

MARZENNA NOWICKA

University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn

ORCID – 0000-0002-0032-9944

EFFECTIVE USE OF TEXTBOOKS BY EARLY EDUCATION TEACHERS*

Introduction: Schoolbooks are the basic didactic tool in early childhood education classes. As evidenced by numerous research reports, their content is significantly diversified in terms of quality. However, empirical research providing insight into teachers' experiences of working with school textbooks is lacking.

Research Aim: This study examines how teachers influence the use of a school textbook. It looks at their views on daily work with textbooks, the advantages and disadvantages they perceive, and their responses to these observations.

Method: Six focus group interviews with 37 early childhood education teachers were conducted. The collected material was subsequently subjected to meaning-oriented content analysis.

Results: On the basis of the collected data, it was established that teachers construe textbooks as: predestined fate, a stabilizing factor in the didactic process, a tool for everyday work, a subject-matter expert and a surety of their responsibility for the learning process. The work of educators with the school textbook is characterized by conformity, limited flexibility, adaptation to the range of children's aptitudes, rationalization and, in rare cases, resistance.

Conclusions: With respect to working with school textbooks, the agency of teachers manifests itself only as a superficial response to the identified shortcomings, without an autonomous approach to the content as well as tasks and instructions in school textbooks. Such a conclusion may offer grounds for a pedagogical discussion on the limitations and needs of training early education teachers in terms of enhancing their agency while working with a school textbook.

Keywords: textbooks, early education teachers, shortcomings of textbooks, agency

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INTRODUCTION

The textbook is an essential tool used by teachers at all levels of education, including early school education (Jakubowicz-Bryx, 2015). It is approached as an “icon of educational reality”, as its content “underpins the substance of the lesson, and it determines the criteria according to which teachers and students recognize which knowledge is legitimate, acceptable and should be disclosed publicly” (Klus-Stańska, 2014, p. 25). As a foundation of teaching practice and a vehicle of legitimate meanings, the textbook undergoes thorough research analyses and diagnoses, which focus on its structure, scope, selection and quality of the content, the methodological complement to the issues discussed, such as questions, instructions, tasks or exercises, as well as the graphic design. Several studies have revealed numerous shortcomings of the textbooks available for the primary school grades. A glaring example of such a defect is the repeated process of letter and reading skill instruction in the reception and first grades of primary school, despite the fact that more than 50% of six-year-old children know more letters than expected in the preschool curriculum, while 18% recognize all letters of the alphabet correctly (Krasowicz-Kupis, 2006). The cloning of the primer and exercise pages in textbooks at preschool and school levels is evinced in the faithful reproduction of the structure, content, the pattern of introducing a new letter and exercises in visual-auditory analysis and synthesis of words (Nowicka, 2021). Both preschool and school textbooks demonstrate substantial emphasis on reading techniques using not only syllables but meaningless letter combinations and, most of all, texts that are uninteresting in terms of knowledge and merely contain a pool of the letters one has learned (Nowicka, 2021). This squanders the developmental potential of children during the sensitive period as well as forfeits the goal of learning to read and school education in general (Klus-Stańska and Nowicka, 2013). Children in the first grade redo not only the reading course but also basic numeracy. Just as with letters, learning numbers up to 10 is provided for in the preschool core curriculum, and yet it is “reintroduced” in first-grade textbooks; also, addition and subtraction in this range is, in a sense, taught anew. This process is additionally encumbered with numerous defects, as emphasis is placed on activities that restrict the cognitive context while rituals of imitation and repetition predominate (Kalinowska-Iżykowska, 2023). Seven-year-olds are inculcated with mental schemata that confine their thinking, becoming an obstacle to the development of mathematical knowledge and skills (Kalinowska-Iżykowska, 2023). Another set of shortcomings is revealed through analytical research into textbook content. Major flaws reported include infantilization and consistently maintained low children competence levels (Szyller, 2017). The texts intended for reading convey an idealized picture of childhood, family and school, trivialize and simplify problematic issues, and reduce or completely overlook the complex and difficult social realities (Łaciak, 2011; Wiśniewska-Kin, 2013; Zalewska, 2013). The world

of textbook fiction gives preference to or deprecates certain habits, uses and social order, leaving “children lacking critical capacity and unable to achieve a transformative attitude towards the fate of their own and others” (Klus-Stańska, 2011). Research also demonstrates high inertia of the content presented in textbooks, whose message and characteristics remain unchanged despite the passage of time (Wiśniewska-Kin, 2017).

