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Emotional Education Discourses: Between Developing Competences and Deepening Emotional (Co-)Understanding

Abstract

The article addresses an issue important in educational sciences which is emotional education understood as an activity for human emotional development. It is important in the context of lifelong learning, that is, both for the functioning of children and young people at school and for the lifelong learning of adults. Emotional education plays a significant role in the development of pro-social attitudes, the functioning of individuals in the local community, and in the building of civil society. Owing to the fact that the objectives of education and the principles of their implementation in educational practice are based on different theoretical assumptions, two different approaches to emotional education were distinguished, that is, technological-instrumental and humanistic-critical. There are clear and significant differences between those two perspectives, and not only in the way they conceptualize and explain "emotional education." The two singled out approaches have consequences for educational policy and pedagogical practice. The aim of the article is to characterize both of the theoretical perspectives at hand and to indicate their implications for pedagogical activities.

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The relationships between emotions and education constitute an expanding area of research in social sciences. Over the past two decades, numerous analyses have been conducted in the fields of pedagogy, psychology, sociology, or anthropology regarding the importance of emotions for learning processes. The emotional dimension of educational processes is emphasized above all by representatives of socio-cultural learning theories, for example, by Peter Alheit, Knud Illeris, Jack Me-

zirow, or Peter Jarvis, who increasingly emphasize that learning can occur in cognitive, emotional, and action spheres, and that it can be rational and intuitive, and even irrational (Jarvis 2012:134). Knud Illeris (2006:81) says that "cognition is always affectively labeled: there are always some emotional traces and components associated with the knowledge we develop. The stronger the emotions present in a learning situation are, the greater the emotional labeling of learning will be."

When addressing the issue of emotional aspects of education, it is also worth noting that in recent decades the activity of educational institutions has been clearly violated by the neoliberal order (Potulicka and Rutkowiak 2010), which consists in dominating education by free-market economics not subject to social control, where "education is situated in a strange space having, on the one hand, the ambition to support individual development and being a common good and, on the other hand, becoming a mere commodity" (Potulicka 2010:103). Those commodification processes concern all aspects of human life, including emotional life (Szahaj 2013:134), they have begun to cross acceptable borders, and are both demoralizing and disastrous. Today, we are raising a society which consists of narcissistic individuals focused on their own success in life. We are less and less capable of cooperating with and trusting one another; as Andrzej Szahaj (2012) says, we live in a "culture of humiliation," in a world of social inequality, where we are exposed to mechanisms that we do not understand, which we do not control, and which we are afraid of. In this situation, questions about emotional education seem to be one of the most important pedagogical issues.

Owing to the fact that relationships between emotions and education are multi-faceted and very complex, it is impossible to define emotional education, its objectives and tasks, without referring to the ontological and epistemological perspective adopted. In pedagogical sciences, we find numerous answers to questions about the aims of education and upbringing, and the principles of their implementation. Hence, the various proposals for pluralistic approaches and typologies, which are specific "maps" of educational discourses. Those include teaching orientations presented by Stefan Mieszalski (2010), or teaching styles proposed by Gary Fenstermacher and Jonas Soltis (2000). Owing to the embedding of the considerations in this article in the field of teaching, I refer to the discourses distinguished in the theory of education (Klus-Stańska 2018). With reference to the above classifications, I distinguish two discourses on emotional education, that is, technological-instrumental and humanistic-critical. At the same time, I understand public educational discourses, after Zbigniew Kwieciński (2019), as some relatively durable collections of meanings organizing the language of statements and debates in public stances and discussions expressed both in direct contacts between people and, indirectly, through the press, books, the media of mass communication, social media, and concerning, directly or incidentally, the issues of upbringing, education, teaching, and the system of education.

The purpose of this article is to characterize the singled out discourses of emotional education, that is, technological-instrumental and humanistic-critical. There are clear and significant differences between them in the way we understand emotional

education. This results primarily from referring to different theoretical assumptions, both within the objectives and principles of upbringing (education), as well as the issues of defining and understanding human emotions.

Emotional Education in Technological-Instrumental Terms

This discourse is based on the oldest and most influential vision of education, in which the basic mission of educational institutions is the transfer of objective knowledge and coding it in the minds of students. The education process is implemented on the basis of curricula prepared by experts, in which the content of education is important from the perspective of preparation for effective action. Education, which consists of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, as well as of competences that contribute to the better, more effective performance of social roles, is a result of pedagogical activity.

