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Educational changes and barriers to change in the statements of teachers-innovators and non-innovators¹

Summary

The aim of the article is to present the differences in the way of thinking about educational change and its barriers between teachers-innovators and non-innovators. The former understood the concept of educational change in a more radical and profound way. In their statements, they demanded a breakthrough that was, in fact, a questioning of the dominant education model. Non-innovators would like transformations, but more moderate, minor ones that do not go beyond the area of the dominant model of education but can potentially facilitate or make the time spent by teachers and students at school easier or more enjoyable. Teachers-innovators more often focused on bottom-up sources of change, i.e., primarily on teachers and their students. Non-innovators focused rather on top-down sources of change, locating them in particular in state authorities, experts, and politicians, and the role of the market as an institution (in the sociological sense). Both groups also differed in terms of the barriers to change they mentioned. While the former mainly emphasized the importance of what hinders or prevents changes and is dependent on the teacher, the latter emphasized the role of issues independent of teachers. In order to explain the differences between the two groups of teachers, the article refers to the theories of W. Reckless and J.B. Rotter.

Keywords: barriers to change, innovators, teachers, educational change

Słowa kluczowe: bariery zmian, innowatorzy, nauczyciele, zmiana edukacyjna

Introduction

While learning about the history of education and pedagogical thought one cannot help but feel that dissatisfaction with existing solutions and searching for a new, promising perspective of education development is a constant and invariable element of education

¹ In this article I have used fragments of my unpublished doctoral dissertation written under the tutelage of Professor Dorota Klus-Stańska, PhD (Supervisor) and Grażyna Szyling, PhD (Assistant Supervisor), titled: *Znaczenia nadawane przez nauczycieli barierom zmiany dominującego modelu kształcenia* (Significance Attributed by Teachers to Barriers to Change in the Dominant Education Model), as well as fragments of answers to reviews penned by: DSW Professor Bogusława Dorota Gołębiak, PhD and Professor Henryk Mizerek, PhD.

theory and practice. Problems experienced by education seem to be resistant to the passing of time, almost permanent. While reading pedagogical books penned by authors at the beginning of the 20th century or even earlier, one can get the impression that worryingly many of the education problems described at that time are still present in the 2020s. Already over one hundred years ago, a school was described as a place where children were afraid (Chojnacki 1815: 47), where they are often overburdened with learning material (Jordan 1891: 44) and where “education is aimed at (...) cramming minds with information necessary to pass an exam and get a position, and not at developing independent thinking, passion for science and learning methods” (Pechnik 1900: 5). Lucjan Zarzecki (1920: 6) also noticed that: “(...) contemporary school with its overladen curriculum and strive for superficial multi-knowledge creates artificial teaching difficulties. These difficulties exhaust the spirit, destroy the drive for cognition characteristic for every human soul”.

Over the last one hundred years, the language of pedagogical scientific publications has certainly changed. Instead of writing, for example, about “exhausting the spirit”, contemporary authors would rather use the concept of “emotional burnout” or “student burnout” (Muchacka-Cymerman, Tomaszek 2017: 95–115), and replace the concept of “fear of school” or “school anxiety” with “school stress”. It seems, however, that the same, or at least similar problems, are hidden under new terms. All of the above seems to prove the inability of solving old and well-known school problems. It can be, therefore, assumed that it is caused by the fundamental permanence of the dominant education model, and its resistance to change (see: Dylak 2000: 176–190; Klus-Stańska 2002: 109–118; Śliwerski 2008a: 19–20).

The subject matter of the barriers to educational change is exceptionally complex and multi-dimensional and thus also difficult to study empirically. The basic issue consists in the fact that what is a barrier to change for one person, does not necessarily have to be a barrier to change for another person in a similar situation. A lot depends on the significance attributed by individuals to the social reality they live in. Findings of contemporary researchers (e.g., Fullan 2016: 21) evidence that research regarding this subject matter must take into consideration the subjective reality of persons, whom the educational change concerns.

The aim of the article is to present differences in the way of thinking of teachers-innovators and non-innovators about educational change and barriers thereto².

