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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCEPT OF REGIONAL EDUCATION IN THE LIGHT OF THE CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES OF THE PEDESTRIAN TOURIST CLUB “MIKOŁAJEK” PTTK SŁUPSK

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Abstract

In the times of the omnipresent globalization, an important place in the education of children and adolescents takes the regional education and the associated with it deepening of the regional identity. The content related to this subject is woven into the issues of different subjects: history, Polish language, geography and civics. Currently available forms and methods of education are offering the teacher conducting classes, many opportunities to prepare the best workshop to achieve his or her goals in this area. One of them is the cooperation with external institutions dealing with regionalism. The curriculum activities of the Pedestrian Tourist Club “Mikołajek” PTTK (Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society) Słupsk in cooperation with Słupsk schools is an excellent example of this. Years of experience, the regional knowledge and qualifications possessed by the staff of the Club provide a solid foundation that can be used and is used in the regional education of children and adolescents, thus implementing the main objectives of “Mikołajek”.

Key words

regional education, the Pedestrian Tourist Club “Mikołajek” PTTK (Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society) Słupsk, Słupsk region.

1. Introduction

In the era of ongoing globalization process, the implementation of the assumptions of the regional education is a very important part of the curriculum in schools of various levels. During the learning process, students should acquire a comprehensive knowledge of the region in which they function on a daily basis and thus expand and develop its own regional identity. Issues relating to the regional education can be implemented in the content of different subjects, and the task of the leading teacher, is

the selection of appropriate methods and forms in order to get the best possible learning outcomes in this area. Of course, the knowledge gained during a lesson is just one of the available sources of information about their region. Building teacher's skills and tools for the regional education, the teacher can and should also benefit from cooperation with individuals and institutions concerned with or related to regionalism in the area.

The main purpose of this article is to present the statutory activities of the Pedestrian Tourist Club “Mikołajek” PTTK Słupsk (hereinafter referred to as

KTP "Mikołajek"), in particular based on cooperation with schools in Słupsk and its surroundings in the implementation of the regional education. A secondary objective is to provide, in this example, the possibilities of utilizing external institutions in the work of a teacher dealing with regionalism.

2. The regional education – concepts and objectives

The concept of regional education in the curriculum is a problem well known in the history of geographical sciences. It is also an issue of several studies and analysis, the results of which are presented in a number of publications on this subject. As early as in the eighteenth century, an outstanding Czech educator J. A. N. Komensky rightly pointed out that teaching geography at school, should be initiated by getting to know the local area. He expressed this in "the Great Didactics", "The material should be constantly divided in such a way to first give information about what is the nearest" (Komensky, 1956, by Hibszer, 2004, p. 10). Over time, the idea of regional education flourished which is evidenced by appearing in the literature various definitions of this concept. D. Jankowski (1990, p. 107) presents the regional education as "the introduction of units and small social groups in the tradition and present socio-cultural life of the region and the local community (...).It involves the formation of a sense of identity of the local and regional as well as on strengthening the ties between an individual and the groups which constitute the necessary complement and concretization of ties with the entire national and state society". On the other hand A. Awramiuk (2009, p. 11) explains this concept as "all activities of teaching and upbringing, which are associated with the transmission of knowledge about the region, shaping positive attitudes and behaviors, and strengthening regional awareness undertaken by both the teacher and students". According to J. Nikitorowicz (2009, p. 502), however, the regional education constitute "all actions forwarding the knowledge about the" private homeland "and forming ties with it, with the world of the original roots. He meets a man through the shaping the ability of coexistence, cooperation and continuing involvement "in the small homeland", while ensuring the continuity of cultural groups by equipping with the knowledge, raising awareness of universal values based on local ties." Among the previously developed concepts in this area of education, the idea of K. Kossak-Głowczewski appeared (2003, p. 39–40) which says: "The essence of regional education is to return home to the sources of life of

every human being, to the sources of his ethics and his language, and thus to the sources of domestic, local, regional, national and human culture." Apart from the above definition, an attempt to explain the concept of regional education was also undertaken by other authors in their publications (see: Kowolik, 1999; Petrykowski, 2003; Mistarz, 2011).

Nevertheless, an important problem discussed in the scientific literature are issues related to the definition of the objectives of regional education. A. Hibszer stresses that clearly defined general objectives provide a basis for the creation of specific objectives, which in its content should include the category of knowledge, skills and attitudes. In his deliberations the author cites three main objectives of the regional education contained in the Programme of education in 1997, together with the ways of their implementation. These include:

1. "Equipping the student in the geographical knowledge about the "small homeland", in close liaison with the knowledge of their home country, by:
 - supporting a large part of the learning on direct observations in the field (learning about the environment through using various senses);
 - creating conditions for comparing the book knowledge with the knowledge obtained in the field.
2. The shaping in students a sense of regional identity, which is the basis for involvement in the life of the local community, by:
 - portraying student's relationships with the nearest natural and social environment;
 - arousing the interest of the problems of the local environment;
 - perception of the value of the local geographical environment.
3. Preparing the student to act responsibly in adulthood, mainly in the local community, by:
 - acquiring the skills of evaluating, assessing and making choices needed for functioning in a multicultural society in our country, while preserving the cultural values of their own community" (Hibszer, 2004, p.15).