It is technologically oriented and instrumental education in the sense that it puts in the center a teacher technologist who "equips" learners with knowledge (which enjoys the feature of objectivity here), develops skills and competences, and the most important question the teacher faces is what methods, techniques, and means are the most effective in teaching. That approach permeates the entire system of school education and sees the teacher as a relentless seeker of teaching recipes for educational success.

From this perspective, emotional education is the development of emotional and social competenc-es, which are a condition for the personal and professional development of the individual, and are also an important factor for achieving success in the personal, social, and professional spheres. Emotional competences are important both from the perspective of the functioning of children and young people at school and of adults in their workplace. For they provide an opportunity to use (manage) emotions in such a way that helps them to function better in their personal lives and contributes to their more effective and efficient functioning in society.

The concept of emotional competence has been developed most comprehensively by Carolyn Saarni (1999a; 1999b; 2005), who bases the structure of emotional competence on sociological theories. Saarni claims that human skills that make up emotional competences make it possible to effectively regulate one's emotional experiences and enable proper interpersonal exchange; Saarni (1999b) treats them as skills owing to which the individual is effective in various social transactions involving emotions. At the same time, being effective is understood here as one's belief in having skills in that field and the belief that one is able to achieve the objective. Saarni strongly emphasizes that emotional competences are both a consequence and a condition of participation in culture. Being emotionally competent means to actively participate in social life. People with a high level of emotional competences are more flexible, capable of controlling their actions, thoughts, and feelings in accordance with the cultural context. They also show greater self-confidence, are individuals—as Saarni puts it—who respect themselves, but also respect the emotion-

al experiences of others. Saarni lists the following skills that make up emotional competences[1]:

- awareness of one's own emotional states,

- ability to notice and differentiate emotions experienced by others,

- ability to use appropriate verbal expressions to describe emotions common to a given culture,

- ability to express emotional experiences using symbols,

- ability to empathically engage in the emotional experiences of others,

- ability to differentiate emotional states and understand the lack of correspondence between an internal emotional state and its external expression,

- awareness of cultural rules and emotional norms and standards (knowledge about where, with whom, and how to express one's own emotions),

- ability to take into account information about the interactional partner in order to understand the emotions experienced by him or her,

- understanding that behaviors during which we express our emotions affect others,

- ability to adaptively cope with aversive or unpleasant emotions,

- knowledge that the nature of interpersonal relationships is determined by the degree of emotional directness and authenticity between the participants in interaction,

- sense of emotional effectiveness and agency (the ability to regulate one's own emotions and actions and perceive them as effective).

Carolyn Saarni's approach is slightly different from the well-known (and popular) concepts of emotional intelligence presented by Mayer and Salovey (1995), or by Daniel Goleman. For Saarni emphasizes that the social context plays a key role in the emotional functioning of individuals. Nevertheless, emotional competence is here, like in the case of emotional intelligence, a set of predispositions (knowledge and skills) thanks to which we function properly in various social situations, that is, those that trigger emotions and make it possible for us to regulate our emotional experiences and proper interpersonal exchange. According to Saarni, the process of emotional development is one of maturing and acquiring the skills that make up emotional competence. Those processes take place throughout the entire human life, from the birth of the child to the last moments of our lives; a continuous and complementary process of learning emotions is taking place, that is, the acquisition of emotionally labeled beliefs and, at the same time, learning how to express them. In that way, our emotional competences and beliefs about emotions coincide with the norms and standards current in a given culture.

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[1] Emotional competences, their essence and structure, have been broadly characterized in Góralska (2012).

Despite the fact that Carolyn Saarni's concept is rooted in cultural concepts, it is treated instrumentally as the adaptive potential of the subject. I refer hereby to the two meanings of competence distinguished by Astrid Męczkowska (2003). Competence is then a predisposition to effective action, directed at achieving an objective, its basic components being the knowledge, skills, and motivation to act, as well as convincing the subject of having that predisposition.

