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Speech Is Silver, Silence Is Golden. Thomas Gordon's No-Lose Method – Theoretical Assumptions, References to Practice

Mowa jest srebrem, a milczenie złotem. Metoda wychowania bez porażek Thomasa Gordona – założenia teoretyczne, odniesienia do praktyki

Abstract: Thomas Gordon is the creator of non-authoritarian pedagogy. In it, he speaks out against power relations – the use of force and fear in the contact of the educator (parent, teacher) with the pupil. He believes that the root cause of conflicts between educators and pupils is the use of communication barriers (judging, providing ready-made solutions, lack of empathy). He suggests that the relationship between educators and pupils should be based on respect for each other's needs, love, and responsibility. He proposes the no-lose method based on the theory of equivalent (symmetrical) interpersonal relations between adults, children, and adolescents. This method equips educators with skills that help them establish proper relationships with their pupils and solve problems in a constructive way. Among these skills, Gordon includes: careful observation of behavior to identify own and pupil's needs, identifying and accurately naming the problem at hand, using the language of acceptance in conversation, active listening, building a relationship based on mutual respect, resolving conflicts using the no-lose method, and building authority based on personal influence. The no-lose method is partially or fully used at schools, including in prevention and education programs, peer tutoring, and mediation. It is also a way of reducing school violence.

Keywords: interpersonal communication; teacher; student; no-lose method

Abstrakt: Thomas Gordon jest twórcą pedagogii nieautorytarnej. Występuje w niej przeciwko stosunkom władzy, posługiwania się siłą i lękiem w kontaktach wychowawcy (rodzica, nauczyciela) z wychowankiem. Uważa, że podstawową przyczyną konfliktów między wychowawcą a wychowankiem są bariery komunikacyjne (osądzanie, dawanie gotowych rozwiązań, brak empatii). Pragnie, by relacja wychowawcza między wychowawcą a wychowankiem opierała się na poszanowaniu swoich potrzeb, na miłości i odpowiedzialności. Proponuje metodę wychowania bez porażek, bazującą na teorii równoważnych (symetrycznych) stosunków interpersonalnych między dorosłymi

a dziećmi i młodzieżą. Metoda ta wyposaża wychowawców w umiejętności, które pomagają im w nawiązywaniu prawidłowych relacji z wychowankiem i w konstruktywnym rozwiązywaniu problemów. Do umiejętności tych Gordon zalicza: wnikliwą obserwację zachowań, aby móc określić potrzeby własne i wychowanków; identyfikowanie i dokładne nazwanie zaistniałego problemu, stosowanie w rozmowie języka akceptacji; aktywne słuchanie; budowanie relacji opartej na wzajemnym szacunku, rozwiązywanie konfliktów metodą bez zwycięsców i przegranych; budowanie autorytetu opartego na wpływie osobistym. Metoda wychowania bez porażek częściowo lub w całości jest wykorzystywana w szkole, między innymi w programach profilaktyczno-wychowawczych, w tutoringu rówieśniczym, w mediacjach. Jest także jednym ze sposobów radzenia sobie z przemocą szkolną.

Słowa kluczowe: komunikacja interpersonalna; nauczyciel; uczeń; metoda wychowania bez porażek

INTRODUCTION

The key to understanding children and adolescents is finding a proper way to communicate with them. It impacts not only didactical and educational effects, but also relations among teachers and their cooperation with parents. One could argue that communication skills lie at the core of the teacher's job. The no-lose method is specifically designed for teachers and educators seeking effective ways to communicate with children and adolescents, and aiming to enhance their interpersonal communication skills. This article seeks to broaden our understanding of the subject and focuses on the teacher's work environment, interpreted as a space where interpersonal relationships grow. In the first part, I will discuss interpersonal communication, and in the second part, I will discuss the no-lose method.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT (INTERPERSONAL) COMMUNICATION