Whereas, T. Nawrocki (2003, p. 226) formulates one primary goal of regional education that is "shaping students' sense of their own regional identity as an attitude of commitment to the functioning of their environment and authentic openness towards other communities and cultures." In a similar form also P. Petrykowski (1997) speaks. In addition, the author explains that this objective can be achieved by developing and strengthening a sense of regional identity, which would increase the awareness of belonging to a certain place, area, community and culture.

K. Kopeć (2004) rightly draws attention to the need to implement the tasks of regional education at every stage of education, because only then it will be possible to achieve the final effect which is to develop in students a complete image and understanding of their own region. Undoubtedly, this is possible by the objectives set for regional education in schools at all levels.

In the core curriculum of general education, until recently in force (Rozporządzenie..., 2002), the implementation of educational paths was assumed. One of them was "The regional education – cultural heritage in the region". For the best of its implementation, in the regulation was prepared a set of goals, objectives, content and achievements appropriate for each type of school.

According to the regulations, the main objectives for the mentioned path, valid in the primary school are:

- "getting to know the nearest environment and the specifics of their region;
- the development of family values related to the cultural values of the local community;
- the development of patriotic attitudes related to regional culture."

In the next stage of education namely the education at junior high schools for "regional education – cultural heritage in the region", there are the following purposes:

- "the development of knowledge about the culture of their region and its relations with national culture;
- establishing contact with the local and regional level in order to form close relationships and understanding of the diverse belonging for the human;
- strengthening the sense of national identity through the development of regional identity;
- development of knowledge about the history of the region in conjunction with the traditions of his own family."

A. Religa refers to them in his publication (2003), that presents, among others, the link between the regional content with the geographical content in junior high school.

In a joint publication of W. Srokosz and M. K. Szmi-giel (2002) was presented in accordance with the Regulation of the Ministry of Education dated 26 February 2002., the main objectives for the path "The regional education – cultural heritage in the region", included in the core curriculum for general education at secondary schools, specialized secondary schools and secondary technical schools. These include:

- "learning about their region, including cultural heritage, as part of Poland and Europe;
- deepening ties with their community, region, country;
- shaping of regional identity in the context of national and European values;
- preparation for adult life in the regional, national, state and European structures;
- developing respect for other regional communities of ethnic and national."

Similar to the idea of A. Hibszer (2004) here as well, on the basis of the main objectives several specific objectives on regional education in Malopolska were formulated. At this stage of education it is also worth of attention, to present the regional content, against the background of the whole country, the nation and Europe. A supporter of this type of concept is S. Bednarek (1999) who considers the need for exploring the student's knowledge of their own region in comparison with the knowledge of the country and international subject matter. A similar solution was introduced in the project of geographical blocks for secondary schools, which include the basic content of the curriculum and those contained in the educational paths. In line with the objectives presented above, one of the branches of the curriculum devoted to regional education was titled "My region on the background of Poland and the world" (Sołohubiak-Borchert, Michalski, 2002).

In the accordance with currently applicable core curriculum, the curricular themes were abandoned from the further leading at schools, one of which was also "The regional education – cultural heritage in the region". Transferring knowledge to students about their own region was not abandoned, however. Currently, the main goals and objectives of regional education are woven into the curriculum of individual subjects. The task of the teacher conducting classes is, however, the selection of appropriate forms and methods to achieve the expected learning outcomes in this regard.

3. The regional education in the activities of KTP "Mikołajek"

One way of implementing the regional education in schools is the cooperation of the teacher conducting the subject with various institutions dealing with regionalism. These may be museums, memorial exhibition rooms, libraries, community centers, regional associations of culture, folklore groups, institutions dealing with tourism and touring. An example of this is the cooperation of schools from Słupsk and the surrounding area with the Pedestrian Tourist

- organization of tourist events, rallies, tours, hikes, trips;
- assisting in the organization of hiking events” (Regulamin Klubu Turystów Pieszych “Mikołajek” PTTK Słupsk).