Emotional competences are an unequivocally positive resource. Hence, encouraging people (both children and adults) to improve the skills that make up emotional intelligence is an important element of management philosophy in many educational institutions and outside them (Goleman 1995). The development of those competences is a factor that facilitates one's professional career and improves functioning in various everyday situations. The results of research on the significance of emotional intelligence in human functioning (Matczak and Knopp 2013) confirm that emotionally intelligent people have greater social competences, function better in close interpersonal relationships, more often exhibit a secure attachment style, and use constructive strategies for dealing with conflicts. They have stronger self-esteem, sense of life, and the ability to influence their own fate, are more resistant to stress, and more often use a task-oriented style of coping with it. There is also evidence of a relationship between emotional intelligence and the effectiveness of school and professional functioning. According to Anna Matczak and Katarzyna Knopp (2013), emotionally intelligent people are more motivated to learn, are more satisfied with

their work, and are characterized by greater creativity.

Many researchers believe that emotional competences are subject to training. Its goal is to achieve such a level of competence which indicates that the effect of a performed action will be consistent with the assumed objectives. Emotional education in such approach is associated with development through the acquisition of emotional competences, while building emotional capital means the development of knowledge, skills, and competences which are the components of emotional competence. And because, as stated above, emotional competence is an important instrument supporting the development of an individual in many spheres of his or her life, and building emotional capital is a basic element contributing to the building of social and cultural capital, the training of emotional intelligence/competences has become an extremely popular marketing slogan. In response to the large interest in the education market, numerous programs, courses, and training sessions are created, the task of which is to raise the level of emotional competences and, thus, to improve the life situation of participants and, owing to this, guarantee them success in all areas of functioning and promote mental well-being.

Unfortunately, the research conducted in this field (mainly by psychologists) does not explicitly confirm the thesis about the effectiveness of courses and trainings aimed at developing emotional competences. Admittedly, there are (few) reports from studies on the effectiveness of emotional training. For example, Danuta Wosik-Kawala conducted empirical research among senior high school students,

in which she showed that (partly) positive results in developing emotional competences can be brought about by workshop classes organized at school. Her experiment proved that the classes caused an increase in the empathy and stress coping skills of the surveyed students, while the proposed educational classes did not significantly affect the change in respect of the respondents' assertive skills (Wosik-Kawala 2013). Also Katarzyna Knopp (2010) confirms that although there are very few studies verifying the effectiveness of courses and trainings, emotional intelligence subjects itself to learning processes and can be stimulated by introducing targeted educational interactions. Many researchers are skeptical about this issue owing to the fact that the effectiveness of such programs and trainings has not been confirmed by reliable scientific research, with some of them going so far as to claim that "those statements are based mostly on anecdotal messages or imprecisely described research" (Śmieja and Orzechowski 2008:36).

Emotional Education in Humanistic-Critical Terms

The most characteristic feature of this discourse is the assumption that the activities of educational institutions should move towards a change in the social world in accordance with the ideas of equality, social justice, emancipation (freedom, breaking free from enslavement), and empowerment (construed as acquiring the ability to act actively). What is clearly visible in the humanistic-critical discourse is the features of the so-called critical teaching, which, according to Dorota Klus-Stańska (2018), is characterized by:

- conscious political nature, which is expressed in the criticism of not only the policy implemented by educational authorities, but also in the criticism of promoted ideologies, norms and standards, systems of values that impose a system of meanings, and social structures, often violating the freedom of individual (teacher) and his or her basic rights;

- sociological theoretical orientation, which is expressed in the fact that we refer more often to sociological and economic sources, and less often to psychological ones;

- the unmasking nature of the school concept, which is revealed as "invalidating" the existing interpretations of the social world and educational practices;

- radicalism, which consists in postulating a profound change in school education that would be a tool and element of political change.

In this discourse, both the knowledge and emotional experiences of individual are understood differently, the goals of their development being also different. It is emphasized here that the individual learning cannot be considered in isolation from the social context or one's biography (Tedder and Biesta 2009), their common feature being to emphasize the importance of the socio-cultural space in which learning processes take place. In a wealth of extremely diverse educational spaces (formal and informal; real and virtual), individuals build their emotional experience, which goes far beyond their knowledge and skills, throughout their entire lives.

Emotions are seen here as deeply entangled in the education process, where not only individual and social aspects, but also the power relations current in educational institutions, are important to feel them: "emotions are created or constructed socially, meaning that what people feel is conditioned by their socialization in culture and participation in social structures" (Turner and Stets 2009:16). Emotions underlie the moral beliefs, attitudes, and practices of social life, are entangled in ideologies, social, economic, and political phenomena and, therefore, take a different form, that is, they manifest themselves differently in public space.