The deficiencies of the tool that the schoolbook appears to be in the light of pertinent research raises the question of how it is used in the classroom by teachers. Thus, one should consider the agency of teachers in their daily educational work involving textbooks. In this study, agency – referred to later on in the final part of this paper – is not construed in psychological terms, denoting the teacher’s sense of subjectivity, efficacy, competence or self-actualization (Kowalczyk-Wałędziak, 2012), but from a sociological standpoint, in line with the debate on the correlations between the “micro” and “macro” dimensions of social life (Szlachcicowa et al., 2013). The approach which underscores the causal impact of social facts on the actions of individuals presumes that “people are the product of their society, by which they are influenced in a unilateral and deterministic manner, for instance, through established relations of production, discourse, cultural codes acquired during socialization or systems of socially generated dispositions” (Mrozowicki, 2013). Opposing approaches see the “social structure as a passive, aggregate consequence of individual actions, which in itself is incapable of having a feedback effect on individuals” (Archer, after Mrozowicki, 2013). The term “subjective agency” draws directly on the tensions between agency and structure, highlighting the “dualistic imbalance between the actions of actors and structural constraints” (Iwińska, 2015, p. 8). Attempts to overcome such tensions may be found in Anthony Giddens’ structuration theory, in which the notion of structural duality is a key element. It exists “as memory traces, and as instantiated in social practices”, with a twofold effect: “both constraining and enabling” certain behaviors (Giddens, 2003, p. 65). Moreover, the development of critical explorations into agency has also yielded concepts that extend it to inanimate objects and other-than-human entities (Latour, 2010), making it problematic (Szlachcicowa et al., 2013). Sociological debates on agency in recent decades have not produced conclusive clarifications, which is why it is taken as a baseline that agency “is the ability of an individual to »cause a difference« in a pre-existing state of affairs or sequence of events” (Giddens, 2003, p. 53). As regards structure and agency, Margaret Archer wrote that “structure conditions agency, and agency, in turn, elaborates upon the structure which it confronts” (Archer, 2013, p. 309). The causal powers inherent in agency itself “enable people to reflect upon their social context, and to act reflexively towards it, either individually or collectively” (Archer, 2013, p. 311).

RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTION, METHOD AND SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Within the textbook-related inquiry, empirical reports that offer insights into teachers' experience with the tool are still lacking. Hence, the overall aim of this study was to explore teachers' agency in working with the textbook. The core issue was expressed in the following question: how do early school education teachers use textbooks in their classes with children? In particular, what does the textbook represent for teachers, what advantages and disadvantages of textbooks have they noted and, given such a context, what educational measures do they adopt? The qualitative method was opted for, with focus group interviews serving to collect data. The research project was approved under Decision No. 13/2022 of the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn. Work on the research material relied on the qualitative data analysis paradigm advanced by Creswell (2013). The obtained data were transcribed and coded using information derived directly from the examined data (Gibbs, 2015). An approach focused on the meaning of what was said (Kvale, 2010) was employed throughout the analysis.

The study group was composed of early school education teachers who participated in a postgraduate course to improve digital competence in that professional group. All were actively employed in primary schools from the Warmińsko-Mazurskie (19 persons), Mazowieckie (12 persons) and Podlaskie (6 persons) voivodeships, located either in the countryside (18 schools) or in urban areas (19 schools). The study group consisted of women and one man. The largest proportion – 24 persons – were in the age range between 35 to 45. The oldest female participant was 57 years old, and the youngest was 32, meaning that all had experience in the teaching profession. A total of 6 interviews were conducted, the shortest of which lasted 36 minutes and the longest 67 minutes. The interviews took place in a free classroom at the site of the study.