Communication is a social phenomenon. It is a field of human activity that requires engaging in discussion, exchanging information, and asking questions. Without the ability to establish relationships and interpret information, humans would not be able to create the socio-cultural reality in which they thrive. There is no single, universal definition of communication, as this term has several meanings. Dobek-Ostrowska (2004) defines the act of communicating as a process of "exchanging information between individuals, groups, and institutions. Its purpose is to exchange thoughts, share knowledge, information, and ideas. This process occurs at various levels, is conducted using different methods, and produces specific effects" (p. 1). Communication can be analyzed in terms of its model and the manner in which it proceeds. Elements of the model consist of the involved parties (sender and receiver), the message, the reference point (context), as well as the code and the medium, that is, the means of communication. Messages are exchanged between the sender and the receiver. They are transformed into a symbolic form, that is, they are encoded and conveyed through the chosen communication medium (channel) to the receiver. The receiver decodes the message sent by the

sender. Moreover, often, in a communicative situation, there is feedback defined as the receiver's reaction to the message sent by the sender (Aleksander, 2003, p. 707). Because of applied signs and codes, communication can be categorized as having verbal, oral, written form, or a nonverbal one, connected with facial expressions and body language. Nonverbal messages illustrate the contents of a statement, are used to convey an emotional state and its intensity, define relationships between the sender and the receiver, help to assess the speaker (gesticulation, facial expressions, eye contact, interpersonal distance, body posture, vocal signs (Frączek, 2012, pp. 125–127). Nonverbal communication is a major addition to verbal communication – it serves many functions and strongly impacts how the discussion is going to end. This is why it is important to keep the verbal and nonverbal language harmonized while communicating. One of the forms of communication, important for the issues touched upon in this article, is interpersonal communication, in which the involved parties not only exchange information but also establish a relationship. Nęcki defines interpersonal communication as the process of exchanging verbal, nonverbal, and vocal signs (symbols) in a specific context in order to achieve a higher level of cooperation (Nęcki, 1996, p. 109). Hence, interpersonal communication should be understood as a process by which an individual sends and receives information in direct contact with another person or a small group of people. Communication usually proceeds "face to face" and is accompanied by the engagement of other parties and the exertion of mutual influence. Characteristics of interpersonal communication are: bidirectionality, physical closeness, swapping the roles of the speaker and the listener, creativity (gaining knowledge about the world, creating new terms), dynamicity (receiving, processing and interpreting information), purposefulness (trying to achieve a certain goal), complexity (various forms of interpersonal communication), continuity (the process lasts the whole life), irreversibility (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2004, p.67). In this process, the two sides care about active partaking – that is, achieving mutual understanding. The main difference between communication and interpersonal communication is that

> interpersonal communication is a process in which parties swap roles and exchange information with each other; they are interacting with each other. It is a two-way process that requires physical closeness of the sender and the receiver or a medium that enables such feedback […]. On the other hand, communication happens through media and means of transferring information. It is the sender who is important, whereas the receiver just listens. (Żydek-Bednarczuk, 2005, p. 10)

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN EDUCATION

Interpersonal communication is a basic element of upbringing and education. It is a way in which the teacher influences the pupil, which leaves marks on their cognitive, emotional, and moral development. That is why it is important how the teacher

views communicating with the pupil – do they view it as a monologue with a predetermined message, or do they view it as a dialogue based on partnership that allows for multiple perspectives. In other words, the communication model chosen by the teacher is what is vital. We differentiate three models of interpersonal communication: one-way, two-way (interactive), and relational (Frydrychowicz, 2004, p. 65). When it comes to building proper relations between the teacher and students, the relational model, which proposes the sender's and the receiver's focus on the subject of the communication, is the most effective one. It allows for exchanging messages between all agents in a class, encouraging discussion, making own opinions and reflections, and accepting different points of view.

An important element of interpersonal communication is the relationship that forms between the teacher and the pupil. It is this relationship that determines whether the process succeeds or fails. Many pedagogists and psychologists think that interpersonal relations between the teacher and the pupil are one of the most important social interactions. The term "relationship" in a common understanding means a relation between people. Relationships are based on feelings we have toward other people. They can be positive, negative, permanent, temporary, symmetrical, asymmetrical. They are a way of contacting (confronting with) other people (Marszałek, 2022, pp. 275–276). The relationship that is being established during the communication between the teacher and the pupil is an interpersonal relationship. The term "interpersonal relationship" refers to mutual interactions between teachers and students, which aim to achieve certain didactic and educational goals. A more specific term would be educational relationship. Educational relationship is understood as "a phenomenon occurring in a certain place and time, between particular individuals, following a certain strategy" (Nowak, 1999, p. 156).

