

John M. Fischer
Grzegorz Mazurkiewicz

DESIGNING AUTHENTIC EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

Expedition Inside Culture



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Sincerely,

John M. Fischer and Grzegorz Mazurkiewicz
Co-editors

PREFACE

The Expedition Inside Culture (EIC) association is an organization that has been in operation for the past ten years. The association has been striving to address gender, cultural, and ethnic issues and tensions in emerging and established democracies, including countries in Europe and the United States. Those countries have included Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, The United States, Romania, Slovakia, and Germany.

The association itself was founded and is registered in Poland. A second association was recently registered in Romania. EIC is not officially affiliated with any international organizations, but does regularly cooperate with NOVA DOBA in Ukraine, Amnesty International, various Polish Organizations, and has a strong relationship with Bowling Green State University, located in the United States. Through the combined efforts of these different organizations and the dedicated people involved, EIC has grown to represent people from five different countries and has positively affected numerous people across Europe and the United States.

Since the establishment of EIC, our work has included various formal and non-formal workshops on care of the environment, gender stereotypes, tolerance, democracy, and human rights. The main aim is to teach tolerance, openness and understanding in a global society. One of our most important projects is an annual event in different regions in central Europe – where we establish a scientific, intercultural expedition to explore and learn about culture, architecture, ethnic groups, historical background, religion and local customs.

These activities are addressed to students, teachers and young leaders and have forged partnerships across all five countries. Participants work to be prepared for the biggest challenges – the expedition of their lives in a real world, and working to reform and improve teaching – make it more authentic and connected with real life experiences. The work of the association has also included the creation of various publications, conference presentations and significant community efforts.

The number of those affiliated with the Expedition Inside Culture Association continues to grow each year through the efforts of the network of people involved. Those affiliated work to build activities and actions that focus on marginalized groups and histories in the various locations that have become the focus for workshops as well as study. Ultimately, the association is successful when its work helps to prevent discrimination, social exclusion and when it works to build an understanding of life in a multiethnic, knowledgeable society.

The teaching and learning philosophy that serves as a theoretical framework for the efforts of those involved is based on experiential / expeditionary learning. Participants acquire extensive information about a particular issue, they work and develop this issue and

finally present the results of their work. In our time of globalization it seems important to engage students in multicultural education so as to avoid the harmful results of xenophobia, to strengthen the awareness of diversity and the consequences of the relationships between different cultural and ethnic groups.

We have trained over 200 young leaders from different countries in public activities focused on tolerance and democratic involvement. Over 300 teachers from Poland and hundreds more from other countries have been immersed in project methodology and expeditionary learning. As our work continues this book serves as merely one more tool.

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INTRODUCTION

When do journey's begin? At what point do we know what we have become? When exactly are we learning? Our answers are often uneven, challenging, a search for the right words or language to convey our meaning. Designing educational structures, events, and methods that assist us to explore our answers can be even more emergent, ever changing and multi-directional. There are, however, solutions. They are found in creating space for multiple voices, perhaps using different languages. The answers might be constructed by a group representing different perspectives, experiences, and world views. This book is such an effort.

Reading a book is assumed to be a singular event, read from the front to the back; here the context and then the proposition, all tied into a nice bow around the package. By opening this book to multiple voices we hoped to model the process in which we have been engaged; that of creating expeditions inside our countries, inside our classrooms and ultimately, inside our own definitions of our identity.

The pieces in this book come from five countries, from a wide variety of individuals involved in the process of becoming. It is natural that they have come to us at different levels of development and then leave with different levels as well. The pieces collected present editing opportunities—constructivist, multi-voiced—lots of people talking at the same time, in different ways, some native English speakers, some not. Writers wrestling with language, often different words, that have been translated into and then out of Ukrainian or German or English. Through the multilingual nature, we experience a struggle to build meaning and understanding, but not summary conclusions—that is to be found in the response of the reader.

Maxine Greene has said, in her collection of essays *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts and Social Change*¹ that,
*"for all the tensions and disagreements around us, we would reaffirm the value of principles like justice and equality and freedom and commitment to human rights, since without these we cannot even argue for the decency of welcoming. Only if more and more persons incarnate such principles, choosing to live by them and engage in dialogue in accord with them, are we likely to bring about democratic pluralism and not fly apart in violence and disorder."*¹

This book is our attempt to engage in dialogue and to see ourselves as able to embody the change we seek in education. It needs to be made clear that the events, workshops, and methods described have spawned multiple versions outside our control. It is the

¹ Greene, Maxine, *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change*, Jossey-Bass Publishers: California, San Francisco 1995, p. 167.

essence of social communication and exchange, and also one reason why these different people talk about things in different ways. As you approach this text, prepare for an expedition—open to listen and think and feel and challenge. Normally a book is a product. But, instead, this book might be better seen as a step in our process of development.

How might we strengthen those involved in these efforts? How might we work with and empower people who have built relationships with us—to reflect, broaden understandings, mentally step into chaos, dig around messy issues, and struggle with connections to the real world?

This book is not about how to organize an expedition; that guide exists. Instead it is tangible evidence of our theorizing and meaning making. Meaning emerges when we meet, when we reflect after returning home and when we remember, in the small moments of the day, how a student's reaction reminds us of the expedition into life they are experiencing.

Expedition Inside Culture is an association, a teaching method, a workshop, and a series of phenomena overlaid on the learning process. This book helps us explore what expeditionary learning is and might be. The process of writing the book helps us sharpen what our goals look like. It helps us reflect on how we echo our experiences in projects at home. And ultimately it has helped us reflect on who we have become and are becoming. It is not the description of a typical workshop, rather about how participants interpret, use, express their context, and issues. It is a description of how things have emerged and have begun to be important to someone. For the reader, they must individually decide or discover what is good or useful. Ultimately, we hope the reader will leave this experience with their own understanding of the book and our efforts to bring education and democracy a bit closer to authentic, real life.

Welcome to the expedition.

DESIGNING
A
FRAMEWORK
FOR
EDUCATION

EDUCATION - A FORGOTTEN ART

Introduction

A basic observation tells us that people learn from each other. This observation has also influenced the design of the educational process and impacted the huge effort made to build the institution of education. In general, educational institutions and systems are seen as very important mechanisms of human development, of the preparation of valuable members of societies and as a tool to strengthen existing social structures. Depending on the ideology, and on the framework for understanding the reality, the goals of education might differ but in most cases education is perceived as a positive phenomenon. These goals bring beneficial outcomes in two areas: individual development and the social world. Unfortunately, the common view or image does not support these assumptions very often.

Around the world education is in crisis. Schools are losing public confidence and support. Why? Because of the natural difficulties arising from contradictions embedded in the assumptions about school. The primary contradiction comes from a conflict between two goals: one that might be defined as development of the individual and independent learner, and a second that might be defined as reconstructing reality and the preservation of particular group traditions and culture—their achievements to date. Unfortunately the functionalist assumption that what is good for society is also good for every individual member of the society and vice versa is not necessarily true². Too often we witness harmful practices in schools conducted in the name of a bigger, public good. Also focusing merely on learner's individual learners has never proven to be a solution for this conflict. Are we able to solve this problem?

Another interesting feature and/or contradiction of school is that it creates an image of the world in which we live and at the same time is under the influence of the self same external world. Schools and education offer various answers to questions about the world (sometimes even without being asked). Depending on the cultural and political traditions, beliefs and methodologies, these answers determine our understanding of the world. We know the better and worse, the safe and dangerous understandings of reality. We hope, that some of them will never be accepted again because of the results of actions inspired by these twisted understandings (like those promoted in totalitarian systems). On the other hand, it is not possible to find a relationship that has an influence only

² W. Feinberg, & J. F. Soltis, *Szkola i społeczeństwo*, WSiP, Warszawa 1998

on one side of the equation – although the school decides about the image of the world it will embrace, that image also impacts on the school itself. Education and educational institutions, while building the image of the world, adjust to that picture. For example, it is quite difficult to imagine a democratic school in Nazi Germany. While being a part of a very complex social structure and process, school, paradoxically, is a co-creator and a product of that reality.

We should remember that our view of the world is a product of what we are looking at, where we are standing when we are looking at it, and how we feel about ourselves and the thing we are looking at. Our perception of the world “makes” the world. One may draw a conclusion from the viewpoint that it is possible to influence reality by impacting on the perception of reality. So a final thought in this introduction is that if it is possible to change people’s perceptions of the world then this means that it is possible to change the world. In other words, maybe it is still possible to believe in the critical role of school and its ability to shape our lives, to believe that school can change the world and people for the better.

Context: Environment and Reality

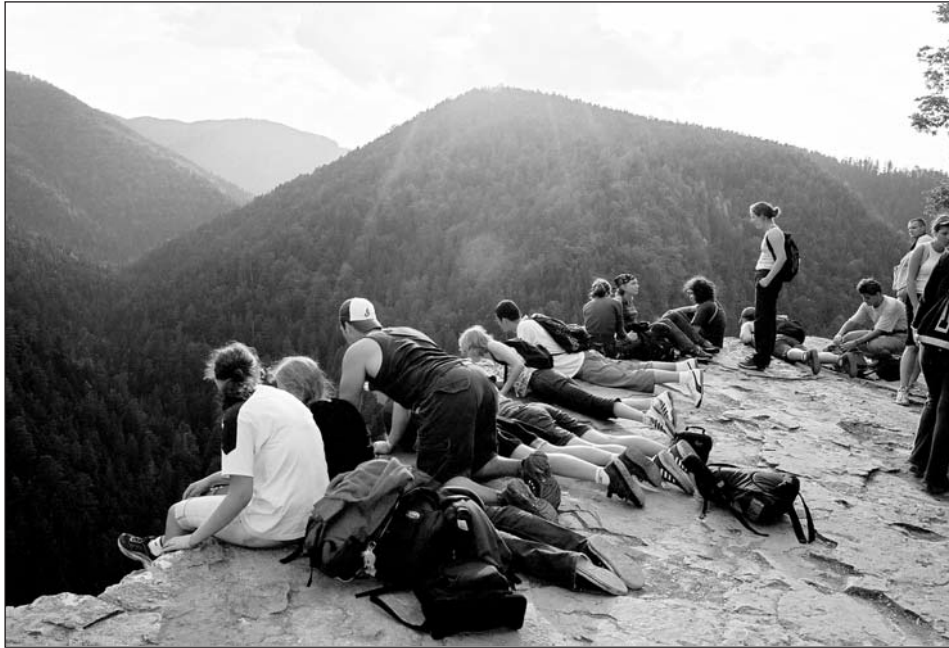
The natural phenomenon of change creates serious challenges that are difficult to overcome. Every time a school learns how to respond to a current task or challenge, the task changes. In the past, the cycle of change seemed to last longer than today. Globalization increased the number of intercultural interactions and the technological revolution accelerated the change process and increased its complexity. However, this does not mean that the school should ignore these processes; rather it means that the school should be more aware of those changes. Unfortunately social, economic, cultural and political contexts are very often ignored. This is one of the serious mistakes that educational reformers might commit – forgetting that a majority of the school’s problems are rooted in the outside world.

In order to be able to create a system that authentically supports people’s development, we need to define the challenges, and also answer two important questions: are we seeking improvement in the present system or are we seeking a deeper transformation? The first option allows us to function quite effectively but does not bring an opportunity for development in the longer perspective because working in that paradigm always forces us to deal only with the current situation and problem, and leads us to mainly focus on daily “administrative” tasks. The second option allows us to see a broader picture and gives us a chance to influence the reality. Both options, however, demand an excellent orientation in multiple ongoing processes, trends and movements.

Among these phenomena one may include (some of which have already been mentioned): globalization, the technology revolution, diversity (understood mainly as ethnic and cultural diversity), and besides which an increased number of older people, an increased role for human capital, and an increased volume of knowledge that is very difficult to use³. Each one of them separately, and for sure all of them together, might bring positive changes but at the same time they might also create threats and conflicts. For exam-

³ G. Marx, *Ten trends. Educating children for profoundly different future*, Educational Research Service 2000.

ple, the ability to communicate in the global context along with the huge, diverse, open space for strong cultural conflicts among value systems and civilizations may lead to a global tragedy. Human kind needs to learn how to use those opportunities for development and the common good, and not just how to survive in these new conditions. In order to develop in a sustainable way we need to move from our contemporary divided society to a single global community⁴; and also to try to adjust beliefs and values accordingly because they need to be coherent with external conditions and technological opportunities⁵.



An increasing awareness of the potential ecological disasters and our responsibility towards them, the lack of democracy and equity, the negative impact of globalization, the strengthening movement supporting the idea of human rights and other humanistic values, incredible technological opportunities, an understanding of the necessity of peaceful problem solving... are all known as phenomena that give hope, but also bring frustrations. These frustrations emerge because of a non-effective struggle with the transference of knowledge into political will⁶. We have a chance to create "a better world", however we need to learn how to use that chance.

One of the important changes should be a change in the way of thinking about learning. We need, as a society and not just those involved in educational sciences, to construct a new understanding of this important process that accompanies us through our

⁴ H. Jackins, *Logical Thinking About a Future Society*, Rational Island Publishers, Seattle 1990.

⁵ L.C. Thurov , *Przyszłość kapitalizmu. Jak dzisiejsze siły ekonomiczne kształtują świat jutra*, Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, Wrocław 1996, p. 22.

⁶ N. Klein, *No logo*, Świat Literacki, Izabelin 2004, p. 463.

whole life and never ends. This is the learning process that happens through active involvement, cognitive processes and the solving of real life problems. The new distribution of labor and the post-industrial world invites and provokes us to think about changes in education. Many believe in increasing the meaning of knowledge as a way of improving the functioning of society. The classical thoughts of Daniel Bell presented a prediction of incredible growth of the educational sector and its connection with society's success⁷. This was partially true and partially untrue. We can see today that more time spent at school does not necessarily mean a more authentic education. We learn more, but still cannot find a solution to the problem of how to learn effectively.

The concept of a knowledge society influences our thinking about school and its role, but is not really visible in schools. Although the postulate of supporting the development of the knowledge worker and strengthening the creation of knowledge as a production process is well recognized⁸, it still seems to fail to impact significantly on the reality of school reality. In the ideal situation, school should help people to develop the abilities and skills needed for: collecting information through inquiry and reflection; a multidisciplinary approach to tasks; work in culturally diverse groups and complex social structures (not only hierarchical, but also network like); with a high level of responsibility and a self-management approach. What is also needed is a new climate in which people required to live in a new reality of constant change might develop and function. That climate should support the ability to deal with the uncertainty of contemporary times. Work in groups is beneficial only when democracy is assured, active involvement supported, flexibility and mobility accepted and responsibility shared.

Context: Defining Misunderstandings

Although we constantly initiate efforts to reform educational systems, these efforts do not bring the expected outcomes. Simple solutions like increasing the number of school graduates does not change the quality of education in society and does not help fight inequality, poverty and exclusion. Why does the school fail when it competes with stupidity, intolerance, hate, xenophobia or indolence? Why do our students fail in real tests, on the streets, in their lives?

When one is able to look at schools without the emotion - caused by political or ideological controversies, one needs to admit that we have not been able to establish any common ground as to what should be taught. What is really important? In a quite schizophrenic manner, the official declarations, political statements, and scientific recommendations are noticeably distant and separated from the reality, and priorities, of school and are not visible on a day-to-day basis. The other problem that almost completely blocks the ability of school, as an organization, to change the way it operates is the way of teaching. It is interesting that this problem arises not only from teachers' misunderstandings concerning teaching methodologies and the newest knowledge, but also teachers' understanding of their role in school. Unfortunately, the lack of agreement on that particular issue causes misunderstandings, conflicts and anxiety. Are they a state employee who should

⁷ D. Bell, *The Coming Post-Industrial society*, Basic Books, New York 1976, p. 212.

⁸ P. Drucker, *Post-capitalist Society*, HarperCollins, New York 1993, p. 8; Hargreaves A., *Teaching in the Knowledge Society. Education in the Age of Insecurity*, Teachers College Press, Philadelphia 2003, p. 16.

focus on the implementation of rules and regulations? Are they a highly specialized professional who should pass on carefully organized knowledge from their area? Are they social workers who need to support those who are struggling? Are they friends or supervisors? Answers to these questions are decided upon by the reality in schools. It is possible to find hundreds of them, some more important and some less, but they are critical ones regarding the process of teaching. It is a sad paradox that despite thousands of declarations focusing on active teaching and learning, when something is the "most important" to teach, teachers use their traditional teaching tools that employ passing on information, not working with it, that promote student discipline and the ability to replicate and not passion and creativity, finally leading to a categorization of knowledge through detached pieces of information from others' packages.

We need to ask the question: "how do we help citizens" in their search for the soft, difficult to define, skills needed in unusual situations, in a multicolored world. How do we help them in multilayered tasks where every time we need to elaborate new approaches and to find new solutions that have not been implemented ever before and when is it impossible to use existing schemes and models? One of the possible answers to that question is implementation of strategies that are based on research and critical inquiry and innovative approaches to problem solving and deep reflection. These are strategies that demand a change in the way of teaching and learning; from a focus on the huge group and standards that support the teaching of everyone in the same way for the same results, and instead to support a move to designing, preparing and providing conditions for independent learning for future gains.

Another obstacle in reforming education is a serious deficit in the operation of democracy in school and assumptions about structure and the sources of power that determine interactions between and among people (teachers and students and students among themselves). Schools operate as authoritarian institutions, treating students and parents as materials rather than partners. Students have no right to have priorities about decisions and to participate in the decision making process concerning critical issues of the teaching and learning process or the organization of school. As long as students are treated as "items that need to be fixed" they will not actively participate in the process of education. Democracy is a difficult concept theoretically and even more difficult as a project to be implemented; we need to be aware that it is impossible to prepare citizens for democratic societies in institutions that are not democratic. Democracy is not about telling one what we should do but working together in constructing common goals and an understanding of the world. The crisis of school is most visible in places where the crisis of the idea of citizenship is visible, where there is a lack of awareness of the need for democracy, and where unfairness is ignored⁹. Schools are waiting for an approach that will allow them to teach effectively in connection with the real world through participation in an authentic learning community.

These issues under discussion shape the reality of the majority of countries. The approach presented in this volume is an attempt to search for a rational reaction to those challenges and is designed for both formal educational institutions, which are elements of the bigger educational system, and informal educational initiatives that promote life-long democratic education and are part of the huge network of projects and organizations

⁹ W. Feinberg & J.F. Soltis, *Szkola i społeczeństwo*, WSiP, Warszawa 1998.

working in less bureaucratic manners. The approach described in this volume has resulted from deep reflections that led to a conclusion of the necessity for critical change in education. However, it does not assume immediate changes and results but rather a systemic process of redesigning the conditions for learning, assumptions and beliefs, together with an investment in creating professional capital through the development of teachers and leaders. School resists changes. Perhaps this is a natural and expected reaction whenever the goal of change touches the basic beliefs and values of the system. A systemic process is the only way to implement sustainable improvements – to invite everyone involved to the discussion on those basic assumptions. Democratic society needs both the discourse and its products: mental models that allow society to function in a democratic way. Stable democracy will not appear without citizens with challenging goals, and good schools will not exist without empowered students .

Possible Directions

School should work in a way that can overcome the contradictions mentioned in the introduction and serve two goals: first, shaping reality according to ambitious values focused on democracy, equality and sustainable development, and second, facilitating individual development and preparation for life – long learning in knowledge society. To be able to do this, school needs to reconstruct the theory and practice of its own functioning. We need to redefine the shared and internalized aims of education. Education needs to focus mainly on the future and active construction of the reality, not on reproducing the status quo. In theory, schooling should be designed as a social mission that changes the world by changing individuals. The belief that we are able to change the world while we are changing ourselves builds empowerment and responsibility. In practice it means that besides teaching techniques for survival, school needs to also give reasons as well as the strength to survive. Understanding and cooperation should become the engines of school operation.

Social capital decides on the success of nations, countries and groups. School is expected to tailor its operation through awareness of this statement and to help build that capital. Unfortunately, in the majority of cases, schools look like they did in the industrial era, in the factory – standardized goals and procedures, the same organizational scheme, and with pressure on controlling instead of motivating. It is high time to think about how we could design “educational opportunities” in various settings, for various groups, with various learning goals. Instead of “one size” for the entire generation, school should offer inspiring initiatives and projects, allowing groups and individuals to broaden and deepen their view of the world and their lives. In other words, education should not prepare for a life yesterday but for life tomorrow.

The crisis in education is not caused by lack of information. In fact, schools, students, social groups have enough information. The situation cannot be improved by maneuvers (manipulating) around curricula or the organization of work. They are important indeed. But first we need to strengthen the democratic culture of education and overcome what was mentioned earlier as ‘the crisis of citizenship’. It is possible to do so by working on the creation of democratic learning communities. The base for those communities is the

assumption that everyone can learn and everyone does learn; even instructors, facilitators and teachers learn. Their learning happens in different areas but they are still learning. A lack of understanding of this assumption blocks the development of learning communities. Only when everybody participates in, and enjoys the learning process, is learning triggered and assured.

When the postulate of creating a learning community is fulfilled, it gives all educational initiatives the ability to involve participants in authentic education. That process must utilize meaningful dialogue and an inquiry process that allows for a closer look at the issues that are researched and discussed. It also allows for reflection on ourselves, our beliefs, and our assumptions. Education needs to help people to communicate on a practical level, a level that enables simple cooperation and also an awareness of ideology. Open dialogue creates space for problem formulation and for creating a statement on the necessity of student activity¹⁰. The climate that supports cooperation, openness and sharing builds a space for the planning and implementing of educational initiatives that involve real action in real life. Education that is based on dialogue and research in connection with reality is easier than in a traditional approach that recognizes learners needs and adapts in a way that allows us to use them and fulfill them in the same moment. Schools and education in general, have to change to ignite learners toward creative inquiry in the areas they need to be successful¹¹. I will stress again that in schools and projects which do this, learners create their world with a feeling of autonomy and responsibility.

Approaches and Structures

We have defined some of the weaknesses of contemporary education as situated in three areas. First is a theoretical and ideological framework for goal setting and assumptions about the roles of educators and learners, which determine or lead to the practice of schooling. The lack of awareness of the contextual conditions and priorities that do not support learning skills for a knowledge society is crucial. Finally embodied in this is a lack of self-reflection by teachers themselves and their failure to understand just how important a defined goal as well as the climate of the teaching and learning process is. Second, is the approach to the teaching and learning process itself. Obviously, it is strongly linked to the previous one, but it is more about a practice that helps to involve students than about the theoretical framework that makes innovative and inspiring practices possible. The main concept here is to focus on increasing the learner's involvement through tasks that have deep meaning, are connected with real life, and provide an opportunity for innovative thinking, creativity and problem solving. These demand new approaches to teaching in which teachers are more active in designing learning situations than in providing learners with more and more information. The third area is connected with democracy and solidarity during the learning process and how that should help to develop understanding and make visible the ability to be a valuable member of society, with a strong sense of empathy for any lack of equity and exclusion of others. In other words, schools and various educational initiatives should be clinics of democracy, allowing participants to experience, test and train democratic procedures and values.

¹⁰ E.P. Quintero, & M.K., *Becoming a Teacher in the New Society*, New York, Washington, Peter Lang, 2003.

¹¹ W. Feinberg & J.F. Soltis, *Szkoła i społeczeństwo*, WSiP, Warszawa 1998.

A new and redesigned education should allow every student to overcome his or her natural obstacles and limitations. And this demands action from both sides – learners as well as the facilitators of projects. The willingness of students to initiate a struggle, especially the one which leads to their overcoming of contextual limitations, relies on an appropriate atmosphere during the educational initiative. Three important elements of this atmosphere are: safety, motivation and the learner's understanding of his or her identity. Awareness of the learners identity is important for both the individual themselves and for the teacher because it helps one to understand one's perspectives, needs, and the possible directions for development. If we want to help build connections to prior knowledge, it is useful to understand the person's background. Motivation is critical to the learning process because without mental involvement it is impossible to be a part of a cognitive process that might last and help in constructing knowledge and solving problems. Safety is inane for authentic learning because without risk taking in asking questions, creating hypotheses and answering, learners stay in a comfort zone that usually does not allow for new and innovative approaches.

The quality and authenticity of learning depends on the ability of the teacher (and/or instructor, or facilitator of the process) to understand that in order to improve education they should aim to change three important elements that were defined as weaknesses (the theoretical framework of education, their approach to teaching and learning, and democratic procedures) and also to create an atmosphere supportive of learning. In thinking about teacher responsibilities, one can point to a few concrete initiatives that, if implemented, might bring positive change.

It is not a sequence of actions that should be conducted but rather a change in the whole tradition of the school operation. For the first weakness (a lack of a framework and/or awareness) we need to create space and underline the need of teachers and others for reflection. Teachers need reflection upon their pedagogical practice and also on the social context of education, personal and group priorities in order to show the complexity of the teaching and learning process. This learning process must include much more than merely passing on of information. For the second weakness (the approach to teaching and learning) we need to help all educational instructors to adjust their practice to the needs of the contemporary world, with its diversity, fast development, uncertainty, and technologies. We can do so by designing valuable professional development initiatives that should include working in peer groups (observations, peer coaching, problem solving), real life projects that can be useful in the "outside" world, participation in ideological and political educational discourse, action research and making independent decisions about their work. Only the professional who understands the world and his/her situation is able to utilise an authentic professional toolbox. Teachers might have a wide knowledge about teaching methods, but they will not be used skillfully without a deep understanding of the aims and context. New "technologies" in education are completely useless if they are used by people who do not understand the reasons for which they should use them.

For the third weakness (lack of democracy) we should open up the decision – making process not only to teachers but also to parents and students. They need to be

heard, not only in the areas that are not really important but also in aspects that are critical for school organization discussions. They should have an equal voice/ status.

However, these actions will not serve education if the appropriate climate is not secured. Those who would try to implement the above recommendations need to internalize them to avoid a situation in which those concepts are used just to improve traditional, competitive educational practices. If that is the case, we will not be able to create a climate that best supports learning (safety, motivation and identity). It is dangerous when one tries to implement new practices without changing deep beliefs and approaches, usually it results in creating a fake identity for that particular initiative and might not only fail to help but even hurt those who participate.