RESULTS

What does a textbook represent for teachers?

In view of the fundamental role of textbooks in education, this study focused on the meanings that teachers may attribute to the textbook as they use it daily during classes. Analysis of the collected material shows that it is perceived by educators in several categories, depending on the role it performs in their opinion, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Categories of teachers' notions of the schoolbook in the context of its role

Role of the textbook	Notional category
Provides an obvious working tool mandated by the ministry	duty, predestined fate
Ensures that core curriculum is delivered	stabilizing factor in the teaching process
Constitutes an indispensable element in each class	standard daily component
Unquestionably defines the scope and course of activities with students	authoritarian signpost
Determines the methodology for introducing themes and establishes their understanding	mentor, subject-matter expert
Determines the consequences of action in class	assurance of teacher responsibility

Source: Author's own study.

Duty, predestined fate

The presence of a textbook in the teaching process is decreed at the ministry level and approved for school use. Teachers cannot imagine a school without textbooks.

From the very beginning of our careers, we teachers are used to the fact that everyone starts their work with a textbook. We've always had one. [Interview 4]

I think most teachers use the workbooks and the worksheets because if you have them, you use them. [Interview 3]

Surprisingly enough, young teachers come into the profession convinced that all textbook content must be covered in class.

When I was starting as a teacher, a colleague who had been working longer told me to choose what I liked from the textbooks, what was more interesting, and what was more important. That I don't have to do everything. [Interview 3]

Textbooks are supplied to schools in packs, and it does happen that teachers do not use art, music or computer science books. The decision in that respect has to be consulted with the school head; alternatively, teachers may make such decisions themselves.

The music textbook is a failure. It's in the pack, but we put them away. They just lie around. So I was very glad that I didn't have to use it. The principal said straight away that I'm the one who decides, me, and that it can be just put away. [Interview 5]

Stabilizing factor in the teaching process

The primary meaning that teachers attribute to the schoolbook involves the stabilization of the educational process in which they are engaged. For them, the textbook provides a kind of interpretation of the content in the core curriculum for a given grade and ensures that it is delivered.

Textbooks guarantee that the core curriculum is met. [Interview 5]

When I have a textbook, I'm not afraid that I'll forget something, some content. [Interview 6]

Textbooks determine for us what's there to be done. [Interview 5]

Teachers see textbooks as a reliable aid in scheduling their work throughout the year. Although they do note their many shortcomings, as discussed below, they nevertheless find that the textbook facilitates their work, its planning and systematization.

It's good that there is, well, this crib of sorts for the teacher. [Interview 3]

The textbook somehow organizes how I think. [Interview 6]

Standard daily component

The unquestionable presence of the textbook is linked to its daily use. According to the teachers' statements, working with a textbook and workbook is one of the routine activities that the children are offered every day.

The children have textbooks and use them every day. [Interview 2].

I work with the textbooks, the worksheets and the maths sheets. I do everything with them in class. I start by explaining, and then we dive into the worksheets and maths sheets in that order. [Interview 4]

Working with the textbook has become so entrenched in everyday school life that children who have been made accustomed to using it demand to do all exercises or tasks in the worksheets.

The children [...] even prompt us, "and now we'll do this, and now we'll do that". [Interview 4]

The children want to have everything completed out of habit, even when they're not at school, they have everything done from A to Z. [Interview 5]

The authoritarian signpost

Textbooks usurp the scope of the teacher's agency to a substantial extent. Educators feel obligated to conform to the topics and the methods to introduce them set by the textbook.

Children can count from memory up to 20, I guess they already know the numbers on leaving pre-school. And in the books, it goes all too slowly anyway. [Interview 5]

They could have the textbooks start with counting to ten without introducing the numbers. [Interview 5]

New letters – it's only half a year of revision that should be in the textbook. [Interview 3]

For example, we have a section on safe use of the internet – why five lessons? We could devote the time to spelling, writing or some other topic. [Interview 3]

Mentor, subject-matter expert

It follows from the respondents' statements that, in the eyes of the teachers, textbook authors are experts in early school education. Therefore, they conform to the methods adopted in a given textbook to introduce the content and explain the intricacies of its substance. Even when they think otherwise, they accept or yield to the solutions suggested in the books, proceeding in accordance with the formula provided.