Methodological assumptions of the research

The main objective of the research was to reconstruct significance attributed by secondary school teachers to barriers to educational change. I have assumed that learning about

² Presented analyses come from my unpublished doctoral dissertation. Interviews’ participants were secondary school teachers; the research results do not directly concern early education teachers. Nevertheless, they can be the source of interesting hypotheses for falsifiability in further research, also referring to primary school or early education teachers.

teachers' conceptions of change and barriers to implementation thereof may constitute a valuable contribution in the development of not only pedagogical knowledge, but also knowledge regarding broadly understood social transformations, since it will facilitate understanding the resistance and diversity of approaches towards changes. I have also assumed that a teacher is a key element of both educational change and potential barriers thereto. It is concurrent with the constructivist belief that the essence of school reality is not something objectively given, but is constructed in the perspective of understanding subjects creating this significance in the biographical and social context.

Research participants were, to an extent, selected purposefully, since the interviewees included both teachers-innovators and non-innovators. On the other hand, interviewees were recruited with the use of a snowballing sampling, since interviewees were asked to enable contacting other potential research participants. In total, I have interviewed 15 secondary school teachers from Tri-City and neighbouring towns. I conducted the research from December 2015 to July 2017.

It should be emphasised that the division into teachers-innovators and non-innovators is arbitrary and, to a certain degree, risky. I assumed that teachers' engagement in the innovative activity or a lack thereof can be related to the manner of understanding the educational change and barriers thereto. Different life experiences can translate into different ways of understanding a specific situation. I was aware all along that at least some innovators could have participated in innovative projects yet not have been motivated by the willingness to change education. It can be assumed that at least for some research participants innovative activity could be a way to "escape forward", that is to say, a form of improving professional competences to, in case of staff reduction, stay employed. On the other hand, non-innovators can show a great willingness to change education and experiment during their lessons with non-standard working methods, yet, not officially participate in any project – which was the case of one teacher I interviewed.

Generally speaking, divisions into innovators and non-innovators will always be arbitrary and risky, since there is no unequivocal demarcation line separating them. Nevertheless, I considered the introduction of this division justified, since, as a result, I obtained an additional basis for explaining differences between interviewed teachers. In other words, without introduction of this division of teachers into two categories, it would be very difficult to conclude what the observed differences between them in understanding change and related barriers might result from. In this context, it can be stated that engagement in the innovative activity is an important dimension of the professional experience of teachers and thus should be included in the data analysis. I am aware that research results cannot be generalised to all secondary school teachers, and results of comparisons between innovators and non-innovators are only sources for hypotheses that can be verified in further research.

Results

While comparing statements given by innovators and teachers working with traditional methods, one can notice differences in how they understand the notion of educational change and what kind of changes they expect. Innovators demand more radical educational reform, a breakthrough, which, in fact, will question the dominant education method. Whereas, research participants who are not innovators would also welcome transformations, but more moderate ones which do not go beyond the known education model but which could potentially facilitate or make more pleasant time spent by teachers and students in schools.

The comparison of two statements on textbooks and their roles in school education can serve as an example (Table 1): N1 – non-innovator, and a teacher-innovator (Ni6). The former notices the change in the education model in the fact that currently, in his opinion, textbooks and practice books for students are written in more accessible language than earlier editions and, as a result, it is easier for students to do homework. Whereas, the innovator suggests throwing the textbook out of a window, if the teacher perceives it as a barrier in actual learning. In her opinion, actual learning starts when the teacher stops relying on a textbook or copies of books, is left alone with the students and has to adjust education to their needs. As we may guess, from her (Ni6) perspective, issues mentioned by N1 seem to be unimportant changes, not worth mentioning.

Table 1. Understanding of an educational change by a teacher-innovator and non-innovator

Teacher, who is not an innovator	Teacher-innovator
<p>N1: In my opinion, in comparison with the times when I was going to school, there is a change for the better, (...) as far as contents are concerned. As a tutor, I often help students with homework and I see that practice books, for example for Polish, are constructed so that anyone is able to help, even a teacher who does not teach a given subject. Questions regarding text are clear (...)</p>	<p>Ni6: This is fear of responsibility. A situation when you are free and can choose, create, requires the teacher to create. It requires them to go beyond the teaching pattern, out of their comfort zone. The teacher used to ask children to open the book on page 84, the next day on page 85 and so on. And suddenly this is not only the issue of ‘we are going to do this now’, but the issue of ‘choosing’. If a textbook is a barrier in teaching, throw it out of the window. And the teacher says: ‘OK, but if I throw it away or if I do not use copies, what should I do? I cannot teach in this way.’ I say: ‘Only then the teaching process starts.’ Then, you are left alone with a student, you have to think what is best for them, and this requires time</p>

Source: own study.