The teaching and learning process suggested above might be shaped in a hundred different ways and might also be confusing for those who are looking for indicators of quality in standardized procedures and comparable, measureable results. One of the possible conditions assuring quality, and also one of the signs of that quality, is the honesty that is an inevitable element of good teaching and learning. Honesty does not allow us to reduce that process only to the use of teaching techniques, but also demands involvement from all the participants of the process. Involvement, especially that which employs the identity of teachers and learners and thus is a declaration of both independence and connectedness, is the key for participants. Honesty supports the construction of knowledge in the situation where the educator is open to learners' ideas and actively involved in interaction with students' curiosity¹². Only those teachers, who reflect their own identity in teaching, can facilitate that process effectively. Only they have a chance to convince other participants in the process of constructing knowledge that they really want to solve interesting problems and answer difficult questions, instead of not merely wanting to continue the ritual in which we have played out old tricks.

One of the actions that might be conducted could be a change in teacher status, tasks and preparation. In schools, the pendulum of trust and control surprisingly stays almost constantly on the side of control. In the history of economics and also in other areas (for example foreign affairs, or finance) there are moments when we want more control or when we trust particular institutions or actors and we agree to give them more freedom. This has not been the case in schools. For at least the last forty years at least they have been facing bigger and bigger demands for accountability, understood unfortunately as very close control. We need to release teachers from their administrative duties that serve only the interest of authorities and work only for purposes of control. Pressure and control do not invite teachers to undertake creative and inspirational initiatives but rather it encourages them to stay within a sector of mediocrity because it is safer. In a theoretical discourse they are expected to show creativity, but in practice they are demanded to produce immediate results and prove them with hard data (for example tests results). This has led to simplified actions focused on satisfying those demands. It is impossible to support self-evaluation, teamwork and innovative thinking when they are punished or rewarded only for individual success measured against national standards¹³. The answer to those dilemmas is embedded in teachers' preparation and the understanding of their role.

¹² P. Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishing, Inc: Lanham 1998, p. 49.

¹³ G. Mazurkiewicz, *Odpowiedzialne zarządzanie szkołą*, referat wygłoszony na konferencji z okazji 10-lecia Instytut Spraw Publicznych UJ, Kraków 2007.

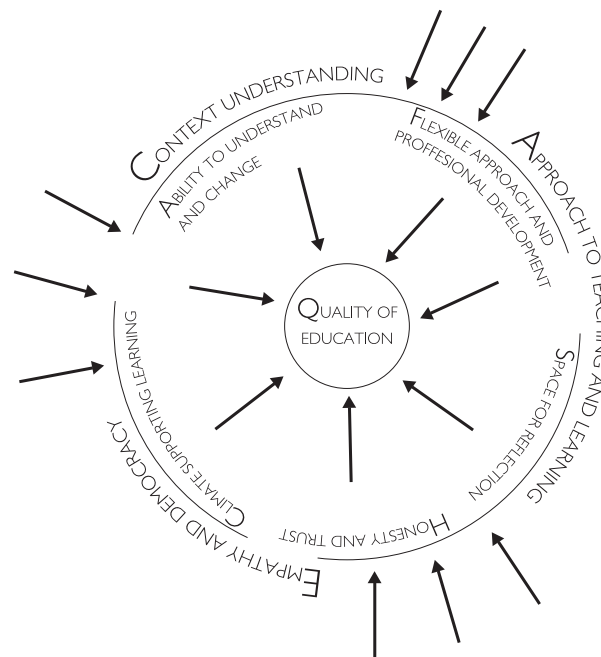


Fig. 1.1 Condition of Education

We need professionals who at the same time present sensitivity and show a deep understanding of the complex reality and their own role. Among the important features of the educational professional (a person who helps learning) I would like to stress three of them. Educational professionals need to develop a deep awareness of their own assumptions, theories, beliefs and limitations, all of which determine the way he or she functions in the world and at work and also shapes the readiness to serve others in the process of growing and developing – this I call “intellectual empathy”. I also believe that educational professionals need to be active in supporting social change, something that should be understood as the main aim for schools. That activity happens through involvement in numerous initiatives and projects inside and outside of the particular organization or process, and also through inspiring others to be active. I have termed this “educational activism”. Finally, educational professionals should internalize the scientific approach to the learning process. This approach allows a constant revising of the knowledge used, permanent professional development, and mainly, an active and independently constructed profession through research, dialogue and cooperation. This I call the “art of teaching”.

Experiential Education Is Meaningful Learning

One of the most promising approaches to teaching and learning is when one utilizes the learners’ direct experiences in the learning process and connect it (learning) with issues that are important to them. Learning from experience (experiential learning) happens as a result of reflection about something that we have personally experienced. It is

a process of verifying a working hypothesis, fulfilling a task, solving a problem or answering a question. Every situation that we participate in or witness, every experience, leads us to another situation through which we experience again reflection on the process. In that way learning becomes a cycle that lasts during a whole life, it becomes a lifelong experience.

The starting point for inspiring an authentic education is real experience. The learners need to be active participants of the process in which we analyze the situation, build conclusions and generalize them, finally planning the next step¹⁴. Teaching in that situation is preparing and creating learning situations, a learning reality that gives chances for inspiration and reflection. In that culture of teaching the basic responsibility of an educator to enable a learner to experience what is the aim of that projects, lesson, initiative or task and find a method for useful reflection. Two basic tasks for designing authentic education is to prepare an activity, or a situation allowing students to gain an experience and to help learners to understand what happened through describing, reflecting, concluding, generalizing and giving feedback. The critical moment is to support learners in internalizing knowledge, skills and attitudes to which they were exposed during that process (experience and reflection) in order to ensure that they can use it in the future. One possible way is to encourage them to train the new skill, to implement it more often or merely to plan how we will use it.

In that way learners should understand that they are not only to remember information and concepts, but also what created it, using subjective conditions, perspectives and feelings extracted from everyday experiences, work and play. Interdisciplinary approaches and new technologies make that postulate more feasible thanks to new tools: the Internet, communicative equipment, recording techniques, photography, mentoring, coaching, innovative teaching methods, etc; by using them we bestow on learners an independent selection of inquiry methods – looking for information, accepting failures, working in groups, constructing knowledge, and also the participating in a meaningful learning processes.

That approach differs from what Paulo Freire has criticized as the “banking approach to education”¹⁵. Here, instead of stressing the importance of “collecting knowledge” and memorizing abstract concepts, active participation in constructing knowledge is critical. That approach allows for a holistic perspective when thinking about education. One interesting “branch” of experiential education is expeditionary learning – the situation where learning experience becomes possible due to scientific exploration of different geographical locations, exploration of ourselves and through travel. The expeditionary learning method is a workshop for the mind – an inquiry based method of teaching and learning that allows for independent and useful education. This method is a project – like initiative that assumes independent, responsible, – based and facilitator – coordinated (in school contexts by a teacher) group work aiming at pre-defined aims. The project’s main framework is similar to preparing an expedition to an unknown land in order to research interesting aspects of reality, solving a problem or answering difficult questions. Participants are invited to be a part of a specific project which turns into an authentic and democratic dialogue among all members of the group. It is difficult to predict perfectly the final outcome

¹⁴ D.A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning experience as a source of learning and development*, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1984.

¹⁵ P. Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom, Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Boulder, New York, Oxford, 2001.

of a project, but as a result of dialogue, it is possible to develop partnership, openness and honesty.

Expeditionary learning faces resistance in schools. It is difficult and does not promise obvious and sure results. Teachers are afraid that students will have a fragmented knowledge and hence they refuse to change their typical style of work and suffer because of the amount of time needed. Implementation of expeditionary teaching and learning, however, allows us to radically change the context of the educational process in order to add students' involvement and connect it to the external world. Expeditionary learning supports personal, emotional and cognitive development, the development of needs and interests, the integration of knowledge and skills from different subjects, and an increase of group work skills. This approach helps one to fight the assumption that those who fail tests are bad students with weaker chances for success.

It is impossible to teach about the world only in classrooms surrounded by walls. It is difficult to know the world and people through reading, watching films and listening to others. It is difficult to learn who we are without a chance to look at our action from a distance. In order to learn how to live, we need to live. To learn about the diverse, changing, and multicultural world we need to step into it, taste it and think how we can learn to be a part of it.

Everything Counts

A small association from Poland inspired the creation of an international project named Expedition Inside Culture in which these challenges are faced and recommendations are implemented. The project stresses that teaching and learning is a never ending responsibility for an open approach to reality and learning itself. Within the project we are aware that the most serious school failure is the situation in which students lose their natural curiosity and desire for learning, when the source of happiness is derived from ending school and not its beginning, hence joy and passion are always the guiding principles.

We (the group that started this initiative) were aware that while diagnosing education in schools we have no right to stop there. We attempted to look for an alternative method of learning and understanding the world. The guiding assumption was the belief that only those who find the courage to leave mainstream thinking about education have a chance for success. Those who do not leave that mainstream replicate the scenario that leads to the same failure as always. It was obvious that if something has a positive impact, it is because it was created for that particular purpose and context, and not for all possibilities, in every location. We knew that communication, listening to each other and intercultural awareness will decide the future of the initiative. We decided that a respect for all opinions, support for self-development, and the independent attitudes of participants¹⁶ were our priorities. Freedom, respect and dignity are the complementing concepts and phenomena that characterizes authentic education. People can not be creative in response to orders or against themselves. We knew that the involvement of free and equal individuals would be a key to all future initiatives.

¹⁶ W. Okoń, *Dziesięć szkół alternatywnych*, Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, Warszawa 1999.

The theory that makes Expedition Inside Culture strong today, and that gives rational reason to operate a framework for analysis of its activities and results, developed through practical experiences, long discussions, painful reflections and discourse that continued regardless of changing locations, participants, time and subjects. In the typical way grounded theories arise, our theorizing around authentic education was tested and implemented before it was a theory – we were expressing our desires and dreams. For example: we would like to meet other people, we want to have fun or why could we were unable to learn without knowing about it, after implementing it we adjusting and finally we were able to verbalize it ourselves in a more elaborated way.

The changing group of teachers, activists and students were, and still are, the driving force for establishing the basic rules of Expedition Inside Culture that today, in retrospect, answer some of the issues discussed earlier in the chapter. We never wanted to arrange anything that would be a simple mechanism of transferring information, values or patterns of behaviors. Our approach always stressed the meaning of a multicultural reality and understanding one's identity in preparing for democracy. We believe that in order to be able to participate in a system that is influenced by various values and priorities, one needs to understand his or her background, priorities and as many factors, which have shaped their identity as possible. Learning in that case is a common endeavor in order to build the meaning of the world from numerous, diverse sources and messages. Only those who are deeply involved in their learning can become independent and life-long learners. The skill of controlling our own learning process is difficult to achieve, but is a desired ability. Participants of the expeditions face the challenge of developing that skill because we believe that quality education is not a matter of using better teaching techniques but is an issue of enabling the learner to become responsible for his or her own learning.

The learning community needs to be a network of equal partners, so the assumption of constant learning by every member of the group is a rule equal to responsibility for learning. The equality of all parties involved in the process means that there are no superiors in the learning process. The specific advantage of the teachers can not come from the fact that he or she has read a textbook earlier, but from the willingness to serve as a resource person or an advisor who has experienced similar situations before and is still eager to learn, not only about content, but also about the process and himself or herself. Teachers have to admit, agree and act according to the belief that during this process they learn together with their students. Only this democratic attitude, in which the value of equality is protected, allows us to create an environment for authentic learning. Those who teach have to be aware that they are also involved in developing themselves. They need to be ready for learning along with their students¹⁷. Learning becomes a democratic experience because everyone struggles and enjoys that struggle similarly. This is difficult both for teachers and students because it demands honesty, openness, involvement, creativity and the agreement that we are not sure where we will end when we finish.

Common inquiry and learning is a step in the journey to build a learning organization, which every institution should become. Of course this is still a revolutionary concept in our schools ruled by the traditional approach to social stratification and social structures. Besides the assumption about teachers and students, there is another hidden message in the statement that "everyone learns". It also points to the conviction that every stu-

¹⁷ G. Mazurkiewicz, *Edukacja dla demokracji. Jak uczyć tolerancji*, in: Forum Europejskie, nr 11, wiosna 2006, Kraków, p. 27-42.

dent can learn – with a different background, talent, degree of preparation, support from other adults, needs and capabilities, etc. It definitely makes the teaching process extremely difficult but this is the only approach that we can accept. And this is why dialogue that allows to include everyone is so critical – because students learn through social interactions. Everyone is expected to be involved because we talk about important things and not because we have to be involved and might be punished if we are not¹⁸. The positive approach to individual needs and the complexity of the world is a result of the multicultural perspective that opens up education to a variety of rich issues and solutions. Learning in democratic and multicultural climates supports equality, perfection, respect, solidarity, knowledge and more. This also leads towards freedom, the main goal of education¹⁹.

Multiple perspectives accepted and included in the learning process support intercultural communication, help to address differences in a way that enriches us and decreases the inherited habit of competition, anxiety and aggression manifest while meeting others. Communication is an educational act itself. The effort accompanying meeting other people helps us to become a human and a citizen²⁰. This is a critical element of the Expedition Inside Culture. In that way we act against isolation or “safety belts” created in contemporary societies, stopping the unwanted from coming into our world²¹. The dialogue between differences was never easy and always demanded effort. Expedition Inside Culture takes seriously one of its aims, that of leading towards understanding through patience, tolerance, and willingness to listen to others’ points of view, others ways of seeing the world.

The contemporary world is fascinating in its diversity but extremely difficult to manage (if we believe it should be managed). The problems we face are so specific and new that it is impossible to use traditional solutions. So it is not really useful to teach and learn “old tricks”. What we need is flexibility, creativity, problem solving skills (and others mentioned earlier) in a special multicultural approach. To teach that it is important to place young people in front of difficult issues and questions, in situations where they can gain an ability to adjust to a new context.

Every expedition goes through different stages of the process corresponding with the way we learn experientially. The beginning is always a preparation to the expedition when we establish research goals, try to know the context of our action (region, history etc), begin to create a common ground by starting a group process and find out the needs of participants. Although it is difficult to see exactly when one stage is finished and the next one started, the next stage is a preparation of the conditions for authentic learning and cooperation. Basically through a set of activities and reflections we try to integrate the group, uncover participant identity and assumptions, show and discuss group process and also introduce the knowledge and skills needed for further work. We ask questions that are important for us and work on the communication process to ensure smooth work in groups. From that point we move to the very active process of researching the area – we go out to the real world to find out about our issues, problems and questions. Through the direct involvement of every participant we increase their ability to collect information, process and

¹⁸ R. Reissman, *The Evolving Multicultural Classroom*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, Virginia 1994, p. 27.

¹⁹ W. Ayers, *Teaching towards Freedom. Moral Commitment and Ethical Action in the Classroom*, Beacon Press, Boston, 2004.

²⁰ R. Kapuściński, *Ten Inny*, Wydawnictwo Znak, Kraków 2006.

²¹ Z. Bauman, *Życie na przemiał*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków, 2004.

interpret it, not only from one perspective but also consider the local culture and context. Finally we invite everyone to the reflection process on the collected data and also on the process they went through. The expedition ends with the implementation plan – how we are going to use the results of that expedition.

The general conception of the Expedition is to involve participants from different backgrounds in one interdisciplinary project that usually aims at a critical issue for the region we research. The process of learning happens on two levels: the content directly connected with the selected issue and the process of learning that happens to the group and the transformation of individuals. Both levels are equally important for the support development of learners involved in the project.

Outcomes of Authentic Education

We will know that we have designed a successful education model when we see successful societies. I have stated earlier that the primary aim of education is to shape the reality according to values focused on democracy, equality & sustainable development and also to support individual development so that it ensures a successful life in the knowledge society. Both of the sentences above allow a wide margin for the interpretation of what exactly success means and what values should be ensured. The process of interpretation should happen only in specific contexts, with citizens actively involved in shaping the reality and equipped with tools that allow them to participate in that process. Those citizens will display certain qualities that should appear as a result of authentic education. The qualities I am talking about create the pillars of education we pray for.

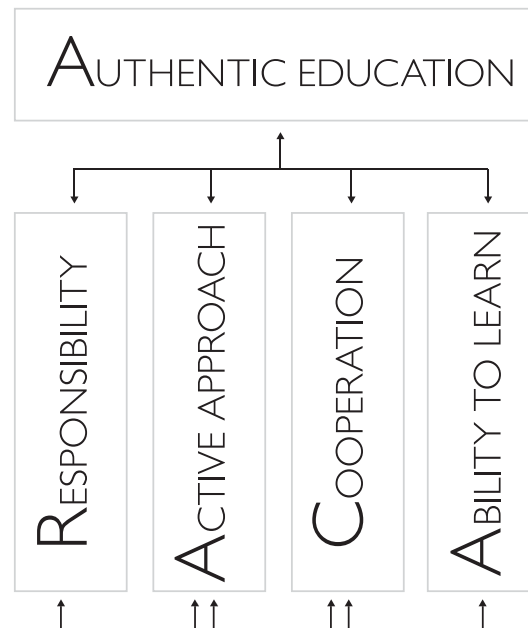


Fig 1.2 Outcomes of authentic education

Firstly, citizens as participants in the authentic learning process are aware of their responsibility towards the world. It means that all the people understand the world and its problems not in a simplistic way but as interconnected phenomena, tied together and influencing all of its elements. They will see local problems as a part of a bigger system and will feel, as an integrated element of the local community, willing to be involved.

Secondly, with that awareness they should also present an active approach to reality. It is not enough to understand the world, it is also important to actively work for its improvement and safety. An active approach towards the contemporary world suggests involvement in designing a process of change and authentic action as well as creative problem solving. The second pillar stresses the necessity of taking action. In other words passive groups and societies have no chance for success.

Thirdly, individual activism is not enough. Even group action might not be sufficient. We need to promote and advertise actions through broadening partnerships and networks into global initiatives and supporting intercultural dialogue. Cooperation, which is not simple voting or compromising but is a sophisticated method of inclusion, starts with understanding ourselves and leads to effective communication through intercultural dialogue.

Fourthly, in order to build and strengthen the three above – mentioned pillars we need to know how to do it, therefore the ability to learn is the fourth pillar. The learning “toolbox” should include learning methods that utilize higher order thinking skills, problem solving, new technologies and work in diverse groups. Learning should be understood as mental mobility and readiness for inquiry in every moment of our lives.

These four pillars, on which we may build the future success of individuals and societies, should arise from the education process described in this volume. It is not simple, rather it is messy and difficult to manage. But readiness to accept the difficulties is the first step in quite a long journey.

Summary

Democracy and education need dialogue. Both democracy and education are the processes that serve to construct a reality, to agree on what we see and want, to establish understanding of the problems we face and the ways of solving them. A “healthy” education system is rooted within a “healthy” socio-political system. It is very important to remember that the evolution of school is an element of the historical process. We need to position it (the evolution of school) into a wider context. Everyday social practices (successes and failures) have a huge impact on school. Contemporary schools use a certain ideological and social software that does not allow them to play the role they are expected to play. They are not able to inspire human kind to build the world we would be glad of. It is our responsibility and duty to change it. It seems that we would benefit today only if we are able to design and build a society in which various educational opportunities, provided by formal and informal “systems”, networks and institutions, would allow youth and adults to develop abilities important in knowledge and democratic societies (such as those

mentioned numerous times earlier in the chapter).

Good teaching is like playing in a jazz band where musicians are in constant contact with themselves, the audience, melody and rhythm. They can manage their instrument playing in such a way that it allows them to play together with the whole band, but also to be aware of their abilities and desires (so that they can have a solo part at the best, appropriate, moment). Good musicians play their solo only when the moment allows for it – in a way that is adequate to the needs, emotions, abilities and the story told by the music. Good teaching is like playing jazz. That teaching allows us to hear all the voices and supports democracy and diversity. It is not about being identical, it is about having equal access, being included, feeling responsible, cooperating with the world, taking part in decision making, and being active. It is not easy but it is not impossible. Every success is preceded by hundreds of failures and wrong answers, but we have decided to try. This volume is an attempt to share the story of success.

AUTHENTIC AND DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION: EXPEDITIONARY TEACHING AND LEARNING AS ONE MEANS

SCENARIO- HIGGINS LAKE MICHIGAN

A group of urban high school students have traveled north to an area of Northern Michigan. They have left their classrooms to spend a few days engaged in leadership, communication and tolerance education activities structured to help them take risks, learn how to engage with the local community and come to understand the powerful possibilities of education. It is not necessarily education as it looks in their brick and mortar schools, but education as it is intended—engaging, thought provoking, challenging.

As the activity begins, a visiting Polish woman gathers the students in a circle and starts a discussion about issues related to women. Murmurs emerge from some of the students, murmurs about why this topic, about girls in general and about how soon there will be a break. Slowly, as the deliberation about the conditions for women emerges topics are discussed and questions raised about situations in different parts of the world. A change comes over the students. They begin to raise stories about their lives in urban communities and their family situations. They are engaged, concerned, self-reflective.

Introduction

Education can be more than the traditional image of teacher (knowledge holder) imparting to student (knowledge container). Education can be a means for becoming more human, for raising questions about the quality of our lives, for working to improve the conditions in our communities. It has at its center the possibility of working towards common ends, what Ayers calls “teaching towards freedom”. What roles might schooling and education play in democratic societies?

“With one eye on our students and another on ourselves, we attend to both the learning environment and the concentric circles of context in which our teaching is enacted. We commit to striving for true awareness of the larger world, to feeling the weight of it as we attempt to lift it up”²². As an ambiguous process democracy is often viewed as too com-

plex and unmanageable for the world of education. Some argue that schools need to be carefully organized with standards, tasks and recipes—measured by the day, the year, and the class. We are faced with beliefs such that education, if it is to succeed, needs to be managed and managed in the sense of one person giving direction and others following. Or does it? If one role for schools in democratic societies is to help prepare young people for active life, then schools need to become more democratic in order to pass on a democratic ethos.

Democracy as a political philosophy is full of possibility and conflict. Within democratic society, education has served many purposes. These purposes for educating members of society act as the starting point for conceptualizing authentic and democratic education.

What is Authentic Education?

Most education occurs inside walls. Four walls, a door, a few windows that might open to the fresh air and sunshine serve as the boundaries for what mainly passes as education. The struggles within those walls are well documented—teachers not prepared for the reality of the classroom; unmotivated students; parents and community members with little time to focus on the needs of learning. Education, when it succeeds, breaks down those walls, opens the doors and puts primacy on the connections between the activity inside the classroom with the world and society outside.

Authenticity has been defined by educational theorists as focusing on designing

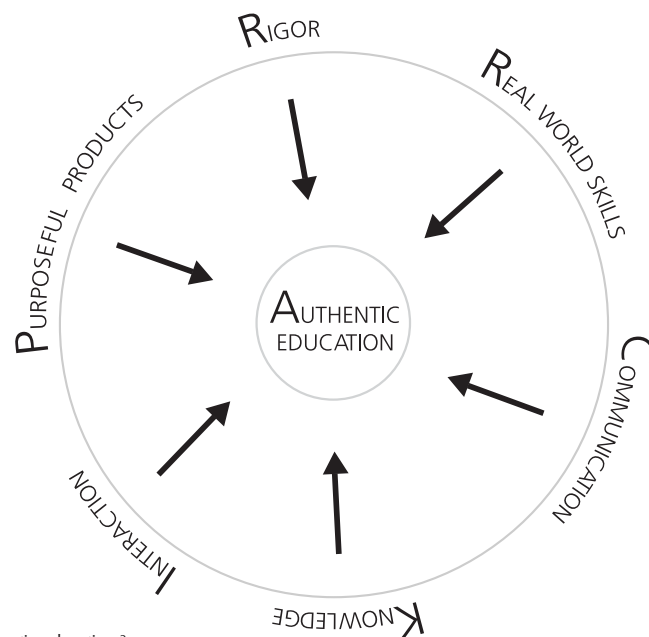


Fig 1.3 What is authentic education ?

²² W. Ayers, *Teaching toward freedom*, Beacon Press, Boston 2004.

learning experiences that broadly connect educational practice to the real world. Within the work of Expedition Inside Culture there are six key aspects to our conceptualization of authenticity: rigorous expectations for student learning; skills modeled on and related to the work of individuals out in the community; knowledge continually gathered from discipline fields; informed and yet question-filled deliberative communication; frequent interaction between learners and the society and its concerns; purposeful student products that are shared with and serve the broader community's goals and needs. In figure 1.1 the context for quality education was laid out. But what might be seen if we look into that center circle of quality? Figure 1.3 takes the aspects of a broadened definition of the quality of education and the general conditions necessary and expands it one more level. Six key aspects of quality education help to make education authentic

Rigor

A student learning in authentic education is focused on supporting all students as they are looked to meet rigorous expectations. These expectations help to define, not the minimum or the totality of student knowledge to be gained, but rather, high levels of understanding. These higher levels of understanding and learning, by their nature, reflect the complexity of issues, events, structures, and individuals that make up the source and reality of the world today.

Real World Skills

It is a rare event to find an adult in the real world sitting at a desk being asked to silently complete a workbook page. The skills necessary to lead a fulfilled and productive life are the skills in use in the disciplines and fields—the job market—that represents the spectrum of adult work. These skills are the means of analysis used by the accountant to determine future expenditures; the means of communication of the blogger seeking to document current events in her community; the means of investigation by the engineer hoping to develop more sophisticated wind power. These skills are modeled on and related to the work of individuals out in the community.

Knowledge

Knowledge is not static. It is, in fact, ambiguous and ever changing as new interpretations and discoveries push us to reconsider what we know about a topic, a species, or a global issue. Authentic education works to continually gather new knowledge from a variety of disciplines and fields. This new knowledge is held up for evaluation, reflection and critique. Students are taught to question both established knowledge and new emerging findings. For example, this educational work links both human rights and the socio-political context for various phenomenon. Historically, the practices and beliefs of dominate cultures have violated the basic human needs of life, shelter, the sustenance of others²³. Historical references allow a historical perspective to take shape with the world. Participants explore the conflicts and economics that helped to shape the world we are living in today.