Humanistic-critical education is, therefore, not a game to gain knowledge or competences. It is something more, it is "an educational game for a better, more conscious, and subjective being in the world" (Malewski 2019:397), and the various forms of emotional education (both institutional and informal) are to make the development of reflective, critical (self-)consciousness possible.

Such an approach to emotional education was first presented by the Canadian education researcher, located in the mainstream of critical pedagogy, Megan Boler. It is worth noting that, according to Boler, emotions are not only ignored in educational practice, but also in the broadly understood theory of education. Boler's research and analyses are groundbreaking in that they deal with the issues of relationships between emotions and education in a different, both epistemologically and methodologically innovative, context than it has been previously described. According to Boler, emotions are a place of socio-political control and, therefore, they cannot

be understood outside of culture and ideology. That means that experiencing emotions and working on emotions can be a tool of resistance to the norms and standards imposed and dominating in an (educational) institution. In the groundbreaking book under the title *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education*, Boler (1999) analyzed schools from the perspective of how they discipline, suppress, and ignore emotions. Boler presents a number of arguments in favor of the thesis that educational institutions control emotions, thus sustaining various forms of social injustice (inequality). That control occurs owing to the fact that in each community there are certain hierarchies of power, norms, standards, practices, or rituals (and the so-called emotional rules related to them) that define and regulate who and in what form can express emotions. It is those rules that determine who is included in and who is excluded from a given community because of certain behaviors. The lack of response to the manifestations of injustice (inequality) in the school or class leads to a sense of powerlessness and, consequently, results in the fact that members of educational institutions are distanced from one another, isolate themselves, and are hostile to each other. As a consequence, that generates a number of negative emotions such as hostility, guilt, hatred, and anomie. Schools are a place where teachers humiliate and ridicule students, and violate their personal dignity and bodily integrity with impunity (Kopciewicz 2011). The lack of reaction to the manifestations of social injustice consequently leads to dehumanization and depersonalization in interpersonal relationships. In Polish schools, many teachers display, as Bogusław Śliwerski (2010:497) puts it, a submissive attitude, that is, they are those teachers who do not have

the courage to resist toxic phenomena and subjects. Most teachers do not have enough courage to bear witness to their values, because they could pay too high a price for it, that is, they could deprive themselves of professional awards, functions, and even jobs. Most teachers do not get involved in difficult or controversial matters.

Meanwhile, if, as critical pedagogy wants it, the basic task of education is to serve democracy, then the involvement in and the active taking of actions that reveal and expose hidden educational violence is one of basic pedagogical obligations. Boler is one of the first researchers not only to reveal those mechanisms of emergence of negative emotions in school, but goes even further, that is, her work is a "call to act." In her opinion, discomfort can play a huge role in education and getting to know "difficult" issues such as racism, oppression, and social injustice. The theoretical proposition she developed, the so-called **pedagogy of discomfort** is a powerful pedagogical tool that makes it possible for teachers and students to use their discomfort to construct new emotional (co-)understandings. Boler proves that moving out of the "comfort zone" is to deconstruct the ways in which students and teachers have learned to feel, express their emotions, and to act. In other words, stepping outside of the comfort zone makes it possible to understand how emotions define what and how we want to see and, the other way round, how emotions contribute to the fact that we do not see (do not want to see) certain phenomena (Boler 1999:177).

From this point of view, the pedagogy of discomfort is a valuable pedagogical perspective (theory) serving to discover and challenge deeply embedded

social dimensions and emotional rules that form individual and group privileges through the daily habits, principles, and rituals of (educational) institutions and social groups. The pedagogy of discomfort is a valuable offer, providing students, teachers, and other people involved in the education process with the opportunity to think critically about the nature of their beliefs and about how they affect daily learning experiences and what they result in. From this perspective, the pedagogy of discomfort implements one of the basic assumptions of critical pedagogy (Giroux 2010) and the so-called transformative teaching (Klus-Stańska 2018) close to them, one of the main assumptions of which is to support learning understood as a process of the continuous reconstruction and transformation of lived experiences. The concept of transformative learning, the "father" of which is Jack Mezirow, and which is currently one of the most-described theories of adult learning, convinces us how we can change the established, and uncritically adopted in our childhood, meaning schemes. According to Mezirow (2000), we look at the world through a network of assumptions and expectations (those are the so-called "frames of reference") that we acquire during the socialization in our families, communities, in a word, through participation in culture. The frames of reference have a cognitive and emotional dimension including, among other things, interpersonal relationships, ways of thinking, attitudes, but also political orientations, cultural prejudices, ideologies, schemes, stereotypical attitudes and practices, mental habits, religious doctrines, moral and ethical standards (Mezirow 2003:59). From the perspective of the considerations presented here, it is important that the frames of reference have a strongly devel-