Another example illustrating differences in thinking about educational change of teachers working with standard methods and innovators concerns the issue of teaching aids and technical means used during lessons. During the interview, N4, non-innovator, as an example of **change and progress** mentioned the fact that older teachers stopped

using VHS tapes and have replaced them with CDs or DVDs, and have started using board games to diversify lessons. However, while discussing educational change, the innovator (Ni7) goes much further, since she proposes using computer applications to carry out tests and quizzes, and suggests that students give teachers advice on tools (applications, computer programmes) with which they want to be tested. According to her, traditional tests and written quizzes are out-dated. It is worth emphasising that the proposed change is not only of a technical nature related to the use of technology, but also covers the relationship between the teacher and learners, since it puts the latter in the position of persons co-deciding on the form of testing.

In both examples, a certain regularity can be observed: the innovator understands educational change as something much deeper and more fundamental than the non-innovator (Table 2). It should be noted that while it is difficult to consider a change regarding a data carrier to be educational, introduction of games to lessons (mentioned by the teacher-traditionalist) is a change in the educational context and thus can be treated as a certain novelty.

Table 2. Understanding of an educational change related to teaching aids in the statement given by the teacher who is not an innovator, and by the teacher-innovator

Teacher who is not an innovator	Teacher-innovator
<p>N4: I have noticed at my school a certain change in my older colleagues, because, e.g., VHS tapes are being replaced by CDs or DVDs, and older teachers are also slowly introducing games. I have in mind especially the mathematics teacher who is introducing games for students, who have some dysfunctions or are weaker, so the game helps them, and actually some of those students get better results. So there is a certain progress (...)</p>	<p>Ni7: I believe that we can enter into interaction with them [with students – B.A. note] so that their skills are not necessarily verified by us, but they show the mechanisms with which we can test their skills. I believe we should depart from traditional forms of quizzes and tests. We have a lot of interesting tools now and the fact that we surprise them makes them more active, approach learning more enthusiastically, because I believe that they are fed up with yet another copy, another quiz that takes up time and paper. The student is so used to this that they simply have enough. I think that various applications give us the reason to adjust them to our subjects. Basically, there is no subject in which it would be impossible to use them</p>

Source: own study.

In statements given by some teachers who are not innovators, one can notice their unwillingness or inability to imagine alternative, differently constructed education built on other foundations. However, the moderation they insisted upon robbed their proposals of what potential they may have had of transforming reality. They wanted educational changes that do not change the *status quo*. For instance, they criticised the focus on testing, but were not in favour of foregoing tests (N2; N4). One of them (N1) demanded providing students with an opportunity to decide on their own education, on what they are learning, but, at the same time, he would like to force them to study subjects which – in his opinion – “do not interest them” and which “are not necessary”, but in a smaller number of hours.

Statements of all interviewees were basically consistent in the scope of diagnosing the needs for educational changes. However, in the case of non-innovators, their expectation to devote more attention to the issues of assessing and testing students is clearly visible. Although, it is difficult to unequivocally state the reason for this phenomenon, it can be assumed that innovators are less attached to the testing-based conception of a school, in compliance with which the final objective of education is to pass exams. Perhaps they understand the objectives of education in broader terms and do not identify them solely with test results.

While answering the question regarding sources of changes, interviewees indicated surroundings of a school, educational policy, the role of experts and individuals directly engaged in the process of education, that is, teachers, students and headmasters. Non-innovators in their statements rather focused on top-down sources of changes identifying them, in particular, with state authorities and politicians, experts as well as the market as an institution (in sociological terms). Whereas teachers-innovators more frequently focused on bottom-up sources of changes that is, primarily, teachers and their students (Table 3). Teachers-innovators noticed that students influence teachers to make lessons more attractive, whereas traditionalists did not notice this phenomenon.