²³ P. Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishing, Inc: Lanham 1998.

Communication

Communication in all its many forms is essential to authentic education. Communication, spoken, written, visual, and others, is both informed by the continuous flow of ideas from the knowledge society and yet questions the same ideas through a deliberative process within the learning community.

Interaction

Frequent interaction between learners, the society and its concerns is crucial if the education mission focused on rigor, communication, discipline-based knowledge, and real world skills is to succeed. Students and teachers leave the four walls of their classroom, through both physical and virtual means, to see, touch, communicate, explore, and investigate with and in the world around them. They encounter a world that is multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-lingual and yet in its diversity ultimately human. Building intercultural understanding is a piece of the puzzle in EIC²⁴. It is our recognition that we live in diverse communities that each struggle with how to define cultural communication issues and then struggle to determine which solutions to propose.

Purposeful Products

Authentic education has at its core the engagement of students in the creation of purposeful products. Not just products that serve as culminating experiences, but formative products that show the initial conceptualizations all the way through final assessments of growth. These products are designed to be shared with and serve the broader community's goals and needs. They are the means through which educational institutions contribute to the broader improvement of society.

Democratic Education as the Goal of our Work

Democratic education is much more than the lessons taught in a civics class, or the mock voting that might happen at election time in each of our countries. Democratic education is the design of learning situations that ultimately result in the development of a democratic ethos in students and teachers. Teachers consciously work to develop the skills, habits of mind, the manner of thinking that contributes to the improvement of the society. That ethos is carried by the student/learner through out their life and informs their encounters with work, learning, communication and the other aspects of a productive life in our complex world²⁵. Education becomes a means for raising up the community, developing a democratic ethos, and improving the lives of those who inhabit neighborhoods, villages and towns in various parts of the world.

²⁴ Kellough 2004 reminded us that both the social and psychological sciences have understood that suppressing or denying ethnicity and race could be destructive to humanity (Hollingsworth, Didelot & Smith, 2003). Tolerance can be defined as acknowledging and respecting the beliefs and practices of others (Heller & Hawkins, 1994).

²⁵ Giroux (1992), hooks (1994), Freire (1998) and Darder (2002) have all pushed educators to struggle with the intersections of culture, curriculum, and democracy. They have pushed teachers and others to think about the developmental change real education implies. They have encouraged educators to seek answers to key questions while remaining cognizant of the context in which teaching and learning is occurring.

The forces of globalization and the interactions that ensue as a result, are at play in the field of democracy education. Dewey²⁶ described democracy as “a way of living together, a way of communicating with one another without the pretense of class or position.” Dewey himself laid out two elements that characterize a democratically constituted society: “the greatest reliance upon the recognition of mutual interests,” and “change in social habits—its continuous readjustment through meeting the new situations produced by varied intercourse”²⁷. Students need to grapple with issues of culture, power, and social justice. Education needs to be a tool in the push for a more inclusive democracy²⁸.

Democratic education involves the creation of environments both in schools and individual classrooms that reflect this conception of “living together” and seek to link those environments to the communities outside of the school and classroom walls. This democratic education contributes to what Cogan and Grossman²⁹ have called ‘multi-dimensional citizenship’.

When work extends across national borders it is clear that at an essential deep level democratic knowledge, skills and attitudes will still be at the center of the program and its methods. The concept of “(b)orrowing is not copying but provides an umbrella to examine how patterns of thought move through and are transmitted in different layers of the local and global systems”³⁰. Borrowing is the manner in which we apply knowledge and advice from others to help reach our own unique goals and objectives. And as teachers struggle with testing and overloaded syllabi so prevalent around the world, it is important that we engage in reflection and debate about what really matters in the teaching and learning process.

How might we do this?

Strategies for developing student awareness and the understanding of key conceptions of democracy must be themselves democratic in nature. For teachers struggling to find ways of engaging their students in negotiating meaning around key ideas such as “people as the source of government’s authority”, “third generation human rights”, and “ways of productively feeding communities while preserving the environment”, focusing on authentic and democratic educational strategies is one key element. As a means of engaging students in critical thinking strategies we must help students to think about questions or problems in specific, analytical ways. By communicating about their thinking, students are led through a process of deliberation during which they talk and communicate about a topic and its elements in a thoughtful manner.

Democracy is dependent on the ability to participate in deliberation³¹. Critical thinking around significant issues means more than simple rote responses to those issues.

²⁶ J. Dewey, *Democracy and education*, New York 1916, NY, Macmillan Company.

²⁷ Dewey, 1916, p. 87.

²⁸ J. Goodman, , *Elementary schooling for critical democracy*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press 1992; E. Yeager, & S. Van Hoover, *Preservice teachers’ understandings of democracy” toward a conceptual framework* In G.E. Hamot, J.J. Patrick 2004.

²⁹ J. Cogan, D. Grossman, & Liu, M., *Citizenship: the democratic imagination in global/local context*, Social Education 2000, 64 (1), 48-53.

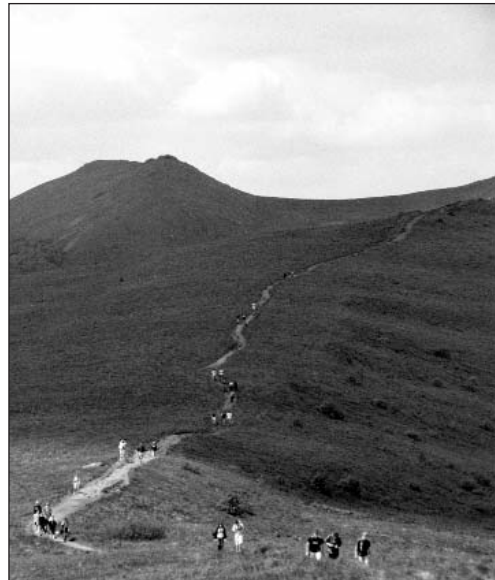
³⁰ T. S., Franklin, & M. N. Bloch, (Eds.), *Educational Partnerships and the State: the Paradoxes of Governing Schools, Children, and Families*, New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan 2004.

³¹ D. Mathews, *Reviewing and previewing civics*, W. Parker, (ed) *Educating the democratic mind*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press 1996.

If our goal as educators is to bring the skills of critical thinking to the forefront, then concept development provides one significant opportunity. In a democratic society citizens must develop and utilize the skills of deliberation. Deliberation helps societies to deepen their democracy. By purposefully constructing a community of inquiry around key themes teachers can mine and mind the knowledge of their students.

Expeditionary Learning

Expeditionary learning, the main philosophy behind the structure of the work that has emerged from EIC, is an effective tool for constructivist learning³². One can even argue that service learning can be seen as a form of expeditionary learning. Expeditionary learning provides “different approaches to schooling” that “emerge from everyday life” that allow for “knowledge, desire, practices and research when, not always in favorable circumstances, they [participants] adopt a critical stance with regard to the demand of the school establishment, the actual conditions in which populations live and the nature of the times we live in”³³. This method of teaching works to place students in “actual conditions in which populations live” allowing students to explore unknown societies or environments. They experience “circumstances” that help frame and drive a “critical stance” on society. These experiences can ultimately change a person’s perception of life.



Expeditionary learning seeks to develop a deeper understanding of knowledge through the development of skills of inquiry. Students are taught to raise significant questions, seek data, information or knowledge about those questions, and engage in inquiry in the real world, then to hold up their new understandings to the critique of reality. This kind of learning seeks to be purposeful, meaning students know they are seeking to prepare to do or accomplish something—tutor a group of preschoolers on safety and laws in their community; hike a local river trail to investigate water quality; identify and record the history of a local historical structure as a means of supporting its preservation. Because this type of learning utilizes the student’s entire being, it is at the root “teaching for understanding”.

³² J. G. Brooks, & M. G. Brooks, *In search of understanding: The case for constructivist classrooms*, Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development 1993.

³³ M. P. Unda, *The experience of teaching expedition and teacher network: New modes of training*, Teachers for the twenty-first century 2002, Sept 3, p. 333.

Nearly all expeditionary experiences teach two concepts. The first concept is the actual subject matter. The second concept is moral development—work with norms and values. Each experience focuses on fostering a community atmosphere, personal discovery, and personal responsibility³⁴. The actual subject matter can range from content in a science class, to that in a literature or history class. But we also consciously work on the level of values or intrinsic beliefs, what might be called human development. It is not one particular set of moral beliefs, but rather a way of being in the world. Expeditionary learning, as played out in our model, has become a tool for helping us to better understand the educational process and our own identity as teacher and student.

The Aspects of the Expedition Inside Culture model

For over six years now a growing group of educators connected to the Expedition Inside Culture Association have worked with teachers, young leaders and students in school classrooms, outdoor workshops, and training programs. And while the setting has not been constant, the general parameters of the aspects of the EIC model have been. These elements have evolved, and developed over time. They are not new—instead they are really a new theoretical framework placed top of notions of the learning cycle. Research about the learning cycle has been around for some time³⁵. As participants move through the four broad aspects of the process, they encounter a participatory educational model that seeks to create learning communities with a shared purpose. The term “expedition” is used both as a metaphor and as a tool. As a metaphor participants are asked to consider the “journey” they are on—where they are heading in their life and their goal to become an active member of the knowledge society. As a tool, participants are asked to think about the steps in a journey as the steps they accomplish in the learning process. Five broad categories reflect these elements:

- Preparation for the expedition—before arrival researching the site of the expedition, reviewing written accounts of the history or phenomenon. Then, once there working to connect with students and introduce the subject of a personal history, including participants creating timelines, sharing artifacts and family histories, working to build connections across the group and a shared sense of their humanity.
- Creating conditions for cooperation and learning—cultural communication skill development and work to create connections across the identities and perspectives in the group.
- Field Research—independent and group research in heterogenous groups. Research focuses on both written sources, oral interviewing, and observation data gathering. After initial findings the groups work to build connections from the location or phenomenon to broader geographical or concept areas.
- Reflection—once the groups and individuals develop concepts and findings they work to connect those to issues and conditions in their lives. They work to build plans for how the new information and learning will impact future plans in their community and they

³⁴ B. Desjean-Perrotta, & D. Buehler, *Project Texas*, Childhood Education 2000, 76(5), p. 292-297; D. Udall & L. Rugen, *From the inside out: The expeditionary learning process of teacher change*, Phi Delta Kappan 1997, Jan., 78, p. 404-408.

³⁵ For more about learning cycles and a sense of how long the concept has been around see J.M. Atkin, & R. Karplus, *Discovery or invention?* Science Teacher 1962, 29.

work to take what happened and upon returning 'home' share their information with wider audiences in the community.

Educational Goals

The elements of this process have been designed to teach tolerance, openness and understanding in a global society during a workshop or expedition that seeks to raise awareness of the reality of diversity and layered history to every event, location and phenomenon. The educational focus pushes students to discover cultural difference and perspective as a resource for future societal development, in a interconnected world. During each aspect of the project critical activities are focused on:

- discovering the local community/phenomenon and its particular context and history.
- studying and raising awareness about the range of cultural groups, beliefs and practices by gathering, analyzing and comparing perceptions of issues and phenomenon from cultural groups and nations around the world and in multi-ethnic societies;
- raising awareness of globalization and issues within our interconnected world, including integration problems connected to the understanding of intercultural values ;
- increasing the visibility of human rights, human dignity and those values focused on international cooperation, respect of minorities, and equal rights regardless of ethnicity, religion, national identity;
- building human capital, capital that is designed to influence (increase) the quality of interactions between cultures, religions and individuals;
- increasing understanding of the stereotypes and biases present in each person's life and the impact these have on daily interactions with others;
- building the capacity to analyze and interpret complex issues in schools and the media and use this competency in their daily life as evidenced by being able to collect data, analyze and critique perceptions and information connected to a topic.

These aspects drive our decisions, focus our work in education and push us to be much more than tourists in our local communities.

Why Working to Make Education More Authentic and Democratic Matters

Connecting education to the world and global issues, including their local and permutations is a condition of authentic and democratic learning. By creating a supportive environment. Expedition Inside Culture focuses on the notion of group communication. The participants – during the workshop – working in different groups (national and multicultural), on various tasks, have many occasions to face difficulties caused by diverse backgrounds or contexts.

Exercise	Local Field Research: Searching for Answers
Objects	a piece of paper and a pen for every group of participants, list of prepared questions*
Time	optional
Aim	to learn about region, its history, local customs, people's belief; try to look at the place from the inside
Action	<p>divide participants into 4-6 persons groups that represent the diversity possible, hand them out a list of question with an instruction to look for answers in any possible way. When the task is finished the facilitator runs the discussion asking how did every group gathered information, what was easy and what did they find difficult, what was helpful during the task, did they notice anything interesting while gathering answers.</p> <p>* a list of possible questions to start with:</p>
1.	How many people live in Stara Lubovna? Describe the multiple elements of diversity in the past and present.
2.	What is the name of the river that goes through Stara Lubovna? What role does it play in the community?
3.	In which year did Stara Lubovna become a city? How might its history impact its interactions with the world today?
4.	Why was the year 1966 important for the citizens of Stara Lubovna?
5.	What is the name of the main market in the old part of Stara Lubovna?
6.	When was the church of St. Nicolaus built?
7.	How many discotheques can you find in Stara Lubovna? Can you get any sense of the social life of the community?
8.	What kind of public transport is used in Stara Lubovna?
9.	How many high schools are in Stara Lubovna?
10.	How many Internet cafes have you seen in Stara Lubovna?
11.	What was the role of Lubovlanski Castle during XIV and XV century?
12.	What happened at the castle in year 1557?
13.	Can you find more than one particular architectural style in the castle?
14.	Which part of the castle is the oldest one?
For each question add your own questions related to how? Why? Does it matter? Finally, think of at least two of your own questions.	

To plan expeditions, whether virtual, classroom-based or out into the world outside the school buildings it is recommended that significant time and effort be put into each area of these elements. Get to know each other and share personal stories and the national or social context in which the story occurs. Find ways that each individual participant can define their personal needs and goals. Be sure to establish rules or ways of being together for the group. Deliberation over these issues becomes one of the most critical aspects for the ultimate success of each project. Every nation's history is composed of the personal histories of its members. "By putting cultural differences on the table rather than under the table, the potential problems can be anticipated and addressed and the potential opportunities can be brought to light"³⁶. Every concept or phenomenon is layered with perspectives, data, beliefs, hypotheses. During the expedition workshop we try to draw a picture of a nation's history or the context for a concept or development of a phenomenon by starting with the individual experience of participants, raising questions, seeking new information and data and then beginning to apply this new information to our understanding by working to share it with real world audiences. This helps us all become more aware that it is our humanness that matters. That despite everything, we can, as Maxine Greene has said, "do is speak to others as eloquently and passionately as we can about justice and caring and love and trust".

Conclusion

The fragile nature of democracy is seen in many events and aspects of life today. Students encounter voters indifferent to the role their vote plays in determining the direction for leaders. Students hear radio and television discourse that works to silence dissent, limit debate, and label as right wing or left wing definitions that may in fact help to solve key problems or issues. Authoritarian countries in parts of the world inflicted significant "damage... to terms used to describe democratic governance..."³⁷. For example, uncontested, predetermined elections were and are still often portrayed as "democratic" in many countries. As students encounter various topics and studies around Nazi Germany, apartheid in South Africa, Maoist China, poverty in Detroit or migration in Romania, they also encounter individuals and governments who distorted the terms and concepts of democratic governance. As a result teachers need to explicitly work to redefine and reconceptualize key elements of democracy with students.

The aspects of authentic and democratic education help educators accomplish the broad goal of preparing and motivating students to be participatory members of society. The multi-ethnic nature of countries and interactions around the world lead to the ever growing importance of the development of skills such as deliberation, communication and connections to the world outside of classroom walls.

As Expedition Inside Culture works to build and share elements and practices across language, cultural and national boundaries, those involved are forced to pay careful

³⁶ S. Schneider & J. Barsoux, *Managing Across Cultures*, New York, NY: Prentice Hall 1997.

³⁷ J. Patrick, *Principles of democracy for the education of citizens in former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe*, in R. Remy, & J. Strzemieczny, *Building Civic Education for Democracy in Poland*, National Council for the Social Studies and ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education 1996.

attention to the ideologies inherent in their work. As Steiner-Khamsi³⁸ has said, there is a clear difference between internationalization (evolutionary process—increasing intensification of global {economic, scientific, technological, and communicative} relations of interaction and exchange) and internationality (semantic construction) –the constructions of world views and reference horizons out of particular socio-cultural or national settings and driven by these settings internal needs. We seek to work within the evolutionary process, to be proactive about our role in the world.

In an era of growing awareness about the importance of preparing students for the knowledge society, as well as the ever-present existence of globalization, societies may be questioning their particular definition of the ideal person³⁹. Global efforts at educational reform seem to be aiming at the creation, not only of a new concept of the ideal person, but also of a new concept of the ideal teacher for the ideal person.

Schools can be created that focus on the real problems in their community, that engage students in participation in real life. How might teachers and students work to meet their own self-interest and also still improve the democratic life of their communities? Examples of programs around the world bring us evidence of what is possible and what we must pay attention to. Martin Luther King told us that “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”⁴⁰ By understanding the important role that schools, teachers, and ultimately learning, play, educators can begin to think about the promise and possibility inherent in authentic and democratic educational practices. Expeditionary learning, with the elements we see in Expedition Inside Culture, is a massive first step. In the future we hope to hear what participants do when they return home.

SCENARIO- LESNICA, SLOVAKIA

On a warm August day the Expedition Inside Culture workshop was held in the Spisz region of Northern Slovakia in the small town of Lesnica. The area has a large population of Roma (gypsies), and they were one of the main ethnic groups studied and discussed during the workshop. The workshop progressed through a series of events that were primarily student led.

Multiple views of history were shared throughout the workshop by students, as they explored personal and national histories. The students presented these discussions to the workshop. As the students compared and contrasted the events of history, they found that each history was interwoven with others' individual, personal and national histories. An introduction to the local area's history was brought to the forefront of discussion. What students found is that the material that had been researched prior to camp usually did not coincide with the actual demographics and history of the area. Topics and sources were not always congruent with each other.

³⁸ G. Steiner-Khamsi, *The Global Politics of Educational Borrowing and Lending*, Teachers College Press, New York/London 2004 p. 33.

³⁹ M. T. Tatto, (ed), *Reforming Teaching Globally*, Symposium Books Oxford, United Kingdom 2007.

⁴⁰ Martin Luther King, Jr.

The workshop attendees ventured into the local area of Lesnica to interview townspeople and to collect information about local history. The participants were split into multinational groups of four or five participants to conduct interviews. The interviews prompted discussions on townsfolk's perceptions of the Roma population and their opinion on Slovakia's admittance into the European Union. The students then proceeded into the surrounding area to other cities, like Stara Lubovnia and Lipovce, to conduct further research. They brought back the information and shared their data with the broader workshop group. They worked to begin to make sense of their findings in coordination with some of the sources that were explored. Questions were posed to the students about the Roma population's minimal representation in their findings.

After the students reflected on their findings each multinational group created a project or artifact to share with the workshop. The workshop participants were then challenged to reflect on their experiences and how those experiences can be utilized in their lives.

THE LANGUAGES OF EXPEDITION INSIDE CULTURE

The Expedition Inside Culture project is not about language learning. None of its stated objectives refers to foreign language acquisition. Language is regarded as a mere vehicle that makes participant interaction and idea exchange possible and it is usually up to the participants themselves to negotiate the level of understanding, production, and the meaningfulness of the language they are using to communicate in the workshop.

Typically, in an EIC workshop the language employed for communication is English and the two predictable linguistic groups are therefore: the native speakers (i.e. Americans) and the second-language learners (Poles, Romanians, Germans, Ukrainians, Spanish speaking participants in the U.S. and so on). However, the diverse ways participants come to relate to language, the struggle to keep up with the avalanche of concepts, and different



attitudes towards those and the various linguistic backgrounds participants come from, each with its specific heritage of social practices associated with the use of that particular language; all of this makes the initial two groups actually disperse into an intricate web of

individualized responses and approaches to the vehicle of communication.

What makes an analysis of language relevant to an in-depth examination of EIC as a process is precisely the fact that the participants' way of relating to it reflects the more complex development of the entire group in terms of adjustment to a culturally diverse context, awareness of learning as dialogue, and an understanding of difference as productive.

To begin with, language is the most immediately visible marker of difference among participants. One golden rule of Expedition (otherwise negotiated with the participants themselves on the first day of activities) is that, no matter where they are or what activities they are engaged in, everyone must communicate in a language that everyone else understands (i.e. English). This rule is doubled by another, one meant to speed up the interaction process, which mixes participants in multicultural groups in as many situations as possible: activities, meals, and accommodation arrangements. However, the initial reflex of the newly-arrived participants is to stick to what is familiar and their mother tongue is the first to resort to. Familiarity is usually accompanied by the diverse levels of knowledge or skill in English, which makes some participants less willing to use it.

This is not only the case of less able English speakers, but also of the more knowledgeable ones. According to one language theory, the better some people know a foreign language, the more they hesitate to use 100% of what they know, using instead 100% of what they know correctly, more than likely a school-induced fear threatens to keep genuine communication rather artificial. One of the aspects, therefore, that makes EIC an authentic language learning experience is the attitude towards errors. It is inevitable that the mixture of levels, accents, degrees of confidence, and participation will lead to language errors of all kinds: pronunciation, spelling, grammar, or misused vocabulary. What is significant about them is less their occurrence, but the attitude towards them or, rather, the change in attitude. The first few times the errors are made, they are met with two different types of reflex-like reactions, both probably due to the differences in the respective education systems participants come from: the more lax manner of American participants of clarifying or rephrasing a misused item of language (or at times ignoring it altogether to boost self-confidence) versus the stern disapproving looks and immediate urge to provide the correct version of Eastern European participants.

Traditional teaching approaches have been telling us for years that the path to language learning is immediate correction of errors and prolonged exposure to such principles makes us eager to act accordingly. Yet, an authentic learning context comes to prove us otherwise. Participants slowly discover that pointing out a language error only comes to add to the insecurity of the linguistically less able or that, in task-based activities, impatience with somebody's hesitation or difficulty in verbalizing ideas is counterproductive, and they have to find other ways to help them express their otherwise valuable contribution.

Another traditional myth of school teaching that rather impedes, then helps learning is the projected image of the native speaker as an all-powerful, mistake-free possessor of all language-related knowledge. Students are urged to acquire a proficient level of language, while constantly being reminded that they will never be as good as native speakers. There always comes a point, during the often ten days of continuous interaction, when one of the native speakers does make a mistake. The astonishment on the other participants' faces, the shock of recognition finally manages to demolish this supremacy myth and

pave the way to the precious realization that mistakes are natural. They are to be expected, they are inherent to any kind of language use, and they can be reworked upon in productive ways. This is yet another moment when the participants' attitude changes, finally giving some room to self-confidence and, thus, genuine learning.

In a way, participants' response to language errors mirrors their general development as learners throughout the EIC workshop. They learn how to fight their own school-induced preconceptions, they learn that all language is alive and thus subject to inaccuracy, and they eventually learn to adapt knowledge to task-achievement and interaction in an authentic context of communication. Towards the end of the workshop, errors are signaled in relaxed ways, assumed by their makers in a guilt-free manner, and even turned into inside jokes that participants remember and keep exchanging even years after one particular workshop ends.

Second of all, and perhaps the most important achievement in this respect, participants come to understand language as a marker of identity. During one reflection session in the final stages of the workshop, one American participant shared that "her most powerful experience was feeling as a linguistic minority would like." She discussed the effect of having been in a situation where not only did she have to find other ways to explain what she needed in a local grocery store or phrase the questions during the Scavenger Hunt interviews in the local community, but how she dealt with moments during the camp when everyone else had the privacy of their own mother tongue to find refuge in once in a while, except for the English speakers whose language was no mystery at all to anyone else. That was a significant moment both for the one who shared, but also for everyone else who listened since, as the discussion that followed pointed out, people realized that language is one of the things we most often take for granted, just like we do with our belonging to certain cultural or social groups and that such categories like "majority" or "minority" are a matter of perspective and presumption.

A similar revaluation of participants' understanding of communication takes place with every discussion of EIC's most important concepts like stereotype, power, discrimination, ideology, bias, or perception. Participants who have to operate with such terms in a language different from their own become aware, while reading or discussing with native speakers texts or situations associated with the concepts above, that we sometimes too easily use words whose weight we do not really grasp on account of the fact they are foreign. This can sometimes sound offensive or biased to a native. This is a situation that obviously extends to other similar aspects such as behavior, gestures, and practices. The value of language as a powerful means of communication where we constantly need to pay attention to the other's understanding is thus re-established.

Third of all, it is not just one language that EIC participants learn more about. While English speakers gain knowledge of Romanian, Polish, Ukrainian, or German words and jokes that further help cement group cohesion, everyone begins to understand, especially during the local field research, that to any given community the language that matters is less the one everyone speaks and more the one that allows everybody to enter a real dialogue. They are faced with a series of linguistic and social symbols (interviews, artifacts, logos, inscriptions on church walls or funeral stones etc) that teach them that any

cultural group will cultivate that particular language which allows for harmony within the group and positive interaction with other groups.

What matters in the end is that EIC participants learn how to relate to language in a meaningful way that illustrates their growth as individuals during the project and their ability to use difference in fruitful ways.

Expedition Inside Culture is not a foreign-language learning summer school. It does not deal with grammar and pronunciation. It is an opportunity for diverse languages to co-exist for the purpose of only one kind of communication, that of understanding.

DESIGNING
A
WORLD:
EXAMPLES

COMPETITION, COOPERATION AND EXPEDITION INSIDE CULTURE

The fact that education has come to resemble, in more ways than one, a zero-sum game is an assertion many have acknowledged in recent years. The fact that students strive solely towards getting a winner's prize at the end of the day is easily observable in most classrooms. In other words, the fact that "competition" and "competitiveness" have come to play a central role in the educational endeavor is almost old news. This is not to say, however, that there are no points of contention still left on the matter, open to heated debates in today's educational arenas. The most obvious of these address a few simple questions with some rather intricate answers: does competition, as attitude and practice, bear any benefits towards achieving the goals of education or is it plain detrimental? Does competitiveness foster excellence or does it cultivate self-doubt and frustration? Lastly, if we are to contend that one of the goals of education is to build citizenship and solidarity, is a contest-oriented approach up to the challenge?

