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DEVELOPING TRANSFERABLE COMPETENCES OF STUDENTS – THE SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY AND CHALLENGES OF FUTURE EDUCATION*

Introduction: In contemporary education systems around the world, there is a shift from learning of the knowledge to education focused on acquiring skills that are useful in everyday life and that can be used in a variety of out-of-school settings. These are transferable skills. As such contemporary system, the Polish education also should focus on teaching the strategies for implementing the core curriculum thus to enable the students to develop their transferable resources and skills.
Research Aim: The aim of the article is to redefine the goals of Polish education in the light of the assumptions of the concept of self-determination. This theory describes the optimal conditions for the development of intrinsic motivation. The authors of the article place transferable competences of students at the centre of the education and upbringing process.
Evidence-based Facts: The described functions of education, based on the current legal acts, are focused on supporting students in coping with life problems in addition to referring to the cognitive sphere. In theory, thus the legal foundation of Polish education is quite well prepared for the implementation of the idea of developing transferable skills. The difficulty lies in developing effective strategies for these provisions. Such example solutions are provided in the article.
Summary: In addition to analyses relating to specific provisions of the education law, the article contains examples of good practices presenting the ways of using the content of the core curriculum to develop students' knowledge and their transferable competences in parallel.

Keywords: transferable skills, self-determination theory, education, intrinsic motivation.

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INTRODUCTION

The aims of education and upbringing have been gradually changing along with the changing living conditions and requirements of employers on the labour market. Currently, education systems shift from teaching focused on gaining knowledge to education aimed at acquiring skills useful in everyday life. One of the fundamental demands of current education systems and future education is the school's development of transferable skills and competences (see Justice, Rice, and Warry, 2009; Stevens and Miretzky, 2014), whose aim is to optimally adapt the students to their environment, giving them well-being both in the professional and general-life layers (a sense of happiness, cf. Sternberg, 2010). In order to meet such a challenge, the Polish teaching system should also focus on strategies to implement the core curriculum, enabling to shape students' transferable skills.

RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTION

The aim of the research was to identify an effective strategy for developing students' transferable skills in the school environment, at the same time, taking into account the possibility of implementing subject-related issues (e.g. Polish language, mathematics or history), described in the core curriculum. For this purpose, a review of the literature and evidence from educational research focused on the following research questions:

1. What are the functions of transferable resources in the context of learning and in relation to the out-of-school functioning of students?
2. How does the self-determination theory (SDT) concept explain the good (optimal) functioning of students in the school environment?
3. What are the possibilities of implementing the SDT concept in designing an educational environment fostering students' transferable skills?

EVIDENCED-BASED REVIEW

The goals of contemporary education. The foundation of each education model is the goal for which activities are planned and the appropriate material and human resources are collected. Although most parents generate their private expectations towards the school and the aims of education, they understand exactly those that are in line with these expectations, at the level of generally applicable legislation the basic tasks of the education system are precisely described. It is worth recalling understanding that the Polish school has been already formally prepared to shape transferable skills and the difficulty has been related to the implementation of these records (Knopik, 2018). Educational law is a basic document outlining

the organizational framework of the Polish education system. Article 1 of this Act (Journal of Laws of 2017, item 59) specifies what this system provides.

The tasks and goals are related to the broadly understood current and future activity of students in various areas of functioning (technology, culture and art, social life, career). It should be emphasised that the mentioned provisions underline the need for a dynamic and flexible understanding of education objectives, as they are partly dependent on the changing requirements of the labour market (Dylak, 2013; Klus-Stańska, 2015). Transferable skills refer to the core curriculum of general education for primary school in Poland (dated on 14 February 2017).

Further analysis of documentation in the field of education law shows, however, that at the operational level, when the Ministry of Education indicates specific teaching objectives for particular subjects, this vision has been pushed to the side. In the expanded list of the subject teaching contents, it has been quite difficult to find those educational functions that have been defined in the preamble to the core curriculum (Klus-Stańska and Nowicka, 2014). Perhaps the general goals should be a constant perspective of education and upbringing regardless of the school subject taught by the teacher. It would require reflection, indicating the various possibilities of shaping these skills, both in the content layer of the module, and the didactic methods used, as well as building constructive school relationships with external entities (cf. Michalak, 2014; Zając, 2013).