Humanistic education developed a set of principles with an individualistic approach that ought to be followed in the relationship between the teacher and the student. This approach suggests that the teacher should support the student in finding their own individuality and interests, encourage contemplation, unassisted decision making, and help with shaping their self-esteem. "Individuality in the educational relationship is reflected through the pupil's ability to influence the relationship. Furthermore, it enables seeing oneself as a creator of own life" (Sowa, 2005, p. 456). A good teacher communicates with their pupil in an open (free of judgement) and conscious (pays attention to words and emotions) way. They are honest and authentic, have respect toward their pupils, build cordial relations with them, show them acceptance, and are empathetic. Those behaviors of the teacher shape a communication etiquette through a discussion (educational dialogue, language ethics). The value of a dialogue as an education method lies in the fact that it "[...] facilitates changes in the personalities of the communicating parties, it is also an effective way of protecting their rights, and gives the possibility to actively induce pupils into solving their own problems by themselves. It is a way of communication that accepts the right of pupils to decide about

themselves" (Skurjat, 2014, p. 132). According to Śnieżyński, dialogue in education teaches conversational etiquette, taking responsibility for words, cooperation with others, eases worry, enables feedback to take effect in a teacher–student relationship and between students themselves, makes it possible to understand the personalities of the communicating parties to a greater degree, creates social relations between the parties (Śnieżyński, 2005, pp. 17–19). Nowak-Łojewska notices that in the educational process, communication in the form of a critical dialogue is necessary. In a critical dialogue, communication processes are symmetrical and respect the teacher's – but also the pupil's – right to have a say. It enables asking questions, voicing own opinions, analyzing and reflecting upon certain matters from different angles (Nowak-Łojewska, 2023, p. 75). Difficulties arising during the process of interpersonal communication are referred to as communication roadblocks.[1] One of the best-known typologies of communication roadblocks is the so-called "dirty dozen" proposed by Thomas Gordon. It will be discussed in the second part of the article.

COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF THE TEACHERS

Competence is, in other words, the scope of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enables proper execution of professional activities (Kwaśnica, 2007, p. 301). In the teacher's job, the skills of establishing and maintaining positive relationships strongly influence the realization of duties and the achieved effects. A special kind of competence in the didactic and educational work, is the communicative competence that is necessary to establish interpersonal communication, enter into an educational relationship, and dialogue with the pupil. Samborska notes that the uniqueness of communicative situations and the communicative nature of the teacher's job indicate that communicative competence is a basic element of education, which determines how the teacher is viewed, their level of professional education, and the skills that they need (Samborska, 2014, p. 49). Strykowski defines communicative competence as knowledge about the process of communication and the ability to send and receive messages effectively (Strykowski, 2005, p. 23). Communicative competence defines the quality and effectiveness of the educational process. Teachers possessing communicative competence can listen to students and establish relationships with them, resolve conflicts, and create an atmosphere that fosters communication within a class and outside it. According to Kwaśnica (2007), teacher's communicative competence is the ability to stay in contact with others and with oneself. He believes that communicative competence includes empathetic understanding, unconditional acceptance of a student, the ability to criticize – understood not as disregarding, but rather

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[1]   Roadblocks and mistakes that hinder efficient communication, among others, are touched upon in (Kozyra, 2019).

searching for hidden aspects of own and other's views – renouncing the authoritarian communication style, and embracing the non-directive style, which treats own point of view as one of many possible answers (the so-called cooperative communication style) (Kwaśnica, 2007, pp. 300–301). The importance of communicative competence in education was spotted by and included in the new model of teachers' training developed by a team of experts working for the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. It was implemented in 2019. Among nine different general effects of the training preparing for working as a teacher, there is an annotation that a pedagogist should have communicative competence and collaborative skills that enable effective cooperation with all people engaged in the educational process (Ministerstwo Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego, 2018, p. 3).