In this context, should we revisit the issue of competition in education in an attempt to show that its benefits, if any, are greatly outweighed by its harmful effects? Moreover, the high emphasis placed on competition (be that intended or unintended) makes it difficult to build both citizenship and solidarity amongst students. Therefore, by displacing the emphasis from competition to cooperation, non-formal education in general and the Expedition Inside Culture (EIC) effort in particular has the potential of filling this gap. What is the concept of *competition* and its place, role and effects in the educational arena today? What are the ways in which *cooperation* presents itself as a viable alternative for constructing learning situations that would in turn allow learners to both make the best of their potential and to practice supportiveness, tolerance and solidarity? Can cooperative education can be effectively put to use in teaching tolerance, democracy and citizenship? An answer might be seen by taking a close look at EIC and its distinct use of cooperation as both an educational method and a central learning outcome.

Competitive education as a failing endeavor

Competition is a most pervasive notion that has penetrated most areas of society, spanning from the most obvious (such as sports) to the subtlest (such as childcare). Far from being localized, it is a diffused discourse seeping into many, if not most, of our actions⁴¹. On a commonsensical level, the concept of "competition" has become tantamount to performance, excellence, quality. Popular wisdom tells us that what comes out of any type of competition are either better products, more efficient employees or worth-

⁴¹ D. F. Mathews, *Is there a public for public schools?* Dayton, OH, Kettering Foundation Press 1996.

while entertainment. Competition is discursively constructed as fun to watch, healthy to engage in and an inescapable practice on the route to success. However, competition is never truly valued for its own sake; what it is valued for though is winning. In many ways, the world is split between “winners”, the truly valuable and the truly respected, and “losers”, the pitied and disregarded. Losing is no less of a social stigma as winning is the reverse. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that the “loser” label, coupled with the appropriate gesture, is one of the most dreaded insults of children’s slang.

A practice so conspicuous on all levels of social action could hardly be absent from the educational arena. From schools competing to gain the best students to students competing to gain the best grades and the shiniest golden stars on the teacher’s wall, competition stands at the core of education on all levels of inspection. However, for the sake of keeping within the scope of this analysis, we shall focus not so much on institutional competition or the type of competition schools engage in toward the aim of securing resources and students, but more so on classroom competition as it occurs between students and becomes part of the learning process.

An eager opponent of a contest-oriented education, Alfie Kohn defines competition as “*mutually exclusive goal attainment*”⁴² which thus manages to stress the very core of any competitive situation – one’s success necessarily requires another one’s failure. When a competition is over, be it sports-related, school-related or of any other type, there is one thing that is always left behind – a winner and a loser or, in some cases, a few of the former and many of the latter. Kohn makes a useful distinction in proposing the notion of “*intentional competition*”⁴³ as an individual’s internal proclivity towards beating others, which does not necessitate a structured competitive framework to be put into practice. This concept is particularly useful in analyzing competition in the context of education as it describes the recurrent situation of students putting their efforts into outperforming their peers even when there is no prize at stake. It also reflects in all areas of everyday life – from running the fastest, to wearing the prettiest clothes, to being most popular, people seem to need the rush of winning. But Kohn contends that engaging in (sometimes fictitious) competitions is by no means a natural propensity but, quite on the contrary, a naturalized one. In other words, competition as practice, attitude or skill is socialized and education stands at the core of this process.

But how exactly is competition detrimental? To begin with, education is essentially a process that, generally speaking, works towards developing knowledge, skills and attitudes. Learning is carried out within this process and all of its steps are crucial to completing this goal. In other words, when solving a mathematics problem, students do not learn by getting the right solution but by completing all the operations that lead to that particular solution. Oftentimes, instead of hindering the educational process, getting the solution wrong actually ensures a better understanding by way of re-visiting and re-evaluating the process that led to the solution. In most cases, the end product of an educational activity (the maths solution, the lit essay, the science project) is not the objective of that activity but one of the many steps, which happens to be among the last, employed in the production of learning. However, when competition and competitiveness take up the stage, this balance is greatly shattered. When students become aware that they are competing over

⁴² Ibidem

⁴³ Ibidem

something, be it grades, prizes or college seats, the focus is irreversibly shifted from the process to the end product.

Let us consider an example. Mathematics was never my academic strong point. In all honesty, I dreaded anything related to it. However, I was forced, some years back, to sit a rather complicated calculus exam that counted towards my getting into the college of my choice (majoring in a field which could hardly have been less related). Therefore, I spent the six months leading to the exam learning what I like to call "recipe mathematics". I never really had any deep understanding of what I was doing but it was getting me the right answers. As it turned out, I did not only pass the exam but I got a better grade than 97% of all the nation's high school seniors. It was the most competitive of situations; we were all struggling for the same aim, which was getting into the undergraduate program of our choice and places were scarce. Competition-wise, I was a winner. Learning-wise, I was quite the loser. My understanding of the intricate workings of calculus reasoning did not increase in the slightest, but by all the common standards, my performance was remarkably successful. In this context, if we are to contend that the goal of education is to breed winners by these standards, then there is hardly anything wrong with this approach. However, one is left to wonder: is this truly the goal of education? Because if it is not, what do we need competition for?

Some would argue that the abovementioned situation is inescapable, that when resources, such as college places, are scarce, competition is needed so as to fairly allocate them. Even if we were to accept such a claim and, at the same time, take for granted the fact that those students who know the most calculus will perform well in higher education, it still does not account for the fact that this particular competitive situation actually failed to provide colleges with the students with the best understanding of mathematics. This also refutes the rather common assertion that competition is desirable because it breeds excellence. What this claim actually maintains is that, while striving to beat others and, most importantly, because of that, students are not only better; they become outstanding. There are a few different ways of going about this line of reasoning. Firstly, since competition inherently entails winners (those who get the highest grade) and losers (those who do not), excellence, if any, could only be found at the very top. Only the very best, by different standards, are rewarded while the others are left aside. This process, apart from signaling out "the excellent", also manages to signal out "the weak" and "the not-good-enough". From this viewpoint, competition breeds as much excellence as it breeds self-doubt, frustration and feelings of un-worthiness.

Secondly, as Alfie Kohn rightly points out, there is a "*fundamental confusion between excellence, on the one hand, and the desperate quest to beat people, on the other*"⁴⁴. Being competitive does not necessarily entail the potential for excellence, just as excellence does not necessarily come out of competition. In other words, competition is by no means a prerequisite for excellence and the latter could be fostered, to even better results, through more cooperative instruments. To this point David and Roger Johnson conducted a meta-analysis of 122 American studies that considered performance in cooperative, competitive and individualistic settings. The two researchers discovered that 65 of the studies under scrutiny revealed that cooperation promotes higher achievement, while only

⁴⁴ A. Kohn, *Competition vs. Excellence* (op ed), New York Times 1991, April 26.

⁴⁵ R. Johnson, & D. Johnson, apud A. Kohn, *No Contest: The Case Against Competition*, 2nd Edition, Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1981 1992.

⁴⁶ D. Johnson, & R. Johnson, *Cooperation and competition: Theory and research*, Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company 1989

8 gave the same credit to competition. 36 studies found no significant statistical difference between the two⁴⁵.

Last but surely not least, many advocates of competition claim that it is paramount for our students to be well-prepared for the cutthroat environment they will surely encounter in the real world and on the job market. First and foremost, such an argument has the distinctive quality of being particularly circular. If we live in a highly competitive environment, there is hardly any safer way of maintaining it as such than continuing to bolster the benefits of competition in education. At the same time, if students are not encouraged to see their peers as obstacles to their success and as just another one to be beaten, it is not to say that they will not perform well in the “real world”. A student can be well-prepared and up-to-the-challenge without having been brought up in the “Number One” mentality. What is more, such a student could develop a competitive advantage that competition itself could never develop, which is increased and lucrative cooperation skills.

On the other hand, how does an education so highly focused on building competitive skills address today’s appeal to solidarity, multiculturalism and citizenship? Globalization and all the changes brought about by late modernity have prompted a newly-revived focus on issues related to identity, community or citizenship. At a time when borders are more fluid than ever, when transnational entities play a distinct role in our everyday life and when clear-cut distinctions between people, nations or culture are a thing of the past, education needs to attend to the skills and attitudes needed in such an environment. Could competition cater to these necessities? Johnson and Johnson, in their 1989 study of cooperation and competition⁴⁶ outline some of the values associated with competitive environments in school settings. Among these: perceiving others as a threat to one’s success; being active in both securing personal success (“*good offense*”) and obstructing others in obtaining it (“*good defense*”); considering individuals who are different either as a threat, if they are thought to possess an advantage towards winning the competition or as contemptible, if one believes to have an advantage over them. If these indeed are the values promoted by and through competition, then solidarity, intercultural communication and citizenship hardly seem to find their place. Furthermore, diversity appears to be unattainable in a competitive environment, as differences are first and foremost seen as threats and by no means as opportunities.

Cooperation as the working alternative

Now, if competition is clearly failing on a number of levels, is cooperation a viable alternative? Johnson & Johnson define cooperation as “*working together to accomplish shared goals*”⁴⁷. A cooperative learning environment is a setting characterized by five major characteristics. To begin with, it entails the positive interdependence of all participants or, in other words, the acknowledgement of the fact that the activity performed is mutually beneficial and that the efforts put in by participants are all highly intertwined. Secondly, members of cooperative groups are also held accountable for their own input

⁴⁵ R. Johnson, & D. Johnson, apud A. Kohn, *No Contest: The Case Against Competition*, 2nd Edition, Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1981 1992.

⁴⁶ D. Johnson, & R. Johnson, *Cooperation and competition: Theory and research*, Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company 1989.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*

to the common activity. A sense of individual accountability is essential in terms of both accomplishing the task and, more importantly, in terms of strengthening the skills of each member so as to subsequently be able to also perform well on her own. Face-to-face interaction is yet another essential characteristic of cooperative learning. Students need to actively promote each other's work and accomplishments and to help and encourage their peers. Cooperative learning is, first and foremost, an interactional endeavor as it is based on a constructivist view on the production of knowledge in that "*conceptual understanding of the world is always a result of social interaction*"⁴⁸. Consequently, social skills stand at the core of cooperative settings; they are all at once developed and put to use when cooperation is involved. Lastly, cooperation can only be efficient and effective when participants constantly work towards maintaining and improving their group relationships and the quality of their work. This type of group processing must be deliberate and continuous so as to adjust, by way of feedback, the inner workings of the group⁴⁹.

As opposed to competition, cooperation is said to promote a very different set of values. Firstly, working in cooperative settings entails an active commitment to the common good on the part of all those involved. The task at hand cannot be individually solved nor does the failure of others bring any benefit to the group. This, in turn, leads to perceiving others not as threats but, instead, as contributors to one's success. Moreover, one's worth is deemed unconditional and so is the value of others as the skills of all participants are needed in solving the task and, therefore, a person's effort never ceases to be valuable to the group. Equally significant is that diversity is held in high regard when cooperation is concerned. Differences are seen not as a hindrance but as a pool of potential resources that could add up to the success of the group in accomplishing whatever task is at hand⁵⁰. From this perspective, cooperation promises not just to undo the wrongdoings of competition but also bring about some needed improvements to the quality of education in general and education for democracy, citizenship and tolerance in particular. When placed at the core of an educational context, cooperation is both a motivating learning environment and an instrument for building long-lasting relations and instilling those values that would help learners to successfully live and be active in an increasingly diverse society.

Expedition Inside Culture as a successful site of cooperative learning

This is precisely what Expedition Inside Culture sets up to do and, to this end, it constructs cooperation as both a central educational method and a desired outcome. As an educational endeavor, Education inside Culture was born out of a shared disappointment with traditional forms of schooling and a strong belief in the promise and potential of a new type of education, one that would "*enable students to face the difficult question of their own identity and beliefs that appear as a result of social interaction*" and would foster "*tolerance, openness and understanding in a global society*"⁵¹. Expedition Inside Culture

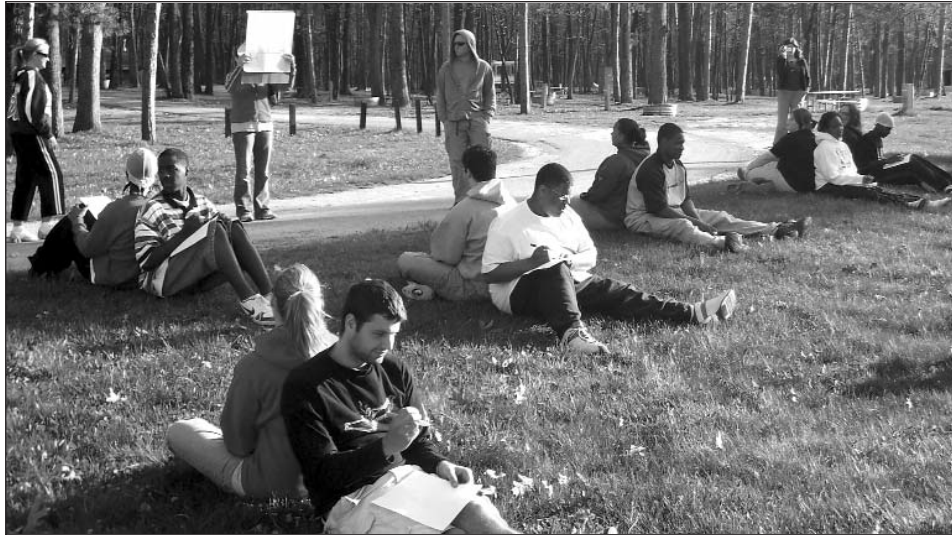
⁴⁸ A. Sutinen, *Constructivism and education: education as an interpretative transformational process*, Studies in Philosophy & Education 2008, no. 27: 1-14.

⁴⁹ D. Johnson, & R. Johnson, *Cooperation and competition: Theory and research*, Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company 1989.

⁵⁰ Ibidem

⁵¹ Mazurkiewicz et al., 2007, *Steps of the Workshop. Guide for Leaders*, p.9. Retrieved January 10, 2009 from http://www.expedition.org.pl/admin/upload_cdown/pplik/2/guide2007.pdf.

strives towards offering an alternative to an obsolete educational system that faces a plethora of still unresolved problems. The high focus placed on competition is one of these problems. To EIC, an educational endeavor based to a high extent on competition and competitiveness could hardly accomplish such goals as *“increasing the visibility of values focused on international cooperation, respect of minorities and equal rights”* or *“raising awareness of world integration problems connected with the understanding of intercultural values”*⁵². These aims are hardly compatible with the winner-takes-it-all scenario of competitive education that would not only place learners in antagonistic positions but would also promote the benefits of such positioning and therefore undermine the very essence of these goals.



Therefore, so as to address these deficiencies, EIC puts forward the concept of *“expeditionary learning”* as a pedagogy deeply rooted in the concept and practice of cooperation and based on three essential premises: the goals and objectives of any act of education can best be attained in an environment of mutual support and not unilateral authority; learning can only be achieved through authentic dialogue; and the process of creating knowledge entails equal participation from both students and teachers who need to reach a common ground by taking up roles as co-learners⁵³. All of these premises stem from an understanding of education as a primarily social and interactional site and what EIC sets out to do is create a learning environment suited to these prerequisites of effective learning and guide students towards constructing their own learning experiences through the interaction with both other learners, teachers and the spatial and historical setting in which the learning experience takes place.

Cooperative learning stands at the core of this type of education for several good reasons. Intercultural communication, open-mindedness and tolerance cannot be lectured and taught, nor can they be won in a race. They are attitudes and skills developed through

⁵² Ibidem

⁵³ Ibidem

and within active interaction and cooperation. Therefore, in order to achieve all its intended objectives and allow learners to “attach their personal and social meanings to the learning activities”⁵⁴, the EIC project puts forward a 9-step strategy towards building the expeditionary learning experience. These steps span from choosing a historically and culturally relevant location as a backdrop for the learning activities to facilitating participant integration and exchange of beliefs on history and culture, from the establishment of connections to the area to evaluating the learning process. Within each of these stages, cooperation goes two ways: towards developing cooperative skills and towards putting them to use.

Firstly, each step of the Expedition plays a role in structuring the learning environment into a cooperative situation defined by the five characteristics mentioned above. For instance, an initial “rules and expectations” session sets up the loose coordinates of the activities to take place and, in a shared manner, proposes the guidelines of future cooperative endeavors. Statements such as “all teams must be made up of participants of different nationalities” or “participants are never to interrupt others when speaking” are examples of such commonly-agreed upon guidelines. All subsequent stages build on and possibly modify the cooperation coordinates set at this time. Then, the “integration and communication” stage targeted on developing the positive interdependence and the cross-cultural social skills needed for efficient cooperation. At this point, activities are chosen so as to help participants build work relationships in a conscious manner, by not just accomplishing team-based tasks but by also reflecting on the group processes that take place while working in particular teams. In this framework, both individual and group reflection becomes as important as the activity, game or task itself as it helps participants to become aware of their attitudes and actions and, by doing so, to be able to constantly adapt their manner in future cooperative situations.

At the same time, Expedition inside Culture introduces learners to a variety of cooperative situations, ranging from brief task-oriented teamwork to complex projects that stretch on for several days and entail various different activities to be performed. The difficulty of the tasks and the complexity of the teams (in terms of cultural diversity, age etc.) increase gradually, thus offering learners the space to adapt to this type of learning environment. However, the one thing that permeates all these different situations is the active questioning of the mechanisms that make them possible or quite on the contrary, the ones that act as hindrances (stereotypes and biases). In this manner, cooperation is constantly constructed and deconstructed thus allowing learners to not just become familiar with the process but to make it their own.

When discussing the challenge of creating cooperative environments in culturally diverse groups, Johnson and Johnson underline the importance of offering learners the means of constructing a “superordinate identity”⁵⁵, based on a shared set of values that would unite the various personal (cultural, gender, ethnic or religious) identities of students. In a sense, the EIC project as a whole and all its subsequent activities converge precisely in that they aim at aiding learners to discover the common basis of a shared identity that will allow them to recognize themselves in others that are seemingly different while at the same time remain aware of what it is that makes them distinct, unique individuals. In the long run, such an understanding of one’s identity stands at the core of functional diverse

⁵⁴ Ibidem

⁵⁵ D. Johnson, & R. Johnson *Cooperation and competition: Theory and research*, Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company 1989.

communities and, by being aided to acquire it, EIC learners become prepared to engage in such communities and, what is more, to play an active role in shaping them.

The superordinate identity built by EIC has the distinct quality of escaping the confinement of the limited time frame of an Expedition Inside Culture summer school and seeping in all the future actions of its participants. EIC learners not just comprehend the values of cooperation – supportiveness, solidarity, commitment to the common good - but raise up to their challenge by striving to constantly promote them, both through personal example and through a variety of more targeted actions. In this sense, Expedition Inside Culture is essentially constructed as a basis and starting point for active engagement in one's environment and, in true cooperative style, EICers continue to work together and with others towards publicizing the values and methods of *"expeditionary learning"*

HIGGINS LAKE, EXPEDITION INSIDE CULTURE: HELPING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS MAKE PRODUCTIVE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND THE WORLD

Imagine a classroom filled with student's eager to learn, but not always sure how to do so. Visualize students who "fear criticism" everyday and find it hard to trust others based on their home life⁵⁶. As urban educators, we faced the challenge of helping these students everyday and were always searching for teaching strategies that tackled some of the most delicate of personal issues. It seemed almost impossible to be effective teachers until we experienced the philosophy of Expedition Inside Culture (EIC). As past participants and leaders in the international EIC it became apparent that the significance of EIC was valuable to bring back to our American high school students. Urban high school students often face many challenges in their daily lives and are not often presented with times to learn about themselves and others in the world. Our program, Higgins Lake, Education Inside Culture, has become a successful approach to closing the gap between what happens in a traditional urban high school and the experiences of expeditionary learning and cross-cultural education.

To understand the challenges and successes, one must first understand who we are. Higgins Lake, EIC has representatives from three to four Ohio high schools, each with a different demographic base. Two of the high schools are located in Toledo, Ohio and are predominately minority based with both having roughly a 55 percent economically disadvantaged makeup⁵⁷. Another high school is from Elyria, Ohio and includes students from all socio-economic backgrounds, as well as ethnicity. The final, and newest added, high school comes from Sunbury, Ohio and is composed of primarily Caucasian and middle-class students. One can see the interesting combination of schools, yet the students never seem to notice these differences.

Naturally, when we began designing an American EIC there were many immediate issues such as funding and lack of administrative support that we had to confront. However, with a good deal of effort we were able to achieve success and held the third Higgins Lake, EIC in May 2009. Our expedition is much shorter than the international project, lasting only four days, however each day is packed with activities and projects designed to encourage student development and success. During the four day expedition, students and leaders are involved in many activities to encourage an understanding of our global world. Students learn that they are a part of the larger world and involved with its

⁵⁶ A student who attended the May 2007 Higgins Lake workshop actually stated that "EIC allowed me to open myself up to people without fear of criticism."

⁵⁷ Information taken from the Ohio Department of Education website, http://lrc.ode.state.oh.us/Schools/School_Search_Results.asp?sel, accessed June 4, 2009.

workings on a daily basis. Finally, the students and leaders work to integrate with each other, while arguably more importantly, discovering themselves.

The format for Higgins Lake EIC is always evolving and changing as teachers find out more about expeditionary learning and its impact on student learning and success. However, one constant is the idea that students learn the best by actually “doing” something. Hands-on activities promote student ownership and lead to levels of understanding and motivation unlike when students are simply given teacher-made assignments. When students assume the role of teacher, and teachers demonstrate that they are still learners, the conditions of a genuine learning community are present. The value of this ownership cannot be understated, especially in a low-income, urban school. Activities that fit this mold can create a sense of pride and accomplishment for students who are all too used to experiencing failure in traditional scenarios. Consequently, the organizers and leaders of Higgins Lake EIC have determined that students must be involved in the learning process in order for it to be meaningful and rewarding. Because of this, the most successful activities used are student-centered, as well as student driven while tackling three difficult issues; communication, teamwork and cross-cultural relationships.

One of the most intriguing early hands-on activities at Higgins Lake EIC is called *Robots*. The foundation of this activity is based in communication but opens many other doors for learning and discussion. *Robots* takes place on the second morning of the camp and requires participants to be put into groups of three, with one person being the eyes, one person being the mouth and another blindfolded being the “robot.” There are no spoken words used and each group must develop a means of communication to help the “robot” collect as many items as he or she can. *Robots* has proven to be a great communication builder as students do not truly understand how important communication is to the successful completion of a task until that is all they have to rely on to reach his or her desired goal. Yet, when the end of camp nears, the students find the activity much more valuable with one student declaring, “This experience has shown me how to be more of a leader, how to get to know people and how to always be myself.”⁵⁸

The most popular activity is traditionally the nature hike. Everyone wakes up early and goes on a seven-mile hike around a neighboring lake. As leaders, we feel this is a great experience for the students considering their demographics often live. Most participants have never been on a hike and where things are handed to them in an instant, via the Internet and other methods of mass communication, they see no need to go on a hike. Although the hike is obviously beneficial for the connection to nature, students are again asked to challenge themselves as well as comfort zone.

Within the hike, students participate in two activities; *Blind Leaders* and *Electric Fence*. *Blind Leaders* involves the students and leaders to be placed in groups with everyone other than the leader being blindfolded. The groups are then asked to navigate the hiking trail, thus requiring that the leader of the line give verbal cues to help the group get through the trail. This puts everyone in a very uncomfortable situation because it is already uncomfortable for urban students to walk in the woods, but it becomes an intense inner struggle to complete the task blindfolded. The activity again helps with communication but also teaches students how to trust each other⁵⁹.

⁵⁸ Student quote, Higgins Lake, Expedition Inside Culture, May 2008.

⁵⁹ Student quote, Higgins Lake, Expedition Inside Culture, May 2007.

The second hiking activity is called *Electric Fence* and requires only rope. Two lines of rope are attached to trees flanking the trail and stretches from one side to the other acting as a fence. The students are only told that everyone must get from one side of the fence to the other without touching the ropes and if someone touches the fence they must start over. At the start of the activity one student declared that she thought she was going to “hate” the activity, but it ended up being her “favorite” part of EIC because it taught her to “grow and trust others.”⁶⁰ Naturally, students tend to be very frustrated at the beginning and argue over potential plans, but after a few minutes they begin to stop and listen, thus uncovering the ultimate goal of teamwork. We find that this activity is a great way to get the students to be creative and problem solve while also helping them see the importance of listening and working as a team.

Field research is also one of the main goals of Higgins Lake EIC. We believe that by helping students understand their surroundings, they are better equipped to deal with the challenges of real world. To achieve this goal we use an investigative scavenger hunt. The scavenger hunt takes place over the course of the expedition and involves students asking people who they have never met questions about Higgins Lake, while also making observations about the town, the lake and the people. When the scavenger hunt is debriefed, there are always students who report they experienced strange looks or bizarre comments from the residents of Higgins Lake, Michigan based on his or her race or ethnicity. In light of these comments, the next goal of EIC starts, which is becoming aware of and confronting stereotypes.

Towards the end of the workshop, students participate in an activity called *Bafa Bafa*. The United States military originally used *Bafa Bafa* to help military personnel recognize and understand cultural diversity. This activity requires two groups with two different



⁶⁰ Student quote, Higgins Lake, Expedition Inside Culture, May 2009.

cultures. Students and leaders are immersed either in the Alpha or the Beta culture and have the task of interacting with each other through the stipulations of the new culture. The cultures must then blend, naturally causing many issues. However, these issues lead to wonderful discussions about cultures, stereotypes and the tolerance of other people.