oped **emotional layer** through which we filter and give sense to our world. Therefore, the frames of reference form our identity and are the regulators of our behavior and actions in the world. As Mezirow (2003:58) puts it, transformative learning is a process in which we transform the uncritically adopted frames of reference, endowing them with a more open, reflective nature and emotional ability to change. Transformative learning, therefore, leads to a profound change in the way we perceive and interpret ourselves and the world and, consequently, gives the individual a chance to free oneself from the unreflective use of fixed, habitual, often dysfunctional patterns.

Another example of pedagogical projects carried out from the humanistic-critical perspective, and concerning the emotions of teachers, are the studies by Michalinos Zembylas (2002; 2003; 2004; 2005). His research (including the several-year ethnographic study described below) shows how the emotional experiences of teachers are integrated into the culture of an educational institution, and also how much entangled they are in the relationships of power and ideologies current in a school. Owing to the fact that Michalinos Zembylas' project is one of the first qualitative studies showing the role of emotions in education, it is worth presenting here the assumptions and results of the research by Zembylas (2004), who is one of the few to conduct qualitative studies in this area. It was a three-year ethnographic project, in which participated one primary school teacher—Catherine, a person with 25 years of work experience. The data were collected using various methods such as field observations, lesson recordings, in-depth interviews, analyses of documents (such as the school register or curriculum), and an interesting technique which consisted in the teacher keeping an "emotion diary." It was also a very special study owing to the researcher's own involvement. As the author says, his role evolved from that of a "participant-observer" at the beginning of the project, to a "participant-collaborator" at its end (Zembylas 2004:189). Based on the numerous data collected over three years, Zembylas proved that the significance of emotions in education boils down to the following three roles:

1. evaluative (assessing), which boils down to the fact that the teacher's emotions are a reflection of how the teacher perceives students, the school grade, teaching process, learning process, et cetera, in other words, the teacher's emotions are an important element of assessing (perceiving) school reality;

2. relational, which consists in the fact that the teacher's emotions are a reflection of the relationships (interactions) in the school environment (this is about relationships between teachers and students, but also with other members of the school community, i.e., other teachers, the school principal administration, parents) and, what is important, those relationships are constantly changing;

3. political, which means that the teacher's emotions "are a reflection of" the school's emotional rules (which depend on the current situation in the educational system, educational authorities, etc.), and as such are an important element of the teacher's self-assessment.

Zembylas' research "reveals" how significantly and deeply emotions are related to educational processes and shows that the teacher's emotions, and especially the ways of expressing and regulating them, are part of the school culture and the emotional rules current within that culture (Góralska 2018). The cultural factors present in the rules current in a school, in the curriculum, orders, and prohibitions set by educational authorities, et cetera, define what a teacher should feel and how he or she should express his or her emotions in specific teaching situations, and indicate what is and what is not acceptable in the teacher's behavior. Therefore, the rules "order" teachers to express their emotions in everyday school life. But, most importantly, the emotional rules binding on teachers are a kind of "disciplining technique" for the teacher's emotional expression (Zembylas 2002) because they divide the teacher's emotions into proper and improper, normal and deviant. If teachers do not comply with those rules or break them, they do it at their own expense. Therefore, the teacher's work requires investment and commitment, and is understood here as a conscious effort to develop emotional expression so that it complies with what the rules prescribe. The teacher's emotional work understood in such a way can also be an expression of (political) resistance to the rules that are imposed on the teacher (e.g., by educational authorities), which he or she does not agree with (Zembylas 2002:196). It is closely connected with ideological, political, and institutional factors that oblige the teacher to exhibit specific behaviors and take actions, and the adopted strategy of emotional work depends not only on his or her interpersonal relationships with students, but also with colleagues and school administration, so the emotional experiences of teachers have a clear political nature.

