in Werning & Lütje-Klose, 2009, p. 57).

Moreover, numerous research findings and analyses prove that children from lower social classes are discriminated against in the educational system. A. Giddens' example (2007) admittedly concerns Great Britain, but we may nevertheless venture a general conclusion that today's educational system is two-layered: it creates 'winners' and 'losers'. The first group consists of the children of parents of at least middle class, who are able to afford to place their child in a school of their choice. The educational law of selection favours the privileged classes placing the children of poorer families in less favourable situations (regardless of what categories of deprivation we may have in mind). The criteria of selection, including medical ones, are applied in over 50% of English schools (Hugill, 1996).

The significance of marginalisation theory for preventing learning disability

A teacher's knowledge about the potential causes of learning disability due to the social and economical status of the family should be incorporated in the planning of support strategies. It is often the case that teachers/pedagogues focus on a child and his/her problems that are the consequence of the disability. They intervene only when symptoms of difficulties appear, such as low grades or having to repeat a year, and then organise remedial programmes in order to balance out the deficits. However, one may or even should look for early warning signals. A pupil whose family is of the lower social status usually wears poor-quality clothes, does not take part in school initiatives which require additional fees (trips, supplementary classes in and outside of school) and does not have a complete school equipment. Additionally, his/her parents contact the class teacher much less frequently and often choose restrictive measures when enforcing house rules. They do not help the child in the educational process or supervise his/her school activities, which in turn often results in the child's forgetting to do homework. Therefore, adapting an approach that does not focus merely on the child's school performance but additionally takes into account his/her individual conditionings may greatly contribute to devising effective trouble-shooting measures for learning difficulty, by reaching directly to their causes, i.e. family's child-rearing incompetence. To focus solely on the consequences might at best minimise but not entirely overcome the problem.

The sociolinguistic theory by Basil Bernstein

Among contemporary theories which analyse impact of education on social inequalities, we find **the theory of language code** by Basil Bernstein (1975, cited in Giddens, 2007).

Berstein's theory has been developed on the grounds of research into school failures of working-class children in England. It is based on the assumption that the communication system that is characteristic for a social group and a level of school performance are interconnected (Bokszański, Piotrowski & Ziółkowski, 2002). Bernstein analysed the language of working-class children and claimed that it is based on so-called 'restricted code'. This means that when speaking, a person makes numerous hidden assumptions and expects that others will recognise them. The restricted code is a type of language that is connected to a particular cultural environment. The culture of the working class is most often based on close ties and informal relationships among neighbours. In this environment, everyone shares the same or similar set of values. Depending on a social class, according to Bernstein, different approaches to rear children are adapted. This may result in different language and thinking patterns. Restricted codes, which are characteristic of a given group, realise norms and meanings which depend on the context (Bernstein, 1990). A lower class child expresses his/her emotions in a direct way, often very expressively, at times with inadequate strength, and doing something, he/she expects an immediate reward; a child does not make any long-term plans and is instead focused on the present – therefore a reward, or frustration due to a lack of it, tends to reach extreme levels. The restricted codes result in a primitivization of the understanding of everyday relations, and lead to a preference of the descriptive mode of speaking and forming one's thoughts over the analytic one. In the case of the middle classes, acquiring speech is based on the use of a comparatively elaborated code. The life of this class is oriented towards such values as order, rationality, stability, and control over emotions. Middle-class parents induce in children a need to plan long-term goals, such as financial security. These goals are regarded as much more important and satisfactory than the immediate fulfilling of one's needs. Therefore, children must consistently learn how to control their whims and focus on long-term goals. A child is encouraged rather to verbalise his/her emotions, control them, understand why he/she feels something and what it is (Ginsburg, 1982). In the elaborated code, the meaning of words is isolated and becomes adjusted to a given situation; language itself is less connected to concrete situational contexts. This means that a child who uses an elaborated code finds it easier to make generalisations and use abstract terms. Language therefore is used to explain and interpret, or ponder the alternatives. The elaborated code allows to describe feelings and intentions, develop reasoning ability and, in consequence, hypothesize

over future events. A child's language is very subtle and contains many words which express relational aspects (e.g. 'although', 'or' and the like). In the world of the elaborated code, a child must think according to relational terms in order to understand the statements of his/her parents; communication with them does not mean only an exchange of information concerning one's needs but also a necessity to provide reasons and arguments in support of one's attitude. Finally, the elaborated code has to do with the emotional context of an utterance produced by or addressed to a child.

The language used in school, hence the language of knowledge, is a language of the elaborated code. Children who have acquired it in the process of socialisation on the pre-school level find it easier to face demands in school in comparison to children who use the restricted code. This does not mean that the latter are bound to fail in the educational process even before it begins, but they will certainly need to make greater effort. Also, in early school days at least, their language style is going to clash with the academic culture of the school. Bernstein stated in his analysis that the effects of socialisation are entirely different for low- and middle-class children. Parents from lower classes do not teach their children how to rationalise, or manage the surrounding world. The life of children, similarly to the life of their parents, is strongly dependent on accidental events and is unlimited by long-term goals – even if one tries to create them, they tend to be unstable. These goals resemble reveries rather than real objectives. In consequence, lower-class children do not have highly stimulated ambitions. At home, arbitrary relations seem to be the norm and a parent's opinion cannot be questioned. Joan Tough (1976) confirmed Bernstein's research results. She demonstrated that working-class children less often receive answers to their questions or hear arguments supporting another person's opinion (mainly in family situations). While middle-class mothers explain to their children why the latter should not do something, or why they should do it, working-class mothers stop at giving a direct statement about what children are not allowed or must do. Moreover, this sort of statement is often compounded by a strong emotional message which clearly demonstrates to the child that his/her possible protest or discussion are pointless, anyway.

The theory of language codes, also referred to as sociolinguistic theory, is an attempt to explain the conditioning of restricted educational possibilities. An analysis of differences in communication and socialisation processes has demonstrated that a child who comes from a family that uses the restricted code rarely receives answers to his/her questions at home, and therefore hardly ever poses them as he/she is accustomed to assertive, rather than explicative, statements. With time, this may lead to limitations in cognitive curiosity and, in consequence, to a more limited knowledge. In school situations, a child is going to experience troubles responding to an abstract language that characterises the educational content (in this sense, an equivalent of a scientific discipline). Most of the information provided by a teacher in the elaborated code is going to be incomprehensible to the

child, who, in turn, not being accustomed to asking questions (having had multiple experiences where his/her questions were left unanswered), is going to lag behind the others in the course of a lesson.

The significance of sociolinguistic theory in preventing learning disabilities

In the Polish educational reality, as well as in many other countries, didactic work is most often based on methods which rely on verbal communication. This refers both to direct communication, when a teacher explains a theory or poses questions, and to indirect communication, when a pupil uses a piece of written text, either from a school book or a worksheet. Being aware of a child's communication preferences and their language code, which mirrors the pattern of family or community relations, may help realise that learning disabilities are caused neither by cognitive deficits related to the functioning of thought processes, nor by attention deficit, but are rooted in communication channels which are used in school and are not tailored to student's capabilities. When this is noticed, one solution may be to adjust the information to the child's perceptual abilities. This means in turn that directions given by a teacher should be formulated on the basis of the child's code, not the teacher's code. A good idea is to use visuals to illustrate the content (drawings, pictures, diagrams, charts). However, the teacher's goal should be to gradually enrich the child's vocabulary by means of suitable reading materials, to broaden the scope of the child's interests, and encourage him/her to initiate a dialogue during social interactions.

Figure 1 illustrates the causes of learning disabilities. It shows that according to 20% of parents, the causes are inherent in the family environment; almost 30% of parents think they lie within school that does not adjust its communication style to the capacities and preferences of a child. However, the majority of parents, but also teachers, do not fully comprehend that difficulties in information processing may result from specific communication patterns linked to cultural capacity of the family and an environment in which the child lives. This said, one cannot expect that a family is going to change their social status overnight, as well as their routine activities and communication patterns which all have developed in a process of cross-generational inheritance. One approach based on sociolinguistic grounds, which may be effectively used in a 'struggle' to overcome learning disabilities, is to focus therapeutic activities onto the entire family, not only onto the child. Preventive programmes prove to be the most efficient measures. Every country and city has its own so called neglected areas that are marked by cultural destitution. One should realise then that as long as they exist, the troubles in learning connected to the social and cultural neglect will be a significant cause of the educational exclusion of certain children.

It is interesting that in this summary of causes of learning disability, we discuss factors which differ noticeably from those that are voiced by teachers. On the basis of an interview with a teacher, from a set of five causes of learning disability presented above, only one is directly linked to the school, i.e. overloaded school curriculum (a quote). The other four factors: difficult family situation, child's laziness, truancy, developmental deficits are perceived as inherent in the family environment or as endogenous conditions. The opinion by this teacher is confirmed by research results obtained by Barbara Fotyga (2001, pp. 103-113) which show that according to educational institutions, the greatest responsibility for learning troubles falls onto the bad family situation (48.9%); much lesser negative affect is ascribed to school (13.5%). However, parents' opinions are significantly different: 31.8% of them think family situation is responsible and as much as 28.7% put the blame on the school environment. Pupils with learning disability see this situation in yet another way: according to them school holds the main responsibility (33%) while family environment is much less significant (22.3%).

Theory of cultural reproduction by Pierre Bourdieu

Another theoretical concept which has been created on the grounds of sociologic research and attempts to examine the phenomenon of learning disability is the cultural reproduction theory by Pierre Bourdieu (Sawisz, 1978).

According to Bourdieu, the family plays a significant role in biological and social reproduction. This is where the capital is accumulated and transferred across generations. However, it is not the only such place. Another and equally important one is school, which as an institution solidifies reproduction mechanisms. This allows us to assume that in certain cases, school inequalities result from social inequalities based on differences in cultural heritage. The theory of cultural reproduction confirms that school is permeated with violence. On the one hand, it is symbolic violence over subjected groups. On the other, it takes hold over dominant groups which have no other choice but to reproduce their high social status.

In this theory, a shift from cultural aspects towards economic determinism was made in the work by Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (cited in McFadden & Walker, 1997). The researchers focused on the role of school in the reproduction of work division and tried to answer the question why people accept segregating measures. According to the researchers the structure of school relations corresponds to the structure of capitalist economy.

The correspondence phenomenon characterises contemporary school as well as pupils who continue to be 'sorted' on the grounds of various criteria, e.g. skills (this refers to predicting one's future professional role), developmental disorders (in case of special schools, compensatory classes, therapeutic classes), origin (ethnic classes; lately, a noted problem of children in Roma classes in Poland). This is confirmed by analyses conducted in various countries on relations between learning disability and the process of marginalisation. German experience (reports from 1970s) indicates that schooling for children with various disorders largely included pupils from social margins and lowest layers of the society (W. Thimm and F. H. Funke, cited in Werning & Lütje-Klose, 2009).

The significance of the cultural reproduction theory in preventing learning disability

It is necessary for a teacher to be aware of the differences that result from social and economic status and the level of students' skills. Teachers working in regular schools frequently assume that pupils represent a similar level of learning abilities. This is a dangerous assumption as it leads to standardisation of conditions and requirements. While groupwork is a commonly applied solution in schools, groups should be created with great caution. A teacher's order – "please, form small groups" – may deepen the differences between pupils. Very often children form groups on the basis of the criteria of ability or sympathy, often related to having similar interests and a common way of working. In order to prevent segregation, a teacher should take responsibility for dividing pupils into groups and not leave it to the children. An informed choice of group members and planning specific tasks for each of them will enhance co-operation and contribute to the development of natural tutoring among peers.