Śliwerski (2005) notes that contemporary teachers still do not possess enough knowledge about ways of communicating with students "pedagogists are people with whom it is not possible to talk, as they prefer the authoritarian communication style. Mutual relations between them and their students are characterized by a strong asymmetry that distorts expressive relations, creative thinking processes, authenticity of demeanor, and willingness to express one's feelings" (p. 9). This state of affairs is reaffirmed by studies of teachers' communicative competence (Grabowiec & Bochniarz, 2016, pp. 278–282; Strykowska-Nowakowska, 2017, pp. 317–328). To support teachers (and parents) in establishing proper relationships with their pupils, many innovative methods (psychological concepts, also called humanistic concepts), which improve the process of interpersonal communication, were established.[2] One of them is the no-lose method created by Thomas Gordon.

THE AUTHOR OF THE NO-LOSE METHOD AND THE ORIGINS OF HIS CONCEPT

Thomas Gordon (1918–2002) was an American psychologist, psychotherapist, and author of guides concerning interpersonal communication. He also devised courses and programs for parents and teachers focusing on improving the quality of interpersonal communication. The fact that all over the world education facilities, where trainings for parents, teachers, children, and adolescents take place, and where coaches are being educated to work with those groups, were and still are being created, is proof of continuing interest in the no-lose method. In Poland, there is also such a facility – the Polish Gordon Education Centre (Polskie Centrum Edukacji Gordona, n.d.), established in 2005.[3]

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[2] For instance, a very popular method – M.B. Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication.

[3] Detailed information about the centre's activities can be found at https://gordon.edu.pl/. It was from this site where the information about Gordon was gathered.

If one wants to discuss the no-lose method, one has to reference theoretical ideas resulting from a few important branches in psychology and pedagogy – progressive education, humanistic psychology, and nondirective pedagogy. All of those impacted scientific works of Thomas Gordon.

New Education began in the last decade of the 19th century in Europe and the United States. It was a pedagogical movement whose goal was to reconstruct school and make radical changes in education (Sztobryn, 2006, p. 278). The fathers of the New Education proposed that a child should be seen as an individual in the educational process and that this process should account for psychological qualities, needs, interests, and talents of a pupil, reference their activity, give them a chance to be creative, and to express their creativity. Let us recall basic ideas and principles of the New Education: the necessity to understand unique qualities and social skills of a child, education based on the activity of students – their autonomy and creativity, educational ideas over didactic ones, fostering one's independence, supporting one's artistic and moral development. The need for autonomy, spontaneity, and freedom in development and education was being highlighted. There was an emphasis on the role of conversation with a child (dialogue). The teacher should be rather a partner than a guide – a person who facilitates growth, but does not take the spotlight in the educational process. The new school was to become an active school tailored to children's needs. The success of the New Education movement was based on experimental schools, including John Dewey's school in Chicago (1896), Cecil Reddie in Abbotsholm (1889), Ovide Decroly's in Brussels (1901 and 1907) (Sztobryn, 2006, pp. 289–290).

Humanistic psychology began in the United States in the 1960s (Zieliński, 2008, p. 133). Its founders are thought to be three psychologists: Carl Rogers (1902–1987), Abraham Maslov (1908–1970), and Gardner Murphy (1895–1979). As the name suggests, humanistic psychology is the branch that puts the human and their world in the center, and the main principle is the concern for the individual's own good. The inner world of a human takes a central spot in humanistic psychology. That is why humanistic psychology focuses on people's desires, aspirations, love, fear, happiness, questions of existence, achieving one's full potential, and the need to be understood. It reinforces human freedom, uniqueness, and autonomy, encourages dialogue and communication between people (Zieliński, 2008, p. 133). The fathers of humanistic psychology were no strangers to the ideas of the exponents of the New Education Movement, including primarily John Dewey (1859–1952), professor of the University of Chicago, whose schools were operating in the vicinity of the University, and William Kilpatrick (1871–1965) – author of the project-based learning. Carl Rogers studied under those two pedagogists, and their ideas greatly influenced his further scientific career. Rogers is considered to be the creator of the theoretical foundation of nondirective pedagogy (also known as nondirectional pedagogy). The essence of nondirective pedagogy lies in the idea of renouncing role models, authorities, and encouraging the child to discover and embrace values independently, trusting the child