Referring to the research of such critical sociologists of education and his own ethnographic study described above, Michalinos Zembylas (2007) also formulates an interesting definition of emotional capital. He presents emotional capital as a collection of resources related to the access to the emotionally valued skills and assets held (mainly by women). Emotional resources are seen here as protectiveness, support, commitment, hence the quite popular view that women are "more emotional." Zembylas notes that professional work is an important place where one acquires emotional resources. For every professional role is associated with the norms, standards, and expectations defining what emotions and in what way employees should display in the performance of their duties. In a word, he defines emotional capital very broadly as types of emotional resources that are very significant not only for the social functioning of individuals, but also have economic consequences. They are also important for the broadly understood participation in culture. In critical terms, emotional capital does not necessarily have to be a positive resource, as it may, like other forms of capital, be a tool of cultural reproduction and may consolidate social inequalities. That happens when the emotional competences acquired in childhood do not comply with (are in contradiction to) the rules of feeling and expressing emotions resulting from the performed occupational or social role, which, as a result, leads to alienation and exclusion (Góralska 2016).

To confirm that thesis, it is worth recalling here Steven Gordon's (1981) research on and analyses of emotional culture. As part of culture, Gordon distinguished two so-called emotional orientations,

that is, institutional and impulsive. That division suggests that people find their deep, true "self" located in institutional behavior (in accordance with the standards of the institution) or in impulsive behavior (against those standards). Those two different emotional orientations (institutional and impulsive) are manifested in different emotional responses of individuals. In institutional orientation, people express emotions in accordance with the standards current in a given organization, sustaining the standards for the expression of emotions. In impulsive orientation, on the other hand, people express their emotions spontaneously, often disregarding institutional rules and conventions. Interestingly, the same emotion can have different meanings in different orientations (e.g., anger from the institutional perspective means a loss of self-control, and from the impulsive perspective freedom from social norms), and in addition, a person's emotions can change rapidly depending on the situation. According to Gordon, impulsive orientation focuses on the expression of primary emotions (such as anger, fear, disgust, sadness), which narrows the emotional vocabulary. In turn, institutional orientation focuses on culturally developed social (secondary) emotions, such as loyalty, trust, love, and vindictiveness. The emotional vocabulary of such people is much wider. According to Gordon, impulsive orientation can constitute "better" emotional capital in temporary situations, while institutional orientation in long-term relationships. Steven Gordon's (1981) analyses clearly show that the "value" of emotional capital in educational institutions is deeply entangled in and dependent on relationships and social roles; it is also a reflection of the position in social structures, and

emotional capital can be a tool of social exclusion and dominance.

The approaches presented above indicate how strong the relationships between emotions and education processes are. They also reveal that emotions are a fundamental component of school culture and a constitutive element of the learning process. Those relationships are so strong that Andy Hargreaves (1998) calls education "emotional practice." That means that education is a kind of activity that triggers in other people expected or unexpected changes in their emotional experiences. This is explained more precisely by the postmodern concept of **emotional understanding** by Norman Denzin (1984), who defines emotional practice as a type of activity that causes in a given person / other people changes in their emotional experiences. Emotional (co-)understanding is construed here as an intersubjective process, in which a person enters the field of both his or her own emotional experiences and the experiences of others. Interpreting one's own and someone else's emotional experiences is crucial to the building of emotional (co-)understanding. Emotional practice makes people become (see themselves as) complex subjects, that is, they perceive themselves in a more problematized way. Emotional practice can be "expressed" not only verbally, but also through the body, and is a peculiar combination of thoughts, feelings, and actions (cf. Hargreaves 2001:1056). Emotional (co-)understanding is, therefore, reaching one's own (or someone else's) stock of emotional experiences, recognizing them, and interpreting them.[2]

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[2] The research on affective contagion explains that the processes of social transfer of emotions between people are possible (cf. Wróbel 2016).

Meanwhile, as Norman Denzin claims, instead of emotional understanding, school everyday life (educational practice) is often characterized by emotional misunderstanding, which, according to Denzin, is a ubiquitous and even chronic feature of school everyday life. Contacts and relationships between students and teachers are not conducive to closeness and are rarely based on mutual understanding. According to Denzin, successful teaching and learning depend largely on the ability to build understanding with students and other participants in the learning process. In other words, education and upbringing largely depend on whether we can create conditions that make emotional (co-)understanding possible. Emotional misunderstanding not only strikes at the essence of the learning process and lowers its quality, but also destructively affects all elements of the (emotional) culture of educational institutions. It is on emotional (mis)understanding that not only success in education depends, but also the fact of whether we are able to build close relationships with students (parents, colleagues) and, thus, to develop pro-social attitudes, work to maximize our own (and our students') development, in a word, to act to build trust and social well-being (Śliwerski 2017:11).