Research conducted in the framework of the ROBUSD project confirms to a great extent the cultural heritage theory and that learning difficulties result from an individual position in the set-up of the environmental conditions, rather than from actual developmental deficits of a pupil.

Figure 2.
The first encounter with the expression 'learning disabilities'
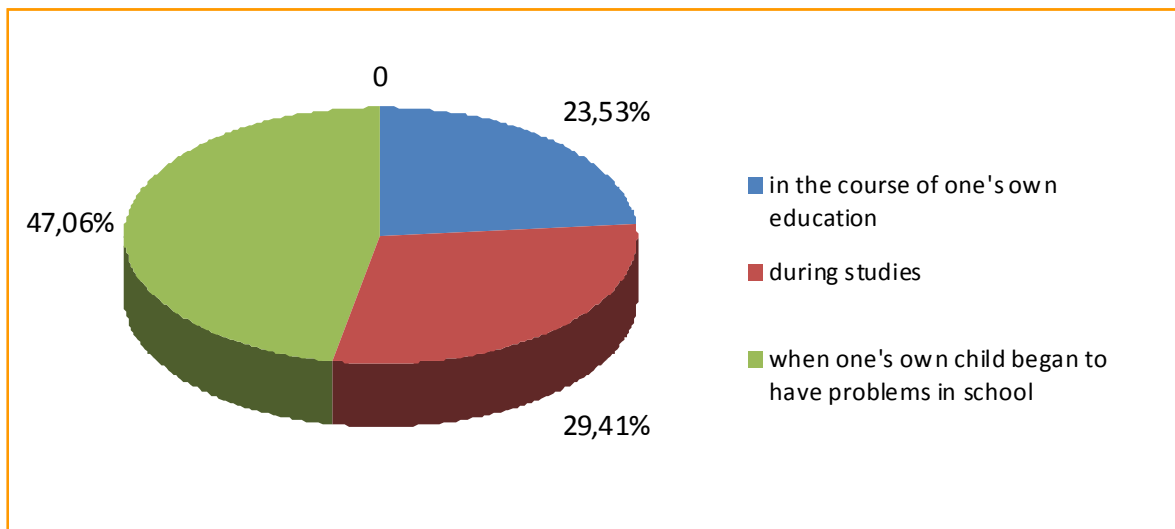
The results of the research demonstrate that 23.53% of the parents of children with learning disability share experiences that are similar to those by their children, i.e. they first encountered the expression 'learning disability' in school when they were diagnosed with the disorder.

Learning disability and social labelling approach theory

One of the most interesting theoretical concepts which seek to explain the phenomenon of school failure, particularly with regard to pupils from socially marginalised groups, is **the labelling approach theory**. One of its main proponents is Edwin Lemert (1951). Although in sociology and social pedagogy his theory is often placed among concepts of deviation, Lemert himself was against it. This has to do with his approach to interpretation of the origins of deviant behaviour, different from the mainstream views, as well as his questioning of the stereotypical understanding of the depraved subject as one who displays destructive attitudes. According to Lemert, deviation is to a lesser degree only the result of individual behaviour, but rather stems from social reactions. A deviation does not exist until a behaviour is diagnosed as deviant in a process of social judgement: a deviation designates a behaviour or role that receives negative social appraisal, and a deviant person is the one to whom this behaviour is attributed. In Lemert's view, a deviation is established by exercising social control, which determines people's behaviour and deprives them of the right to decide about their own

life. In this theory, the status of being deviant is attributed to, rather than acquired by an individual. Lemert distinguishes between **two levels of deviation**. The first one, **primordial deviation**, designates any behaviour that is characterised by 'otherness'; its features are different to those accepted by the society, although at this level they do not necessarily need to be construed as negative – an aspect commonly attributed to deviation. However, when they are met with a critical, degrading, and isolating social reaction, a specific interaction between a 'deviant person' and the labelling society sets in. One of the characteristics of this level in the process is that a person who is labelled 'other' experiences negative emotions as the result of social punishment, which provokes further and even more stringent social reactions, such as isolation and rejection, as well as formal steps taken against the labelled person. They, in turn, strengthen the reaction by the rejected person, who acts in self-defence against labelling. On the last level in the process, the labelled person accepts his/her deviant status and makes attempts to adjust oneself to the new social role. This last level is described by Lemert as **secondary deviation**. In an analysis of the repercussions of social labelling at either level, one should observe that the changes in a rejected person's attitude develop along an escalation of negative social attitudes. These repercussions take toll on the sense of one's identity and self-esteem as it is being influenced by labelling.

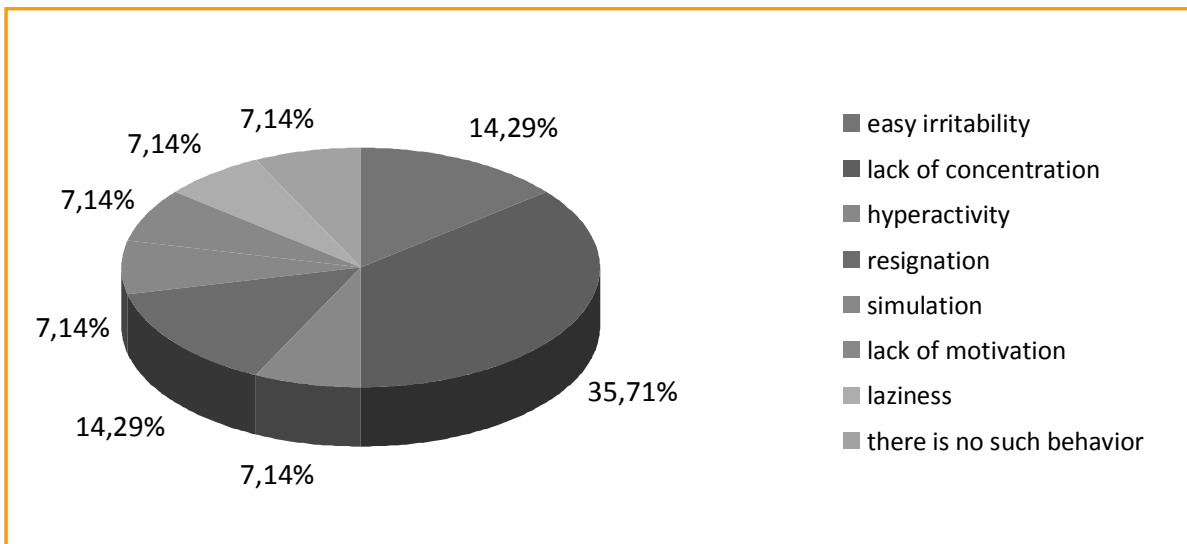## The significance of labelling approach theory in preventing learning disabilities

According to pupils, one of the most important tasks of a teacher is evaluation of their performance. Teachers are not always aware of this and they rather perceive their role as the one which is about conveying knowledge and developing pupils' skills. Nonetheless, it is necessary that they understand that for a child, evaluation by a teachers is a point of departure in the process of building self-image. A child with a learning disability is going to display more reasons for a negative evaluation, however, this does not mean that it is impossible to find elements which are worth praising. Every evaluation should be performed as if for the first time and burdening by negative memories should be avoided.

According to the results of the research conducted in the framework of ROBUSD project, one of the behaviours characteristic of children with a learning disability – according to parents, it causes the greatest troubles for a child – is **attention deficit**. The other leading causes include **easy irritability in social situations**, and **resignation**.

Figure 3.
The child's behavior which provokes the greatest difficulties

easy irritability
lack of concentration
hyperactivity
resignation
simulation
lack of motivation
laziness
there is no such behavior

An analysis of the problematic external consequences of the behaviour of a child with a learning disability, i.e. what kind of behaviour poses the greatest problems to others, demonstrates that a factor that is the most significant according to parents is **quick irritation**. Together with **a lack of control over emotions**, these two factors are negative reactions which may lead to an aggressive behaviour in over one-third of children (35.71%).

In the context of the social labelling approach, such a reaction by a child needs to be construed as a particular self-defensive action that is linked to the negative evaluation of his/her person by the surrounding environment. Another problem is what social labelling approach terms 'secondary deviation', or rather, its consequences. By taking on the role of a pupil with learning disabilities, a child identifies with all socially defined expectations concerning his/her behaviour.

Figure 4.
Which behavior by a child is the most problematic to others?
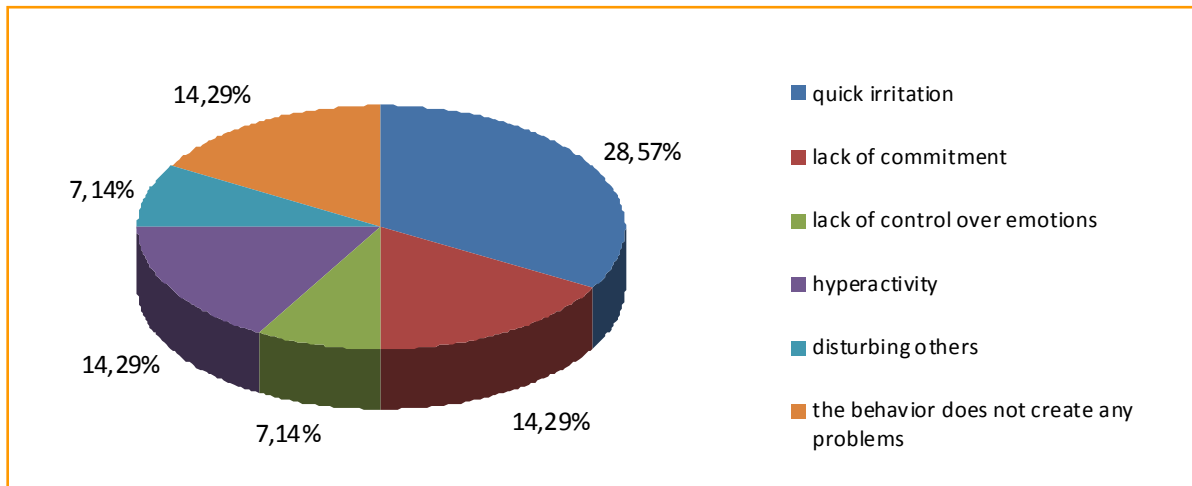
This means that if the characteristics of a child with learning disability includes easy irritability, lack of control over one's emotions, or aggressive behaviour, a child who is taking on that role is going to incorporate them in his/her behaviour. According to parents and teachers, one of the main causes of troubles in learning is the child's laziness; however, it is difficult to determine whether a child with a learning disability is indeed lazy and whether it is his/her real choice not to engage in certain activities, or whether we deal here with an attributed label.

Certainly, the answer to this question is difficult. Nevertheless, it is important that parents, and teachers in particular, are aware of the significance of their opinions and when they form them, they should rethink their likely impact and the fact that a frequently expressed opinion becomes the 'truth' not necessarily because it reflects the facts, but because the majority of people think it does.