Table 3. Statements on the source of changes in the dominant education model made by teachers who were not innovators and teachers-innovators

Teachers, who were not innovators	Teachers-innovators
N12: As far as changes are concerned, the Ministry has an idea and introduces changes, and we simply adjust	Ni6: And everybody complains about the system. And I, as a teacher, knew that it is not about the system. My colleague who works with me would complain about the system, but this is a very convenient excuse not to do anything. That is why this bottom-up change project was designed
N1: As far as the basics are concerned: curriculum or textbooks, the Ministry of Education imposes the requirements (...)	Ni13: I believe that, regardless, the role of a headmaster is very important , since they present their vision to teachers. Their function also allows them to implement a lot of things
N2: I think that unfortunately, declarations of changes come from teachers, whereas changes or projects of changes, unfortunately, come from politicians, the government and they do not comply with teachers' proposals (...)	Ni15: Students are starting to demand it from them [from teachers – B.A. note]. (...) Now, it is the student who demands using it in a different form than during other lessons. So it is happening. Of course, not during each and every lesson, but it is
N4: And as I am saying, it seems that simply everything depends on the Minister. What the Minister comes up with...	Ni7: I believe that we can enter into an interaction with them [with students – B.A. note] so that their skills are not necessarily verified by us, but they show the mechanisms with which we can test their skills

Source: own study.

Both groups of interviewees also differed in terms of indicated barriers to changes. Teachers-innovators more often than the other group indicated limitations that depended on the teacher. This category includes conservativeness and conformism of the teaching staff, a lack of time and willingness to use creative teaching methods, poor education of teachers or stress and its consequences such as tiredness, discouragement and burnout, whereas, non-innovators more often paid attention to the issues independent of teachers, that is, external barriers. This category includes legal-bureaucratic barriers, the manner of introducing changes in education, problems with leadership in school, pressure on teachers and limiting their autonomy.

Furthermore, it follows from the analyses that even if teachers from both groups speak on the same topic (e.g., core curriculum) they interpret the described reality differently. What is a barrier to change for teachers-traditionalists is not a barrier for teachers-innovators and *vice versa*. Non-innovators seem to less frequently notice that the teacher, their behaviour and attitude during a lesson, might be the problem (Table 4).

Table 4. Statements given by teachers working with traditional methods and teachers-innovators

Factors	Teachers working with traditional methods	Teachers-innovators
External barriers	N12: They do not like going to school, because it is boring. They are saying this over and over again. But what can I do to make it more fun? I can, but I have neither space nor time for it	Ni3: I have been a teacher for 20 years and I have always felt free. The system has never limited me
Bureaucracy	N12: We are tired, we would like to come and teach, we would like them to give us a break from all the bureaucracy which is excessive. I believe that we meet too often in our country. As the European Commission said, you cannot see the Polish teacher from behind a pile of papers, and this is true	Ni7: Well, if someone wants to, they can generate papers. If someone wants to copy their plan of work, they will. It is enough that the plan is in the computer, we can combine it with the e-register and no one requires a paper form. Bureaucracy has been limited (...)
Core curriculum	N4: (...) often a teacher would like to do something fun, for example devote more hours on a certain topic, a subject matter, but, in fact, they are limited, since on the one hand, we have core curriculum and we have numbers, let us say, you have to fit into 30 hours, you have to do all and there is no place for freedom to spend 4 hours on this, 2 hours on that, because I lose something and then someone can complain that it has not been covered (...)	Ni10: No one tells me how I should conduct classes. I am responsible for what is happening. I am responsible for covering the core curriculum and I am aware of it. How I cover it depends on me. There are, of course, some control systems, because they have to be, a teacher cannot do whatever, there are inspections, dates of inspections, but, as I was saying, it depends on me and no one has tried to impose the way I should teach

Table 4. cont.

Factors	Teachers working with traditional methods	Teachers-innovators
Teacher's contact with students	N5: Besides, the form period is only one hour a week, which very often boils down to the teacher filling in the register. For 45 minutes children are left alone and the teacher is filling it in, because there are so many documents , documents to be filled in by the teacher or school pedagogue	Ni6: (...) the most important 45 minutes I spend with students during a lesson. The most important time is when I go out with them, or when we stay at school in the afternoon, or on Facebook at night, and talk. This is the most important for me

Source: own study.

Also the concept of educational change is understood by innovators differently than by teachers working with traditional methods, they perceived the manner in which educational changes are introduced differently and formulated different expectations (Table 5). However, all interviewees shared the belief that a change should be introduced primarily from the bottom up.

Table 5. Basic differences in statements given by teachers working with traditional teaching methods and teachers-innovators

Questions	Teachers working with traditional methods	Teachers-innovators
Is the education model changing?	Yes	No
What is the barrier to change?	System	Teachers
Where do educational changes come from?	They are introduced top-down	They are developed bottom-up
The idea of change	Creating better textbooks and better teaching aids	Throwing the textbook out the window and teaching without a book

Source: own study.