The concept of transferable resources in education. The changing nature of work in the digital and information era entails the need to redefine the learning process and its goals. One can notice a gradual transition from teaching to learning with an emphasis on students' activity in this process (*student-centred learning* – see Justice et al., 2009). In previous concepts of education, the assumption was made that in a knowledge-oriented learning model, some important skills useful in life and work would emerge as a by-product of knowledge-based learning. However, it turns out that this approach, assuming the transfer of knowledge and skills from one field to another, has not been realistic in practice. Employers often report a lack of transferable skills in young, educated people undertaking professional work (Shah, 2013). On the other hand, in the program assumptions of the European Parliament of the EU (see Official Journal EU – Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council 2006/962/EC) and other global educational regulations (The Partnership for 21st Century Skills – cf. Van Roekel, 2001), the most important in the lifelong learning process arethe following skills: communication, cooperation, critical thinking and creativity. They have been also called "soft skills", often neglected in the school education (Knopik, 2018).

Transferable competences could be revealed when the previous knowledge and skills influence the way of acquiring new competences (Justice et al., 2009). This transfer consists in the ability to use resources acquired in one context in new sit-

uations. In the literature on the topic (Perkins and Salomon, 1989) there has been a distinction between close/near and distant/far transfers. Near transfer occurs when both contexts are similar, such as driving a car and then using this ability to drive another car. Far transfer refers to more diverse contexts, such as the use of cooperation skills gained during sport training in work situations in a team (Justice et al., 2009).

In other publications (Billing, 2007), there has been also a differentiation of automatic, direct application of frequently repeated skills in similar situations (*low--road transfer*) and requiring more thoughtful use of metacognitive skills in situations distant from those in which knowledge was acquired (*high-way transfer*). Problem-solving skills, critical, logical and analytical thinking can be transferable resources of the "high-way" level, if they are developed and repeatedly practiced in different situational contexts.

Transferable resources depend on two types of factors: a) individual (target orientation, development of internal motivation, autonomy in action, sense of agency, and competence – see Deci and Ryan, 2008) and b) environmental (supervision, feedback, and teaching style – Gardner and Korth, 1997). This entails the fact that education conducive to the development of transferable resources and competences should be characterized by teaching focused on a student who has been as an active participant in the process. Therefore, the goal of modern education should be to develop personal transferable skills of students (Shah, 2013). It is worth emphasizing that learning transferable skills is in itself a skill that requires learning in the process of specific learning, not innate or developed when acquiring theoretical knowledge (Stevens and Miretzky, 2014). There are three stages of learning the ability to apply knowledge and competences in a transferable way (Stevens and Miretzky, 2014; Smekalova, Noom, and Slavik, 2016). In the *first phase*, called the "stage of acquiring skills", students learn new strategies and practice them. Then, in the *second phase*, called the "retention stage", they receive feedback about the quality of performance, mistakes made and the possibilities to avoid them the next time. In the *last phase*, called the "transfer phase", students have the opportunity to apply their skills in new situations and problems that are different and varied, but can be solved using the techniques they have trained. In some studies (Pellegrino, 2012), transferable skills are called "deeper learning", defined as a process in which the student acquires the competence to transfer and apply to new circumstances what s/he has learned in the conditions of school education.

Transferable skills are grouped into three categories (Gardner and Korth, 1997; Pellegrino, 2012; Sawin, 2004): 1) *cognitive* – including critical thinking, reasoning, analyzing and synthesizing, adopting different perspectives for perceiving phenomena, etc., 2) *intrapersonal* – including self-management, independence, personal resource management, setting goals and determining the ways to achieve them, emotional competences and coping strategies in difficult situations, resistance to

failures, understanding own emotions, etc., 3) *interpersonal* – including social relationships, the ability to communicate with others, cooperation, implementation of skills in a group, dynamic assumption of roles in a team, negotiating, resolving disputes, etc.

An environment fostering the optimal development of students – the self--determination theory. The results of numerous studies conducted in several previous decades (see review – Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, and Ryan, 1991), as well as observations of the effectiveness of education in everyday practice, show that students convinced of their competence, independence and belonging to the group, motivated internally, with teachers who support and respect their emotions and their need for autonomy, gain much greater and more tangible benefits of education than students whose teachers use external reinforcement and less educated methods to meet the universal psychological needs of human being. According to Deci and Ryan (2008), these universal needs include: a) the need for independence and autonomy, b) the need to acquire skills and feel competent; and c) the need for social belonging. Creating an environment conducive to the optimal development of students remains a constant task of pedagogy and psychology, upbringing and teaching (Liu, Wang, and Ryan, 2016).