Howard Becker, a follower of Lemert, proposed an even more deterministic theory (1963). According to him, a deviation is a social process that to a certain extent is independent of actual actions committed by an individual. This theory was construed on the grounds of observations of the inconsistency of socially judging approaches, i.e. not every person who violates the norms is socially labelled. Labelling is the result of multifarious elements and, to a great extent, depends on the social status of an individual, his/her previous social role, position (including economic status), the level of environment's tolerance, or person's participation in culture.

In the context of the labelling approach theory, we also need to consider at least potential perceptual distortions in labelling people.

One of the examples may concern erroneous evaluation of pupils, which is commonly noticed, not only in Polish literature. This refers to an evaluation of the didactic process but also of the social aspects of school life and interactions with a group of peers. Research by Z. Kwieciński (1995) demonstrates that a process of evaluation in school takes an average of 3.3 minutes of a standard lesson; only 61% of this is valuable to pupils, i.e. a feedback that is more comprehensible and comprehensive than a grade, which always remains somewhat enigmatic.

According to the research within the framework of the ROBUSD project, the parents of children with troubles in learning assume that the most important consequence of the diagnosed disability are **low school grades**. Are they the effect of the evaluation of the actual abilities of the child, or do they rather result from an implication of the unconscious schemes which economise the process of evaluation?

According to Georg Noizet and Jean P. Caverni (1988), but also Zbigniew Zaborowski (1988), the faults with evaluation process lie in the personality features of evaluators. The most frequent is **the attribution error**. This means that if a teacher regards a pupil as kind and likable, the latter receives a broader tolerance margin in comparison to a pupil who is dressed in scruffy-looking clothes, or perceived as different from peers. His/her competencies are often regarded as lower. The attribution error is also called **the halo**- or **nimbus effect** (Eysenck, 1965). The research findings by Noizet and Caverni demonstrate that the first group of pupils receives higher grades than their actual performance. Kwieciński describes a similar phenomenon which stems, however, from the social origin rather than from mere school competencies and an amount of pupil's effort. This phenomenon is called (following Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968) the **Pygmalion effect**, i.e. the effect of positive or negative approach of a teacher towards pupils. The negative approach is the so-called **Golem effect**; it manifests itself in lower evaluation of children from families of lower social status; the **Galatea effect**, on the other hand, signifies higher evaluation results determined by the higher social status.

If we take a closer look at the very process of evaluation, we may discover the causes of possible errors. Noizet and Caverni indicate that one of the causes may be the order by which students' paper work is corrected. Usually, the papers which are corrected first receive better marks than the subsequent ones. The researchers mention also the **anchoring effect**, i.e. setting the correspondence between the subject and the category of answers. In the process of evaluation, the first paper is compared to the model answer(s), the point of reference for the second paper, however, is the first paper, etc.

Therefore, we should not feel surprised that a very large group of pupils, almost 70% (69.5%), regards the evaluation by a teacher as highly inaccurate. Over 40% of teachers are aware of the protests and

discontent of pupils because only as few as 2.8% of them are willing to consider pupils' arguments and to change the grade in case the arguments are convincing (Falaron, 1988, cited in Śliwerski, 2008, p. 33).

In the context of the theories discussed, we should reconsider the process of evaluation of pupils with learning disabilities, including how much the opinions by teachers reflect the real capacities of a child. Do teachers reflect upon the factors which may jeopardise the evaluation process, and which might put a child with learning disability at a considerable disadvantage?

School does not deal effectively in solving problems related to learning disability since as much as almost 20% (18.75%) of children demonstrate their negative approach to school and over 15% (15.63%) experience isolation and rejection by their peers.

Figure 5.
The consequences of learning disabilit
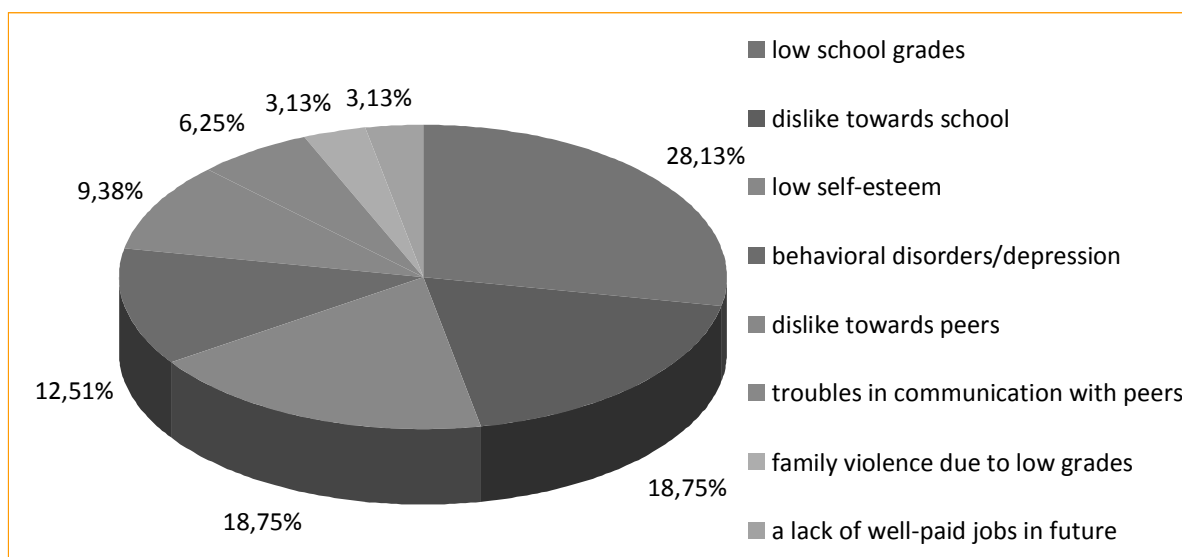
Judged according to their own opinions, teachers seem to be aware of the role they play in creating a positive self-image in case of each pupil, even the one who experiences troubles in learning. They also know they are (and should be) the educators who by noticing and focusing on the positive aspects of a student's behavior and strong personality traits set up conditions for his or her successful development. They are also aware that their role is to counteract labelling and stereotypization in social communication among peers. However, research results demonstrate that in an overwhelming number of cases their efforts prove insufficient; to almost 20% (18.75%) of parents low self-esteem is the major problem in their children's development and over 12% (12.51%) of them have observed the symptoms of behavioral disorder and depression in their children.

According to the data by NSPCC, a British organisation working to stop child abuse, children with learning difficulties are at high risk of being exposed to acts of aggression in social relations. Eight in ten of them experience cyberbullying while in six in ten of those cases physical violence is used. David Miller and Yasmine Kovic quote the Mencap research results of 2007 and claim that what is problematic is not only the scale of violence that refers to a great number of children with learning difficulties, but the fact that the problem is rarely exposed. Only 4 children in 10 have seeked help by informing others about the aggression against them[1].

The aggression against children with learning disability is a major problem and it should become the focus of an analysis by theoreticians and practitioners working in the field. Children not only happen to be the victims but perpetrators of aggression. According to peers' testimonies, one of the most noticeable characteristics of the behavior of children with learning disability is that they strive to become noticed. Since they lack (positive) means in order to achieve that, they tend to reach for measures which are reprehensible, e.g. they pick on others. Therefore, it seems valuable that we carefully listen to and ponder observations made by peers. It often happens that the ideas which are plain to see prove to be the most effective (conclusions from an interview with a child with no learning difficulties).

The theories presented in this text have been chosen to remind teachers that learning difficulties may result from many factors and that they are not always based on biological disorders of central nervous system, although this is the most common answer given by parents and teachers. Social processes and attitudes analysed by the authors of the theories presented are often unconscious or belittled. Once I have heard that a teacher's work is just as any other: one goes to work, fulfils the working scheme and is ready to leave. In my opinion, however, such an attitude is entirely false, or at least it should be false. There is probably no other profession in which so many things would depend on so few people, in which one is responsible for the shape and character of social interactions and since the latter are the grounds of any other actions, this also means responsibility for economic and industrial development of the entire country. However, teachers should receive support in their efforts.

When this is not realised sufficiently, it may become one of the most important causes of all the problems discussed in this article.

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[1]

http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/.../sexual_bullying_deaf_disabled_wdf69261.pdfdeafness.about.com/cs/parentingarticles/a/teasing.htm

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A Student with ADHD

as a Perpetrator and Victim of Aggression

An arrival of new pupils with special educational needs always poses an important challenge for the educational institution. Each such child brings in a baggage of diverse needs and capacities as well as numerous limitations and problems related to fulfilling the role of a pupil, disciple, and companion in a group of peers. Children with ADHD are a group that particularly requires a consistent improvement of diagnostic skills by their educators and devising efficient forms of educational and therapeutic work. In their case, all educational and rearing endeavours should be focused on re-establishment of healthy ties and relations among people. A site where these can be built and modelled – by virtue of guaranteeing each student possibilities to display their strong features, skills and abilities – are schools that are open to diversity and prepared for co-operation with a pupil with psycho-social functioning disorders. In order to face the challenges of responsible education that is effective in the case of each child, schools should create appropriate development and learning conditions individually for their own students.

Although we have been dealing with education of children with ADHD for a number of years now, it is a field where more and more new questions and doubts continue to arise regarding adequate forms of a therapy. It is also a field characterised by relatively low practical competencies of teachers; a fact that likely is linked to the clinical image of the disorder. Additional difficulties in devising educational work with children with ADHD are posed by common rearing problems which result from compound behavioural disorders of various strength and kind. In many educational environments, pupils with ADHD are still regarded as worse, disobedient, or undisciplined and adults who are responsible for the child's rearing and education are unwilling to acknowledge the diagnosis of the syndrome; in certain ways, this might help justify the undesired behaviour of the child and remove the label of a loser, troublemaker, or ruffian.

In this context it is worth emphasising that although the topic of hyperactive disorder and attention deficit has often been the focus of scientific research, many of its aspects continue to raise debates and discussions and frequently stir controversies among theoreticians and practitioners. Even the definition of the syndrome is problematic.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a term acknowledged by the American Psychiatric Association (APA, 1994) under the DSM-IV classification. The International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) uses a different term, i.e. Hyperkinetic Disorder.

On the basis of an analysis carried out by Scandinavian researchers, Ch. Gillberg (1998) defined deficits in attention, motor control and perception (DAMP). The DAMP syndrome fulfils the criteria of ADHD as well as those associated with so called developmental coordination disorder (DCD) under DSM-IV classification (cited in Nijmeijer et al., 2008, p. 68).

Subject literature highlights the relations and diagnostic difficulties related to pervasive developmental disorders (PDD) and ADHD. Many people with PDD display personality traits which are typical for ADHD syndrome, however they can be secondary to the original diagnosis (cited in Nijmeijer et al., 2008, p. 697).

In any case, however, the ADHD syndrome is defined as a set of symptoms linked to hyperactivity, impulsivity and inattention. It belongs to fragmentary developmental disorders which occur in childhood. It assumes an intensification of symptoms in the area of hyperactivity, impulsivity and inattention which largely or completely impede normal functioning of a person.

An important aspect of the diagnostic approach is classification: DSM-IV or ICD 10. "According to A. Pisula and T. Wolańczyk (2005), in a group of children in early school period, 10% of cases of ADHD are discovered under the DSM-IV criteria; adopting ICD-10 criteria lowers this number to 1-2%" (Skórczyńska, 2008, p. 433).