The books impose the notation, for example, when adding two elements. The children themselves even ask why we have to do it this way since it's so strange for them. [Interview 4]

In the exercises, there was an instruction to convert verbs in the past tense into the present tense, and a formula was given. For me personally, this formula should look different [...], whereas they tell you to do it according to the formula. And sometimes, when I discuss it with the children, they ask me, "Why like that?" [...] And I wonder how else I can explain it to them. [Interview 4]

Assurance of the teacher's responsibility for the teaching process

Teachers' attachment to textbooks leads them to evade responsibility for the classroom process. Teachers justify engaging in ineffective or boring activities, citing the presence of such suggestions in their textbooks.

Some of the content is boring, simply even for me to cover, and the children are just flat on the tables, and it's hard if there's an uninteresting topic. [Interview 2]

This introduction of all the vowels at the beginning is stupid, [...] after introducing the vowels alone, we can teach nothing reading-wise, yes, nothing. And then the reading skill is not up to standard. [Interview 5]

Advantages and shortcomings of textbooks identified by teachers

The teachers made extensive statements regarding the quality of textbooks; they spoke of the advantages but, above all, referred to the shortcomings of the books used while working with children. Their observations were applied directly to specific packs. With respect to positive features of textbooks, the respondents most often praised the staggered difficulty of the tasks, exercises and reading development material. Teachers are also glad to have additional workbooks, which they can use when working with children who display different degrees of ability. Supplementary resources in the packs are also important, as they enable educators to elaborate on the themes and methods of covering textbook content.

The nice thing about these workbooks is that there are additional texts to read and additional exercises at different difficulty levels. [Interview 3]

It's cool because we have a three-tier reading development: for the weaker ones, for those who already handle it not too badly and for those who read well. [Interview 5]

However, the shortcomings of the textbooks involved the most intense response in the interviews. Above all, complaints were made about the quality of education in mathematics. It was generally noted that there is too little of it in the packs. Interesting exercises were reported to be lacking, and the schematicity of instructions and lack of thematic continuity were criticized as well.

Generally, it's poor maths there, and it's probably in every pack for the first semester that they have to count to 10. [Interview 4]

There's too much of that ready-made stuff that the children just write the answers in, for example. [...] already, at the end of the first grade, they don't even read the answers, they just know that they have to write the result. Later, when they have to write the answer, they can't put it together. [Interview 3]

I don't like that there are repetitive tasks; the children are supposed to do the same thing, and the questions are phrased the same way each time. [Interview 3]

During the interviews, the problem of repetitive content in textbooks was extensively invoked in the teachers' exchanges.

Family is very often there: with Mother's Day there is family, and then there's family on Grandmother's Day, family with Christmas, so there's a lot of that. [Interview 2]

The signs in spring are there each year [...]. It's a waste of time. [Interview 5]

For example, for children in the third grade, it's like these repetitions, it's so infantile, really [...] Well, how can you drum the same thing for four years, because it's from nursery onwards practically. [Interview 6]

Teachers are annoyed by the abridgements or lack of opportunities in the textbooks to consolidate the skills which the children are acquiring.

They bring some topics in too fast, for example: there's multiplication and division is already on the next lesson. [Interview 4]

Well, for example, there are descriptions, then a break, another topic comes in, and then they come back to that description. It's not consolidated in one way or another [...], somewhere this part of speech appears and then there's a break, it's not there, then there it is again all of a sudden, the children don't know. [Interview 3]

Discussing the deficiencies of the textbooks, the teachers also observed that the tasks and instructions they contain are sometimes too easy, given the actual abilities of children.