Attempts at theoretical explanation of observed differences between teachers

Walter Reckless' (2011: 29–33) social control theory³, and especially the division into outer and inner containment introduced by him, seems to be useful in describing differences between both groups. In this conception, teachers-traditionalists can be described

³ Walter Reckless describes inner containment as a construct made of the following components: self-control, good self-concept, ego strength, well-developed superego, high frustration tolerance, high re-

as individuals with high outer containment, focused on carrying out instructions of others, conformist, lacking the sense of initiative and expecting strong management from their superiors. Innovators, however, seem to have more features associated with inner containment, that is, they do their utmost to act as independently as possible, autonomously, by carrying out their own ideas and expecting their superiors to support their own intentions (or at least not hinder implementation thereof).

Equally useful can be Julian B. Rotter's (1966: 1–28) locus of control theory, which posits that individuals can basically be divided into those with a strong external locus of control (searching in the external world for reasons for their experiences) and with a strong internal locus of control (convinced that the events experienced by them are a result of their actions). From this perspective, teachers-traditionalists seem to belong to the former group, while innovators to the latter.

The differentiation of outer and inner-containment made by W. Reckless (2011)⁴ and the locus of control theory by J.B. Rotter (1966) can provide a perspective helpful in understanding statements given by participants of the discussed research. It especially concerns the aspect manifested by **more frequently locating sources of barriers to change externally by teachers who were not innovators, and, at the same time, greater focus of teachers-innovators on obstacles related to the teacher**. The former can feel victimised by the situation in which they have found themselves. They are convinced that they have a very limited impact on the school's reality; not much depends on them, because they have to do what is required of them by the school and ministerial authorities. Innovators, on the other hand, feel that they are the subjects of the teaching process and believe that they have a significant scope of freedom, as a result of which they can implement what they have planned for the lesson and what they believe to be the best form of teaching.

The problem of teachers' lack of a sense of agency has been emphasised by numerous authors for at least 30 years. In 1985 Zbigniew Kwiecieński was already writing that teachers and tutors "are becoming and feeling more dependent, outer-directed, deprived of the possibility to choose and plan the contents and methods of their activities" (Kwiecieński 2011: 14). It is difficult to say whether this problem has become more pronounced, but there is considerable evidence to suggest that it has not disappeared after the transformation of the

sistance to diversions, high sense of responsibility, goal orientation, ability to find substitute satisfactions, etc. Therefore, it is the ability of an individual to use internal mechanisms that regulate conduct. Whereas, outer containment is a concept referring to a form of social functioning, in which human behaviour is regulated by environmental factors, such as: social control (supervision and discipline), a scope of activity including limits and responsibilities, as well as 'safety-valves' in the form of an opportunity for acceptance, identity and belongingness.

⁴ The concepts of outer and inner containments are also used by David Riesman, Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denney in their famous work titled *The Lonely Crowd* (1966), in which they distinguished three social formations, characterised by different demographic potentials and generating the need for other type of human character: 1) tradition-directed society with high growth potential; 2) formation of temporary population growth popularising inner-directed individuals, and 3) initial decline in population in which outer containment is becoming prevailing.

system in 1989, and has survived into the 21st century. Dorota Klus-Stańska and Marzenna Nowicka (2005: 226) wrote about a teacher's mental incapacitation in the context of a system in which they were required to function, while B. Śliwerski (2009: 31–48) emphasises teachers' personal responsibility for their own sense of freedom and subjectivity: "Thus, teachers should continue to emancipate, conquer and perpetuate their inner freedom, that is, freedom to choose and implement set objectives, which will in itself be the ability to oppose external oppression. No one from the outside will give them freedom necessary for creative work, if they do not make any efforts. (...) It is high time to renounce the identity of the professional role «given» by the government for the benefit of the «assigned» identity encouraging creative search, self-definition and self-determination" (Śliwerski 2009: 47).

It can be assumed that approaches presented by D. Klus-Stańska, M. Nowicka and B. Śliwerski are not conflicting, but rather underline other aspects of teachers' struggles concerning their own subjectivity. On the one hand, in their work, teachers deal with numerous systemic limitations, which favours (but does not determine!) popularisation of a specific professional mentality, specific incapacitation, inhibition of the ability to show initiative, etc. However, working conditions do not release them from the responsibility for what they are doing, how they are performing their professional obligations and how they are treating their students.