and making them co-responsible, rejecting forced goals and educational programs in favor of unconditionally accepting the child for who they are, the lack of repression in favor of independence, self-determination, self-control, and self-reflection of every person's unique behavior (Śliwerski, 2005, p. 120). The teacher ought to be a person whose actions are sincere, who is empathetic, creative, able to change, flexible in solving problems, ready to share their own experiences to satisfy the child's needs, to answer questions, and to help their interests grow. In the relationship between the teacher and the pupil, the teacher is a neutral listener who completely accepts the second person, and is ready to provide help not only when the pupil asks for it. The teacher does not manipulate, does not judge, and does not have any ulterior motives. The help provided to the pupil relies on careful listening, wanting to understand them, and being able to share own point of view (impressions and feelings) without passing judgement, advising, or instructing. This kind of teacher is known as a facilitator – a person who supports one's development and creates appropriate conditions in order to help the pupil make the most out of their potential (Danilewska, 2004, p. 204; Śliwerski, 2005, pp. 122–123).

Thomas Gordon was a student of Carl Rogers. Gordon worked at Roger's Center for Studies of the Person in La Jolla, California, where, based on humanitarian psychology and nondirective pedagogy he created the concept of nonauthoritarian pedagogy and developed it further in practice through the no-lose method, which is also known as a method without winners or losers (Danilewska, 2004, p. 206). The particular elements of the no-lose method have been known in psychology and pedagogy for a long time. Gordon combined them to create an interesting alternative way of communicating without aggression, while also fulfilling the needs of the two parties involved in the dialogue.

THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS OF THE NO-LOSE METHOD AND MODEL

The no-lose method is based on the theory of equal (symmetrical, collaborative) interpersonal relations between adults and children or adolescents (Śliwerski, 2005, p. 138). Teachers and pupils are treated without any differences, with regard to their rights, needs, individuality, and dignity. The main factor that determines whether the process of education and learning is going to be pleasant and satisfying, or rather disappointing and discouraging, is the ability to enter into a special kind of arrangement with the students and to listen to their verbal and nonverbal messages to offer them exactly what they need. A child is not a possession of the teacher, they are a separate individual with their own life and identity. That gives them the right to privacy and to independently solve their own problems (the basic idea behind the no-lose method is the idea of having a problem which stipulates that the problem

should be solved by the one who owns the problem). The teacher should accept that. The goal of education is the broadly understood development of the child that should not be subject to external ideals, but stem from the child's potential. The pupil should grow to like and accept him/herself and become a person who they can and want to be, even if their choice differs from the expectations of their teachers/parents (Śliwerski, 2005, pp. 138–139).

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT IN THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION

Interpersonal conflict is an integral part of social life. In the school environment, conflicts are unavoidable. They occur between the teachers and the pupils, and among pupils themselves. Most often they stem from a conflict of interest, goals, views, intentions, incentives, or duties (Puppel & Krawczyk, 2015, p. 149). Thomas Gordon also mentions an instance where the behavior of one party disturbs the other party in trying to fulfill their needs. Contrary to popular belief, conflict does not necessarily have to be negative. It is how the conflict is going to be resolved that is important for the pedagogic process. A constructive resolution of a conflict gives the feeling of calmness and satisfaction, boosts energy levels, expands possibilities for personal development, and enables building relationships in a group. The positive influence of a conflict is reflected through a better understanding of oneself and the environment, emotional relaxation, and relieving stress. From the perspective of the educational process's quality, the negative consequences of conflict include anxiety, loneliness, suppressed anger, rebellion, a decline in the group's psychological atmosphere, and destruction of interpersonal relations (Siewiora, 2015, pp. 112–113). For the teacher, a conflict poses a challenge, in which their interpersonal relationship skills play a major role. "The best pedagogical approach the teacher could take for dealing with conflict with the students would be a constructive approach, where the teacher tries to use a difficult situation as an occasion to conduct a joint analysis of behaviors and attitudes, which enables students to understand themselves and other people" (Tyrna-Łój, 1999, p. 9).