Those first exercises on the worksheet, it's not clear what they're for. Very often, they're so simple, so trivial, that I usually skip the first ones because the children can tackle them very well on their own. And the ones at the end are more difficult, where you have to reflect, think, I do those with them. [Interview 3]

The exercises are too easy. Children often say that it's easy for them, that it's a piece of cake. They just don't need to use their intellect at all, although this also depends on the ability of the children. [Interview 4]

The infantilization of content also came up in the conversations concerning the shortcomings, although such remarks were not all too frequent in the material collected.

The infantile is [...] this grandmother is perceived as an old lady sitting there, hair in a bun, knitting, and yet grandmothers are very active professionally. It's so infantile and doesn't correspond to our reality. It's more like great-grandmothers mostly look like that, the really old ones. [Interview 6]

The content of the reading texts, well, sometimes it just makes me wonder what the author had in mind. For me, it is so unreal and silly that it's just beyond me. [Interview 5]

Characteristics of teacher's work with a textbook

In this study, the utilization of textbooks by teachers was investigated, despite the identified limitations. Analysis of the collected data made it possible to reconstruct the characteristics of action on the part of the teachers:

- *Conformity* towards textbook suggestions and methodological guidance,
- *Flexibility* within certain limits,
- *Adaptation* to the children's ability scale,
- *Rationalization* for oneself and the pupils,
- *Resistance* in rare cases.

Conformity

The basic trait of teachers' work with the textbook – as reconstructed from the collected material – is conformity. Teachers align the organization of the teaching process with the structure of the textbook, the subject matter contained there and the method to cover it, the sequence in which particular topics are introduced and the range of instructions and exercises.

With a textbook, it is easier for me to know what I should be working on with my children at that time. [Interview 5]

In mathematics, we had the centimeter introduced in the first grade. The children brought rulers and measured and measured, both in class and in the workbook. And we spent the whole day doing that, and the next day it is not in the textbook anymore. The children are interested; they want to measure, but they have to count because there are only calculation activities provided in the book. [Interview 3]

The textbook constitutes the starting point and the core based on which the activities in the early grades are structured. The teachers focus on covering its content and plan the children's additional activities around it, only supplementing the book's suggestions.

We now add a lot to what we do in the textbook. There is a multimedia whiteboard, and there are different apps. We also print a lot, and download from the internet to match the topics in the textbook so that there are extra worksheets. [Interview 2]

For example, those first pages in maths, there's nothing to do with them, too little, because it's easy, children get bored, so we come up with some extra sheets, or manipulation play, or blocks, or we have different games. [Interview 3]

I work on additional materials. I bought myself a whole alphabet from some teacher groups online, and I give the children various exercises I got there. [Interview 2]

Flexibility

The teaching process involving the textbook as a mainstay affords teachers certain leeway. In some packs, time is explicitly granted to the teacher to be used as they see fit. This is how one respondent describes it:

In the guide, we have a plan for the week, and there's a topic for each day of the week [...] And mostly on Friday, it's often that they are short of the topic and it's a day for the teacher. It just says like that: day for the teacher [...], so then it's used for something you haven't done, for consolidation or for extending the reading. [Interview 5]

Some of the teachers have expanded those boundaries of freedom in their work with the textbook, but it invariably remains in the background of their teaching plans.

Some topics are stretched out too far, the same thing every day, over and over again. For example, I shorten the five-day topic into two days, because the children do it faster. We do more interesting things. [Interview 3]

Adaptation

The matter of actions undertaken by teachers relative to varying degrees of ability of the pupils was strongly tangible in the collected material. The teachers emphasized that they do take that factor into account and select textbooks and exercises accordingly.

This year I've had a weaker group of children and this is a challenge for the teacher. I've taken different textbooks, the minimalist kind, because it's a challenge just to adapt working with the textbook to these children. For example, I have children with assessments from counseling centers and some tasks are just too difficult for them. [Interview 2]

Some are very really gifted, so clever [...] and for those who work faster I always have extra worksheets prepared. Recently I prepared four and everything was done, with lots of the lesson time still to spare! But with other children, oh my!. [Interview 4]

Rationalizing for oneself

The rationales for covering all topics in line with the textbook received much attention in the teachers' statements. Teachers justified their decisions primarily with concern to achieve equal levels of skill and knowledge among all students in the class.