The DSM-IV classification defines three ADHD subtypes. The first two subtypes, the inattentive type and hyperactive/impulsive type, are marked by a dominance of inattention or hyperactivity and impulsivity, respectively; the third subtype is called the combined subtype. Depending on a given ADHD subtype, the following characteristics may be proportionately distributed or appear with diverse intensity:

- the combined subtype (at least 6 characteristics in the area of attention deficit and at least 6 characteristics in the area of impulsivity and hyperactivity must be present);
- the inattentive type (at least 6 characteristics in the area of attention deficit and less than 6 characteristics in the area of impulsivity and hyperactivity must be present);
- the hyperactivity/impulsive type (less than 6 characteristics in the area of attention deficit and at least 6 characteristics in the area of impulsivity and hyperactivity must be present).

Diagnostic indicators regarding the area of attention deficit need to confirm the following characteristics related to a child's behaviour (Kołakowski et al., 2007). A child:

- fails to give close attention to details and makes mistakes;
- often has difficulty sustaining attention during tasks and games;
- often does not appear to listen;
- often struggles to follow through on instructions and has difficulty in finishing a task and in performing daily duties, but not because he/she does not understand the instructions or is unwilling to perform the task;

- often has difficulty with organization of work and other activities;
- often avoids, dislikes or procrastinates to start activities requiring sustained mental effort;
- often loses things necessary for tasks;
- often is easily distracted due to outside stimuli;
- often is forgetful in daily activities.

In the area of hyperactivity and impulsivity the following characteristics need to be confirmed:

- often fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat;
- often has difficulty remaining seated during class and other situations;
- often runs about or climbs on pieces of furniture when such behaviour is inappropriate;
- often has difficulty engaging quietly in activities or resting;
- often talks excessively;
- often blurts out answers before question has been completed;
- often has difficulty waiting for her/his turn;
- often interrupts or intrudes upon others during a conversation or game (Kołakowski et al., 2007).

For the diagnosis of the ADHD syndrome these characteristics must occur consistently during at least six months. Most of them should appear before the age of 7, and at least in two educational settings. Additionally, a social, educational, or occupational functioning disorder should be confirmed. Under the DSM-IV classification, other developmental and physical disorders must be excluded.

The ADHD syndrome is diagnosed by a team of specialists with a special role played by doctors and psychologists who are experts on the syndrome. The basis for the diagnosis is a detailed investigation regarding the psycho-social history of the child from the moment of conception through consecutive developmental periods. An important role in the process of diagnosis plays the data regarding the family environment in the context of behaviour which is disturbing from educational point of view, as well as an analysis of child's functioning in school situations, i.e. in interpersonal contacts with peers, adults and the child's adjustment to the norms abiding in these contexts.

When diagnosing ADHD syndrome, one needs to consider its connection to a level of individual adjustment behaviour, i.e. gaining balance between individual and the surrounding, which is the basis for individual development.

Individual adjustment behaviour (Kostrzewski, 1978) is understood as self-dependent, effective, socially appropriate, age relevant and suitable for peer group behaviour. Practically, in every pupil with the diagnosed ADHD syndrome it is going to differ from the norm. Therefore, a group of children with ADHD, regardless of the intensity of educational problems, is going to require that teachers:

- get familiar with and understand specific behaviours and emotions (low self-esteem, attention deficit, hyperactivity or withdrawal, aggression, lack of control over one's impulses, lack of interest in learning, problems subjecting to others);
- demonstrate an understanding and accepting attitude towards a pupil despite his/her difficulties; show a positive support, patience, as well as such treatment of the child, which may serve as a pattern to peers;
- define and systematise their expectations and demands;
- set up models of flexible group work and possibilities to relieve emotions;
- engage in work with parents based on close partnership.

The causes and prevalence of ADHD

Although it is difficult to decide who first identified the disorder, usually the observation is accredited to a British paediatrician George Frederic Still. In the course of lectures held in the Royal College of Physicians in 1902, he described children he had encountered during his medical practice who were resistant to discipline, exhibited signs of unruliness and little self-control as well as were generally defiant, dishonest and wilful. Still proposed a thesis that this condition did not result from poor child rearing or spiritual degeneracy, but rather it had been inherited or was the consequence of injuries during the birth process (Hallowell & Ratey, 2004, p. 28). In 1960 Stella Chess, as one of the first researchers, separated the hyperactivity disorder from the theory of brain damage and introduced to her work a term 'hyperactive child syndrome' (Hallowell & Ratey, 2004). Since that time the research on the symptoms of this syndrome and attention deficit has speedily developed and the term 'psychomotor hyperactivity' has become commonly used.

Along a research focused on ADHD syndrome, investigations in its aetiology progressed. In that time many other theories were created, for example, regarding the ADHD as the result of micro damages during pregnancy and birth. "The majority of research findings indicate however that brain damage which took place during pregnancy or birth is not the main cause of ADHD" (Kołakowski et al., 2007, p. 36).

Biological mechanisms responsible for this disorder were confirmed by research indicating the significance of heritage factors. A theory regarding ADHD as a trans-generationally inherited syndrome, in other words, a genetically conditioned disorder, was confirmed for example by a research on twins. Kołakowski et al. (2007, p. 34) indicate that "in the case of ADHD, the degree of inheritance is very high, i.e. around 65-95% (average 76%) and is one of the highest among psychic disorders (a higher degree of inheritance can only be observed in case of few other characteristics, e.g. height)."

ADHD syndrome is prevalent all over the world and is diagnosed in all cultures and all continents. However, there are considerable differences in terms of population of pupils with the disorder. "Data presented in subject literature oscillate from around 1.5% to 16% in children population" (Dąbkowska, 2008, p. 77). This discrepancy, as we have mentioned, may result from various diagnostic approaches and a classification which is accepted in a given country as well as the access of a given population to diagnostic and therapeutic institutions.

"The greatest prevalence of the disorder at the level of circa 9.6% is observed in younger school-age children" (Dąbkowska, 2008, p. 79). Meanwhile, subject literature indicates that the ADHD syndrome is about three times more often diagnosed in boys than girls.

The problems of psycho-social functioning of pupils with ADHD in the context of fulfilment of school roles

Children with the ADHD syndrome experience great problems adapting themselves to school requirements. They demand particular support and well-planned didactic and rearing strategies in the area of developing their personal competencies which mark functioning in school. This refers to children's **self-awareness** (emotional awareness, correct self-evaluation, self-belief); **self-regulation** (self-control, taking responsibility for one's actions, observing rules, adaptability, innovation), and **motivation** (achievement motivation, commitment, initiative, optimism) (Wyczesany & Mikrut, 2002).

The greatest troubles with executing developmental tasks result from disorders related to inhibitory control and self-control. The latter are responsible for the correct performance of executive functions, such as: operative memory, internalisation of monologues, control of emotion, motivation and arousal, and reconstitution. According to R. A. Barkley (1998, p. 54 cited in Skórczyńska, 2008, p. 437), all the above-mentioned executive functions are less developed in children with ADHD than in healthy peers.

Another factor that distinguishes children with ADHD are frequent non-appropriate behaviours which result from impulsive aggression (Kołakowski et al., 2007, p. 109). The latter has a biological basis; it is connected to the excitability of the organism, characterised by stimulus-inadequate and uncontrolled vehement reactions, a lack of goal-orientation, as well as a possibility of directing aggression against oneself. An unplanned aggressive behaviour in most cases occurs when a child has troubles dealing with a new, difficult situation or in a moment of strong emotional tension. A pupil does not hide his/her behaviour and when a vehement action occurs, he/she cannot determine the consequences; afterwards, in most cases, a child regrets his/her behaviour. Such strong temper tantrums, regardless whether they are directed against oneself or other people, in most cases are not signs of bad behaviour but symptoms of the ADHD syndrome. However, many adults and peers may perceive them as indicators of aggressive behaviour that has been deliberately planned by the aggressor so that he/she can reach a certain goal. In terms of the social functioning of a pupil, a very important practical skill is devising a strategy to cope with a 'tantrum', i.e. an act of impulsive aggression. A role of a pedagogue and therapist is to demonstrate to pupils the differences between impulsive aggression and socialised aggression so that they can distinguish between those elements in a child's behaviour which are the results of the symptoms of the disorder and others which result from the disorder itself. It is a difficult task if we take into consideration how many adults have troubles determining a thin line that separates impulsive behaviour and one that is controlled by a child.

The difficulties which originate from the symptoms of the ADHD lead to socially unacceptable behaviours and are often linked to a lack of understanding and labelling by peers. The poorer the knowledge about the disorder by all peers in an educational community, the greater stigmatisation and isolation of a pupil with ADHD are. This can lead to negative self-image and troubles with self-evaluation due to continuous failures and misunderstandings. Such pupils often become 'scapegoats' in a class (Hallowell & Ratey, 2004) because in a critical moment or when under threat, peers quickly notice that suspicions of bad behaviour may easily be redirected to an 'always trouble-making victim', who in the end may become the target of the aggression by the entire group. In an attempt to become 'accepted' and gain a status within the class, one often takes on a role of a 'class jester'; however, this always turns out insufficient to build peer-to-peer relations satisfactory for both parties in the long run.

Troubles experienced by a child with ADHD are responsible for accumulation of negative thoughts about oneself, which may lead to secondary effects of the ADHD syndrome. A preparation of a teacher for work with a pupil with ADHD is necessary in order to prevent it. A research conducted among teachers in ordinary schools on their preparation to work with a pupil with special educational needs (SEN) confirmed that over 60% of teachers do not have sufficient knowledge or preparation (Jachimczak, 2008, p. 195). Among the teachers who declare to be sufficiently prepared to work with

a pupil with SEN (circa 40% of the investigated population) only one received necessary training in a course of pedagogical studies; two thirds received necessary information and skills in a course of individual research, whereas the majority of them took classes or engaged in literature analysis; only 18% of teachers completed postgraduate studies in support of development and education of children with SEN. These results provoke concerns about the quality of education and, what follows, knowledge and competencies of a teacher in the subject. They also confirm the necessity to incorporate in the curriculum of pedagogical studies a possibly large block of special pedagogy-related content so that a teacher who begins work in school can be familiar with basic but necessary knowledge on the specificity of work with a child with special educational needs.

Table 1.
The preference ranking regarding preparation for work with pupils with SEN

Answer	Position in the ranking (means)
Exceptionally skilful	1. (3,7)
Physically impaired	2. (3,8)
Hard of hearing	3. (4,9)
Chronically diseased	4. (5,5)
Hard of seeing	5. (5,6)
With mild mental retardation	6. (5,6)
With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD syndrome)	**7. (5,8)**
With complex fragmentary deficits	8. (6,0)
Autistic	9. (6,3)
Deaf	10. (7,5)
Blind	11. (9,4)
With more serious mental retardation	12. (9,8)

Source: (Jachimczak, 2008, p. 195)

A low, seventh position of pupils with ADHD in the ranking above indicates limited preparation for work with them in school conditions. The practical reality demonstrates that teachers' approach often relegates them to individual tutoring, outside of school, in the conditions of social isolation. The above research results confirm that the position of children with ADHD in ordinary schools is difficult. This may regard:

- inappropriate attitude of teachers towards a child with ADHD;
- low competencies of teachers in terms of work methods regarding the needs, capacities and limitations of a child,
- lack or insufficient co-operation with parents and specialists on planning programs for a child and his/her class.