Another important difference between both groups of interviewees is the manner of understanding an educational change, or, to use D. Klus-Stańska's words: "the horizon of the school idea" (2016: 53–69). There are many differences between innovators and teachers-traditionalists, but they can be reduced to a common denominator. **The former have a significantly deeper understanding of the education process and a wider horizon of ideas concerning what a school can be, what school education could look like, and who a teacher and a student can be.** Probably this is why they expected more radical changes. In comparison with them, non-innovators were less daring in questioning what is considered obvious in thinking about a school. The conviction that a teacher must perform a managerial role during a lesson has been inculcated in them, and they associate creative teaching methods with "a fun break" rather than as a more effective educational measure. It seems that to a larger extent than with the innovators, teachers-traditionalists have fallen victim to what Robert Kwaśnica (2015: 7) called the "cultural cliché of a school", that is, the basic inability to image this institution differently than in the commonly accepted manner. One can agree with D. Klus-Stańska (2011: 47) that embedding the way of teachers' thinking about education within the frameworks set by the objectivist paradigm and teachers' reluctance to cross these boundaries constitute important barriers to change.

It is also worth stressing that teachers-innovators held higher positions in the school hierarchy than their colleagues working with traditional methods. Their perspective, school experiences and general opinion about the situation can be influenced by the position a teacher holds on the ladder of power and social prestige. For example, a young teacher, unsure of their financial and professional situation and without an established position in the school, can more often become a victim of verbal aggression from students than

a respected teacher acting as a headmistress. The latter will have not only a larger scope of freedom of action to implement their ideas, but also will have actual authority over other persons working in the institution managed by them. Therefore, it is not completely clear if the differences observed between these two groups predominantly result from different engagement in innovative activity or rather from their position in the school hierarchy. It might contradict the thesis (formulated, in fact, by the interviewees) that innovators are discriminated against and ostracised by their co-workers. This point of view is similar to the one formulated by Bogusław Śliwerski, who wrote about the teaching environment “«destroying» remarkable pedagogues” (2008b: 143).

Summary and discussion

The aim of the article was to present differences in thinking about educational changes and barriers thereto occurring between teachers-innovators and non-innovators. The former understood the concept of an educational change in a much more radical and in-depth manner. In their statements they demanded a breakthrough questioning, in fact, the dominant education model, whereas interviewees who were not innovators wanted more moderate, small transformations, which do not go beyond the dominant education model, but which could potentially facilitate or make more pleasant the time spent by teachers and students in schools.

While talking about the sources of change, teachers-innovators more often focused on teachers and their students. Non-innovators in their statements rather focused on top-down sources of changes, locating them, in particular, in state authorities and politicians, in experts as well as in the market as an institution. Teachers-innovators and traditionalists also differed in terms of enumerated barriers to changes. While the former mainly underlined the significance of what hinders or prevents changes that depend on the teacher, the latter emphasised the role of issues independent of teachers.

To explain differences between both groups of teachers, Peter L. Berger's and Thomas Luckmann's social construction of reality was referred to in the article, and W. Reckless' division into inner and outer-containment as well as J.B. Rotter's locus of control theory were used.

In this article I treated common knowledge gained in the everyday professional experience of teachers as the basis for conducting my analysis, or, metaphorically speaking, as a key to understanding their manner of comprehending the world. And indeed, in the course of the analysis of the collected data I was more and more irrefutably convinced that at least some personal theories of interviewees also constitute a barrier to introducing changes at the micro level. If some of my interviewees take at face value the assumption that students learn primarily as a result of teaching, it is difficult to imagine how they could significantly change their professional practices without revising or even rejecting this assumption. It seems, therefore, highly probable that this type of conviction must have a petrifying effect

on teachers' capacity to change the school reality. Meanwhile, many participants assume it to be obvious that the role of a student is that of a passive person, able only to **receive** knowledge **transferred** by others. None of my interviewees proposed that students (or their parents) also participate in designing educational changes, although some innovators noticed that, in fact, youth are already able to encourage teachers to introduce changes during lessons. Despite the fact that education engages education authorities, teachers, students and their parents, the latter two groups are not treated by teachers as individuals who should be taken into account. What is worse, some interviewees suggested limiting parents' rights and increasing the scope of the power of state authorities and educational institutions. Therefore, it is difficult to imagine how teachers could exercise greater care in mentoring students when they assume an explicit demarcation between teaching and mentoring, as if these were two completely different areas of activities, which is typical for the objectivist paradigm.

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