It is necessary to repeat this introduction of the letter in the first grade because it has to be consolidated. There are children who, despite us learning for seven months of

the school year already, do not remember what the letter B looks like, for example. [Interview 5]

We've hammered things in things since nursery, it's certainly tiresome, but they can't remember, they don't know. When I had a poem about spring flowers, they didn't know what a snowdrop looked like. [Interview 6]

The additional texts for reading, some of them make no sense at all, as long as there's lots of the new letter [...], but they do have to practice reading, because without reading they won't get any further. [Interview 5]

Rationalization for pupils

Teachers also shared how they justify the need to cover all the topics in the textbook to their pupils, especially in the first grade. It is worth noting that they have previously criticized the repetitive content themselves, stating that it is below the ability level of most pupils, tedious and boring.

I have a very intelligent child in my class, he didn't want to do the exercises in the workbook because he said it was "rubbish". And for me, it was like a red rag to a bull. So I say, "»rubbish« or not, but we're doing it; there are weaker children who need to learn it too". Well, and they stopped saying that it was "rubbish". [Interview 4]

And when the children say, "that's already been done", "we know that already", we say: "well, we'll revise in that case!". [Interview 2]

When a child claims that they know a letter, I say: "well that's great, great that you know". I don't say: "well then, wait for the teacher to explain, because someone might not know". [Interview 3]

Resistance

In a wave of teachers' statements manifesting their compliance with the dictatorship of textbooks, two responses stood out, as the interviewees stated that they opted for resistance in this regard. In a sense, the educators in question positioned themselves in opposition to the remaining respondents and declared that the textbook plays a negligible role in the activities they plan.

I'm a bit... er... of a different teacher and I don't use textbooks much, very little. [Interview 4].

The textbook is sometimes there, we open it, but they don't always have to, not every day that they have to have it, so to speak. [Interview 3]

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The principal conclusion that arises from the analyses presented here suggests a limited scope of the subjective agency of educators, which – as far as working with textbooks is concerned – manifests itself solely as a superficial response to the identified shortcomings, without attempts at an autonomous approach to the content, the tasks and the instructions found in textbooks. The teachers see the textbook as a self-evident working tool, legitimized and decreed to be applied by the ministry. They cannot imagine education without the textbook, which significantly defines the limits of their agency. It is symptomatic that such a conviction is already held by educators at the very beginning of their professional careers. This may be indicative of the strength of experiences dating back to their pupil years, which have not been worked through in the course of university studies (Kwiatkowska, 2008). The extent of limitation of agency, understood here as the ability to modify and deviate from the textbook version of teaching, is evinced in the fact that the textbook is approached as the determining factor in the classroom while textbook authors are seen as subject-matter and methodological experts. The teachers are unwilling to take all the responsibility for their work, and they are aided by the belief that the textbook vouches for the quality of their professional efforts. The educators may have many remarks about the shortcomings of textbooks, but they are largely of a superficial, epidermal nature. They fail to perceive the profound mental and socializing dysfunctionality of this tool, and they are unaware of the complexities involved in the anti-developmental corollaries of daily exposure to it, which “often irreversibly determines the nature of individual and social behaviors” (Wiśniewska-Kin, 2017, p. 259). They feel responsible for both covering the textbook content and catering to the developmental needs of children, although the latter are not adequately taken into account in such textbooks. The simultaneity of conflicting motives is not significantly altered by their working modalities. *Ad hoc* additions, modernization or adaptation do not attest to teacher autonomy and do not sufficiently safeguard the children from the effects of adherence to the textbook regime. The teacher’s agency, constrained by the power of the textbook, translates into a limited agency of the children themselves. Pupils are forcibly made to follow the course dictated by the textbook, to which they must submit and which they cannot question.