The ADHD syndrome and behavioural disorders

According to the definition, behavioural disorders mean repetitive antisocial, aggressive or defiant behaviours. Generally it is assumed there are two kinds of behavioural disorders: oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) and, in more serious cases, conduct disorder (CD) (the proper behavioural disorder). "Oppositional defiant disorder is diagnosed in over 70% of children with ADHD; only few of them suffer from conduct disorder" (Kołakowski et al., 2007, p. 114). Oppositional defiant behaviours mean norm- and order-defying behaviour and a tendency to purposefully bother and irritate others. Children with ODD do not react adequately to a situation, easily lose control over their behaviour, and often manifest their anger.

The classification of conduct disorder (CD) according the ICD-10 criteria (Kołakowski, 1999, pp. 107-110) recognises two subtypes of CD: childhood-onset type and adolescent-onset type; it also defines the degree of their intensity: mild, moderate and severe CD (Wolańczyk, Kołakowski & Skotnicka, 1999). Among the diagnostic criteria of the behaviour of a child with CD are:

- often loses temper and argues with adults;
- often actively defies or refuses to comply with adults' requests;
- often blames others for his or her mistakes;
- is often resentful and vindictive;
- is verbally and physically aggressive;

- deliberately destroys the property of others;
- steals.

Although developmental disorders are not identical with aggression-related problems, these two are often concomitant. Socialised aggression to be observed in the context of overlaying developmental disorders, conflicts with the law and aggressive behaviours is characterised by: learned behaviours, low influence of biological factors, full control of the perpetrator, goal-orientation, direction against others and connection to solidified social behaviours (Kołakowski et al., 2007, p. 205).

In a discussion of developmental disorders (which often may become aggressive behaviours), one needs to focus on the fact that they often accompany the ADHD syndrome. If this be the case, the development of a child and his/her level of social and school functioning is going to be significantly more difficult. "It is stressed that children with ADHD, or ADHD accompanied by aggressive behaviours, are usually rejected by peers, while children with developmental disorders are equally often accepted or rejected" (Kołakowski et al., 2007, p. 116). Peer-to-peer isolation may also be the cause of swifter dropping out of school as well as troubles with the law, substance abuse, or suicidal attempts.

Research results (Jachimczak, 2008-2009) on developmental disorders in children with ADHD of younger school age (a sample of 30 pupils) measured according to the scale of adjustment behaviour devised for children, adolescents and adults (Nihira et al., cited in Kostrzewski, 1978) show that regarding the first stage of education, we may define four categories of the moderate childhood-onset type developmental disorders: violent and destructive behaviour (1), antisocial behaviour (2), defiant behaviour (3), psychological disorders (13). The results are shown in the chart.

Figure 1.

Wyniki badań zaburzenia zachowania w kategoriach: 1. gwałtowne i destruktywne zachowanie, 2. zachowanie antyspołeczne, 3. zachowanie buntownicze, 4. kradzieże i kłamstwo, 5. zamykanie się w sobie, 6. stereotypie ruchowe i dziwaczne ruchy, 7. niewłaściwe formy zachowania się w towarzystwie, 8. niewłaściwe nawyki głosowe, 9. niewłaściwe lub ekscentryczne nawyki, 10. zachowanie autodestruktywne, 11. nadmierna pobudliwość ruchowa, 12. odbiegające od normy zachowania w sferze płciowej, 13. zaburzenia o charakterze psychologicznym.
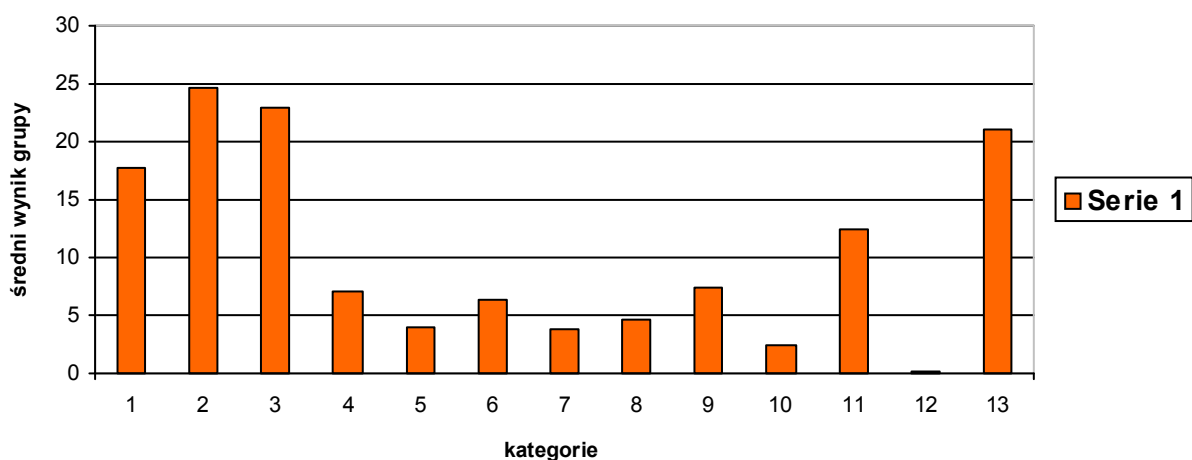
Source: private research.

In this context, when pondering on the problem of coexistence of aggression and behavioural disorders, with an emphasis on the oppositional defiant disorder in children and adolescents with ADHD, one needs to take into consideration multiply and varying influence of educational environments in which a child functions. Since the conduct disorder that compounds the diagnosed ADHD syndrome does not hold promise of positive entry into the adult life, the actions and planning focused on combining and joint application of proven therapeutic models should start as early as it is possible. One should keep in mind that bringing an excessive attention to incidental and drastic events involving children with ADHD, which take place in educational institutions, does not bring much good as such events do not reflect the state of reality. On the other hand, one should not suggest that schools are not troubled by problems related to violence, including the discussed area. It is, however, necessary to remember that severe conduct disorders are characteristic only of a very limited number of children with ADHD. This means that an isolation therapy (e.g., in a hospital or special institution) should be implemented only in well-justified situations, e.g. when the safety of other peers is threatened.

A therapy and activities supporting normal functioning of a child with ADHD in the school environment

Considering the effectiveness of therapeutic activities, we need to stress that the most effective form of therapy of a child with ADHD is a combined therapy, i.e. based on a proper combination of therapeutic methods, including close co-operation with parents and sustained or temporary administration of medications.

Since the ADHD syndrome is linked to the difficulties in organisation of the inner and outside world of a person, pharmacotherapy often improves functioning. However, one should remember that in order to change (modify) child's behaviour more effectively, a sustained individual or group therapy should also be implemented. One of the suggested therapeutic approaches is cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). It assumes a close co-operation between a patient and therapist in determination and understanding of the correlation between thoughts, emotions, and behaviour. This therapeutic approach is characterised by being focused on 'here and now' difficulties, i.e. regarding a person's current life. The patient and therapist agree to take the same point of view regarding the problem; further on, specific therapeutic goals and strategies are defined and the latter' efficacy and efficiency are continuously monitored (PTTBiP, 2007).

An example of a therapy focused on durable modification of the patient's behaviour is a programme by D. Pentecost (2005) called ADD Alternative Parenting Techniques (ADDapt). The author himself names this approach a training, education, or modification of behaviour, whose aim is to help a child in changing him or herself. The main focus of therapeutic activities in this approach is set onto parents. However, as Hallowell and Ratley emphasise (2004), besides arranging relevant therapies, it is important that a patient with ADHD has a person who plays the role of his/her 'trainer'.

A significant number of adults (parents and teachers) do not regard their personal engagement in the therapeutic process of a child necessary as they do not see a danger that the child's behaviour is going to develop new and even more serious problems. However, it is often a case with children with mild oppositional defiant disorder that they are able to leave a 'vicious circle' of negative behaviours, provided they find a person who can offer constructive support, and help the child find effective ways of dealing with one's own impulsivity and lack of organisation.

However, contradictory to our expectations, educational institutions lack competent teachers prepared to start programmes in modification of pupil's behaviour. Many schools suffer from shortage of common responsibility-attitude, cooperation, and consequent and reasonable approaches to deal with educationally difficult situations.

In this context, considering how difficult the social and emotional school situation of a child with ADHD is, it is necessary that schools devise well-planned initiatives of prevention and therapy regarding violent behavior committed either by the child, or his/her peers. These initiatives should take shape of coherent, comprehensible, and practically manageable programmes in order to prove effective and embrace all participants of the educational process. Henceforth, the programme devised by D. Olweus seems to be the best model to be implemented in school environment (1996, cited in Danilewska, 2002). It assumes actions on three levels: the first level – school; the second level – class; the third level – individual, i.e. direct work with the child with continuous help and support provided to and from parents.

When a new pupil with ADHD appears in the school, a diagnosis of his/her social and emotional functioning should be performed. This should regard: preparing a report on difficulties faced by the child and a detailed description of interventions (keeping an **'Anger Code'**; devising **a temper tantrum-solving pattern**); supervising the effectiveness (regarding eliminating the undesired behaviour, e.g. **a school system** of good behaviour reinforcement); planning actions and support from teachers, peers, parents as well as the institution administration workers.

The diagnosis should lead to an implementation of the most important tasks regarding the security and appropriate functioning of the child in school. These may include the following points:

1. creating a school system of temper tantrum prevention (a strategy on how to cope with a child's outburst) and elimination of behavioural disorders (systematic observance of introduced rules by staff members);
2. increasing the number of individual and group socio-therapeutic activities to build correct relations in a peer group;
3. creating an effective system of performance enhancement and self-improvement for teachers;
4. broadening the scope of co-operation between school and home to perform therapeutic actions in both environments.

Considering the engagement of all teachers in a process of education and therapy of a child with ADHD, it seems important to adequately plan tracks of personal developments for each teacher in the institution so that they can together create an interdisciplinary team and are able to support each other in solving difficult problems related to violence in school. One should remember, however, that a board of teachers is a conglomerate of individualities who have the goal of building a team focused on the same target, i.e. education and support of each pupil in the school community. However, "one should not construe the recommendations regarding co-operation on the programme and its joint implementation as a requirement of uniformity. In the contrary, it is important that each teacher develops a style of communicating with pupils which suits best his/her personality and implements it in a consistent manner in conformity with one's own programme of aggression prevention" (Danilewska, 2002, p. 6).

In educational and therapeutic work with a child with ADHD, an important element is skilful leadership of a class. This regards continues monitoring of relations between the peers and the child with ADHD. Among tasks which should be implemented in the work of every teacher are:

1. creating a statute of norms for a class which refer also to a programme of behaviour modification in a child with ADHD;
2. conducting planned workshops on emotions with an emphasis on significance of negative emotions which often condition aggressive behaviour;
3. conducting classes which help pupils distinguish between impulsive and socialised aggression;
4. including in the process of education and rearing classes based on co-operation and supporting positive relations among peers;
5. holding meetings with parents and peers, which provide a thorough analysis of difficulties regarding special educational needs of a child with ADHD and other peers in the class.

At this level it is necessary to refer to personal beliefs and experience of each teacher as they are the foundation for building correct interpersonal relations. A special focus should be given to co-operation on the statute of norms for the class – this should be done with participation of parents, peers and the teacher. The statute should clearly define the norms and repercussions for their violation. In the least possible way, it should single out a pupil with ADHD, i.e. its composition should make it applicable to all students in the class without getting into additional particularities.