In closing, we began this journey with great uncertainty. As teachers we knew we could work well in our classrooms, but questioned our abilities to motivate students while outside of everyone's comfort zone. Yet, past participants of Higgins Lake EIC have shown that expeditionary learning is successful and very meaningful⁶¹. For instance, many of the students who attend EIC want to attend again, but as leaders⁶². Students also take the skills learned back to school and serve in leadership roles or speak to other students about their experiences at E.I.C⁶³. Finally many students have applied to college or have made other post-high school plans, which is something that they may not have done before due to a lack of motivation and self-confidence⁶⁴. In short, we have achieved measurable success based on the increased interest each year and student success after EIC. Yet, the most important thing we learned is that we have helped students grow and learn to live in a global society. One student described the essence of our dream by saying: "I learned that even though we come from different places we can always find some common ground."⁶⁵

⁶¹ We make this statement because students are asked to complete surveys as they end the experience and naturally as teachers we are always following our students' future behavior to the best of our ability.

⁶² This year we had a student return to Higgins Lake, E.I.C. for the third time. He was eager to serve in a leadership role and did so with great success. He has since graduated and will be attending Muskingum College in the fall.

⁶³ Students have done many dissemination projects such as mural painting, MySpace page creation, and article writing.

⁶⁴ A student who attended Higgins Lake, E.I.C. 2009 stated, "EIC has definitely taught me a lot about how to handle being in new and uncomfortable places. I'll be leaving for college in 3 months and it helps to know that I'll be OK with the new situation which gives me confidence in myself and makes it less scary."

⁶⁵ Actual student quote, Higgins Lake, E.I.C. May 2009.

WORKING FOR WITH HUMAN RIGHTS: AN EXPEDITION INSIDE CULTURE ACTIVITY

Human rights as a goal and a means of education

In January 2008, just a few months before the end of his sentence, Zmicier Daszkiewicz, a citizen of Belarus, a 27 year – old prisoner of conscience – one of the leaders of the young, democratic opposition, was released from prison. That release was preceded with the campaign organized by activists of human rights from all over the world. Thousands of letters, with petitions for the release of the student-activist, had been sent to the authoritarian government of Belarus and its president Lukashenko. A paper cranes, made in origami techniques had been sent to Zmicier at the same time. Among those thousands of “carrying freedom birds” around one hundred were a result of activities focused on human rights conducted during Expedition Inside Culture during Summer 2007. All participants involved in that initiative should be proud that their effort, to a certain extent, helped to free Zmicier.

In that same year, 2008, we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the General Assembly of the United Nations. Since that time, many nongovernmental organizations around the world have carried out educational authorities, activities devoted to human rights and have aspired to remove the cases of their violation.

Twenty years ago communism in Poland was overthrown and since that time human rights education has become formally recognized by the Polish educational system according to the paragraph in the Declaration of Human Rights: *Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.* (article 26 (2) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights”).

The introduction of human rights education into the official educational system should be seen as a very positive phenomenon. Unfortunately the results are quite limited. Students are able to learn about the history of HR, about particular laws and the way those laws are classified. There is no time, however, for broadening the subject by showing how we may act (in practice) for the benefit of people whose rights were broken. There is also a lack of time for the most important thing – for supporting the development of civil virtues and authentic activity in the real world.

That space, at least partially, has been filled by nongovernmental organizations. Since 2005 Expedition Inside Culture has joined these efforts. It was the first time when the members of the Amnesty International School Group⁶⁶ from Zabrze and its trainers appeared on expedition. The cooperation between these two organizations started and has been continued since then. The question of how to educate others on the topic of human rights is the subject of annual plans before each expedition. From the very beginning, with the expeditionary learning model of Expedition Inside Culture used in Poland, human rights have been hidden in a sequence of activities devoted to stereotypes, tolerance, and intercultural dialogue. However, since 2005 the issue of human rights has been raised to a higher level, devoting to them a separate range of workshop activities and exercises.

What does the meeting with human rights look like in practice during the expedition? Usually the exercise known on the Internet as “100 people” or “Global Village” is the introduction to classes. The task for the participants is to imagine that the world population has shrunk only to their group. The leading person points out how many people should get up to show a world phenomenon (e.g. she/he asks 70% of participants to get up and explains that they are the people of a religion other than Christianity). This exercise quickly shows participants that they are in a very privileged position in the world and it forces much reflection.

The other activities, which teach the participants particular human rights, are taken from the manual *“Compass. A manual for Human Rights Education with Young People”* published by the Council of Europe in many languages (the manual is available on the Internet at <http://www.eycb.coe.int/compass/>). The exercises “Draw-the-word” game and “Rights Bingo!” are examples, which give an opportunity to obtain basic information about human rights. For further information, see the Council of Europe website – the intention of the authors is to use this set for free by all interested parties with only one condition, which is giving the source.



⁶⁶ In Poland since 2003, about 110 Amnesty International School Groups have been established within the Rights-Education-Action Program financed by Norwegian Amnesty International. The School Group from Zabrze cooperating with EIC was the first such group registered in Poland.

After the first part during which the participants get to know something about human rights and its philosophy, there comes time for real action. The participants are presented with current cases of people whose rights are violated. Due to Amnesty International rules concerning the impartiality of action, the cases should not come from countries represented by the participants. We can learn about particular situations and people who need our support (meaning letters of support) at the exact moment of the workshop from the network "Urgent actions" published at Amnesty International's website. It is useful to visit that site regularly because in the section "Good news" we can find who benefited from our letters (usually 30-50% of cases monitored by AI end in a positive way). In that way it is possible to state that the final effect of expedition actions is real and effective. "Real" people are defended and helped. It is very far from the idea of traditional schooling where pupils read a book and monotonously remember which right belonged to which generation. We also believe that it is far more effective in order to prepare responsible citizens.

The methods used during the above mentioned activities are directly embedded into the conception of experiential learning (which is a basic idea of how Expedition Inside Culture is functioning). Those methods heavily involve students in searching and analyzing the stories of particular prisoners of conscience, emotional engagement caused by increased knowledge about the state of human rights, authentic action for improvement of a situation and also the possibility to monitor the results of their own actions.

The most important moment every year for all the activists of the human rights movement in Poland and all over the world, is The International Letter Writing Marathon lasting for 24 hours, organized by Amnesty International every December. During the last Marathon in 2008, 323,000 letters were written in defense of over a dozen people and groups. The biggest number of letters were created in the United States of America (195,000) and in Poland (79,000). From December 13 to December 14, 2008, we wrote almost 7000 letters in Zabrze (the town with the Expedition headquarters); it was the greatest amount in Poland. People who had previously taken part in expeditions wrote the lion's share. Although not connected with the school any longer, they came back and I feel that they are going to return – partially because of their experiences from the expedition.

To summarize my text I need to remind the reader of the main goal of the Expedition Inside Culture, as I understand it. That goal is supporting people in the development of: tolerance, a stereotype free vision of the world, responsibility for the surrounding world and the ability to conduct real action in order to improve that world. All of these will happen when we put together the Expedition methodological approach and human rights content.

DEALING WITH CONTROVERSIAL AND DEBATABLE ISSUES IN EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Expedition Inside Culture is a many-sided phenomenon. Except for apparently being entertaining for youth and a learning formulation it has a much deeper content and is focused on very important educational aims. EIC celebrates diversity and multiple perspectives in approaches to modern life problems, issues of culture, history, traditions, youth upbringing, reflected in the name itself - Expedition Inside Culture. Culture in this case should be treated in the wide sense as a sum of peoples' progress in social, economical, political and cultural spheres in a definite period of history.

In history and modern life there is a lot of controversy. Dealing with historical and cultural issues during the expeditions we can't avoid touching on sensitive and debatable problems. The EIC participants are young people from different countries. Their education, consciousness, views and opinions are formed due to the concepts, approaches and interpretations of history and culture accepted in their native countries. So one of the tasks of EIC is to find approaches to the mentioned issues on the basis of common human values.

For the EIC activities, a definite region in Poland or other country is chosen every year." Usually it is interesting and often complicated by its historical, religious, ethnic and cultural peculiarities. For example, in EIC-2006 the historical and cultural background was the southeast of Poland – the land of the Boykos and Lemkos. The research was focused on "Operation Wisla" and activities of the Ukrainian Partisan Army (UPA), which are treated by Poles and Ukrainians differently and the memory of these events is still a painful one. So should we touch such on controversial and debatable issues and how should we do that?

History and the present time supplies us with a wide circle of controversial and sensitive problems: Holocaust, ethnic purges, pogroms, military crimes, collaboration with occupiers, violation of agreements, civil wars, deportations, migrations of refugees, violation of human rights, religious pervasiveness and conflicts, colonialism etc. Any country in Europe and in the world has similar problems in its history or at present. Often such phenomena separate groups of people, whole societies or neighboring countries.

In spite of many efforts on the part of governments and international organizations, such controversial and sensitive problems cannot be solved for a long time. Why? How should young people or even children act in such circumstances when professional politicians and scholars can't find the common sense for contradictory, polemic, debatable, sensitive – controversial issues?

First we should define what the controversial issue is.

Controversy - (from French - controverse) difference, discrepancy, antipathy, a debatable case or sensitive issue for which different people may have their own visions due to personal values, interests and feelings. So:

- controversial issues are always **conflicting**;
- a controversial issue is the one dealing with that which during deliberation we should **embrace the value judgments of many people**.
- controversial issues are painful, complex and ambiguous.
- such issues cannot be solved only on the basis of facts and evidence.
- in these issues **values and interests clash, there is some political sensitivity**.
- sharp emotions connected with the problem **impact on the whole of society and are complicated and current**.
- controversial issues often **haven't the single solution or "right answer"**.
- some people never give up and are ready to die to protect their position.

So dealing with controversial issues in EIC activities is important because:

1. **The EIC participants get ready to be citizens in a pluralistic democratic society.** It is necessary to teach them as citizens to cope with a lot of social problems, to decide together with other people what is good for the society and how to gain this. The EIC activities should become a laboratory, where the participants could experiment and learn to deal with the democratic process.
2. **The participants develop critical thinking skills.** Through discussion of the issues mentioned young people develop cognitive skills such as the ability to gain and analyze information, put forward a hypothesis, gather and assess evidence, obtain a better understanding of the problem when sharing information and views even. And the most important – be able to create a new vision of the problems, be sure to cope with controversial situation by means of a synthesis of constructive ways out of it.
3. **The participants develop interpersonal communication skills.** Communication is a core part of the EIC philosophy and the basis of all activities. Participating in discussions they gain skills of active listening, empathy, cogency, group cooperation. Well-arranged discussions help to bring up tolerance regarding various points of view on the mentioned issues.

Since controversial issues concern personal views and raise emotions, it is necessary to be especially attentive and flexible. It is very important to keep the situation under control and to make the activity successful even if you haven't found the "right answer". First of all the participants should achieve a general understanding of what is controversial and what is the essence of the concrete problem, what prejudices and stereotypes do exist around it. Concentrating attention on facts and important information will help to overcome bias. The participants should decide what they already know, what else they need to know and what questions should they ask and answer to understand the multiple perspectives and complication of social issues, opposite positions "for" and "against". Usually the development of effective rules helps to represent the opposite positions accurately and in a balanced way, demonstrate respect for all opinions and create a comfortable atmosphere to promote openness. The peculiar feature for EIC is the cooperation of mixed international groups. Working individually and cooperating in groups the participants

can share their national experiences, perceive others' points of view, effectively distribute responsibilities; make collective efforts and gain consensus and compromise. When sides come to a consensus on definite issues they make sure that they have realized and fixed it, not to already go back to used arguments. It is often necessary to take «time out» to cool the passions in the discussion. For that purpose, putting down thoughts on the issue discussed in order to share them with others later can be very helpful. The final reflection helps to summarize the achievements. Here the participants can talk about what they learned and what conclusions they came to. It may happen that the feelings are so strong and acute that a decision or consensus was not found, and there still are more questions than answers. Analyze consequences and alternatives. Prompt the participants to further personal searches for ways and decisions.

Now it's time to speak about the methods that seem fitting to work with controversial issues. A problem can be solved when discussed. The most effective here can be solving dilemmas, debates and various types of discussions. During these activities young people search for arguments and counterarguments, take their positions and substantiate them, make a moral choice and explain their positions on the "line of power", presenting personal or group opinions.



Actually the methodology suggests several types of discussions. But since we are dealing with controversial issues based on a clash of values and interests in the process of searching for ways and decisions, Interactive discussion best fits here. It helps to look at the problem from various angles: pure information, positive and negative opinions, feelings. It promotes comprehensive analyses of the problem and a search for ways and decisions.

This method is a combination of several well-known simple methods. It is good to work on controversial issues in any sphere of life or learning. Using this “Interactive discussion” you can involve all the participants of the group into the activity, prompting critical thinking and expressing opinions. The method is good in a classroom and in an after class activity with any age of participants.

First of all, you must choose the issue to discuss. This issue and its details must be well known to all the participants of the discussion (for example: the latest news that has struck all people and has been widely dealt with in the press and television). If you choose for discussion some specific theme not known well you should have the participants read or watch a film containing the necessary information. Or you may give as a task to find and read any possible information on this issue before the session begins. But in starting the discussion you should arrange a talk to check what knowledge the participants have.

The trainer formulates the topic for discussion to put evident controversy into the title to prompt the participants to debate. (For example: a topic for the EIC-2006 participants could be such: *“Operation Wisla” – the only sound decision for national and social problems in post - war Poland*”; during the EIC-2007 the participants discussed the topic: *“EIC participants still cannot change school life”*)

After the topic is chosen the discussion goes in logical steps. At the beginning working in pairs the participants search for arguments why they agree or disagree with the statement. It helps to think of the issues being discussed from both sides.

At the next stage all participants take their position “for”, “against” or “vague” in relation to discussed topic. Here they gather in groups of like-minded persons, look for arguments together and present their opinion.

The next step helps young people to feel the problem from inside playing different roles of people concerned with the discussed issue. For example: roles for the EIC-2006 participants could be: *Lemkos-Ukrainians – citizens of Poland, Poles – neighbors of Lemkos, Polish government representatives, Polish soldiers – participants of “Operation Wisla”*; the EIC-2007 participants had the roles: *young EIC participants, school teachers, parents, department of education representatives*. The task was even more complicated. There were positive and negative parts suggested inside every role group. All of the suggested parts had short explanations (instructions).

After the roles are presented and have touched various feelings, the participants try to find the solution for this controversial situation they have worked on. Their solution should protect human values, preserve interests and arrive at social consensus. Short debriefing helps to fix the results and focus young people on the new knowledge, abilities and values gained.

Summary

Dealing with controversial and debatable issues in expeditionary learning activities is very important and needs more detailed practical ways and methods of analysis and work. Using interactive methods is the best approach to dealing with such issues – it gives the best understanding, comprehensive elaboration of information and a search for decision.

The participants of the Expedition coming from different countries get ready to be citizens in a pluralistic democratic society, citizens of the world, develop critical thinking and international interpersonal communication. They learn to cope with a lot of social problems, deal with the democratic process first in trainings to be able to do this in real life.

Young people gain a better understanding of the value and concern of each person in historical and social processes. This promotes socially significant skills and abilities and is especially effective in the fostering of human values. The trainer must be well prepared to work with people who discuss controversial issues, to understand and foresee possible difficulties and threats and not to prompt a bigger sense of conflict.

Dealing with controversial and debatable issues doesn't often give answers to sensitive questions and the controversial situations are not often solved positively. The participants may feel vagueness and confusion that bring about new questions and further independent searching for answers on the basis of the skills gained in the expeditionary learning activities. The process of such work promotes transition from uncontrolled and unexplainable emotions to understanding and knowledge of the issue. People shouldn't *forget* past and present controversial problems but they will be able to *understand and forgive*, to come to a social consensus, *to avoid* controversies in the future.

A DEMOCRATIC APPROACH TO FINE ARTS

Art and Value

There is little question about the central place of art in the lives of individuals and of its importance to their overall comprehensiveness. Civilizations throughout the ages have respected art whether for its form, its purpose, its meaning, or its spiritual significance. As part of the values of Expedition Inside Culture (EIC), art and the creative process have been incorporated to help connect the mission of EIC with the vision. The objective essentially is to organize democratic practices and the arts as a cohesive example of ornamental art with a purpose. Nevertheless the relevance and value that art brings is stronger in the present day than it ever has been, so artists continue to create as the motivation encourages them.

Today people are faced with an incredible variety of expressive artistic forms which make the process just as thought provoking and in depth. From literal realistic renderings, non-literal abstractions, strong political pieces that send evident and distorted visions of the truth, to legacies from early art movements that still prolong the concept of individual style, the subjects and techniques of present day artists test the gamut art has within creative freedom where aesthetic quality is determined solely from an idiosyncratic human view. It is within these approaches that students will learn and understand the needs of art and what it can offer.

As a direct result of financial reductions, schools are constantly trying to encourage academic concentration to be centered on core curriculum subjects, and as a result, reformers must reduce or eliminate time for the arts. Art is typically a deficit in formal and non-formal education and as a result, schools focus most if not all of their attention elsewhere. Schools are in essence missing their opportunity to expand students' skills which are necessary components of success in such a culturally diverse world. K-12 education that includes the arts is essential and can be considered a complete approach to learning and understanding civic responsibility. Art education will enhance the traditional curriculum; Eric Oddleifson in *The Case for the Arts* believes "the arts should be the basis of education"⁶⁷ because the deepest and most lasting learning is participatory and whole-brained⁶⁸. Including art within formal curriculum is essential when discussing how art utilization helps

⁶⁷ E. Oddleifson, *The Case for the Arts. The Learning Revolution*, 53(27), 46. Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, U.S. Dept. of Labor, 1991.

⁶⁸ *ibidem*

to promote a self-governing approach. This concept is essential because it encourages learned ways of behavior focused on the value and significance of art when addressing important topics.

Art and democracy are important factors that work cohesively in order to help kids have a more fulfilling understanding of what civic engagement means among youth. As a tool for democratic education, civic art shows limitless possibilities for children's ability to grow and gain better civic skills and attitudes as they learn by doing.



Each and every person has the ability to participate in the pleasure, beauty, excitement, stimulation and inspiration of viewing, or creating art with a strong message behind it, be it political or not. And for many of us, there is so much more to gain from investigating the rich depths of artistic inspiration that have helped in the creation of some of the most profound works in existence. Knowing and understanding art is a skill requiring specially developed proficiency, exposure to the medium and understanding of concepts. As educators, if we address the diversities of artistic expression, the dynamics of the meaning and all its exquisiteness, this process will only add to who our students can develop into.

Art as a cognitive characteristic helps both verbal and logical forms of cognition as well as helping individual's capacities for creative thinking, imagining and problem solving. Through the experiential learning opportunities that EIC offers, the creative process becomes more about the experience while the work is being created which helps directly connect art to the process. An example of this experiential learning in action was during a chalk drawing with my second level drawing class we titled *Celebrate Diversity*. Ideally, the creative process was designed around an image that would capture the concept most clearly and was intended to get the community involved in analyzing the image in depth so they could walk away with an unspoken experience. As a result of this project, an addi-

tional 36 individuals including students, faculty, and community members, who became drawn in, also learned the inspiration of the activity simply by becoming involved. According to Stevan Harnad, Psychologist at Princeton University:

The relation between affective and cognitive factors in art will of course vary from art-form to art-form. One would expect, for example, a bigger cognitive component in literature than in music, and in representational than in nonrepresentational art. The reason is that (in a non-metaphorical sense) literature and representational art are about something, whereas (non-programmatic) music and nonrepresentational art are not.

Art and Value

Research into the records of students in several schools has indicated that a curriculum that devotes 25% or more of the school day to the arts produces youngsters with academically superior abilities⁶⁹. It is students with that academic aptitude that have the power help to develop strong solutions to community issues through the use of art. Former U.S. attorney general Janet Reno said much the same thing, *"Young people who are involved in making something beautiful today are less likely to turn to acts of violence and destruction tomorrow."* By supporting the arts and our children, we are telling America's youth that we believe in them and value what they can be.

Many people do not associate the arts with "thinking."⁷⁰ We are aware of the art product, the song, the picture, the play, but we are even less aware of the *process* which creates that product. The arts are a host of not only inspiration and talent, but they are a great measure of an individual's personal view an understanding of a subject matter. Participating in art activities helps children to gain the tools necessary for understanding human experience, adapting to and respecting others' ways of working and thinking, developing creative problem-solving skills, and communicating thoughts and ideas in a variety of ways.⁷¹ In addition, notes that art nurtures inventiveness as it engages children in a process that aids in the development of self-esteem, self-discipline, cooperation, and self-motivation.⁷²

It is very important for the continued development of democratic practices in art to include students who suffer academically because it allows them to feel engaged in both community activities and political voice. Through encouragement of civic skills, community attitude and beliefs, education's main goal should be to have established student credibility among young people. This ideology allows students to have a right to be heard on issues they feel are important and to be able to express those issues in a creative behavior. As host to millions of students, schools have the ability to reach the minds of many young people across the world. Schools help develop and foster the skills and knowledge necessary to communicate superior citizenship standards. As ideal institutions connecting education with citizenship practices, schools have the ability to address civic responsibility, political knowledge, and critical thinking all of which can be designed with creative art practices.

⁶⁹ E. Oddleifson, *The Case for the Arts. The Learning Revolution*, 53(27), 46. Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, U.S. Dept. of Labor, 1991.

⁷⁰ E. Jensen, *Arts with the brain in mind*, Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development 2001.

⁷¹ A. Mulder-Slater, *Why is Art Education Important? Classroom Leadership - What Should We Teach?*, 5(2), 2001.

⁷² Ibidem

Schools themselves are communities. They are organized by young people who learn to interact with one another, work with one another, struggle with one another and problem solve. This in itself is a great way to build a significant foundation for a good future in citizenship practices. Schools, as important communities, can help turn down the idea that involvement doesn't matter, that a vote won't make a difference, and that things like political, economic, and religious views do make a difference. All of these variables are essential and are all equally important to one another in order to demonstrate the democratic process effectively. By providing the best quality education to our children, education that improves their personal civic knowledge and skills, schools have the upper hand in promoting good citizenship, democracy and a free proud government.

Community Art

As in any everyday art program, the end product is what is sought and often the most essential element beyond genuinely understanding the concepts involved. In community art, the objective is to complete an artistic work by joining together with members of your community over a common purpose, but it is the process of doing so that is the most important. The end product is valuable to the experience, but it is during the development of the project that is when individuals in the community can come together to coordinate effective ideas, to help solve any issues in a creative capacity. Community art is also designed to help improve the image of the area and to improve the visual aesthetics of an area.

During the developmental period, community members explore ideas together, interact with one another through conversation and have the ability to relate personal experience to the project itself. Community art suggests that individuals who participate will have some personal feeling of ownership, being involved in some way in the creation of the artistic work, and the ability to participate in the creative process by listening, asking questions and getting involved.

Community art projects are created to help present issues to a community in a way that educates others through artistic expression. Individuals involved with the project identify a problem within the area and then deliberate and discuss ideas on creating an artistic form that will present the idea to the surrounding area. Throughout the production of the artistic work, individuals involved will attain the skills necessary to complete the project, infuse ideas through communicating values and beliefs, and can develop a sense of pride and self confidence. That feeling has the ability to mature as the individuals have an opportunity to share the learned experience personally with spectators interested in the assignment.

The idea of community art as an investment to an area is highly appreciated by some and even promoted and encouraged by others. As an investment, the community must decide on any of the countless factors assumed to impact the project in any way such as the relevance of the project, if the money involved in its completion is worth the investment, if the time it will take for the members involved is reasonable, how the outside community will react to it etc. In some cases, the art isn't necessarily permanent so the need to deliberate over fiscal matters may make the process a little more manageable.

While some community art work has appreciated over time because of the message behind it or simply the hard work dedicated for its completion, the emotive benefits of those both participating in and those experiencing the project are what outweigh the true end result. It is work designed and implemented with passion and creativity that stand the test of time, both aesthetically and emotionally.

Community art bring benefits for schools, other organizations and for society at large. For schools and other organizations, it helps produce motivated and responsible learners who can positively relate to one another, educators, and the surrounding community. Focused on societal impact, citizenship themed art helps encourage responsible active participation in the community in a small frame of view and stronger democratic development in a large frame of view.

By using art to display a message, active citizenship can be addressed through a number of different categories influencing and impacting characteristics of good citizenry. Initially, it helps students become aware of their rights and responsibilities as citizens and informs them about the needs of the community. It develops self - confidence in students as they work to articulate their opinions and arguments and shows them that they are capable of having an influence on the community and that this becomes the greater as they become more involved. As their work within the community develops, it will show them how they can present themselves as responsible citizens to the society and continue to practice that idea more widely.

By being active in a project that focuses on the community, students have the ability to learn about the value of the project because of the emphasis on their learned experiences. A strong element of citizenship should come from the learner's own personal experience and how that emotional impact is teaching them to be more engaged citizens in the end. Through the use of appropriate interactive discussion, students can have dialogue and debate that helps them focus on the real life issues that they are facing while completing this project, or regarding the issues of the community. It also encourages young people to think and act for themselves and encourages collaborative group work in a cooperative project. Essentially, this gives the children an opportunity to have a say in their own learning, as well as a voice in the community which is the real focus behind this project.

International Approach to Arts Based Projects

While assessing supporting evidence on the profound impact art has in democratic experiential learning I interviewed scholars from Argentina, Ireland, Senegal, Trinidad and the states of Nevada and Delaware; to further understand the cognitive development that is a direct onset of fine arts and democracy. While interviewing Mr. Tony Kennedy, project developer of Project Citizen in Northern Ireland, I asked him, *"Why do you have students do community art as part of your teaching about citizenship?"* According to Mr. Kennedy he responded by saying Project Citizen's benefit with the inclusion of art "teaches them [students] to respect and understand the other's point of view." He continues by saying that, "the main purposes of exercises like community art is to involve young people who would not other wise be involved and every day be resistant to speaking to each

other frankly about their differences or are even resistant to be with each other,” supporting both a pedagogical and civic education approach.

Ms. Marianne McGill also from the Co-operation of Ireland, a non-governmental organization that works to build peace on the island of Ireland spoke about how their project provides art as a medium through which young people interact with their peers from across the border to help create good measures of personal development. Ms. McGill shared that the program in Ireland makes use of art because they look at it as a methodology. Ms. McGill mentioned that one of the main reasons art is so strongly encouraged is because it allows students to freely express themselves through different mediums. She continues by saying, “arts methodologies are also used to facilitate the groups working together collaboratively.” As the interview continued, Ms. McGill addressed how seriously the students take this project because they develop such a special personal connection to the work they do and the mission of their project.