The self-determination theory (SDT), developed in the 1980s by Ryan and Deci (1985), became the conceptual framework for this challenge. Since then, the concept has been used in explaining mechanisms of behaviour and models of interactions in various areas of human functioning, such as education, sport, religion, health, or psychotherapy. Its main assumptions concern the extent to which the social environment satisfies three universal psychological needs: 1) independence (autonomy), 2) skills (competence) and 3) affiliations (relatedness). This satisfaction has been related to behavioural regulation, taking into account internal intentions (and internal motivation) and external behaviour control (and external motivation) (Deci and Ryan, 2000; 2002a; 2002b; 2008; 2012). An environment conducive to optimal human development has been characterized by a lower degree of control, and a greater support for autonomy and independence in acquiring new skills shaped as part of social interactions (Kaplan, 2018). The attitude towards satisfying these needs, both by parents and teachers, favours the development of the internal motivation of the child, as well as her/his self-determination and joy of self-efficacy in many areas of life and in various everyday situations.

The results of many studies show correlations, illustrating how meeting these needs cause a number of positive and desirable consequences. Internally motivated students: 1) achieve higher school grades (Noels, Pelletier, Clement, and Vallerand, 2000; Nguyen and Deci, 2016; Oga-Baldwin, Nakata, Parker, and Ryan, 2017); 2) have a higher self-esteem (Orsini, Binnie, and Tricio, 2018); 3) better understand the essence and meaning of what they learn at school (Gagne and Deci, 2005); 4) have higher social competences (Reeve, 2002); 5) display higher adaptability to

changing conditions and new situations (Niemiec and Ryan, 2009); 6) show higher self-awareness and emotional competence (Grolnick, Deci, and Ryan, 1997).

It might be worth paying attention to the extensive typology of motivation, proposed by Ryan and Deci (2000a; 2000b), and verified many times by different researchers (Trenshaw, Revelo, Earl, and Herman, 2016; Vallerand, 2001; Vansteenkiste, Lens, and Deci, 2006). According to Ryan and Deci (1991; 2000a), internally motivated behaviours such as building a tower of blocks for the pleasure of building, reading a book for reading pleasure, are prototypes of self-determination and are innate, as seen in spontaneous behaviour of children in infancy. Externally motivated behaviours are inherently instrumental, that is, they are like tools, instruments for achieving a goal. Early research on these two types of motivation pointed to their opposite nature, which suggested that behaviours guided by an external motive do not have much in common with self-determination. Relatively recent studies have revealed that there are several types of externally motivated behaviours that vary in the degree to which they represent instrumentally controlled activities. Some of them may be associated with the possibility of self-determination. Motivation types distinguished in this category are: 1) external, 2) introjected, 3) identified, and 4) integrated.

External regulation occurs when the student performs tasks in order to obtain praise from the teacher or to avoid punishment. This is the least self-determining form of external behavioural motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000b). Accepting the principle because it is necessary (since the teacher requires, because parents asked) is the basis for introjected behaviour. Introjected behaviours are not considered self-determining (Ryan and Deci, 2003), because the motives that guide the student are not integrated with it. A student motivated in this way will avoid being late to the lesson or receiving a low grade because of the reluctance to feel guilty as a consequence of those behaviours or deterioration of their own image and lowering self-esteem. Therefore, s/he does not identify her/himself with regulation, so it is not a part of her/his self. The motive of action still remains instrumental. In the identified regulation (Deci et al., 1991), a person identifies her/himself with behaviour and accepts the process of her/his control, which becomes, to a much greater extent, part of her/his self-image. As a consequence, the student performs a task much more willingly and more freely. The behaviours regulated in this way are treated as much more independent, autonomous and self-determining. Identification gives a greater sense of choice and will to participate in the activity. The student does homework, because it is an important activity for her/him and s/he is convinced that thanks to this s/he will achieve better results in learning the school subject. In this case, it is still an external motivation, because the motivational theme is more instrumental than the interest in the topic of homework. On the other hand, such behaviour is largely self-determined, because it was taken voluntarily, for personal reasons, and not under pressure from outside. Most associated

with self-determination form of motivation is the integrated behaviour regulation (Deci and Ryan, 1985; 2000). The process and motive of taking up the activity is in this case fully connected and consistent with the image of the individual, her/his system of values and needs. Integrated regulation is similar to internal motivation due to the fact that both forms of motivation are autonomous types of self-regulation. However, they differ in that the behaviour implemented under the influence of internal motivation is taken up because of interest in the activity itself, while the behaviour implemented as a result of integrated motivation is important for the person because of the value of the result.

According to the SDT (Deci, Eghrari, Patrick, and Leone, 1994), the social environment conducive to the optimal development of students should be dominated by the teacher's influences and strategies, supporting internal motivation, as well as external, integrated and identified, in which there is the greatest similarity to internal motivation and the largest load of self-determination. The environment conducive to the optimal development of students and the education of their transferable skills should, therefore, abound in teacher's behaviour that strengthens independence and does not strongly control students at various stages of education.