The most important component of the work with a child with ADHD is the child itself. Well-planned supporting activities may help the pupil improve on performance of school roles, prevent developmental disorders, or effectively limit the existent educational troubles. A team of therapists in the CBT Centre (conducting a cognitive behavioural therapy), in their search for effective work methods regarding a child with ADHD, proposed an approach "using so called 'glasses', i.e. a set of specific methods which despite symptoms help a child and the surrounding environment in achieving normal functioning" (Kołakowski et al., 2007, p. 131).

In the area of concentration deficit, adults but also peers can contribute to improvement of the functioning of a child with ADHD by: limiting the amount of stimuli surrounding the child, reducing the span and complexity of tasks by giving single directions, motivating the child by adopting a diverse forms of work, restoring attention and focus on performed tasks, planning activities which use a day working plan, or task planning.

In relation to hyperactivity, we can make things easier for a child by accepting that he/she continues to move around, and organise the space of the classroom in such a way so that the child does not disturb others during their school tasks.

A greater problem is how to help the child in gaining control over his/her impulsivity. "Research results of the last few years have indicated a low effectiveness of therapeutic programmes focused on emotions control. Why? An answer to this question is simple: in order to change one's own behaviour, one needs to remember about it, in other words, not to act impulsively... The support should then include reminding a child of the adapted norm of behaviour" (Kołakowski et al., 2007, p. 134).

Predicting a situation in which the child will likely not remember the abiding rules, forewarning the child about them, keeping graphic 'what-to-do' reminders should be used to forestall and eliminate any undesired behaviour. This is the last and probably the most complex level for a teacher regarding individual work with a child with ADHD, and it is largely his/her watchfulness that is responsible for the child's success or failure in interpersonal relations with other peers in the school. Therefore, it might be beneficent to arrange after-school activities in such a way that the child is treated like a 'challenge cup', i.e. every person who has it in his/her hands treats it as something of exceptional value and gives it a great care to pass it on to another person without inflicting any damage to 'its' health or social and emotional functioning.

When we consider the effectiveness of actions regarding the undesired behaviour in children with ADHD, we must also ponder the question of who is particularly predisposed to successes in educational work. Following J. Korczak we may claim that teachers can be divided into good and bad ones. The first group does not present an ability to critically analyse their efforts and is bound to repeat previous mistakes and continue to move in a wrong direction. The second group are people who, being aware of the 'four cogged wheels model' which describes strategies of work with undesired behaviour of a pupil (Pyżalski, 2007), perform an analysis of all four components of the process: a teacher, strategies, pupil, social and situational context. Therefore they are not bound to repeat their mistakes. They know that in order to have a success in their work, "an appropriate person needs to apply an appropriate strategy regarding an appropriate person in an appropriate context" (Pyżalski, 2007, p. 88).

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School as an Environment Conducive to Aggression

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I suggest we now consider school as an environment that itself generates violence and aggression. By violence I understand everything that constrains the developmental potential of a student as well as a teacher in school or school-related areas. I distinguish between three factors that may generate violence:

1) structural factors at school (school regulations, rules of conduct, place, space, time, etc.),
2) symbolic factors, i.e. the culture of school in broad terms,
3) human factors, i.e. personality and individual (biographical) qualities of all participants of school activities to which they bring in their individual problems and motivations which originate outside.

The goal of school education, according to its statutory definition, should be to maximize the developmental potential of all of learners by helping them achieve personal goals which tie in with their individual aspirations and possibilities; school education should enlarge the cultural capital which pays back later in life. School (an Old Greek term: scholé) should then be a place of harmony and freedom, a site of particular allure where one is dedicated to performing enriching activities which, in turn, bring joy and satisfaction. However, school institutions, as we know them, are still far away from this root definition. They are organised and managed according to a model of bureaucratic state-owned institutions prevalent at the end of the 19th century. This model allows to arrange educational goals according to the rules of administrative rationality, i.e. the use of the same set of educational tools, assuming relatively similar time framework as well as homogenous circumstances. The purpose is to eliminate an 'accident' (individual fate) from the education process. This can only be achieved when all individuals in the institution act independently from their subjective needs and individual experiences. In this view, the rationality principle should therefore be extended onto other areas, such as the time of schooling, methods, didactic tools, as well as evaluation of students' performance and teachers' approach towards pupils.

On the other hand, democratic models of school organisation and management are based on a different set of principles. Firstly, formal legal equality of all subjects involved in education. Secondly, all relations which involve school authorities (e.g. school board), students and parents are given legal dimension: their rights and duties regarding one another are legally stipulated on the basis of their formal equality and their right of freedom. This configuration guarantees that no person is dependent on arbitrary decisions of school authorities and remains subject only to legal regulations. The observance of those regulations should then be a task of a special entity, such as school board, and is one of the indicators of democracy in a given school organisation.

Structural factors

Many years ago Zygmunt Mysłakowski claimed: "The state is the political organisation of the society. This implies coercion, hierarchy and power: the necessary factors when an aggravation of the tensions between particular group phenomena is required." (Mysłakowski, 1931, p. 23). Educational activity is therefore closely linked to the real life as this is where the struggle over the future and state-required social changes takes place. Since they are part of the politically organised state, school personnel or even entire institutions often become – albeit contradictory to their expectations or without knowledge – a natural political environment. The environment exerts pressure on school education on two levels:

A) the state, i.e. who and to what extent participates in political decisions (e.g. whether educational processes are realised in parliamentary democracy or totalitarian regime);

B) political parties which exert major influence over institutions responsible for determining goals and structure of the entire educational system (Průcha, 1997, p. 87).

Every change of political formation implicates further political and educational changes. The dominance of a given political current is manifest in major national dailies, large circulation magazines, electronic media; it is evident in public declarations made by political parties, governments, social organisations and congresses, as well as in scientific publications. Political parties strive to maximise their influence over all education-related fields, which is most evident in pre-election periods. Most often, they differ in their views towards the following issues regarding education:

- status of non-public education,
- management of the educational system (flexible vs. bureaucratic; centralised vs. decentralised),
- scope of reforms and innovations in education,
- financial safety measures regarding education and upbringing costs,
- salary levels and range of pedagogical autonomy of teachers,
- core and the scope of social, moral and religious education in the public sector,
- the role of school in education and raising children and young people,
- the role of local authorities in school reforms (school boards, parents' boards, students' councils, teachers' boards; educational, students' and parents' NGOs, etc.),
- trade unions: their role and influence on education,
- temporal and structural framework of public education (time when compulsory education begins, length of education, structure of the educational system, educational strategies/plans, etc.),

- the program of general and vocational education (reforms of curriculum content of education and upbringing),
- systems of enforcing and maintaining quality of education (standards, internal and external exams, systems of evaluation and selection, etc.),
- economic necessities, economic problems of the country, international political polarisation and global changes in economy which should be solved with the help of education,
- problems of equality and inequality of various kinds (e.g., school access, gender, religion, etc.),
- ways of encouraging learners to study (directive, involving giving orders, authoritarian vs. non-directive, supportive, based on authority of another person, etc.).

One of the indicators of the structural violence embedded in the educational system are pedagogical activities which have been contaminated by political motivations.

> Their politicisation means making education an integral part of a network of structured power relations which rationalise the social being and determine one's area of participation in it:
> - an individual as a free/dependent agent;
> - the society as an amalgam of antagonistic/co-operating groups;
> - law as a body of regulations (already operative or underway);
> - the state as a facilitating/restricting regulator;
> - knowledge as an instrument/evaluator;
> - ideology as an expression of interests/rules of participation (Rutkowiak, 2004, p. 34).

The structural violence generated by the political environment surrounding school is most evident when it tightens its grip on one-sided penetration of the educational process. This is when education begins to stand for a set of particular qualities, defines the time and space of educational process, conditions evaluating of student's performance, and turns them into objects of social engineering.

The latter is achieved by educational instruments (mainly the language of pedagogy, its institutions, people, activities, and symbols) – now implemented to convince students about the exceptional merits of the proposed system of comprehending social being as well as the man's role in the society. One is expected to accept this programme and reject alternative modes to envision the social order (Rutkowiak, 2004, p. 25).

An outstanding German existentialist philosopher Karl Jaspers claimed that "politics plays between two poles: possible violence and free coexistence" (Rutkowiak, 2004, p. 39). Respectively, we can look at school education with regard to how it plays between the two poles of the following relations: pedagogical supervision – school managers, teachers – school manager, teachers – parents or

teachers – students. According to H. Arendt "the paradox of politics inscribes into a rectangular structure: with the horizontal bond of desired coexistence and the vertical hierarchy of using violence." (Rutkowiak, 2004, p. 39). Similarly, the official programs of educational politics persuade us to accept the great need for creating social (pro-social) attitudes in schools; on the other hand, politicians who vote on education law deliberately create provisions which limit the spectrum of the proposed changes. They do so in order to uphold the status quo which allows higher authorities to govern school in the authoritarian model and produce fake symptoms of democratic processes.

Indeed, the pedagogy in a democratic society neglects its duty of exercising vigilance towards unstable power structures. The outcome of this is not the rationality of coexistence, but irrationality of violence. We falsely assume that democracy on its own is able to so-to-speak spontaneously solve educational problems by using political mechanisms of power, their forms and procedures – only because the common good is at stake. The negative outcomes of contaminating democracy with politics are not easy to prevent. However, in a society that is truly democratic, 'politicality' stands for being able to take into account a spectrum of manifold solutions. This spectrum, though, does not leave any space for politicisation of one's activities. "The political forces of certain groups are likely to be balanced by arguments of their opponents, and decisions are made in a conciliatory manner. A democratic arrangement is one in which immanent political mechanisms are 'naturally' prone to the social engagement of pedagogy by letting it participate in the political realm. These mechanisms – also naturally – play down the effects of politicisation, or even eliminate that category from the area of thinking about pedagogy." (Rutkowiak, 2004, p. 38).

In a mono-centric society, the politicisation of pedagogy becomes most evident when the latter gets instrumentally connected to a dominant ideology. Its politicality, on the other hand, is visible when the system acknowledges social and historical nature of pedagogy. Within the mono-centric system, two adversary and ideological models of pedagogy are contrasted: one is officially adopted and promoted; the other is viewed as oppositional and humanist. The totalitarian state encourages the over-use of power on every step in school management: this unfortunately translates onto the toxic attitude of some of the teachers towards students, or even parents. According to a belief which has been widely accepted by educational communities, despite the fact that it is contradictory to the principles of democracy, the power relations between educational authorities and school executives, executives and teachers, teachers and students and their parents must all be based on the formal authority of higher rank-subjects, whereas authority itself requires a given degree of subjection and servitude. One should remember, however, that an authoritarian society is only able to produce authority-subjected individuals.

This state of affairs was criticised years ago by Janusz Korczak, a precursor of humanist education, who wrote: "We are unable to change our lives as adults, as we ourselves have been raised in captivity; as long as we are in chains, we will not be able to give freedom to the child." (Korczak, 1984, p. 187). The idea was that those in charge of education should first learn about the dialectics of freedom and coercion in order to create greater possibilities for empowering and emancipation of the social life. The transformation of school from a state-governed institution into public one (in other words: from political and administrative terror – which by the way has ruled this country for so many years – into a public and social institution) was based as if on 'forcing' teachers and parents to engage in the process of contemplating themselves and learning the principles of democracy and freedom.