Gordon believes that the most important factor in resolving a conflict between the teacher and the student is its externalization. The point is to name the conflict, to analyze the ensuing clash of interests, and approach it like a problem to be solved, where neither party is winning or being defeated. This approach allows the teacher to indirectly influence the child. It aids the development of the pupil through independent decision making and bearing the consequences of their own choices (Gordon, 1991, p. 142). This strategy of resolving a conflict was dubbed as collaboration (accepting goals and desires of the second party without having to renounce own aspirations and ambitions) (Puppel & Krawczyk, 2015, p. 150).

THE TOXIC LANGUAGE – 12 ROADBLOCKS TO COMMUNICATION

What hinders the development of a positive teacher–student relationship? Gordon believes the so-called roadblocks to communication are the reason. Gordon includes among them: ordering, commanding, directing; warning, threatening; moralizing, preaching; advising, giving solutions, suggesting; judging, criticizing; praising, supporting; ridiculing, shaming; interpreting, analyzing, diagnosing; reassuring, consoling; questioning, probing; diverting, sarcasm (Gordon, 1995, pp. 93–100). Such statements distort or shatter the process of communication, because negative emotions evoked in the receiver paralyze the conversation. Some of those roadblocks are of an excluding nature (especially judging, criticizing, labeling, and admonishing messages). Excluding messages push the child to develop an inadequate self-image focused on weaknesses or perceived lack of competence, resulting in exclusion in different areas of life (Tempczyk-Nagórka, 2017, pp. 125–127).

FACTORS FACILITATING COMMUNICATION WITH A STUDENT – LANGUAGE OF ACCEPTANCE

Showing acceptance toward a pupil with a problem is an important part of the no-lose method. It enables the teacher to foster pupils' self-esteem and self-respect. Acceptance is demonstrated through utilizing appropriate techniques of communication with the child, also known as non-toxic communication techniques. These include:

Passive listening, i.e. silence. Proverb has it that speech is silver, silence is golden. Silence is one of the most effective therapeutic tools – it serves as an invitation for a person in a difficult spot to speak about matters that make them distressed, allows for catharsis, and relieves feelings and emotions (Gordon, 1995, p. 71). In a pedagogical situation, passive listening (wordless message) signals acceptance and constitutes an invitation for the child to open up further (the first step). Silence helps to avoid roadblocks to communication.

Answers of approval (invitations). To assure a pupil that they are being listened to, Gordon advises using verbal and nonverbal cues to indicate that our attention is directed toward them. Nodding, leaning forwards, smiling, frowning, and appropriate facial expressions give the student the impression that they are being listened to. Verbal cues – "uh-huh", "hm", "ah" (psychologists describe them as empathetic grunts) – signal to the student that they are being listened to and that the teacher is interested in what they have to say.

Door-openers. Sometimes students require additional invitation to say more. Teacher's statements should facilitate that – they are the door-openers: Do you want to say something more about it? That's interesting, tell me more. Would you like to talk about it?

Active listening. Gordon believes that most messages carry an unspoken, implicit content. That is why sometimes it is difficult to grasp the true meaning of a message. Active listening helps to properly understand the child's intention (encoded message). This kind of listening ensures that the message of a student will be understood and their point of view acknowledged. It assumes collaboration with the pupil by ensuring that they are understood by the teacher. It enables the creation of a relationship based on mutual respect, trust, and empathy. Active listening is not the same as agreeing with the other party, but rather making an effort to understand what the sender wants to communicate. As such, active listening intertwines with empathetic listening, which focuses on understanding the emotions of the receiver (Gordon, 1995, p. 78). Techniques facilitating active listening are: paraphrasing – repeating the speaker's statement in another form, voicing the meaning of the heard statement, as to check whether we understood properly; focusing on what is most important, requesting to elaborate, explain unclear content; reflection – telling the speaker what we think they feel (Gordon, 1995, p. 89). Active listening requires self-knowledge and self-control form the sender (it is vital that they prioritize well-considered views over opinions, which stem from emotions), caring about receiving feedback that indicates whether the communication is heading in the right direction, eliminating distractions, and maintaining positive attitude from both parties (Skurjat, 2014, p. 138).