In the studies of motivational conditions (Deci et al., 1991), three variables have been taken into account: the promise of the prize, deadline and choice. The results showed the greatest impact of choice on the internal motivation of students and their self-determination in learning. On the other hand, the research revealed that top-down setting appointments and promises of rewards had a negative impact on internal motivation and reduced the students' sense of independence. It was also revealed that only respecting the right of students to express their emotions and opinions about tasks (whether they like them or not and why), resulted in an increase in internal motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2008). Similarly was with giving students the opportunity to participate in making decisions related to the teaching process. Such situations raised the sense of agency and the sense of influence on school events, and, thus, contributed to the increase of the sense of self-determination (Chirkov, Ryan, Kim, and Kaplan, 2003).

In the environment fostering the optimal development of students, verbal messages spoken by teachers also seem to be important. Research dividing instructions into: a) controlling (containing requiring phrases: *must*, *should*) and b) supporting the student's independence (containing suggestions, proposals, choice) revealed positive impact of the latter on the sense of autonomy, competence, affiliation and identification with the objectives and tasks (Armoura, Berjot, Gillet, Caruana, Cohen, and Finez, 2015; Cuevas, Nitoumanis, and Fernandez-Bustos, 2018). The perception of the school and the teacher by the students was also important for self-determination. Less controlling teachers were connected by the students with the evaluation of the atmosphere in the classroom as more positive, and also with their greater willingness to fulfil the school tasks (Ryan and Deci, 2000b).

Examples of good practices in education. Implementation of the self-determination theory into the mainstream of education in Poland, has been reinforced by positively validated internships of 58 teachers who joined in 2016 the implementation of the emotional-social competence development program using the TROS-KA/CARE package (Domagała-Zyśk, Knopik, and Oszwa, 2017). This package has been developed as a set of diagnostic tools and post-diagnostic materials (scenarios, work sheets, training presentations, multimedia applications simulating decision-making processes) aimed at identifying and developing students' transferable resources related to the sphere of emotions and social relations. Its name (which is an acronym in Polish) TROS-KA/CARE includes: T – dealing with difficulties, R – relations with others, O – self-image, S – efficiency, KA – affect control. Teachers who started implementing this program among more than 1,200 students aged 9–13, used both ready-made materials developed by the authors (Domagała-Zyśk et al., 2017) and exploited the package as a model to create their own outlines and implement original ideas. Importantly, the process of developing students'transferable skills did not take place as part of special extra-curricular activities, but was included as a permanent feature of the standard classes, resulting from the core curriculum.

The examples of solutions will be presented in the further part of the paper. Their common feature is the development of knowledge (in Polish, mathematics, biology, history, geography, and English) and transferable skills in parallel.

Table 1.
The sample of good practices – how to develop students' transferable skills and implementation of the core curriculum in parallel

Record from the core curriculum	Transferable skills development
Polish language *The student improves various forms of saving the obtained information*	Students keep their journal of positive information. Every day they record any information that has generated a positive response in them, trying to use various forms of expression (poster, graphics, music, rebus, mem, etc.). After each month, they prepare a ranking of the five most positive information. Those willing can present their journals (or selected fragments) on the class forum. Auxiliary question: *What conclusions can you draw from your journal?* *Do you see any similarities between the entries posted in your journal?*
English language *The student asks for advice and gives advice*	The students worked in two large groups during the English language classes. Each group for 15 minutes described five of the difficulties that they had faced recently. Then they jointly ordered these difficulties according to the subjective degree of importance of a given matter. Each member of the group awarded points from 1 to 5. After the score was summarized, a list of difficulties was finally drawn up according to the set criterion. Representatives of both groups successively presented their difficulties. The task of students from the opposite group was to give them the best advice. In the end, the group arranged a slogan promoting them as professionals in helping others. It is worth enriching the exercise with alternative advice in response to a given difficulty (providing several solutions).