Although not included in the regulations, the aforementioned guidelines are implemented with a strong focus on regional education. This results mainly from the fact that since the beginning of the work the club community was created by the people associated with the culture and regionalism in the area. Although due to historical reasons their roots were scattered in different parts of Poland, yet thanks to their passion, courage and commitment they decided to build upon this earth, the Słupsk homeland, to which attached will be people born here: Poles, Kashubians and other słujsk residents (Zielonka, 2000). Among others those people deserve special attention: Kazimierz Świdzki, Władysław Lachowicz, Wojciech Wypisniak, Stefania Jóźwik, Józef Cioplik, Zenon Frąckiewicz. The high regional activity of club activists gave a solid foundation to establish a strong, long-term cooperation of the Club with schools from Słupsk, Słupsk district, and not only. Its origins date back to 1971, when the organization of hiking events, prepared specifically for the students was launched. That is when the first Rally of Primary Schools Youth of Słupsk Earth took place. It was organized within the period 9th–10th June. The route led from Słupsk to nearby Włynkówko where the camping under tents was organized, while the second day of the trek brought the participants back to Słupsk. During the youth rallies the organizers always put great emphasis on the regional education. Young tourists participating in hiking in the surroundings, were gaining the knowledge on history, culture, geography, nature and historical sites associated with the region, where they exist on daily basis. They were held on the region’s designated hiking trails, which system enables to present the participants of hiking, the most valuable natural and anthropogenic of the area. Very often the support and assistance in organizing this series of events was given by the Board of Education in Słupsk and the Faculty of Education of the Municipal Office in Słupsk. The rallies of Primary Schools Youth of Słupsk Earth were organized uninterruptedly till 1999. On 24th September 2005, the jubilee and last XXX Rally of Primary Schools Youth of Słupsk Earth was organized. 215 young tourists arrived to two one-day long prepared hiking routes.

This did not mean, however, completion of the activities related to the regional education. Moreover, they have been extended by further hiking rallies. Currently in the event calendar of KTP “Mikołajek”

there are 6 generally accessible hiking events organized in the region of Słupsk. In each of them a large part of the participants are students and teachers from Słupsk and surrounding primary schools, junior high schools and high schools. Apart from this, the Club supports the activities of Słupsk PTTK Branch in preparing and conducting subsequent 2 events designed for children and teenagers. These are rallies: “Powitanie wiosny” – “Welcoming Spring” (March) and “Mikołajkowy” – “Santa Claus” (December), which are held regularly in recreational areas of the Słupsk city. The participation of preschool children in these events is worth noting. In addition, according to the assumptions of the Club regulations, the activities of it recently significantly expanded to support schools and educational institutions in the preparation of thematic events concerning regional issues. The work on individual events is not limited to accompany the group through a certain section of the walking trail. The qualified club staff provide participants with a lot of interesting information related to the area where they are currently are. For the rallies are often invited people, who in the course of short lectures, help to deepen previously acquired knowledge. These include employees of the national park, landscape park, forest district or people related to the culture of the region. During each hiking children and young people have the opportunity to participate in a pre-prepared contests of knowledge about the area in which the current event is taking place. All the above activities are planned, thinking about the students participating in club trips and awakening and deepening their knowledge and regional identity.

In the idea of activities of KTP “Mikołajek” and described rallies, one cannot ignore the concept contained in the above-mentioned definitions of regional education by Komeński, Jankowski, Nikitorowicz, Kossak-Głowczewski. The method of learning the immediate area, thanks to the organized hiking trips, gives schools and teachers involved, the possibility of implementation, presented in the first part of the article, objectives used to achieve the best learning outcomes in terms of knowledge about their own region. Knowledge, thanks to pedestrian tours, about the cultural heritage and characteristics of the physical-geographical area, obviously requires further expansion of information on the social environment and the economy. Only in this perspective, it gives students a comprehensive regional knowledge. Properly conducted and organized by the school the regional education, therefore becomes a key tool for building students’ regional identity and awareness of the opportunities and developmental barriers of their region (Michalski, 2003).

4. Conclusions

The activity of the Pedestrian Tourist Club "Mikołajek" PTTK Słupsk virtually from the beginning was associated with cooperation with schools from Słupsk and the surrounding area. Through 48 years of activity within the Słupsk region, it permanently grown into a program of work and philosophy of the Club. Apart from the desire to instilling in youth the idea of hiking and sightseeing, the primary aim is also to provide participants with the greatest knowledge of their own region. Mainly it is based on a hiking organized in the form of rallies and tours, for which the available network of hiking trails in the region is used. The requirements and the progress of modern education forced the organizers to introduce additional methods of achieving the objectives of regional education. The program events included: lectures, discussions, presentations, meetings with interesting personalities and knowledge competitions. Everything about the region in which the students are functioning on a daily basis. From the point of view of teachers, cooperation with "Mikołajek" gave the possibility of introducing interesting and varied training methods concerning natural, anthropogenic and cultural values of the region. In conjunction with the analysis of the socio-economic area, schools tend to provide pupils with a comprehensive knowledge of their own region. The cooperation of KTP "Mikołajek", schools from Słupsk and the surrounding area is an example of the good and the applicable practices in the transfer of knowledge in the field of the regional education.

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