Conclusion

The article describes emotional education in the context of various theoretical perspectives. The approach I have called a *technological-instrumental discourse* presents emotional education as developing emotional and social competences, which are treated as a factor facilitating one's functioning in a school, professional career, and improving functioning in everyday situations.

A different approach to emotional education, which I have described as a *humanistic-critical discourse*, indicates that emotional experiences can be a tool for personal development, but they also have deep social and political entanglements. Here, emotional education means supporting the development of a rich and diverse set of emotional resources, which are important both from the perspective of the individual's openness to the understanding of his or her own experiences and opening the way to personal transformation; they are also important in the context of developing understanding with others, developing empathy, compassion, and solidarity. Acting for the benefit of emotional development construed in such a way can contribute to the reduction of suffering, social inequalities, exclusion, and marginalization.

Considering emotional education in different theoretical contexts leads to different consequences which are important from the perspective of educational practice and supporting emotional development.

Treating emotional education as a set of emotional and social competences is an instrumental approach to emotional development and, from this perspective, emotional education is construed as multiplying resources, that is, skills that make up emotional competences (Dietel 2013). One's emotional resources are treated here as an instrument, a tool that, when properly improved, contributes to the supporting of the individual's development in the various spheres of his or her life, while emotional competences are treated here as the adaptive potential of the subject undergoing such training. Its goal (i.e., one of the training sessions) is for one to achieve such a level of

competence that will make the effect of his or her action correspond to the assumed performance pattern. Emotional education in this approach consists in developing and improving knowledge and skills, the components of emotional competences. As a result of various experiences (both intentional training and everyday situations), the individual develops them throughout his or her life and, therefore, our competences can constantly grow. They are treated here as the acquired, adaptive functions of personality.

In the humanistic-critical approach, emotional resources are of a different nature. Their development consists in the creative activity of the subject in constructing his or her own (self-)cognition, and not in the reception of the content of cultural message. That requires a different organization of educational processes, where, as Peter Alheit (2009:15) aptly observes, "the focal point is no longer the effectiveness of teaching, effective teaching strategies, or the coherence of educational programs, but the situation and conditions on the side of the student." It means a shift towards non-formal and informal learning, where the most important teaching tasks include supporting subjectivity, empowerment, and acquiring abilities to act actively. The development of emotional resources is based on the holistic and deep changes taking place at the highest level of personal development. In this perspective, it is also important to build conditions for learning to adopt a different point of view, feeling, and acting differently, or in a different way. Shared learning, learning to be with one another, creates opportunities for developing critical and reflective (self-)awareness, but also opens the way to the building of trust and solidarity in the area of school culture. From this perspective,

emotional education is the creation of support for the building of emotional (co-)understanding.

In the era of dominance of neoliberal culture and the domination of life by free market economy, where we are regularly subjected to "becoming skilled in competitive, antisocial, egoistic, privatized behavior, unconducive to activity based on the principles of cooperation, mutual trust, and care for the common good" (Rutkowiak 2007:101), demanding pedagogical actions for the benefit of emotional development is undoubtedly one of the priority tasks in the field of educational sciences. It also seems that those are the reasons why the perspective of emotional education in humanistic-critical terms has much greater educational potential, owing to the fact that it is that vision of education that focuses on the issues of emancipation, social justice, and human freedom. I fully agree with Gert Biesta (2013), one of the leading theoreticians of this trend, who says that instrumental education, currently the dominant vision of education, is an enslaving and oppressive approach due to the fact that it is about forming an individual according to a predetermined pattern (goal) and discipline. Such education is enslaving, it perpetuates social inequalities, and can easily become a (legal) instrument of control and power. Biesta (2013:3) says explicitly that such an understanding of education is a "fundamental misunderstanding of what education is" and proposes a vision of education where building subjectivity and sensitivity is important. Moreover, most importantly, as claimed by Tomasz Szkudlarek (2010:487), one of its supporters, critical pedagogy "is an extremely interesting, theoretically dense, analytically reliable, politically important, and pedagogically responsible theory."

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