

Popular science summary - Power-sharing in early school discourse

The changes taking place in Poland and around the world in recent years – i.e. disinformation, the activity of anti-democratic movements, wars – have made democratic education one of the issues to be implemented in practice. Its element should be an even and fair distribution of power, which is pursued through power-sharing. This phenomenon in the school classroom means a process of decision-making not only by the teacher, but taking an active part in it by the pupils as well. The purpose is to give students more autonomy and responsibility. Power-sharing studies are important because they can make teachers more aware of the practices used or not used, such as: deciding on the choice of learning materials in consultation with students, collaborative planning of the content covered in lessons and the creation of rules for classroom behaviour, as well as differentiated ways of assessment in line with the agreements of both groups. This is important because sharing (or not sharing) power itself can have both positive and negative consequences – for example, increasing inequalities between children from different backgrounds. To date, no research has yet been undertaken that describes power-sharing in the classroom in a Polish primary school, or more specifically in grades I-III.

The planned study aims to identify and describe power-sharing practices in the school classroom at the level of early school education in Poland (grades I-III). The study will have two stages:

1) The stage prior to the actual study:

Interviewing students about their experiences of power-sharing in the school classroom. This stage will serve as a prelude to the actual study – it will allow me to provisionally determine what to pay more attention to when analysing lessons.

2) The study's proper stage:

- Audio-visual recording of lessons in five different classrooms.
- Investigating the occurrence/non-occurrence of power-sharing practices in lessons (assessment will include verbal communication, non-verbal communication, classroom space, learning packs and supplementary materials used).
- Identifying what factors differentiate the occurrence/non-occurrence of these practices (e.g. gender, socio-economic status, etc.).
- Analysis of ways of withdrawing/granting the speaking time in the classroom.
- Analysis of the materials teachers and students use in lessons, which will provide context for the recorded material.
- Creating a concept of power-sharing in relation to early school education in the classes studied.

The results of the project's research will provide a better understanding of the phenomenon of power sharing, the particular practices and their potential causes and consequences in grades I-III of primary school in Poland. This research can highlight both the mistakes made by teachers (and thus make those surveyed reflect on their own pedagogical practice) and the good practices used in schools. The findings of the study can be used in preparing pedagogy students for a more informed performance of the teacher's profession.