In support of this issue from a pedagogical approach Ms. Patricia Quann from the Delaware Law Related Education center believes that, “dialoguing with community programs is very important on both sides, I think community programs working with kids and kids working with them ... and getting administrative support for those things is always important.” When asked, what value do you see in students engaging with community and community engaging with students, and why do you see that as important? Ms Quann responded by saying, “because I think its real world, and it builds relationship that can be valuable to them as adults and for their future.” “It gives them and opportunity to do something, to feel affected and to see results from those they have served from service learning, but I think it goes beyond that, it allows them to demonstrate to adults that they can be effective,” she continues.

Understanding what students have learned from citizenship community art and being able to assess the validity of those actions serves as great supporting evidence of the value of fine arts and democracy. Mr. Bobocar Tall, from the Institut National d’Etude et d’Action pour le Développement de l’ éducation in Senegal Africa, shared his program’s successes as he spoke about the remarkable abilities students have and the drive and excitement they’ve developed because of the program’s success in the past. Mr. Tall noted largely the positive changes in student behavior encouraging long term civic engagement within the community, the community’s new found appreciation about the students involved, and the students’ motivation to become self engaged in their work.

Largely due to its participating members, the same approach helps EIC continue to build its sterling reputation amongst those who seek the experience. As an active member of EIC today, I have found that by being involved as a participant in EIC I constantly seek out ways to continue my development as an art educator trying to design fine arts projects with a democratic purpose. Expedition USA in Higgins Lake Michigan, a field trip designed for US high school students modeled after the true international EIC, will be an experience that I can utilize to share some of the great lessons I’ve taught already to a crowd of motivated and likeminded students.

Mr. Kennedy from Northern Ireland noted that, “students became more active citizens, and attitude and tolerance increased which showed that there was a significant increase in both citizenship activity and tolerance. The program is not a static program, it is a continuing development program which uses experiences in the past to help develop

change.” “To us art and citizenship, and citizenship education are about the issue of public reconciliation on the island of Ireland and in our view you can’t be an effective citizen unless you’re a citizen who respects the point of view of people from other back grounds and other cultures so we use art and citizenship to promote that, and that is our long term goal,” Mr. Kennedy concludes.

My closing comments support that with the inclusion of arts based democratic practices, students will have the ability to gain better respect for themselves as citizens in a community, gain stronger voice in community action, and can become more responsible individuals. The arts help promote a feeling of individuality and creative expression, and are a supportive outlet to many types of individuals. Through my involvement as an art educator I have had many personal experiences with arts based democratic projects that consistently prove the value and worth such activities have. Character building is important at the high school level, and I’m glad to have witnessed its strength and success as such a young educator.

ACTIVE IN ROMANIA

“Mihai Viteazul” National College a high school in Romania has been a participant in the EIC projects starting from the Expedition’s early beginnings. Today, this national group has acquired the necessary stability that allows it to establish and pursue informal learning-related goals. Most of the team members have participated in EIC at least three times and have gained the basic skills to share the knowledge they received in the summer schools with their national community. Starting as a young group was hard due to lack of experience, setting unrealistic goals, and lack of cohesion. Step by step, however, we have managed to carry out projects and activities that have proved our commitment to spreading the ideas of Expedition Inside Culture.

Scavenger Hunt at the Village Museum in Bucharest

Aiming at the students of “Mihai Viteazul” EIC Romania has set up a project meant to implement the expeditionary learning method, and it is organized in three steps. The overall approach of the project was to challenge misconceptions about traditions and the investigation of history, embodied in preconceived attitudes towards what a museum might stand for as a cultural institution. The aim of the project was to enable students to define and select their own tools to be used for research, to gain knowledge outside the sometimes artificial classroom environment, and to redefine their experience of what a museum is or how it can be used. In the first stage of the project, the 30 participants went through a teambuilding session where they learned about one another, defined the goals that made them a group, and debated on meanings and perspective. During the second step of the project, they were invited to participate in a scavenger hunt research activity at the Village Museum, where they had to find out information regarding rural architecture and tradition. The participants began by attending a workshop of their choice on specific research tools and methods of expression such as: the use of words, drawing, and photography. Armed with both the discussion on perspective and with the tools for expression, the entire group reunited at the Village Museum on October 27, which was also the annual Autumn Festival. Participants took pictures to build a photo-story, drew sketches, completed interviews, and wrote essays on what they saw. This final step encouraged students to reflect on their experience and present their findings.

This project was a perfect chance for the Romanian EIC group participants to use the skills learned in the expedition, while at the same time, planning and carrying out the project. We, the organizers, had to think about what students wanted and had to develop

activities they would be really interested in. We wanted to give them a taste of non-formal learning and take them out of the traditional classrooms, even if only for a day. This turned out to be an opportune lesson about defining goals, finding the best means to achieve them, and creating a suitable structure for them. This was the project that made EIC Romania a close and well defined group.

Social Cinema - Blue Eyed

We were so impressed by the documentary “Blue Eyed” that we saw and discussed in the Academy of Leaders in 2007 that we wanted to share it with the people back at home. This project also consisted of three different steps. The three steps included marketing, presentation, and developing a workshop.

Marketing. Two weeks before the viewing of the movie, we displayed posters that expressed stereotypes based on arbitrary features such as eye color. For instance “blue eyed students are smarter” and “girls wearing pants get poorer grades than the ones wearing skirts,” and so on. We hoped to create a reaction we could build on during the round-table discussion after viewing the movie. The expected response was definitely there, many of our schoolmates were intrigued, even scandalized, and some even ripped the posters.

Presentation. This led us to our next step, which was inviting the students to the presentation of the project. The successful marketing brought us a roomful of curious teenagers. For one hour, we spoke about EIC, stereotypes, the “Blue Eyed” movie and invited them to join us for a workshop about discrimination, identity, and labeling.

Workshop. A fair number of students joined the workshop. They saw the documentary and then engaged in a discussion trying to figure out the mechanisms of discrimination and how they apply in the real world. The debate lasted for a long time and the participants talked passionately about cases of discrimination in the community. At the end, the opinions were split – some thought that it was possible to fight discrimination, others thought of it as a lost battle.

In the view of both the organizers and the participants, the event was a success. The Romanian group worked as a team, and this time, having more experience from the expeditions, reached a more profound dimension. The actual organization of the project was also easier, the hard part, this time, was getting into the minds of the participants, anticipating their needs and reactions. We also learned that moderating a discussion is not as simple as it seems and requires a lot of training.

At present, the group is trying to continue this series of events such as viewing a documentary on issues related to tolerance and understanding of differences and reflecting on those in a follow-up discussion, debate, presentation etc. in their high school. Also, the project will extend beyond the audience of the high school, as it already involves those members who are now university students and have already started similar sessions in their own academic communities.

While working to create non-formal learning structures, the members of EIC Romania have also developed a way of EIC thinking – whether it is school, work, or other activities, we look around us trying to find ways of putting our EIC skills into practice.

THE ACADEMY FOR LEADERS OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

The Academy for Leaders of Intercultural Dialogue (ALID) is an educational project developed by the association Expedition Inside Culture (EIC). Its goal is to prepare young people from different countries and cultural backgrounds to become leaders in a contemporary, globalized world. It consists of three international meetings (trainings) and work in local (national) groups in between them.

Where the idea came from

As the EIC summer project Expedition Inside Culture became a stable point of each year, and we were faced with the situation of people wanting to come back and participate in the project more than just once; naturally we had to think about some solutions. It was obvious for us that those second or third time participants were playing a different role than newcomers. Yet we wanted them to develop further and gain new skills, but we also considered their presence an additional source of knowledge for the 'regular' participants of the summer projects. That brought us to thinking about how to prepare a learning process that would be interesting, challenging, and real for everyone at the same time.

We also wanted to broaden our impact and one way of doing this is to prepare people, who would multiply EIC's ideas and actions. Hopefully one day they will then prepare the trainer course. Then the cycle will start again, but with much bigger impact and range, as our capacity grows with each trained person who stays involved.

Preparations for the project

The first main step of our preparation for a project with young leaders was to think and discuss our definitions of leadership and leaders. It was crucial to get to know how we understand a leader's role, as well as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes he/she should have. Of course, it was a never - ending discussion, and its aim was to not prepare a description of a person, like a form, but to prepare a plan that would shape people into this form. We wanted to prepare a learning situation which would help us to empower youths in their process of becoming responsible for themselves but also for others and their surroundings. I believe that the process of defining who we want to work with and what

we want to teach and learn was also an opportunity for us to see our work in a wider context. We had to think about the impact we make on young people we work with, and we wanted to see if what they encounter during EIC projects influences their lives. We decided we wanted to prepare a project which would specifically focus on a process of becoming a leader in a multicultural world, which is still full of cultural misunderstandings, xenophobia, and passive attitudes towards intolerance. We wanted to create a project which would help young people to solve these contemporary problems. So we had to prepare this project, but first we had to agree on how we wanted to do this. Discussions with the groups of people who were involved in this process were fascinating for me as approaches were different. I especially remember a very interesting disagreement regarding leaders' role, which was featured in the discussion as to whether EIC should be like a symphonic orchestra or an improvising jazz band. In the vivid and democratic process, the scope of the content was created.

Three pillars of leaders' project

To achieve our goal, which was to prepare young people to be leaders in intercultural dialogue, we decided to focus on our work in three aspects, which would work in the process of building future leaders; intercultural approach; teaching, training, and leading others; and social activism in local communities.

Intercultural approach

The basis for our work was corresponding with those from the EIC summer project. We believe it is crucial to understand the intercultural context of the world and we do it with emphasis on the following issues:

- **Education for tolerance** - we educate youth to be more accepting of others on the basis of race, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, and other factors. Our main assumption is that no one is born with prejudice, so hatred can be overcome, and that it is possible to teach democracy and tolerance.
- **Experiential learning** - learning happens best with emotions, when people are truly involved and interested in the subject of learning process. To ensure this involvement we invite them to design this educational journey together. This enables everyone to learn both individually and as a group. We appreciate diversity and inclusion. We share responsibility for the learning process and learn what makes us a crew, not passengers, in our journey.
- **Socio-transformative constructivism** – is a key element of creating active members of society. We focus on identity development; learning's main function is not gaining knowledge, but deciding what kind of person you are. Such an orientation to teaching and learning affirms that knowledge is socially constructed and mediated by cultural, historical, and institutional contexts. It also assures us that, as a part of a social world, we can make changes in it.

Teaching, training and leading others

This pillar focuses on teaching methods and skills connected with leadership. Based on the train-the-trainer approach, young people practice leading exercises, discussions, and other activities.

Again we emphasize the role of responsibility for the learning process, which is shared by both: those who teach and those who learn. Teaching is not transmitting information, but is creation. It means we understand how the thing works, not only notice its existence. Active teaching, as well as, active learning is the basis for our work.

Social activism in local community

The only way to make an impact on reality is to be actively involved and participate in social change. Our local community is a good place to start with. Participants are prepared to look for and research issues in their surroundings, and then, on the basis of the survey, prepare a plan for work in the local community. The area of the work is free to be chosen by each person (or group), as we believe it is important that young people deal with subjects they find important. However, we strongly encouraged participants to choose activities which are not time-to-time events, but encourage long term cooperation with the local community. This enables a real exchange of knowledge and experiences, based on mutual understanding of the issues, and common work towards solving local problems.



Fig. 21 How it works in the framework of three international meetings

Each meeting (training) includes working in the fields of all three pillars, but the focus is changing simultaneously with time and attention dedicated to the particular aspect of the project.

As shown in the diagram above, during the first meeting the focal point is intercultural issues. Leading skills and local activism are present in little notation. The second stage of the project is mainly focused on trainers' skills, but again two other aspects are still present. The last part of the project is dedicated to local issues and active citizenship,

which is grounded in two of the previous pillars: intercultural context and leadership.

How does it look in practice so far

Till now, we have managed to go through the first two stages of the Academy.

STAGE ONE: MARCH 2008, WISŁA - ZABRZE - KRAKÓW POLAND

Participants: students and young teachers from Poland, Romania, Ukraine and USA.

Financially supported by: Youth in Action Programme and Bowling Green State University.

Description of event:

For the first meeting of the Academy, we decided to visit three places in southern Poland. In Wisła, a small village located in the Beskid mountains, we held participants' integration and anti-discrimination training. We believe it is a critical condition for people who are to work in the field of intercultural education to get to know their own identity, stereotypes, and prejudices, as well as, the mechanisms of discrimination and oppression. Equipped with this knowledge, we started preparation for local research. It was deep, and sometimes painful, but a very fruitful process. As a result, we had four teams which were prepared to explore Zabrze, the EIC association's homeland. Full of remarks of its intercultural past, it became a scene of our local research and its interpretation. We discovered forgotten traces of Silesians, Poles, Germans, and Jews living together. One of the top points of the project was, in my opinion, meeting with the local authorities and representatives of minority groups in the city hall. It was clear to me that our hosts were truly impressed by the EICer's openness to discuss and deep understanding of the process going on in the city with uncomfortable issues. Unfortunately, the authorities did not share this openness. I believe we can count it as a success, that during our meeting the representative of the local Roma minority and the city mayor met for the first time to sit down and have a discussion together. Before we left the city, we wanted to leave a trace of our presence, so we organized a cleaning up of an old Jewish cemetery. The last stop on our educational trip was in Krakow, where we focused on training skills. During the last four days everyone had a chance to pick, prepare, and lead an activity and then hear feedback from the group.

Before the groups left to go back home, we decided on preparations for the next step of the Academy. Since our focus would be teaching, we had to think about whom and what we wanted to teach. That discussion took place on our internet forum, where we decided to prepare an Intercultural Dictionary with kids from the youth shelter in Lublin.

STAGE TWO: JULY 2008, KAYAK TRIP ON TANEW RIVER IN LUBLIN

Participants: students and young teachers from Poland, Romania, and the USA. Our Ukrainian partner did not manage to participate in this stage due to personal problems of group leaders (underage youngsters could not travel alone to Poland).

Financially supported by: Expedition Inside Culture Association and Bowling Green State University

Description of event:

The preparation phase for the main activity, teaching Polish kids from a shelter, took place during a kayaking trip on the Tanew River. It was a great compilation of a team-building activity and learning possibilities. In the evenings, we were working on the programs for children from the shelter, and during the kayaking we became a team. We were to work as a team in Lublin too. During this time, we did not know that we learned as a group while coping with difficult situations on the river. We would use this information and skills sooner than we expected. Only after the first day of working with our new 'pupils' in Lublin, we had to revise our plan to prepare the dictionary. The kids were younger than we expected and most of the concepts we had prepared were too abstract and not



understandable. It was a crucial moment, as for the first time Academy members had to face a real life situation and were to act out, as an international group, and decide what to do. I was very impressed by two things: first of all, the decision did not revolve around how to entertain the kids, but how to make our lessons age appropriate.

Secondly, it was a great experience for me to observe the process of decision making and planning in the group. Later on I saw the participants using the Experiential Learning Model. They were revising, reflecting on, and implementing changes in order to improve their work. Of course, this was not an easy thing and both major and minor problems appeared, but it was visible that the group was learning from their mistakes. It was in this moment, when I could see that we were getting closer to our aim of preparing an international group of leaders with intercultural dialogue. I saw a team of independent thinkers and educators preparing and running activities for a very difficult group – kids at the age 5 to 13, who speak Polish and also some of them had behavior and development problems. I saw their struggle, sometimes maybe even doubts if they could make it, but in the end I will always remember the final effect, the kids sharing the knowledge and skills they had gained in those five days with one another. I think it was an extremely empowering experience for Academy members, as well as, for those who prepared the project.

Evaluation of the project

It is hard to evaluate the project, as it is still ongoing, but already we can find some issues which were sources of problems or dilemmas.

The most obvious problem was that financing was not secured for the whole project, but we were looking for financial support in three parts separately. It resulted in a situation where the future of the next project stages was unknown and the engagement of participants was dropping. It was also hard to plan reasonably when we did not know if there would be a possibility to send an application for grant support. We did not know if we would get the grant. We faced those problems, but we managed to overcome them, since we believe money can help in the realization of your plans but are not indispensable.

Another difficulty we met was when we tried to set a time limit for each meeting, which would suit all groups. The differences between school years in participant countries, as well as the different levels of education the participants held created situations where it was very hard to find a time slot which would be suitable or possible for everyone. For financial reasons, we had to divide our project into three parts. We had to struggle with this issue three times as well.

A problem we did not manage to solve resulted in the absence of the Ukrainian group for the second part of the project and the possible lack of this group again later this year. This was a situation when participants were underage and no adult participant could come to the meeting. International travel without a warden was not possible and the situation occurred too close to commencement of the project date for us to not find a solution. Notwithstanding, I would also count on another project success (apart from those described before in the text). A new role for a Romanian partner is being created to take a leading role in organizing the third stage of the project. I think it represents in practice what we often tell in theory: that the real learning process implicates sharing responsibilities, duties, and changing roles. That is why I know we are on OUR way, and we continue to go on OUR expedition.

JAZZ BANDS: GROUP LEADERSHIP THAT SWINGS

For five years, I have been teaching and working with schools as an educator. Most recently, I have taught science to middle school students in a small charter school. Many of my teaching practices can be attributed to the experiences that I had through Expedition Inside Culture (EIC). When I first was asked to be part of EIC, I was not sure what all it involved. However, I knew it promised an opportunity to go to Poland and to interact with young people from many different nations. I have since been to five different expeditions and I dramatically see my experiences with EIC and how they have affected my daily classroom teaching – methodology and my daily classroom social structures. One of the most difficult aspects of participating with EIC is figuring out how to frame and explain what is experienced. After a long period of reflection, I have pieced together my “jigsaw of understanding” about EIC and reasoned how my experiences at EIC have affected my teaching. The techniques I learned at EIC helped me to foster trust and communication, emergent leadership, and metacognition in my classroom.

Since I have had five opportunities to participate in Expedition Inside Culture, I have had the privilege to see many advantages to the intercultural communication process. I believe that Expedition Inside Culture is an international program that creates avenues of communication through the study of the local history of a forgotten or ignored population that ultimately leads to discussions of larger issues on a global scale. These communication avenues allow for participants to analyze and discuss topics such as multiple perspectives (like historical, personal, and local perspectives), tolerance, xenophobia, stereotypes, issues of culture, and human rights.

Echoes of 2006 Expedition

The Expedition Inside Culture 2006 focused on Operation Vistula, which involved a mass evacuation of Lemkos and Boykos living in southern Poland, a few years after World War II. The participants of EIC examined the cause of and the local people's response to the action of xenophobia against the Lemko and Boyko population. The participants discussed the fate of those ethnic groups that were uprooted and moved. The second focal point of EIC 2006 was human rights. We had several workshops discussing topics about human rights, defining the Declaration of Universal Human Rights determin-

ing which human rights are being violated, peaceful ways to combat those violations, and ultimately how we are responsible for encouraging political action in society to encourage the adoption of human rights. Through these activities, students were led to develop a connection to the local culture of Lemkos, Boykos and Operation Vistula by seeing firsthand the effects of World War II and the moving of these ethnic groups. I made this conclusion after the students' final presentations at the end of EIC.

What I learned at EIC as a teacher

Within my small charter school we have a very diverse population. Our school focuses on visual arts and performing arts. We are located in a small Midwestern United States city that is very blue collar. In my class we have a wide range of socioeconomics' and backgrounds. I have students who not only are diverse ethnically, racially, and economically, but as artistically as well. It is very common within one artistic major such as music to have several students who would consider themselves as 'beginner rock stars and rap stars' and students who are diligently playing their oboe biding their time for the Boston Pops Orchestra. In my class of 80 I have over 28 different school districts represented and each student from those school districts is on their own academic level, some very low and some extremely high. Because of this vast group of students most ordinary teaching practices fall short of reaching and including every student as a part of a class unit, therefore I found myself in need of a way to include everyone.

Through my experiences at EIC, I learned that in order to establish trust and communication every person must be viewed as an individual. The process of participant integration and *Exploring Students' Beliefs About History/ Sharing History* (EIC guidebook) is similar to Michalove's article *Circling In: Examining prejudice in history and in ourselves*⁷³. Michalove examines the four steps of the integration process in a classroom to build trust, respect and effective communication. Those steps are: show respect to others and yourself; speak out when you see bullying, scapegoating, and other negative behaviors; stand up for what we know is right, even when others do not; and believe that each person has a unique perspective. I feel that the last step is the most applicable feature of EIC for the classroom.

At EIC, the participants begin the expedition with multiple activities that allow for trust and communication to be established. It teaches participants how to communicate with others of different backgrounds and cultures. EIC uses English to uncover the hidden language of culture. English is the base language that allows us to communicate, but the interaction with each other reveals our differences of values through non-verbal communication.

The EIC process teaches trust and team building strategies through games and activities. These activities ensure a willingness and security for sharing "unique perspectives" and are an integral part of the process. In my teaching, I spend two weeks at the beginning of the school year on similar activities. Spending time on trust-building creates a climate in the classroom that encourages communication and, just like at EIC, is an integral

⁷³ B. Michalove, *Circling In: Examining Prejudice in History and in Ourselves*, 1999.

Blind Walk: The blind walk is a perfect activity to teach students to trust each other and how to communicate effectively. Students are randomly placed into groups; all of the groups' members are given blind folds. Have all the group members but for the first group member, put the blind folds on. Next, have all the members in a group join hands, and have them follow the first leader through a hike or a walk. The more difficult to maneuver as a group, the more the communication is needed from the seeing member. Have the members switch roles and have each group walk or crawl through a new location. Lastly have them discuss the challenges and obstacles they experienced as a group.



part of my teaching. My students learn to understand and operate under the phrase, "one of us is not as smart as all of us." This belief helps students to understand that their perspectives are an important addition to the group. Like in EIC, we reflect on what we have learned and the students are encouraged to share their thoughts and opinions, even if they differ from those of the group. These differences make the group stronger and allow students to value each other's perspective.

As a young leader and the decision making process in the "jazz band"

In a jazz band, there are certain instruments that take lead and others who carry the beat. The EIC experience fosters leadership skills in its participants. As young leaders most do not know who is playing the drums and carries the beat and who will be Miles Davis and play the lead. EIC allows young participants to emerge as leaders. In my expedition 2006, I was trying to figure out what talents I could offer the groups. Through discussion and the general understanding that everyone has an important piece to add; we as a group, sifted our way through to create activities that challenged the participants as well as ourselves. Educators can operate as an orchestra with each student waiting to play its role with the music, or vice versa a teacher can allow students to take the lead in improvisation, like in a jazz band, where each student adds their perspective and takes in the educational process. Young leaders of the expedition talk and discuss the way to organize and plan each day. This organic process allows for creativity and experiences in helping frame the facilitator's plans for that day's expedition. Still, there are many times the young leaders of the expedition may be put into leadership roles that make them feel uncomfortable. With a supporting cast and a clear goal, those inexperienced leaders can feel successful. However, the fear of failure is a very real aspect that a young leader faces at EIC. In fact, failure is almost essential to the EIC process. Failure allows each person to evaluate their role and process the event. All the leaders want EIC to succeed, but the fear of failure is real. As well as a fear of failure, each young leader carries his or her own idea of what the participants should experience; defining and framing their own ideas of EIC.

The group dynamics of the jazz band begin to emerge as a leader and can come full circle, experiencing success and failure while learning to depend on one another.

By mimicking EIC activities in my classroom, I can foster leadership skills in my students as well. The process for planning EIC begins long before the participants arrive at the expedition. Within group work in my classroom, students are placed in similar situations to those of EIC young leaders. The students are given a task and leaders begin to emerge. The process of a student stepping forward and facilitating roles is a challenge every teacher faces with group work. However, my students have already learned to value everyone's opinion and perspective through the trust and communication building activities we have already completed. These values help to guide the students in this process. Most will succeed in the task given. Still, for some, failure is inevitable. Some students need to fail to feel vulnerable enough to depend on the group. I give little guidance to groups who are conducting group projects. I remind the groups of the goals of the project and the values that we keep—that “one of us is not as smart as all of us.” This process is the same one that EIC participants experience after the activities when they must come to an agreement that is reached by all or most of the participants.

EIC teaches many metacognitive skills such as self awareness and personal reflection. Expedition Inside Culture teaches how to analyze differing perceptions and perspectives, but it also allows for the participant to reflect on the information that was presented in the group discussions and to draw one's own beliefs about the information.

Two Pictures: This activity allows students to explore their own perceptions about a subject matter. Selected pictures have been strategically cut into two separate pieces (you want pictures where the subject matters are not typically associated with one other). Students are given one half of the picture and they are told to observe what they see in the picture. Next, students are sent to find the person who has the matching picture. When they find the matching picture they are to share with their perspective. Lastly the teacher leads them through some questions to let them evaluate their observations. Questions such as: “What did you observe?” “When you found your matching picture, how did your perceptions change?” “What can we learn from making judgments with limited information?” “What did you learn?”

At the end of an activity or event, EIC brings the information back to the participants. The participants are asked to construct their own ideas about an activity. The leaders are guides that prompt thinking with open ended questions that allow participants to examine their role in the activity and the purpose behind that activity.

Developing Jazz Bands

In my science classroom, I use these same techniques to facilitate my students' learning. I generally start with a “driving question.” This is the main question that we research and conclude as a class. I then allow students to go through the process of giving and sharing information. Next, the students will explore the topic through labs. At the end of the lab, we will have a group reflection and students will begin this process of evaluating what was learned. Students are prompted to write their reflections in their notebook. One of the last activities is the use of large concept maps that allow students to make their

own connections to some key words the group has designated as important and of value. Finally, groups will discuss and present their information to the class. The class is encouraged to ask questions and to evaluate each of the group's concept maps and presentations. Students are taken through the process to reflect and evaluate what was experienced within the lessons and come to a conclusion as a complete group. The groups are not always similar; however, the students will question each group's information and I will occasionally interject some open-ended questions to help them reevaluate their data.