I-MESSAGE AND YOU-MESSAGE

A basic skill in communication with a second person is giving feedback about how the receiver's behavior influences the sender. Gordon advises using I-messages, which he also calls responsibility messages, in order to give feedback. Using I-messages, the teacher takes responsibility for their own inner state and for their willingness to share this information with a student. They also allow the student to take responsibility for their own actions. An I-message is comprised of three parts: action – result – feeling. It involves identification of a problem, description of how a problem influences the teacher, and naming the teacher's emotions that were evoked by the student's behavior (Gordon, 1995, pp. 152–153, 158). The message does not include judgment, is clear, based on facts. It is based around speaking about one's reactions, feelings, and thoughts toward the student. A message formulated in such a way does not negatively affect relations between the teacher and the student, increases trust and mutual openness, is in favor of expressing one's expectations. Appropriately formulated feedback allows the student to correct negative or reinforce positive behaviors, and see situations/ problems in a different light. The teacher gets a sense that their actions are meaningful and gains authority that is based on respect and appreciation. In Gordon's view, I-communicates reinforce intimacy between teachers and their pupils. They portray teachers as reliable and genuine people, with whom students can maintain meaning-

ful relationships. This is because teachers show students their inner ability to express feelings, in result presenting themselves as human beings who experience both positive and negative emotions (disappointment, harm, anger, fear, but also joy and pleasure) (Gordon, 1995, pp. 154–155).

In opposition to the I-message is the You-message, which addresses the other person. The You-message judges, blames, and often labels. Information constructed in such a way hinders the proper and effective development of relations between the teacher and the pupil and often leads to conflict.

WAYS OF RESOLVING CONFLICTS

Gordon notes that most teachers resolve conflicts with students in terms of winners and losers. This happens because teachers are convinced that they can only assume one out of two possible approaches – authoritarian or permissive. Both of these approaches cause problems. In the first case scenario, where the teacher is the "winner" and the student is the "loser", the latter utilizes defense mechanisms that surface as rebelling, resisting, provoking, wanting revenge, lying, blaming others, cheating, submission, buttering up, conforming, backing off. These unwanted behaviors resulting from losing and negative feelings (anger, helplessness, humiliation) create new educational problems that have to be examined and resolved. On the other hand, when the teacher assumes a permissive approach, thus, labeling him/herself as a "loser" and the student as a "winner", they are placed in an unfavorable spot, which results in a myriad of negative side effects like treating one's job as a burden, taking revenge on students, praising students, being vulnerable to psychosomatic disorders. As a consequence, students become egoistic, undisciplined, do not respect others, and do not want to cooperate (Gordon, 1995, pp. 196–202). Both approaches to resolving conflict show a lack of an effective solution that would satisfy both parties. Gordon suggests an approach in which both parties work together to find an apt solution, where there are no losers and all parties win. This method is called "the six-step problem-solving". The steps were based on John Dewey's method, which was proposed as a way of resolving an individual's life problems. They include:

1. Defining the problem
2. Brainstorming solutions
3. Evaluating the solutions
4. Deciding on a final solution
5. Implementing the solution
6. Checking the results (Gordon, 1995, p. 242)

The benefits of this method are: increasing students' motivation to finish their resolutions, unleashing creative thinking, enriching the experience of both the student and the teacher, establishing the process of agreeing on solutions, eliminating the need

to use power, maintaining positive relations, uncovering real problems, reinforcing students' responsibility for their own actions and fostering their maturity. When the two sides feel like "winners", their potentials combined equal their sum with the addition of the synergy effect (collaboration generates additional value that surpasses the sum of individual efforts[4]) (Gordon, 1995, pp. 257–265).