One of the necessary measures to transform the school system into a democratic environment where one learns about social responsibility issues is to socialise it and open it to democratic processes in need. By means of rank-and-file initiatives, self-governing may gradually gain control over school authorities who should never exercise power in the absolutist manner and respect the basic rights of all subjects involved in education. As early as at the turn of the 1980s an outstanding pedagogue Bogdan Nawroczyński pointed out to two very simple and clear truths regarding pedagogy: 1) each pedagogic action involves elements of freedom and coercion; 2) there are multiple kinds of freedom and coercion in education which contradict one another (Nawroczyński, 1987, p. 279). Due to an oversimplification of this pedagogical statement, the following conclusions have been drawn: there is only one kind of freedom in education, so-called negative freedom, i.e. being free from all kinds of coercion, prohibitions, and necessities (barbarian chaos, anarchy), as well as one kind of coercion, i.e. negative coercion: mechanical training, physical oppression, mistreating the student or using one instrumentally for various purposes. In fact, both perspectives have nothing in common with a proper education; at times, though, they are wilfully used with no other intention but to undermine the very principles of education in all its aspects.

Meanwhile, the field of education appears to be an ideal structure (containing human people and material objects) to be used to consolidate the position of those in charge of it. Likely to become abused, it also poses challenges to politicians. In this respect, the role of the media, the fourth power, is often unfortunately forgotten; one should, however, remember that media representatives never represent one but multiple political leanings and ideologies and they are bound to become more or less involved in the politics, either by cooperating with the authorities or joining the oppositional forces. When media present the school only in negative light of crime-inducing cases (drugs, physical abuse, pathological behaviours of teachers or students, etc.), they start up the wheel of the self-confirming judgment and encourage the rest of the society to think alike.

Symbolic factors – school's culture in broader context

The public discourse on education in school is governed by demagogical thinking, misrepresentation of facts and imputing to political antagonists claims they have never made: it is impossible to verify the facts, nonetheless they sound like true arguments. However, the essence of the ideological struggle is not a mere fight over arguments. What is at real stake is the elimination at all costs of those who threaten one's own goals which only matter. The demagogical thinking seeks broader social support, hence populist slogans (e.g. stress-free, permissive, or individualistic) and nicely ringing lies. No effort is required to identify them and a deeper probing into the manner they divided the world along black-and-white categories is not welcome. But the exponents of demagogical thinking do not waste time on colour tones, as their sole objective is to target their enemy (it may be a personal enemy, such as creators, experts, scientists and/or an idea or theory which they publish or present). As soon as it is accomplished, they provoke further hostilities and unrest as the enemy's mere existence becomes unacceptable, therefore all of its aspects should be removed or excluded.

The prevailing school system culture which is responsible for provoking aggression against students and teachers may therefore be called with Neil Postman's term a culture of 'technopoly'. The latter is defined by the following set of characteristics: it is a system dominated by bureaucracy, in which social and moral problems are only (or predominantly) tackled by means of technical solutions; a system in which performance in school and education is reduced to its productivity, precision and objectivity. In the culture of technopoly the categories of good and evil are bound to disappear as their root is in the universe of moral values and as such they cannot be adequately measured, therefore one cannot regard them as objective. "The priests of technopoly call a sin a 'social deviation' – a term taken from the field of the statistics; evil is now a 'psycho-pathology' – a medical term in turn." (Postman, 1995, p. 110).

The technopoly seeks its authority in the idea of statistical objectivity, therefore its essential features are: reification, i.e. substituting a real thing for an abstract idea – pedagogues start to believe that a child is indeed a thing, an object which can be localised and measured according to scientific procedures; and classification, i.e. ordering people by giving them a place within the rank. The best such criterion is the number. "If we order people according to their intelligence, not only do we assume that intelligence is a thing, but also a simple thing, one which can be localised somewhere within the brain and given an adequate number. It is as if the essence of beauty was the exact size of female breasts." (Postman, 1995, p. 156). According to Postman, the technique has created new modes of comprehending the reality. For example, a common practice of evaluating student work by giving it

a number or letter proves they have become a tool, part of technology. Ascribing a number value to human thought has become quite large a step in constructing the mathematical conception of reality.

If we do not find anything improper in this phenomenon, it is because our minds have already been conditioned by the number technology and we perceive the world according to respective categories. Meanwhile, each tool has been based on a set of ideological presumptions, predispositions for creating a certain world image, with one attitude and meaning being privileged over the others.

The new evaluation technology does not add or distract anything; it simply creates an entirely new picture. Since according to Taylor (1911), the main goal of all human work and thought is their productivity, the process has heavily been influenced by the principles of the scientific management of human resources. When they were transferred onto the field of education, gaining knowledge has become measurable as a product of one's educational performance evaluated in terms of its productivity. The tool to provide objective information about the student's achievements and confirm the very possibility of exact estimating one's capacities was the grade. In the words of M. Foucault, the learning people have become 'countable individuals'.

According to the assumptions of the technopoly, having trust in human judgement or opinions is incorrect as they remain inaccurate and ambiguous. What cannot be measured, either does not exist, or is of no value. By transferring the aforementioned system onto the sphere of education, education specialists and proponents of technocratic assumptions confirmed to the following: personal opinions and individual evaluations of performance in learning and conducting educational process by students and teachers, respectively, have now been replaced by the system of grades awarded by a body of supervisors (controllers) on principles of regulations, rules, and norms. In the result of this process, teachers have been released from thinking and accepting responsibility for it; it turn, the system has now been made to think in their place. "It is a pivotal movement whose consequence has been a conviction that technique in all of its kinds can think for us. It is one of the main assumptions of the technopoly." (Postman, 1995, p. 65).

Due to the persistence of this attitude, we continue to lose trust in people and their personal systems of beliefs and feelings. The technical tool that in the field of education "has been granted its own regulatory life are all kinds of tests. Technopoly has not accepted any of the subjective forms of knowledge; they must seek confirmation in tests administered by specialists. Their goal is to eliminate ambiguities and doubts. They tell us that 136 collected points stand for having more brains than 104 points." (Postman, 1995, p. 113). One of the aftermaths of trust in the magic of numbers and tests is the loss of trust in human judgment and subjectivity. Technopoly gives priority to the exact knowledge

over the true one, and sees its enemy in the diversity, complexity, ambiguity of human judgments and behaviours.

This perfectly fits into the class system dominating in the worldwide education, due to which, the same educational curriculum may consistently be applied. The system assumes the same factors are present: participants, time of education, time units; the content of the curriculum is divided into carefully planned bits and pieces; its purpose is to reach an imposed goal (e.g. the end of the academic year). "Therefore, not only is it the time when planning is possible; the time itself becomes a project – it is to lead to something other than it is now, only to reach the state from where on it will stay its very self." (Bauman, 1995, p. 18).

In modernism, one of the key ways to sustain this entire image and its coherence is to neutralise all kinds of renegades who dear to think and act according to other principles. This may be achieved either through a direct attack, or by picturing them as being 'deviant', 'aberrated', 'nonconformist', or demonstrate symptoms of 'social pathology', 'social maladjustment', etc. However, at this point modernism shows its two-faced attitude: on the one hand, it pictures education as a process of becoming civilised, human, one that transcends undesired and coarse elements; on the other hand, it remains silent about the violence it itself legitimises by calling it a positive discrimination. The modernity does not tell us then that "what to one is a civilised process, to the other is a strategy of subjugation and enslavement; it does not tell us the meaning of the process of civilisation is not so much **the elimination** of violence but rather its **redistribution**." (Bauman, 1995, p. 35). Accordingly, educational authorities would wish to keep their monopoly on the legal use of violence in the field of state-owned education just to ensure its structure and sustain illusions of its civilised nature (by observance of law and protecting public order).

The a priori assumption that the teacher, as if by definition, always is a subject towards the pupil, who in turn is the object of his educational efforts, has brought on many grave consequences as it has put the right to decide of students' fate in the hands of their teachers who provided pupils with one and only-valid interpretations. This creates the adiaphorisation effect, in other words: "positioning one's actions or their objects as morally neutral and independent of evaluation with regard of moral categories" (Bauman, 1995, p. 45). What follows is the exclusion of certain types of people (in this case, children and young people in the process of education) from the assemblage of moral subjects, and by that separating one's deeds from moral evaluation. Things that are permissible to certain people are prohibited to others.

Teachers' milieu fights the moral evaluation of their own deeds on the same terms as students'. By enhancing the procedural discipline over their pupils and strengthening their own peer-to-peer loyalty, the teachers turn these two instruments into the superior or even self-sufficient indicators of moral conduct. Due to the organizational structure of a school, the power is concentrated in the hands of those who have it (school manager, teachers, administration) while others are subjected to it (certain teachers, students, parents, certain administration workers). The power itself works along two axes: the horizontal one stands for a spectrum of educational problems; the vertical one means it is concentrated in the hands of a fairly limited number of people. In this structure the school manager stands for domination, the teacher for subjection. In another configuration: the teacher stands for power to which the student must subject. This therefore means that dealing with power may on one hand be based on fear of those who do not have it or, on the other hand, on aggression which targets those outside the direct circle of power (outside the executive management).

Within power relations which had been established in this manner only few have a licence to act wilfully (school authorities and people in their circle), the power itself is therefore alienated. Others are perceived as worse (e.g. teachers are not permitted to fraternize with their supervisors, even less so with school administration workers). On the other hand, the participation of opinion-forming and controlling structures (school board, teachers' board, parents' board) in exercising authority rather than merely controlling its results is make-believe and signifies demoralisation of those structures. Further harm is inflicted by privileging some of their members and discriminating against others outside the circle of power in the community.

In a school managed according to the authoritative model, the priority is given to the masculine values, despite the fact that large amount of women equally become their exponents, e.g. domination. The process of reification – in which people are treated like objects, not persons – is accompanied by a high degree of violence and dependence, e.g. using teachers, psychical harassing children as weaker individuals. This is the result of the long-present and time-honoured imaginations that have been served to sustain the relations of dominance and subordination. The authority of the teacher who represents the power and values, while the pupil stands for the subjected part is yet another phenomenon to prolong the legalism of educational authorities. The authority "is a certain feature immanent to a person or, relatively, an institution, to which other people, institutions and social groups become more or less ideally subjected." (Rowid, 1957, p. 365). The educational praxis confirms that a clearly dominating model of authority in schools is the one which is at hand in case the teacher has not succeeded in becoming student's guide or friend. However, in the developed democratic societies, teachers not only observe the students' right to freedom, they also refer this principle to themselves, despite holding important educational functions laid on them by the estate or nation. Even authorities

see in them free individuals who by means of nature and/or their former education, have become masters of one's true thoughts and deeds – a true inspiration for their students.

Subject-related factors

In the course of our investigation of toxic social relations in school, we also wish to pose questions about the source of broadly understood aggression and contempt for other individuals. We also seek to analyse instances in which pedagogues violate humanist values. No doubt, a toxic system hurts people (in particular children, elderly persons, sick and impaired individuals), it disrespects abiding legal regulations and universal values, and, by doing so, it violates the very dignity of the human being. This system is stricken by a disease. By encouraging negative attitudes, or even training people in perpetrating hostile behaviours, it exposes them to at least one sort of damage: moral, social, physical, and psychic which, in turn, bring negative consequences for an individual development as well as social coexistence.