The experiences I had and the lessons I learned not only affected me personally, but they have shaped my practices in the classroom. EIC has taught me methods and practices that help me develop a class of individual students who can learn, trust and depend on each other. Students have expressed to me that they feel as though they are a vital part of the educational process. They have explained in class surveys that they feel responsible for their own learning as well as the learning of the group. The students begin to develop their own inner monologue about what they are learning or have learned. This helps them reflect on the educational path and process they have all been involved with. As they reflect, their learning starts to come into context. Students see the value that each individual brings to the class and as a cohesive dynamic group they find their own way and leaders emerge throughout the tasks just a jazz band feels it way through a song. I firmly believe that without the techniques I learned from EIC, my students today would not have the opportunity to learn the communication skills, leadership qualities, and metacognitive strategies that I am able to teach them. These skills better equip my students to face challenges both inside and outside the classroom. Expedition Inside Culture has proved to be a life changing experience for both my students and me.

ORANGE FOR EARTH: A CASE STUDY

Orange for Earth designers

Orange for Earth was a project designed by the Expedition Inside Culture Association. The Association integrates people with various backgrounds and countries - teachers, students, artists, ecologists, and many others who care about issues of democratic society. Each year they meet to take part in an expedition – an experience of becoming researchers, exploring a region, seeking new skills and information. All activities of the expedition are based on 'expeditionary learning'. The method assumes that students cooperate in independent and responsible ways while conducting a specific project. Exploring actions are prepared by students and coordinated by a teacher who guides students to achieve their goals. The goals are to explore the chosen issue or region, present the information they gained, and reflect on the learning process.

Orange for Earth was designed to familiarize Polish schools with the project approach and method of 'expeditionary learning' and through this to induce a change of acting and thinking about the learning processes.

More about Orange for Earth

Orange for Earth was conducted in the 2006-2007 school year and its activities were divided into three stages. The project started together with another, well known Polish action called "Cleaning the World" organized by the Foundation "Our Earth." In this initiative, groups of students gather together and literally clean their neighborhoods, forests, streets, fields, etc. This initiative happens regularly once a year. In the first stage of the EIC project, we invited students to document this action by taking three photos and submitting them on the project webpage along with a short cleaning report. The second task included participation in on-line forum discussions, which were related to current action issues. Four hundred and seventy five schools participated in the first stage, and 100 of the most active schools were invited to the next phase.

The main objective for schools in the second stage of the project was to conduct 4 projects in varying topic areas, methods, and range. Moreover, schools were encouraged to use two of four kinds of projects (research, media, educational or social).

Projects could refer to four topic areas (history and society, culture and art, multicultural and ecology). They had 6 weeks to conduct their project, and after each of them the students' task was to provide a report that was later published on the website. Teachers and students were not left alone with this assignment. We grouped schools regionally in groups of ten and each group had a moderator who coordinated the process and helped when needed. At the end of this stage, students prepared their individual reflections about the process they took part in, which was called "Me and the World." Presentations were prepared at first individually by each student and finally they were gathered in the schools' Power Point presentation. To close this part of the project, we invited representatives of the schools to Warsaw to take part in a public debate. Students from each school had to provide a public speech and share experiences that they gained during the project. There were also numerous environmental and civic issues discussed.

In the third stage of Orange for Earth, 25 schools took part in a scientific students' expedition that was held in Suwalszczyzna. Each school was represented by 4 students and 1 teacher (125 people in total). Students explored the region using the method of 'expeditionary learning.' There were four main steps taken by participants during the last stage of the program.

The first step was preparation for expedition. Before arrival, schools were divided into four groups depending on the students' choice of a topic area they wanted to work on during the Expedition. Those were the same topic areas as we had proposed for projects in the second stage of the program (history and society, culture and art, multicultural and ecology). Also, all students had the possibility to introduce themselves on the project's Internet forum.

The next step was to create conditions for authentic learning and cooperation. During the first three days, the main goal was to let participants get to know each other by using a variety of exercises, games, and simulations. All those activities not only made the integration and communication easier for students, but also prepared them for the next tasks. On the third day, they participated in workshops that provided knowledge and training in particular skills, which enabled them to perform field research. Students participated in workshops on: photography, social research, acting, journalism, movie making, and other topic areas. Students planned the field research themselves, eg. prepared questions to interview local inhabitants.

Local field research was a third step of the expedition. The fourth and fifth days were devoted for visiting museums and places that were important for the region, meeting local inhabitants, and conducting field research. Through visits and meetings, students tried to answer questions they had also previously asked. The main task for teachers and leaders in this step was to teach researchers to see not only a particular part of the reality, but also to try and notice connections among scenes they observed and see them in a broader perspective.

The last and very important step was the reflection. On the sixth day of the Expedition, four groups of researchers met in one place again and started to organize and select the data they had acquired. The next step was to prepare a final presentation for other groups. This exercise was not only to sum up and present information, but also to reflect on what was most essential in the whole process of learning.

How Orange for Earth derives from EIC philosophy

Expedition Inside Culture Association has organized international youth projects which were based on the method of 'expeditionary learning' for many years. The method creates an environment for authentic and democratic dialogue between students and teacher. It also helps them to become open and honest partners in the learning process. It is believed that only schools with a democratic culture of education can provide answers on the challenges of the contemporary world and prepare students for the labor market.

Equipped with the above mentioned experience and beliefs, the association Expedition Inside Culture prepared the project Orange for Earth. In the project, teachers and students had an opportunity to cooperate, learn from each other, make common decisions, and see how the results of their work influence the real world. All actions undertaken in the project were planned to help students and teachers create a surface of partnership, dialogue, and reciprocal responsibility for the learning process in their schools.

Therefore, there were four main aims on which Orange for Earth was based:

- Developing students' awareness of responsibility for their surroundings and the world. The wide concept of "responsibility" includes being responsible not only for yourself and your actions, but also being responsible for other people, your friends, neighbors, fellow citizens. This also included the environment in which we live. Activities in the project were designed to help students to understand that all their actions should be taken in consideration of their consequences, but also to invite them to take actions that positively change their surrounding.
- Creating and strengthening students' public spirit, especially the beliefs connected with environmentally friendly ways of behavior.
- Care for the environment as a regular duty of engaged and aware citizens of democratic society. Thus all tasks of the project were ingrained in environmental issues.
- Creating and developing the ability for honest public activity. Modern teaching methods, like project-based learning methods, enable those involved to connect the process of teaching with the local environment and its events. In such conditions, students are able to take part in real life activities. Through conducting a variety of projects and field research, students and teachers had an opportunity to cross school walls and connect their actions with real local issues. Moreover, that allowed them not only to see the measurable effects of their work but also impact local society.
- Acquiring basic skills essential for living in the contemporary and dynamic, developing world⁷⁴.

As mentioned above, it is essential that schools prepare students to function in the contemporary world and labor market. To be able to do this, students need to be taught many abilities. Orange for Earth enabled students to develop those abilities. In particular, they had a chance to take responsibility for the learning process, become active in the process of designing aims and actions, and assist with negotiating and being responsible

⁷⁴ E. Stoecker, I. Wachna: *Orange for Earth –An Educational Project Which (Temporarily?) Changed 100 Polish schools*, in: Zarządzanie Publiczne, Zeszyt nr 4/2008, Reforming Education: Linking Schools, Universities and Communities for Democratic School Reform, G. Mazurkiewicz, & J.M. Fischer, (Eds.), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2008.

for the results of their work. Participation in the project was also an occasion for students to work in diverse, multicultural groups. Virtues such as: openness, readiness for cooperation, ability to understand different value systems, as well as, awareness of our own priorities, autonomy, and a willingness to take responsibility for yourself and others are the priorities of modern education⁷⁵. Moreover, during all stages of the project, students were using modern technologies. They could develop not only the technical skills, but also a mental readiness to take part in virtual communication processes and develop the capacity to use this ability in a process of self-development.

Benefits schools gained in Orange for Earth

According to the results of evaluations there are several benefits that were obtained by students and teachers thanks to participation in Orange for Earth.

Students were satisfied with participation in Orange for Earth. The program was important for them, and they had fun conducting projects in their schools. During participation in Orange for Earth, participants gained knowledge and developed many skills. Students enumerate that they learned how to seek information, work in groups, and ways to organize and plan their work. They came to understand ways of public action. Participants also learned how to prepare presentations, and they became more comfortable with giving public speaking. What essentially came from this process was that students understood that teachers are not responsible for the learning process, but they are as students. Moreover, during the project they learnt more deliberately and effectively. As advantages of the program, most of the students enumerated active learning, learning dialogue and doing something for others.



The project was also important for teachers. For many of them it was a first chance to work with project methods. Despite time management and organizational difficulties, they noticed such benefits as activating students, developing students' independence, awareness, and interests. Furthermore, in the teacher's opinion, the project was a great opportunity to teach students how to work in groups. They will also see profits for themselves such as using project materials, ideas, and methods in other school activities. Teachers also found it very useful when cooperating with other teachers, exchanging experiences, and also using the possibility to get to better know their own students. And in conclusion many of the teachers felt inspired by the project. We hope it leads to many more projects like Orange for Earth to the very end.

⁷⁵ G. Mazurkiewicz, Bezradność i szkoły, czy brak pomysłu na dobrą edukację? W jaki sposób tworzyć szkoły, których potrzebuje społeczeństwo wiedzy? In: Wiedza w gospodarce, społeczeństwie i przedsiębiorstwach: pomiary, charakterystyka, zarządzanie. K. Piech, E. Skrzypek (red.) Instytut Wiedzy i Innowacji, Warszawa 2007, s. 294-311

HUMOR IN DIALOGUE

Humor is my personal favorite when it comes to icebreakers. A smart joke puts people in a good shape, both mentally and physically; still, there are lots of traps almost invisible to the naked eye, especially if you are not paying attention to the object of your irony. EIC summer expeditions have been a great opportunity for me to meet really entertaining and funny people from all over the world, and it has been an experience that I treasure most. From witty puns to “that’s what she said” and stupid practical jokes, I have had a wonderful time laughing and learning at the same time. But EIC has also given me time and motivation to think about how humor can hurt people or create and forward stereotypes. Therefore, I would like to consider this article as an analysis of how humor has worked in icebreaking, teambuilding, and intercultural dialogue, in the context of EIC summer expeditions.

- **Icebreaking** - The great thing about the Expeditions is that there are new participants every year, so the first days are always about getting to know the people you will share the next two weeks with. Some people are very open and make socializing seem so natural, and there are some who find it difficult to initialize a conversation. From my experience, humor has been the best way to create a free and relaxed atmosphere among people who are acquainted for the first time. But why is that? First of all, telling a joke means you are the center of attention for a short while, but it is enough to get noticed and suggest you are approachable. And why not admit it, we like people with a great sense of humor.

- **Leadership** - I personally like a leader with a sense of humor. I believe that such a person can create a relaxed atmosphere among team members, but only if he uses the right kind of humor. For example, accepting that other people make fun of you once in a while is a sign that you do not take everything personal and you respect a well told joke. But when this type of amusement is focused on only one person or is based on sensitive information, it can lead to the opposite – frustration and a tense atmosphere. Plus, having fun along with team members, means that everyone is equal and a leader is on the same level as everyone else. Consequently I think humor is an important trait of a good leader, as long as he/she can use it for teambuilding purposes.

- **Activities** - Some activities in EIC are essentially fun, especially the physical ones. I remember balloon tossing, puppet master, or simple games that got us relaxed at the end of the day. Apart from this aspect, I think humor is important in more serious activities also.

For example, role playing can create situations that you never experienced and are sometimes emotionally disturbing. That is why it is mandatory that at the end of the session the participants shake off the negative emotions they felt, and at this stage I believe laughing can play a big part. Another situation that comes to my mind is that when some EICers fail to understand a game rule, or lose at a game. Still, in the Expedition, there are no winners or losers and competition is not a method embraced by leaders. Therefore, having fun and learning at the same time is the ultimate purpose, which can be achieved partially if the leading members know how and when to tell a good joke or make a witty observation. Unfortunately, I have witnessed moments in activities when too much laughing created a hostile environment. For instance, we were having an activity about the power scale and how our own identity puts us higher or lower on it. You were given a tag with a certain job written on it and you had to position yourself on a line drawn on the floor, from the least successful to the most successful. After the first positioning, some of the participants' theoretical sex was changed. This led to some joking about turning from male to female, which created a bit of hostility. In the end, I think this was the whole purpose of the activity, to draw attention to stereotypes through all means, which leads me to the next area where humor can be found.

- **Stereotypes** - In this matter I thought it best to see first how humor can be an obstacle in trying to get over stereotypes. The easiest example is related to jokes that feed themselves on stereotypes and forward them - like those based on ethnicity, gender, hair color, religion and so on. Some of them are very funny and are part of a group's culture, so do we stop making jokes? I think this is a question very hard to answer but I also believe that humor is very relative, what you find funny may hurt another's feelings, so as long as you want to be a sensible person, you should check if your type of humor is embraced by the group you are in. Another question might arise here: what if a whole group thinks stereotypes are very funny? Well, I guess EIC played a major role in solving such situations, because in the Expedition you meet a lot of different persons and most likely they do not share all your interests, therefore it is an area where you can test humor ethics, if I may call them so. On the other hand, having a laugh and accepting that there are out there a lot of stereotypes about your country or community is a way of not taking them so personally. I liked the media survey homework where we had the chance to find out how other countries view ours and at the same time hear some stereotypes that will no longer surprise us later in life, something which will give us the patience to deal with them in a peaceful way.

All in all, I cannot imagine an expedition without a moment of good humor. Every time I think about the participants, I can only remember them with a wide smile on their faces, always ready to have a great time. Consequently I try to make humor an important part of my activity in the groups I work with. Seeing people smile and laugh is the first sign that they have connected and that they are comfortable with each other. Still, I must admit that humor is not the solution to every situation – sometimes it takes a whole lot of seriousness to overcome an obstacle as opposed to making jokes and laughing which might be viewed as a powerless attitude.

DESIGNING
A
WORLD:
VOICES

INTRODUCTION

Often, when individuals join us in a workshop we ask them to write about their expectations in the form of an essay or by participating in a threaded online forum discussion. Most new participants talk in excited language about what new things they might find out about the place they will investigate, or what new strategies for leading an activity they might learn. However, when they leave there is usually a flip. Again, we ask the participants to write. They are asked to reflect on the experience and their learning. Over and over again what we hear from them isn't so much about the place or the strategies, although they do write about those. What we hear about is how they learned about themselves and their identity. Their sense of self and their understanding of their place in the world becomes one of the strongest outcomes.



In this section we share some of the thoughts and writing from participants. Some of the individuals have been with us for a long time. Others attended just once. But when we began this text we asked them to write about where they are now in their lives and how they see their work with Expedition Inside Culture impacting them.

Finally, Jan Luczynski begins the section by helping to connect these voices to theories about learning and identity. Reflection and dialog are two of the most essential steps in learning. Listening to the voices of those around us we gain new understandings about ourselves. Asking an individual to speak and share their thoughts begins the process.

EXPEDITION INSIDE CULTURE: AN INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY FOR INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ADVENTURE INTO ONESELF AND INTO THE WORLD

The contemporary world requires more sophisticated knowledge and skills from an individual than ever before especially, if he/she is to live a satisfying, productive, and happy life. Globalization, democratization, civic society building, and advances in technology that expand throughout the planet, provide numerous opportunities for humans to interact with cultural others in a context that they have never experienced before in their lives. This creates a constantly changing environment in which one can never be sure what to expect and what activities should be undertaken. The knowledge and skills mentioned above are necessary to find one's own way through this unstable but exciting reality.

The Contemporary World: What do we need to be able to live in it?

There have been various attempts to define the skills and knowledge that are vital in the contemporary world. The term "key competencies", has been coined to refer to them. Among the variety of competencies five seem to be repeated on various lists: knowledge, a values orientation, relationships with others, relationship with society, and relationship with oneself.

The knowledge necessary to find one's way in the complex world should not be limited to the general academic knowledge that is so highly valued and so widely offered in all schooling systems. Everyday experiences prove that academic knowledge is applied in quite rare instances; to make everyday as well as important life decisions people refer to stereotypes and commonsense truths rather than to the results of theoretical reflections and empirical studies. Social psychology provides immense data confirming this conclusion. That is why it is so important not to leave commonsense knowledge aside in education, but instead to incorporate it into teaching; if, for no other reason, to prevent the students from acquiring prejudices and other dangerous stereotypes.

Values are at the core of education; however, in practice teachers and school move along a thin line between indoctrination and axiological indifference. Both ruin education: indoctrination causes student resistance to adult teaching, whereas indifference leaves the students without proper guidance in a world where values and life styles are in competition. Being left alone and having to make important choices, young people often

suffer from the mistakes they make. Trial and error as a method of learning is especially counterproductive in this area.

Social life cannot be switched off. No matter whether or not school accepts it, students live their abundant social life, with all the consequences of the variety of relationships they establish and maintain by themselves. As in the case of a value orientation, students need to have safe opportunities to experience different interactions and to learn how to behave in an appropriate way. Although the need for social education is commonly acknowledged, the school organization structure (classes, lessons) does not allow for providing the students with real support in developing proper social skills. This is tightly linked to the fourth competence: relationship with society. Civic education has advanced considerably both in the EU and in the USA. However, there is still a lot to do especially in the “emerging democracies” of Central and Eastern Europe. Having experienced an almost two hundred year gap in the rise of democracy, as happened in Poland, we need to be especially careful in creating internal social systems in schools. As P. Boudieu⁷⁶ claimed, school is an oppressive institution where students are forced to accept truths and values they do not want and – quite often – do not understand. This stands in sharp contradiction to J. Dewey’s⁷⁷ idea of school as a miniature democracy; an educational environment that helps young people to develop the democratic habits necessary to become citizens of the democratic world.

Finally, but maybe most importantly, students need to get a thorough insight into themselves. According to E. Erikson⁷⁸ elaborating the fundamental human problem “whom am I?” is the most essential quest of human life and it is pursued throughout life by every individual. Erikson claims that adolescence is the crucial stage of individual development for establishing the rudiments of one’s sense of identity. By assuming different social roles in the peer group, a young individual gains the chance to find out his/her individual traits, check his/her preferences, and build the first plans for his/her personal future. The more diverse opportunities for role changing he/she has, the more probable the emergence of an integrated sense of identity is.

The formal preparation for an independent and self-governed life in adulthood a concept, known as education, suffers considerably from the lack of proper liaisons between schools and real life. Psychologists and pedagogues (e.g., Freire, Illich) have been pointing at this limitation for many years now. Although the critical analysis has not changed mainstream education much, they have inspired several attempts to overcome this precipice and provide young people with appropriate educational support. Expedition Inside Culture proves to be one of the most promising in this respect.

⁷⁶ P. Bourdieu, & J.C. Passeron, *Reprodukcja. Elementy teorii systemu nauczania. [La reproduction. Elements pour une theorie du systeme d'enseignement]*, Warszawa 2006, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN

⁷⁷ E. H. Erikson, *Identity and the life cycle*, New York 1980, London: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc.

⁷⁸ J. Dewey, Democracy and education. In: J. A. Boydston, *The Middle Works of John Dewey*, Volume 9, 1899-1924: Democracy and Education, 1916 (Collected Works of John Dewey). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press 1980.

Expedition Inside Culture: The Chance to Meet Contemporary Educational Challenges

The international program named Expedition Inside Culture offers a unique opportunity to explore the cultural and social world, as well as one's own identity, through the means of mental and physical travel across cultures. Young people, adolescents and early adults, gather in a number of places on two continents to experience the miracle of diversity and communication. They talk to the cultural others, explore cultural environments far from their everyday experience, learn different perspectives, ideas, traditions, habits, and thus develop general and practical knowledge about the diversity of the world, revise their value hierarchies, build new social relationships, become citizens of the world, and explore the depths of their own personalities. This is the kind of education that can never be achieved by traditional methods that prevail in contemporary schools.

Expedition Inside Knowledge

While empirically studying the culture of the place they have arrived at, the participants develop a critical attitude which is necessary for problem solving as a means of dealing with reality. Asking questions, and never taking anything for granted without checking its real meaning, is a crucial step towards a responsible life. Being able to research that which is about to be learned is a crucial condition for authentic and sustainable learning⁷⁹. Participation in the EIC allows for discovering education and learning as something valuable and pleasant. As Julia Blavat'ska has put it: "I found out that it is possible to combine education and entertainment, to learn something new using previous experience, to get to know about the history of foreign countries, and to tell others your own." Telling stories to others and to oneself is considered to be the pivotal way of constructing one's personal knowledge.

Another advantage of EIC learning is the support it offers to participants' creativity. Activities planned for participants by the EIC leaders included scarce directions and detailed instructions that left a lot of room for participants' initiative. Victoria Zalik appreciates this method: "It was not lack of planning on the leader's part, but rather a strategy to encourage the creative process". It also shows the trust EIC educators grant to the participants, which is the only way to evoke this attitude in them.

Expedition Inside Values

Some participants claim that expeditionary experience has profoundly changed their attitudes and values. As Jess Neikamp has put it: "It was an amazing, life-changing, viewpoint altering, experience of a lifetime." And she continues "an experience that would continue to change and shape my life for years and years to come".

Among the values that EIC allows participants to experience, Diana Tereshchuk lists: "I felt our DEVOTION to our common values of peace, friendship and help, RESPECT for everyone's country, INTEREST in everyone's culture, history and personal life, and GRA-

⁷⁹ J. Dewey, Democracy and education. In: J. A. Boydston, *The Middle Works of John Dewey*, Volume 9, 1899-1924: Democracy and Education, 1916 (Collected Works of John Dewey). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press 1980; J. Piaget, *Dok d zmierzania edukacja* Warszawa 1977; Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe

⁸⁰ L. S. *Mind in society: Development of higher psychological processes*, Cambridge 1978, MA: Harvard University Press

TITUDE for every day of splendid time together". Ivan Kendzor goes on: "I learned how to better understand other people in spite of their differences, how to live in a peaceful society, and how to be tolerant ".This kind of experience puts these important values at the core of individual value systems. It does not seem unreasonable to expect that they will remain there for good.

Expedition Inside Others

The social nature of learning so thoroughly expounded by Vygotsky⁸⁰, and largely ignored in school practices worldwide, obtains its full realization in expeditionary activities. The participants have immense occasions to interact with each other while participating in integrative activities, discussions, or doing field research. As Blavats'ka describes: "I learned to work in groups, work together as one team, help other people, and know that you can get help in any situation. I learned how to listen to people and their points of view." The profoundly social nature of learning requires this type of intellectual interaction, with no biases or prejudices against those whose ideas and worldviews are different than ours.

Mastering communication skills, teambuilding strategies, helping others, and various other social skills, is commonly confirmed as important profits gained from EIC by many participants. These skills, however important in contemporary life, do not constitute all the benefits that EIC offers in terms of developing the competence of how to build proper relationships with others. Close and profound interactions provide opportunities for reflection on important life issues.

Conversations with fellow participants constitute an important part of expeditionary learning. Long, in-depth exchanges allow for learning the perspectives of others and for revising one's own. Cory Aron relates a long conversation with a German participant, to which he refers as "one of the best conversations in my life". Its role in Cory's social and personal development cannot be overestimated: "I believe I walked away from our conversation with a new perspective on life and the world". Peer coaching is fairly neglected as a vehicle of individual development in mass education; EIC restores its educational value.

During EIC students also interact with local people quite often with no ability to use the local language. Jess Neikamp describes her first experience on the bus travelling to an unknown destination in Poland: "Here I was, an educated, intelligent, young woman from one of the most powerful and opportunity-filled countries in the world and I could not speak a language other than my own." Learning about one's own limitations, that in a normal environment remain transparent, is an important step towards true knowledge.

Expedition Inside (Global) Society

Meeting peers from different countries and continents allows for learning perspectives and viewpoints other than one's own. While presenting joint accounts on national history, participants have a vital opportunity to see how different the perceptions of history can be. Jess Neikamp reports her particular observation of a Romanian participant's emotional reaction to Ronald Reagan's death, which was caused by her appreciation of his impact on her country's recent history. The dependence on the interpretation of this parti-

⁸⁰ L. S. *Mind in society: Development of higher psychological processes*, Cambridge 1978, MA: Harvard University Press

cular person on the local context became visible to Jess and that made her change a bit of her own perspective: "This was just another instance of shifting my viewpoint of our global society". Thanks to such direct intercultural experience the participants broaden their scope of perception and understanding of different perspectives people may have on the same facts.

Another opportunity to develop new perspectives is doing field research in the local area. "We talked to local people, learned about their daily lives and their histories, and really got a sense of what it is like to live in another area of the world" (Jess Neikamp). Being able to see the world from more than one's own perspective limits the danger of xenophobic and close-minded reactions to cultural others.

Kathleen points at an important difference between school education and what EIC offers in terms of teaching how to relate to society. As the school systems serve mostly to maintain the existing social order, the real goal of education is to produce "[a]n educated person [who] should be able to debrief, deal critically and creatively with reality, and develop one's own opinion to get his own idea of the world with the aim to discover how he can participate in the transformation to a better world". The social reconstructionist stance that underlines her words is not widely accepted by mainstream educators. Nevertheless, the contemporary world is filled with unjust relationships among people, nations, and world regions that need to be improved if mankind is to survive. At the beginning of her reflections Kathleen refers to Nelson Mandela (who) "once said that education is the most powerful weapon that you can use to change the world". EIC certainly is one of those 'not frequent enough' educational projects that put this idea of education into successful practice.

Expedition Inside Self

I. Kant wrote somewhere: knowledge about self is the starting point for wisdom; travelling allows for noticing those traits that remain hardly visible in our everyday environment. While participating in her first expedition Jess Neikamp started to ask herself important questions: "I began examining my personal identity on this bus ride and asking myself some of EIC's most basic reflection questions: Who am I? Who do I want to be? Why am I here? AND Where am I going?" As she admits further: "These are questions that our EIC leaders would continue to ask us and have us reflect on throughout the entire process". These questions are at the core of personality development in adolescence and young adulthood; without proper educational support the person may leave this stage of development with what Erikson calls 'role confusion' having limited prospects of healthy development in adult life⁸¹.