REFERENCES TO PRACTICE

Humanistic concept of the no-lose method is not only a theoretical model, but first and foremost a practical method (a kind of training course), aimed at teachers and parents. Gordon (1994) believes that this is "a specific plan or a set of guidelines that helps to understand and explain many different incidents" (p. 18). In his books (*Parent Effectiveness Training*, *Parent Effectiveness Training in Action*), he gives many examples of situations in which adhering to his method brought positive results. When a conflict between two people arises, making use of the methods suggested by Gordon gives a chance to peacefully resolve the conflict. Below, I will provide several examples of implementing the no-lose method in the school environment.

PREVENTIVE AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

We can observe how the no-lose method fares in preventive and educational programs that aim at supporting the educational skills of teachers and parents. Joanna Sakowska and Zofia Śpiewak created one of the best-known, nationwide programs called "Szkoła dla Rodziców i Wychowawców". Its execution is being coordinated by the Department for Health Promotion, Prevention and Education, which is a part of the Centre for Education Development in Warsaw.[5] The program is comprised of two parts: Adult–child relations, Building relations between children (siblings), parents, and teachers of children. The subjects of courses are: empathetic understanding of children, collaboration, responsibility, proper way of setting boundaries, problem solving, reinforcing positive self-esteem, recognizing and properly expressing feelings, and ways of intervention when a conflict or a fight arises. This program is being successfully executed in many Polish schools (Czerwińska, 2019, p. 6).

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[4] Osińska (2015) emphasizes this in her work.
[5] Detailed information about the programme can be found here: https://ore.edu.pl/2010/04szkla-dla-rodzicow/

PERSONALIZED LEARNING – TUTORING

We can also find elements of the no-lose method in the tutoring method that is being implemented more and more often in Polish schools. A teacher, who at the same time is a tutor, implements the ideas of humanistic psychology and dialogic learning in their work (Kolasa, 2022, pp. 128–129; Sarnat-Ciastko, pp. 102–105). The quality of tutoring meetings depends on the interpersonal skills of the teacher (active listening, the ability to resolve conflicts). This kind of teacher takes the role of an advisor, caretaker, nondirective guide, and partner. They also become a facilitator (cf. the ideas of humanistic pedagogy). Sajdak writes that the facilitative approach includes authenticity, empathetic understanding, and unconditional acceptance of a pupil (Sajdak, 2013, p. 358). A special kind of tutoring is peer tutoring. Sławińska notices, that there are two types of peer tutoring – peer collaboration, where students with similar level of knowledge collaborate in pairs or groups and test different approaches, which ultimately lead them to a common resolution of a problem, and peer tutoring where students with greater knowledge help the rest (Sławińska, 2015, pp. 43–44). Thanks to the interaction and active discussion that takes place between students, the skills of interpersonal communication and working in groups are being improved. Students motivate each other and invent ways of solving problems together.

SCHOOL VIOLENCE, MEDIATION[6]

The no-lose method is a way of reducing school violence, which is often caused by improper social relations among students and between students and teachers. It often leads to conflicts and, in consequence, to educational problems. Using the six-step method in mediation helps to better understand the current conflict, name it, and resolve it in compliance with the "winner-winner" strategy, where the solution satisfies the needs of both parties, at the same time providing emotional balance and psychological safety. Peer mediation is especially valuable, as it not only leads to resolving a conflict between students, but also develops their interpersonal and communication skills, including active listening and the ability to handle difficult situations (Leszczyńska, 2011, p. 38).

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[6] The collection of theoretical and practical works, on which the training program for peer mediators is based, can be found in (Duda et al., 2019).

CONCLUSION

The no-lose method, described in this article, is so universal a set of rules, which improve the process of interpersonal communication and problem solving, that being familiar with it seems necessary for all subjects of the educational process. Skillful speaking and listening attest to a teacher having an interest in a pupil and their problems, facilitates cooperation, establishes an atmosphere of understanding, trust, and acceptance.

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