History *The student explains the causes and evaluates the impact of geographical discoveries on the socio-economic and cultural life of Europe and the New World*	Students write 10 facts about geographical discoveries. They work in pairs. One person plays the European, the other one is a native autochthon who has inhabited new land for centuries. They interpret the given fact by referring to their situation. After five facts, they change roles. As a summary, they try to answer the question: *What would have happened if there were no great geographical discoveries at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries?*
Geography *The student determines the similarities and differences between the big cities of Europe: London and Paris*	Students work in four groups. Each group draws the name of the city: Paris, London, Rome, Berlin. Creative round: *How can cities differ from each other?* Each person responds so that they do not repeat the content that has already appeared. The teacher writes the indicated answers on the board. In this way, a matrix of description of each city is created by the team. Students work in groups. They use all available sources. Their task is to create a description of the city based on previously listed criteria. They can also offer their three additional criteria. During the presentation, each team receives a point for providing information adequate to the indicated criterion, with bonus points awarded for providing information as part of additional questions (to which they could not be prepared earlier, as they were individual ideas of individual teams). At the end of the class, the teams invent a common slogan or rhymes to promote travelling to all four cities. As part of the homework, the students answer the question: *In which of the four cities would you happily reside and why?*
Maths *The student collects and organizes data*	Students choose an interesting topic, based on which they will formulate their research questions. For example: the frequency of using Smartphone by students in the 5th and 6th grade. They independently plan research, collect data and present it. The teacher acts as a consultant who supports the work of students at every stage of the research. This goal can also be achieved by analyzing the data presented in the media (income of the population, unemployment rate, number of students in primary schools in the city, etc.).

Source: Authors' own study.

SUMMARY

Contemporary school cannot be treated only as a place for shaping cognitive competences of children and youth. Equipping students with information about the world does not give them knowledge (which is, by definition, a system of orderly, critically revaluated judgements about reality – Filipiak, 2011), and even more basic resources that enable dynamic adaptation to the reality of constant transformations and new challenges.

Thinking about school that develops transferable skills should not, however, be an opposition to the classical model of building knowledge. Both approaches ought to complement each other, which – translating into practice – means that there is no contradiction between the implementation of the core curriculum (aimed mainly at gaining knowledge) and shaping the transferable skills of the stu-

dents. The examples presented in the table, positively validated in school practice, might confirm this thesis.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The school should be as close as possible to the current and future life of its students. Treating it as a space taken out of context, realizing its statutory goals beyond the "here and now", condemns it to a slow alienation, the essence of which is contained in the sentence often repeated by the students: "Real life is somewhere else but not at school". Education should be related to pragmatics and reality.
2. The SDT by Ryan and Deci is one of the most popular psychological concepts that allow to describe a number of human phenomena and behaviours, which are an opportunity for her/his full and multidimensional development as an independent, competent person, belonging to the society. The SDT indicates the features of environment fostering the individual's well-being.
3. SDT assumptions are deeply in the context of the contemporary legal bases of education systems. Its premises are part of the postulate of education of the future about learning throughout life and in all circumstances, as well as about a new school model that equips not only knowledge, but also transferable skills, applicable in new situations.
4. Taking into account the SDT in creating a school space understood as an environment that fosters development of the students, it gives an opportunity to implement the current provisions of educational law for everyday practice.

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ROZWIJANIE KOMPETENCJI TRANSFEROWALNYCH UCZNIÓW – TEORIA SAMOSTANOWIENIA I WYZWANIA EDUKACJI PRZYSZŁOŚCI

Wprowadzenie: W wielu systemach edukacji na świecie obserwuje się odchodzenie od nauczania nastawionego na zdobywanie wiedzy na rzecz edukacji ukierunkowanej na nabywanie umiejętności przydatnych w codziennym życiu i dających się stosować w różnych sytuacjach pozaszkolnych. Są to umiejętności transferowalne. Polski system nauczania powinien nastawić się na strategie realizacji podstawy programowej, umożliwiające kształtowanie zasobów transferowalnych.
Cel badań: Celem artykułu jest redefinicja celów edukacji w świetle założeń koncepcji samostanowienia, opisującej optymalne warunki do rozwoju motywacji wewnętrznej. Autorzy artykułu w centrum procesu kształcenia i wychowania umieszczają kompetencje transferowalne uczniów, których zastosowanie wykracza poza rzeczywistość szkolną.
Stan wiedzy: Opisywane funkcje edukacji oparte na aktualnie obowiązujących aktach prawnych oprócz odnoszenia się do sfery poznawczej nastawione są również na wspomaganie uczniów w radzeniu sobie z życiowymi problemami. Podstawy prawne polskiej oświaty są dość dobrze przygotowane do wdrożenia idei rozwijania zasobów transferowalnych. Trudność polega na opracowaniu efektywnych strategii implementacji tych zapisów. Takie przykładowe rozwiązania zostały podane w artykule.
Podsumowanie: Obok analiz odnoszących się do konkretnych zapisów prawa oświatowego w artykule przedstawiono dobre praktyki, prezentujące sposoby wykorzystywania treści podstawy programowej do rozwijania wiedzy przedmiotowej i kompetencji transferowalnych.

Słowa kluczowe: zasoby transferowalne, teoria samostanowienia, edukacja, motywacja wewnętrzna.