The question is whether teachers realize that the textbook controls how they think and sets limits to their educational endeavors. The collected statements, in which educators attempt to justify the validity of their conduct and give rational reasons why their compliance is legitimate testify to a tension between the subjective and the institutional. The teachers’ narratives demonstrate that their actions do involve elements of choice and considerable commitment, but the effort is strictly geared by the unavoidable institutional requirements. The educators do not reject textbooks provided for the first semester of the first grade despite knowing very

well that they repeat reception-grade material with the children. They do not object to covering the same topic, although they are aware that it has already been done. They do not disregard exercises that, in their own opinion, are schematic and uninteresting. By yielding to the authority of the textbook, they act to the detriment of children, who lose confidence in their own competence and focus on developing diverse survival strategies in an institution detached from their real needs.

This analysis may offer grounds for a pedagogical discussion concerning the limitations and the need for training early school educator candidates in terms of empowering autonomy with respect to the textbook. Moreover, active teachers need support in developing their own agency and responsibility for their work so that they may “embrace new approaches to problems and resort to solutions that do not yet exist” (Gołębniak and Zamorska, 2014, p. 119). Such support would primarily consist of educating students – the prospective professionals – and the active educators to a partnership-based dialogue with the ministry, school management, and the supervising pedagogical authority. In their interaction with those entities, the teachers are the final link, being required to account for the effects of their own actions in the form of students’ progress as measured by school grades or test results, which is invariably linked to working with the textbook. Critical education of either group and education in resistance to the systemic constraints that characterize school education should also play an important role.

The selection of the sample and its size may be considered a limitation of this study, but the findings discussed here may serve as an inspiration for further research into the experiences of teachers and help reconstruct the meanings they attribute to different elements of their own educational work, so as to counteract the restricted agency of that professional group.

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SPRAWSTWO NAUCZYCIELI EDUKACJI WCZESNOSZKOLNEJ W PRACY Z PODRĘCZNIKIEM SZKOLNYM

Wprowadzenie: Podręczniki stanowią podstawowe narzędzie pracy dydaktycznej na zajęciach edukacji wczesnoszkolnej. Ich zawartość jest znacznie zróżnicowana jakościowo, o czym świadczą liczne doniesienia badawcze. Brakuje empirycznych badań dających wgląd w doświadczenia nauczycieli w zakresie pracy z podręcznikiem szkolnym.

Cel badań: Celem badań było rozpoznanie sprawstwa nauczycieli w obszarze pracy z podręcznikiem szkolnym, dlatego poszukiwano odpowiedzi na pytania o to, jakie znaczenia nauczyciele nadają codziennej pracy z książką szkolną, jakie wady i zalety w niej dostrzegają i jakie działania podejmują w kontekście tych spostrzeżeń.

Metoda badań: Przeprowadzono sześć zogniskowanych wywiadów grupowych, w których uczestniczyło 37 nauczycieli edukacji wczesnoszkolnej. W pracy ze zgromadzonym materiałem zastosowano analizę treści zorientowaną na znaczenie.

Wyniki badań: Na podstawie zgromadzonych danych ustalono, że podręcznik jawi się nauczycielom jako: przeznaczenie, stabilizator procesu dydaktycznego, narzędzie pracy codziennej, ekspert przedmiotowy i żyrant ich odpowiedzialności za proces uczenia się. Pracę pedagogów z książką szkolną cechuje konformizm, ograniczona elastyczność, dostosowywanie do skali uzdolnień dzieci, racjonalizowanie i, w rzadkich przypadkach, oporowanie.

Wnioski: Sprawczość nauczycieli w obszarze pracy z książką szkolną objawia się wyłącznie jako powierzchowna reakcja na identyfikowane mankamenty, bez autonomicznego podejścia do oferty treściowej oraz zadań i poleceń z podręczników szkolnych. Przedstawiony wniosek może stać się podstawą pedagogicznej dyskusji na temat ograniczeń i potrzeb kształcenia nauczycieli wczesnej edukacji w zakresie wzmacniania ich sprawstwa w pracy z podręcznikiem szkolnym.

Słowa kluczowe: podręczniki, nauczyciele edukacji wczesnoszkolnej, mankamenty podręczników, sprawczość