Vast research data confirms that students perceive their daily life in school as permeated by violence. This may be physical violence (despite the fact it is prohibited), as well as psychical one (violence in 'white gloves'). The latter can be done in form of insults, blackmailing, threats, labelling, belittling one's problems, public accusations, verbal aggression, etc. Even partial investigations in the early 1990s confirmed that the most common practices due to which student's dignity was violated included: teachers' revenge (83% of cases), a will to humiliate (82%), viciousness (79%), ridiculing (71%) as well as an unjust evaluation of academic performance (67%) (Dziecko i jego prawa, 1992, p. 74). In these cases teacher aggression and hostility were either deliberate or unintentional (affective). In both cases they caused great harm.

The research by Wojciech Muzyka and Jadwiga Bińczycka, whose primary goal was an analysis of the mentality of the Polish teacher in regard to the educational offers of Polish schools, confirmed such unethical attitudes of teachers. It demonstrated that teachers were not able to adapt to the deep and fast changing school reality and that school institutions were didactically out-of-date as well as psychically and socially dehumanised. The violence was perpetrated among other forms in intrigues, lies, blackmail, and manipulation (according to students, on a number of occasions their teacher acted out in a manner that was ridiculous and unworthy of students' attention). Also, teachers guarded discipline in school by forcing students to observe rules of school behaviour (70,5%), to subordinate

unconditionally to teachers (49,2%), and to respect them (21,3%). In the latter case, they did acknowledge the fact that the matter of being respected is directly linked to one's own actions, being perceived as trustworthy and therefore enjoying greater esteem (Nauczyciel – uczeń, 1996). Further on, the analysis of students' dreams about school showed their unconscious aggression and hostility towards some teachers in the form of common revenge fantasies: "I would break his bones and throw them to dogs; I would set up a camp and lock up all the teachers; I would let the mob take care of him; I would spill valerian in front of his house and then watch all cats from neighbourhood come by." (Nauczyciel – uczeń, 1996, p. 47). We can therefore agree that school has become a site of structured violence perpetrated by some of the teachers against students and that school efforts to eliminate violence from its pedagogical activities saw the dead end. Upon acquiring those research results, researchers started to focus on the following set of issues regarding children's dignity: its violations in didactic situations as well as in after-class activities and its protection in the name of statutory values in the Polish education, including humanist and Christian values. The result of the departure from the path of common control and self-regulation in the area of social life is always the acceptance and consolidation of evil which permeates human relations, destroying the fruits of pedagogical efforts and prevents a contemporary educational system from abandoning the state of its permanent crisis.

The research work conducted under my supervision in 2003 on how students of one of the upper-secondary schools in the Lodz Voivodeship perceived school indicated that only 32% of them made an informed decision to continue education in this school by taking into account their own personal interests, wish to fulfil their future plans, gain education, or were motivated by a different nature of this school in comparison to a traditional comprehensive high school. As much as 26,6% felt they were forced to attend the school or had no other option. Most of them displayed very negative emotion about going to school: negative tension (50%), aversion (34,7%), a will to escape (30,6%), boredom (39,6%), and discontent (23,5%). The happiness about meeting up with peers was a positive aspect mentioned most often (78.6%). An ideal student was perceived as one who is friendly (25%), hard-working (17%), diligent (15%), with good grades (13%), systematic (12%), wise and helpful (11,2% each) (Kulig, 2003).

A particularly worrying fact is that when they were asked: "Are teachers interested in you and your problems?", more than the half of the interviewees (56,1%) answered in the negative. Also, students did not perceive themselves as ones who may influence the life in school and classroom. Almost 70% of the interviewed confirmed their influence on what is happening in the class was limited (48%), or non-existent (21,4%). The perplexing result was that according to 22,4% of students, teachers used physical punishment, predominantly slapping (8,2%), forcing students to clean sanitary equipment (5,1%) or kicking them (3,1%). In the opinion of the majority of students a greater focus should be

given in school to building up the feelings of self-believe in students in their capacities (90,8%), teaching a foreign language so they become fluent in it (84,7%) as well as creating equal opportunities for students of different social backgrounds at the beginning of their lives (83,7%). School's important task was also to provide students with job opportunities once they graduate (80,6%), develop social solidarity and the will to help one another (78,6%), shape personal interests (78,6%) and social skills (77,6%). The least important goals were shaping one's character and personal culture (74,5%), developing one's self-sufficiency and abilities to create initiatives (74,5%) as well as providing high-standard general education (53,1%) (Kulig, 2003).

Contemporary Polish school communities only seemingly demonstrate solidarity in their ranks; they are permeated by feelings of fear and coercion, rather than a union of individual consciences, the authenticity of action, good will, professionalism and the union of people's hearts (Śliwerski, 1996). Teachers and school managers cannot come to terms with democratic ideas penetrating the school territory believing that school vocation lies somewhere else. Doing so they are not in fact responsible school authorities. Student matters are decided without including students in making those decisions (about them, without them) and parents, who are the most important spokesmen of their children's needs and interests, are also belittled; their say is limited except for instances in which by their consent the authorities engage in saving school from institutional destitute and infrastructural poverty. Teachers are not interested in self-governing of their work group and they are naïve believing their interests are going to be taken care of by trade unions (Śliwerski, 2002a).

The reasons for which ethical issues were not to become an indicator of one's ability to work as teacher are unknown. Despite the fact that teacher's actions may leave negative and relatively long-lasting traces on their pupils' personality, it continues to escape being controlled or opinionated by outside entities (public opinion). Such state of affairs creates a situation in which a teacher is not personally responsible (in the legal sense) for his actions except for a case in which commonly accepted legal norms (e.g. a breach of bodily integrity) are violated. How, therefore, is one to enforce on a pedagogue love, respect, sense of tact, good will, empathy, true engagement in solving the problems of his pupils, as the rules of the teacher's conduct are not subject to any legal procedures?

The student's physical and social development, as opposed to that of the teacher, is less advanced. Similarly to a medical patient dependent on their doctor, a student remains practically helpless and almost entirely relies on the good will and kindness of their guardians. Being a child, one is subject to law, however, one cannot testify in one's own case or fight for its rights. A child is bound to the acquiescence of the parents or institutional guardians who by virtue of law are in position of representing child's interests. However, do the adults engage in any kind of intervention? It depends

on their good will, competence and civil courage. School is a toxic institution struck by a moral disease; its agents infect individuals who become unable to accept and observe social and ethical norms and stimulate an autonomous development. Such a system carries in itself the brand of moral evil despite the fact that in statutory regulations it presumes to make the good its ultimate goal.

The devastating results of those actions for the brains of young people can be very severe. It is difficult to estimate them in terms of direct and moral responsibility for causing them. Teacher's metier, just like being a parent, is a special phenomenon: it seems faulty solutions and harmful actions committed by at least some of teachers are not only tolerated by the public; also, no one is being forced to take responsibility for them as they do not produce any 'visible wounds'. Institutional pedagogues enjoy the right to be in a way untouchable: although the consequence of their actions may produce deep, albeit invisible, wounds in the psychic structures of the pupils, nevertheless, teachers' responsibility is only of a subjective nature (being responsible before oneself), which in fact means it is none. If it happens that a teacher is entirely deprived of the sense of moral sensitivity, this practically stands for granting oneself the privilege of being unaccountable. The school becomes an unsupervised no-man's land and is bound to carry on in the midst of coincidental incidents and with each party accidentally snatching bites and pieces of (pseudo)liberty and opportunities to become significant and existentially fulfilled.

According to Aleksander Kamiński, an important indicator of school's democracy is the attitude of its executives towards internal critique and opposition. If they are open and sensitive about it and rationally consider the legitimacy of the critical claims, without attempting to extinguish or obliterate them before the eyes of the outside school audience, there is hope for justice and introduction of necessary amendments.

In democratic school institutions, such qualities of pedagogues, students and parents as their honesty and civil courage in voicing their separate opinions are deeply appreciated. Also, there are no dangers anyone is going to be threatened by human bad will. In social sense, educational subjects in school include not only school authorities and teachers, but all agents who are involved in it. School institution is a local partnership based on involvement of all its subjects in the process of supporting students, where each has its own legally prescribed autonomous area of operation and is not subject to other higher-rank structures. A true value of democracy is that community itself generates the power, not outside factors. A school in the decentralised system is entitled to possess its individual, local rights and its own organisation of its own modus operandi.

It should be based on the educational dialogue founded on the bilateral educational attitude and the recognition of great effectiveness produced by collective education; in the latter, not only an educator but an entire team is dedicated to observance of certain norms and rules of conduct.

Three worlds of three various communities are structurally positioned in order to exist for each other. In reality, they function apart, or often against one another. If democracy does not exist in the outside world, why should it prevail in school? It is connected to a control of the means by which violence is perpetrated, and current authorities in the department of education do not agree with that. Meanwhile, fixing school operations is both necessary and feasible. Otherwise, public school is always going to be an object of both hidden and manifested (most often in the media) critique. School system that avoids changes is bound to stay a dramatic territory which creates the existential pain of students, parents, and teachers. One of the measures to help school find its grounds in a real community is a school board; it should be called into being by parents, teachers and students. This guarantees that all parts involved in the process will be fully balanced by gaining a full subjective standing, unconstrained possibilities to participate in decision making process, and opportunities to engage in all educational processes, broadly understood. School is an ideal site in which one can learn, discover and monitor various incidents (Śliwerski, 2002b). Every community can use it in order to solve its problems in a respectful and appropriate way. It is precisely this 'good space' in which stopping the process of all despicability or toxicity in mutual relations is possible.

School has sense only when it becomes an environment of mutual and authentic interest in one another, care for each other, and true hardship. In each case when the engagement in the process of education is only make-believe, even the best statutory regulations, statutes and systems of individual gratifications for students and teachers, one cannot expect a real change in attitude take place. Such a change requires not only a direct involvement, empathy but as well acting in compliance to prevailing norms and values. Unfortunately, the media seem to be interested mostly in cases which due to the extreme applied by teachers seem to be effective; however, they are not always sound. Their effectiveness may be an outcome of particular circumstances conditioning the behaviour of their students, which require a particular intervention, a reaction, challenging them with a certain attitude. Meanwhile, standard solutions to difficult problems do not exist in education and each pedagogue is obliged to carefully choose one that is the best, confront the causes of a given situation, its course, and possible consequences. In doing so he should use personal experience and knowledge (hopefully it is great and versatile) concerning students of a given age and their developmental level, but also with a feeling of the situation, a sense of personal tack and moral sensitivity. Time is an important factor, most often it is lacking in order to prepare oneself to deal with a situation in a calm and considerate manner.

A pedagogue who works in school not only for financial gratification but who wishes to act with a greater self-reflection and to combine the power and value of his actions with their efficacy for common good, does not require any declarations by the minister or department in order to engage in the process of education making students sensitive to certain ideas. The only thing he should really do is to read into a set of values, feelings, presumptions and hopes which all are in him embedded in order to incorporate them into every day practice in school. The teacher educates his students also through himself; he as well becomes responsible for how much aggression and violence there is in school.

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