The beginnings of expeditionary learning are hard for most participants. Asia wrote: "In the first few days I was scared and confused", Kathleen related: "But the first days were not fun at all. I felt as if I were back in school", Alexandra Ioan had similar impressions: "I was uncomfortable in changing places and interacting with people unknown to me. I needed a period of three days to get used to the new conditions and rhythm". These uncomfortable feelings seem to be like a necessary investment, a condition on which the journey into one's own personality becomes possible.

⁸¹ E. H. Erikson, *Identity and the life cycle*, New York 1980, London: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc.

A similar role is played by contact with the natural environment and physical effort. In formal schooling physical education is sharply detached from other aspects of education. Expeditionary learning allows us to re-join them together. By such activities as kayaking or hiking, participants discover their physical and mental limits and gain opportunities to overcome them. Alexandra loan extensively elaborated about this part of her experience, "(...) when night fell upon us while we were paddling. I will always remember the dark contrast between the despair and exhaustion I felt and the strong feeling of joy and relief that came from hearing Maciej and Adam approaching. It struck me right then that I was able to paddle longer in spite of being really tired". Such kinds of experience give not only satisfaction, but more importantly they improve self-confidence and lift the level of self-evaluation that is so important for fighting the obstacles and difficulties further in life. Another participant (anonymous) confirmed it in the following words, "I think that the most important thing Expedition teaches you is to always get out of your comfort zone and challenge your limits". This allows for learning about oneself. As Kathleen put it, "At the end of my first expedition I knew more about myself. I started to understand who I am and why I am who I am."

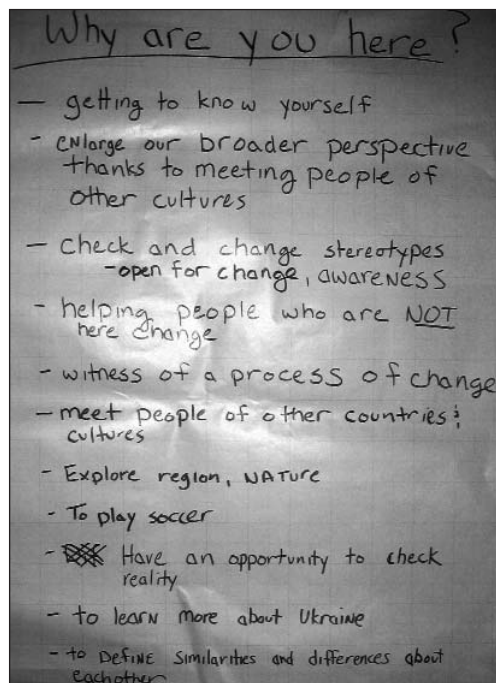
The EIC experience also helped some participants to specify their personal future plans. Two of them report continuation of their involvement in EIC as its members, as well as in other programs (e. g., Youth Leadership Academy – Cory Aron; Nova Doba-Perspective – Diana Tereshchuk). Had they not participated in EIC their involvement in these programs would have probably not happened. Cory Aron also admits: "In my profession, I try to use what I have learned during EIC to better teach my students". Diana Tereshchuk, now a teacher, promotes civic education among her students. Victoria Zalik goes even further in her appreciation of the EIC's impact on her professional formation: "I found that I was better prepared after my summer at EIC to enter the classroom in this new role (as a teacher) than I was walking into my interview a couple of months prior trying to prove I was the best for the job". She especially points at the role EIC played in helping her develop the ability to collaborate with others and flexibility in reacting to her students' needs that now she sees as the necessary traits of a successful teacher. Thus EIC has even influenced these participants' professional role and activities.

The profound impact the EIC experience has had on his entire life is summarized by Cory in the following paragraph: "As for my personal life, I see EIC in every step I take. Even while writing this essay, I have three men seated behind me in a coffee shop talking in a language that I have not ever heard. The pre-EIC Cory would find this an uncomfortable situation. However, the post-EIC Cory finds me trying to understand their conversation and wishing I could speak their language so that I could communicate with them". The interest in other people, an open attitude towards them, and the need to understand them are the profits he gained from EIC that seem to constitute a firm basis for his new life. The great Polish psychiatrist, A. Kępiński claimed that human relationships should be devoid of fear and of any need to exercise power over one another. Instead one should attempt to understand other's perspective, to see the world through the eyes of others in order to enrich one's own understanding. It appears that EIC is an effective tool to reach this end.

Conclusion

EIC is a unique educational program that offers adolescents and young adults opportunities to develop important key competencies. Authentic, profound, and sustainable learning in real-life conditions, practicing value recognition in realistic activities and discussions, establishing and maintaining the network of social relationships that constitute the environment for life during the workshop, international and intercultural exchange of ideas and perspectives during joint activities, a variety of situations testing one's own physical, mental, personal, and other limitations, it all constitutes rich conditions for individual development. The participants' accounts of their expeditionary experiences provided in this volume enthusiastically confirm the value and usefulness of this educational method. Although this data was offered by volunteers and should be checked against another set of data that would be gathered in a more regular fashion (e.g. a survey involving all participants or a randomly chosen sample) to make sure that the picture emerging from these volunteer accounts is not positively biased, this data still brings us to these conclusions and seems to remain correct.

The big challenge for expeditionary learning is the question "how to ensure that this extremely valuable educational method is used more widely in formal education?". Although it appears as something very far from what is used in schools, it does not seem quite impossible to introduce it as a supplementary tool used during summer or winter camps, workshops, or out of school visits that are organized within the majority of school systems across the world. Also the accounts shared in this volume by those participants who, in the meantime completed their teacher training and have become active teachers, confirm that there is space for at least some elements of expeditionary learning in regular education. Since expeditionary learning proves to be a powerful answer to the needs of contemporary education, neglecting this challenge would be an unforgivable indulgence.



A LIFELONG JOURNEY

I thought Expedition Inside Culture (EIC) would be a once in a lifetime experience; a tremendous opportunity to travel to another country. Even as I prepared to be thrust into a different culture, I did not realize what I was getting into. I thought this would be a trip that I would talk about, a trip of which I would fill a photo album, a trip that I may never be able to experience again. Although, the trip was all of these things, what I did not recognize at the time, was that I had a rather narrow understanding of the world, of myself, and of the journey I was about to embark upon.

This “trip” was so much more than just a “trip”. It was an amazing, life-changing, viewpoint altering, experience of a lifetime. I soon came to realize that it was not a merely a once in a lifetime experience, but an experience that would continue to change and shape my life for years and years to come. It was something that I have carried with me and will continue to build on everyday.

I came into Expedition Inside Culture as a college senior who had very little global experience. From a very small, rural, German-Catholic town in western Ohio; I did not have an extensive background in diversity. Even while attending college at Bowling Green State University, I did not fully take advantage of all that it had to offer in terms of broadening my horizons. I thought that college had changed me; made me a more well-rounded and open-minded person. I soon realized that the changes I thought I made were minimal compared to the types of changes I saw in myself during and after



EIC. Expedition Inside Culture has played an integral role in my life and it all began while boarding a bus in Krakow, Poland.

I stepped onto the bus and quickly found a seat by the nearest American. The bus was filled with high school and college students from Poland and Romania. As we began the journey to an unknown destination in Poland, I was filled with anxiety staring at all of the new faces. We traveled on bumpy, narrow roads for hours tentatively making small-talk with the new people around us. I quickly realized, with some amount of embarrassment, that everyone was speaking English. This was my first “aha” moment of many. Here I was, an educated, intelligent, young woman from one of the most “powerful” and opportunity-filled countries in the world and I could not speak a language other than my own. Most of my American colleagues could say the same. We were surrounded by people, some much younger than us, who could speak at least two languages, many who could speak three or four. I quickly began to ask those around me how to say various phrases in Polish. It became important to me to be able to communicate in some way in the language of the area. This experience gave me a new perspective regarding the culture in which I live. This, I soon found out, was the focus of the entire process; to be immersed in a different culture and surrounded by people from different cultures, as a way to examine your own cultural biases. Subconsciously, I began examining my personal identity on this bus ride and asking myself some of EIC’s most basic reflection questions: Who am I? Who do I want to be? Why am I here? And where am I going? These are questions that our EIC leaders would continue to ask us and have us reflect on throughout the entire process.

The long bus ride finally ended in Wetlina, a tiny mountain village in the southeast corner of Poland. Before we explored the area in which we were guests, we had to get to know one another and face our misperceptions, biases, and language barriers head-on. We participated in many teamwork and icebreaking activities to help everyone become more comfortable with one another. We soon moved onto activities and discussions that brought out deeper, more serious issues. One event sticks out in my mind as being another “aha” moment for me. We were separated into our “country” groups, so all of the Americans were working together for the first time since we arrived. Our task was to create a timeline of important events in our country’s history. This sounded simple enough so we got started and listed events like the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, the Civil Rights Movement, etc. When all of the groups completed their task, we came back together to share our timelines. While our timeline started in the 1700s, all of the other countries timelines started hundreds of years earlier. Many of the timelines included several events surrounded by World War II and Communism. Though these were historical aspects of these countries that I knew, it was a completely different experience for me to hear personal views on these events from people who live in those countries. Many were able to tell stories about their parents or grandparents’ experiences with Communism, a concept that seemed so foreign to me. It was obvious that it was still a very vivid memory to people in Eastern Europe. Nothing proved this to me more than when we heard the news of Ronald Reagan’s death.

Upon this news, the American’s were somewhat saddened, but we knew he was old and in poor health so we talked about it for a minute and then moved on. It was not that important of an event for us. But I will never forget the way one Romanian high school student reacted to this news. She cried. When I asked her why she was so upset, she

explained that Ronald Reagan was a terrific man because their country was free from Communism in part because of him. She was truly moved by his passing. Once again I felt completely taken aback. This Romanian high school student knew more about this former United States President than I did! I was humbled. I did not know much about Ronald Reagan and I certainly did not know anything about any Romanian leader; I could not even name one. This, once again, reminded me just how much the world's spotlight was on our country. We do not even realize it, and we certainly do not pay nearly as much attention to the rest of the world as the rest of the world pays to us. This was just another instance of shifting my viewpoint of our global society.

As the days went on we began to explore the culture of Wetlina. We read about the history of the region, and we learned about issues such as cultural discrimination and genocide. We learned about our Polish colleagues views on what happened in this area of their country. We also took time to explore the current culture of the area and talk to some local people about their culture and history. This was no small challenge, as there was a huge language barrier, culture, and custom differences. To remedy this somewhat, each group was composed of multiple countries and contained at least one Pole so that we were able to communicate effectively with the people. This turned out to be one of the most interesting and memorable parts of the Expedition. We talked to local people, learned about their daily lives and their histories, and really got a sense of what it is like to live in another area of the world. It was an awe-inspiring experience working around a language barrier, especially for those of us who spoke English and have learned to assume that everyone else does too.

Another part of every Expedition is a physical challenge. The belief is that through difficult physical challenges, groups can come together. After experiencing this first-hand, I am a believer. The physical challenge of this Expedition was hiking up the Bieszczady mountains. The hike would take all day and it totaled about 13 miles. I am an active person so I was definitely up to the challenge. Others were not so excited. However, as we got started, we could all feel the importance of what we were doing. Along the way, we stopped to write and reflect on both the journey up the mountain and the larger journey that was Expedition Inside Culture. Each time we sat down to reflect, I was able to get a better sense of just how amazing and important this expedition was. As we continued to climb and hike, we cheered each other on. We helped each other when there was a creek to cross or a steep hill to climb. We sang songs and laughed. We went up the mountain as Poles, Romanians, Ukrainians, Germans, and Americans and came down the mountain as colleagues, partners, and friends. Being in such a beautiful setting, in the fresh air and being utterly exhausted, we were able to clear our heads and just reflect on what this Expedition would mean to us in our lives when we returned.

Unfortunately, the day we grew to dread came too soon. The expedition was over and we were to go our separate ways. We left much in the same way that we came; tired, jet-lagged, and crowded on a bus; but the atmosphere was completely different. This time we did not sit only with people from our country but we were intermixed, hoping to get some last moments with our new friends. The bus was louder and filled with laughter. As I looked around, I knew these were people I would never forget. The goodbyes were tearful as we knew many of us may never see one another again. We exchanged e-mail addresses and phone numbers and hugged each other goodbye. Fortunately, this is not

where my experience with EIC or these wonderful people ended. I have continued to stay involved in any way I can to ensure that this amazing program continues to grow.

Since my participation in Expedition in the summer of 2004, I have been involved with EIC in many different ways. I have attended preparation meetings for summer expeditions to help give the participants a sense of what they are getting into and what they will be leaving with. I have participated in the interview process for possible candidates for summer expeditions. One of my favorite ways for staying involved has been an effort to bring EIC and its ideals to the United States. I participated in EIC Higgins Lake where three groups of high school students from Elyria and Toledo, Ohio came together for an EIC experience. Many of these kids were from the city and had never been to such an open space before. In many ways, even though it was only a few hours from their homes, it was very similar to being in an expedition abroad. These high school students had very little experience outside of their communities and came to EIC with strong ideas and biases. We did many of the same activities with these high school students as we did in previous expeditions. It was a great experience for me to be on the planning end of an expedition and to help these students to open their eyes and their minds to the possibilities of this world. I hope that these students carry the lessons learned in EIC with them throughout their lives as I have in mine.

Although, I have been unable to travel recently to be a part of the expeditions themselves, I hope to continue my involvement with EIC to help it continue to grow and prosper. I expect to remain an integral part of EIC and to continue to bring some fresh ideas to the group. As I get older and life gets inevitably more complicated, it becomes harder and harder to travel to be physically present for EIC events, however, I believe that being a part of EIC is so much more than traveling abroad or even planning EIC events. As a teacher, I have an amazing opportunity to share the ideas of EIC with many future global citizens. I have the opportunity to teach so much more than my academic curriculum. As I continue to grow and learn about the world around me, my confidence in the global society grows and I become a more autonomous global citizen, a trait that I cannot help but pass on to my students. This is a fundamental purpose of EIC; to share activities, ideas, and methods with future teachers so they can in turn share these with all of the students they come into contact with in their careers.

The expedition has changed my life and in changing me personally, has changed me as a teacher. I currently teach reading at an Ohio middle school. I have worked hard in my years of teaching to help my students become more globally and culturally aware. Literature is a great avenue for doing this. I try to choose novels that have a variety of cultures and backgrounds represented. I also choose current events as non-fiction reading to give my students a wider view of the world in which they live. Many of them are not exposed to different cultures or even communities outside their own. They struggle with accepting the different beliefs, viewpoints, and values of those different than their own. School may be the only opportunity they have to learn and grow as global citizens. These ideas are not always an easy concept to get across to self-centered middle school students. I firmly believe that the more my students are exposed to various cultures, the more they can become aware of their own biases and learn to be informed, active members of

society. Maybe this will begin to change how they look at the world. Teaching challenges me to continually face my own biases and examine what type of an example I need to be for my students. With state standards and an emphasis on testing, I have had to learn to be very creative in embedding these global lessons within my state curriculum. It can be tedious and time consuming, but I believe in the end it will be beneficial to my students.

The expedition has affected my life more than I ever thought possible. It has made me think more critically about the world in which I live. It has made me much more considerate to what other people experience and how those experiences are similar and different to my own. Expedition has given me a completely different perspective on what it means to truly be an active, informed member of society. What I thought was a once in a lifetime trip has turned into a lifelong journey to continually educate and improve myself as a citizen of this global society in which I live.

LEARNING IS A PROCESS WE DO, NOT A PROCESS THAT IS DONE TO US

Nelson Mandela once said that education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world⁸². Especially in the past decades this statement has gained in importance. Education became an essential good as we developed from an industrial to a knowledge-based society. But what does it mean to be educated? Does it mean to possess knowledge or is education more than repeating the ideas of other people? According to our school system the aim of education is the upbringing of young adults who are able to support our achievement-oriented society in order to keep up the social system. Therefore grades are not an evidence of “intelligence” but rather the proof of memorized knowledge, given by teachers, necessary to integrate the younger generation in the logic of the existing society and to bring about conformity. But how can we change the world, if we become an adapted part of a system which is jointly responsible for the worldwide injustice that exists? “The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never allow us to bring about genuine change.”⁸³ That’s why education has to be more than reproducing the thoughts of other people. An educated person should be able to debrief, deal critically and creatively with reality, develop an own opinion, to get his own idea of the world with the aim to discover how he or she can participate in the transformation to a better world. Because of that education requires, besides knowledge, thinking. That means diverse strategies, such as describing, observing, interpreting, problem solving or explaining, to gain, transform and create knowledge. Other essential skills and values are the ability to reflect on our own action and the happenings around us, the faculty to communicate: to project the ideas and thoughts of other people and also to make ourselves understood, as well as open mindedness a sense of responsibility, empathy, tolerance and other moral values. In other words, education describes a lifelong learning process, which permanently evolves our intellectual, cultural and manual skills just like our personal and social competences. Therefore the aim of school education should be to enable us to think, act and learn for ourselves by teaching us ,rather, how to think, than what to think.

It took 20 years till I started to understand that education is more than memorizing facts. After finishing school I was supposed to continue my education by either going

⁸² Quote by Nelson Mandela

⁸³ L. Audre, *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House*, In *Sister Outsider*, The Crossing Press Feminist Series 1984.

to university or doing an apprenticeship. But at this time I could not imagine spending another three to five years with listening and memorizing. I was fed up with learning things which I was told to learn. For 13 years I had done nothing else but squeezing facts in my head, to please my teachers as I was told almost every day that good grades are the basis for my future life. My future was talked about a lot. As my grades were quite good, my parents, teachers and most of the people who knew told me that I have to use my potential to make a career. In other words to compete in our achievement-oriented society, in order to get somewhere in a high position and earn a lot of money. But was this supposed to be my future? Nobody ever asked what my plans and aims are. Well, even I did not think about what I wanted to become and how my future should look as I mostly did what people recommended or asked me to do and never questioned myself. To figure out what I wanted, I made the decision to take some time off to travel and see what life offers as I was sure that it offers more than working and learning.

At the beginning of my travels I had to realize that, although I belonged, according to my grades, to the best students, I was not prepared for life at all. The only thing that I'd learned during 13 years of education were theoretical information. I was neither self-reliant, nor prepared to cope with the strange, or able to deal with ordinary problems. Especially in the first months of travelling around Australia I felt quite often helpless in unknown situations. But in time I got more relaxed and began to observe, to analyze and to question. I learned by experiences and from mistakes – a faculty almost never practiced by school. Actually exactly the opposite is the case. School tries to teach us to avoid mistakes. Making them means having failed and as a result of that the feeling of shame is evoked. But there is no reason to be ashamed. Making mistakes is natural and besides that, probably the most deep way of learning, though it is not the noblest. I conceived that it is more useful to know how to deal with mistakes than how to avoid them. Furthermore, the understanding of the different cultures, lifestyles and ways of thinking helped me to develop sensitiveness for foreign cultures. Today I can say that travelling and life itself have been partly a better educator for me than school was. The reason therefore might be that travelling was an adventure. Everything around me was new. It awakened my curiosity and interest to grasp the world around and increase my knowledge. I was learning by doing, in other words learning was an active process I did, and not a process that was done to me in a theoretical way. Although I learned a lot about myself, life, cultures and diverse manual skills during those three years, my first participation in the project Expedition Inside Culture has shown me that I was still at the very beginning of my learning process.

In summer 2006, just after my return home, I was invited to take part in my first expedition. I did neither know what the project was about nor what to expect, therefore I was looking forward to an international gathering where the participants get to know the cultures of each other while having lots of fun. But the first days were not fun at all. I felt back in school. Sometimes I even had the feeling of being in the military. Our schedule was packed and the time for tasks very limited. Besides that I always felt under pressure and uncomfortable during the debriefing sessions. It took some time till I started to understand that in order to change something it is first of all necessary to change myself: my perspectives and my understanding of the world. But "if you change something and you feel good with it, it means you have changed nothing."⁸⁴ I had to leave my comfort zone.

⁸⁴ Cited in Expedition Inside Culture Power Point, Dukla 2006, slide 12

The first lesson I got was about dealing with the past. While being confronted with my own history, the history of my family and the one of my country I came to realize that we are a product of our past, but it lies upon us how our future will look like. History happened and can't be un-lived. Mistakes were made but do not need to be lived again. We live in the here and now and it depends on us if our past will predestine our future. Each and everyone of us has the chance to choose between walking the same way as others before or facing history with courage by learning out of mistakes and leaving new footprints. I decided to stop running away from my past (especially the one of my childhood, as it was a tough one) or using it as an excuse for the mistakes I make. I started to deal with it and to take responsibility for my action and behavior.

The second lesson was about the necessity of debriefing and reflection. It was difficult for me to reflect a task within a short time, because I was not used to it. To think about the purpose of an exercise was completely new to me. I never questioned why I did something or what I learned out of it. But



how can we avoid the same mistakes if we do not analyze them? At the end of my first expedition I knew more about myself. I started to understand who I am and why I am as I am. In the same year I began to study social sciences with a focus on intercultural communication. The reason was the chance to combine most of my interests. I wanted to continue travelling and at the same time learn more about politics, economy, other cultures and international relations in order to understand the global correlations. As with most backpackers I had the idea to job later on a which gives me the opportunity to travel and help at the same time. That is why my initial aim was to become a development aid worker. But the more I studied and the more often I took part in the projects of the "Expedition Inside Culture Association" the more I realized that, if I really want to achieve a fundamental alteration of the given economic, political and humanitarian situation in developing countries it is necessary to fight against the roots and not against the fruits of the given problems. In other words I have to think global, but act local. The majority of the problems those states have are a product of western politics and acting. Therefore we need to promote a change of thinking in western societies otherwise the support of development aid projects is nothing more than a drop in the ocean. As long as people in developed countries do not understand that their habits are one reason for worldwide injustice nothing will change. To help them to comprehend, projects such as Expedition Inside Culture are necessary, as school does not do it yet. By encouraging the participants to autonomous thinking, critical questioning and reflected acting EIC is giving them the chance to get their own idea of the

world and therefore the opportunity to discover how they can participate in the transformation to a better world. The method the EIC leaders use is quite simple, but very effective. During the whole time of the expeditions the members of the group are part of a process. While being confronted with themselves and with other cultures, thus other ways of thinking in a foreign setting, participants figure out that their mindsets and attitudes are a result of their perception and imprinting. All of us perceive the same happening in different ways. The way we think is because of the experiences gained and determined by our (cultural) socialization, first impressions can lead to wrong assumptions or even prejudices. To avoid jumping to conclusions participants figure out always to be aware that the picture they see might be only one piece of a puzzle. To see the picture as a whole, as many pieces as possible, it needs to be collected by taking other opinions, perspectives and sources into consideration. Furthermore it is important to be open-minded, without bias and able to look on things out of different point of views. Being aware of the fact that nothing is as it seems to be is the first step towards the break through of old thought structures. With further progress participants stop taking issues for granted. They start to deal critically and creatively with reality and learn to be open-minded and tolerant.

As with all EIC'ers, I went as a participant through a process of development. But in contrast to other EIC participants was for me not the beginning of development but rather the continuation of a process which had already started during my travel period. And as life is a process and we are a process I'm aware of the fact that Expedition Inside Culture was and at the moment still is only a stage in a life long learning and development process, which is determined through learning, unlearning and relearning. So far, school has taught me discipline, basic skills like reading, counting, writing and memorizing facts. Because of travelling I understood, that we learn for ourselves and not for others. The purpose of learning is growth and our minds, unlike our bodies, continue growing the older we get and the more experiences we make⁸⁵. To put it another way, we are responsible for our lives. We decide where our life will lead us to. Therefore our growth depends on our motivation. Learning is a process we do, not a process that is done to us. And my participation in the projects of the Expedition Inside Culture Association taught me that learning is not just an active process which demands openness and the necessity of reflection, but also requires self-knowledge and self-understanding as well as awareness of diversity. It also broadened my mind by making me understand that being educated means carrying responsibility. As soon as we recognize that change is needed, we have the duty to act. Our world can not transform into a better one if those who see that injustice exists, don't care or just talk about it. As not all people have the chance to travel or to take part in projects such as EIC in order to gain the same experience as those who did, it would be desirable if those people who had the possibility were to share their acquired knowledge.

After each EIC-participation, which was more or less the practical application of my studies, I was full of enthusiasm and great ideas on how to share my experiences, but by the time I got back home to my everyday life I forgot pretty soon about those ideas as I got quickly busy with other things. In the past three years during my studies I was still travelling a lot and not very often at home. In between I went for one semester abroad to study in Romania. Afterwards I traveled for three months through South - East Europe.

⁸⁵ partly cited in Moretimer Adler: "The purpose of learning is growth, and our minds, unlike our bodies, can continue growing as we continue to live." Adler, Moretimer; web text; <http://www.new-oceans.co.uk/new/education/sayings2.htm>

Besides travelling I worked and still work on a youth - and children farm or support the intercultural project "Bunt kickt gut!", which is a Streetsoccer-League in Munich, started to integrate the foreign youth in Munich society. Although I might not have shared my experiences directly by doing workshops or starting my own projects, I'm convinced that they influenced my behavior towards others and the way I treat and work with children within those projects as I use every now and then different methods which I learned during my studies or in the "EIC-Projects" such as scavenger hunt. In a playful manner kids learn by doing a variety of things: working in a team, solving problems, communication, how and where to get information, independent working and thinking as well as knowledge about a certain topic. In this way children get educated without even realizing it. I really enjoy working with kids as they get, in contrast to adults, easily amazed, do still have a natural curiosity for all the things they do not know, and therefore ask plenty of questions to understand. This is the best basis for learning and autonomous thinking. That is one reason why I came to the conclusion that in the future I would like to work with children. Another one is that I realized that my strengths lie in motivating, especially children, to learn and work. Therefore I'm going to work on the youth and children farm "Siloah" after finishing my studies this summer. Besides organizing and leading camps, I will guide the yearly team of volunteers. This is giving me the chance to pass on all the skills, values and knowledge I have gained so far.

LIKE NEW ENERGY FOR LIFE

I have been involved with EIC since the summer of 2004, when I went on an expedition for the first time. Since then I have taken part in four Expeditions Inside Culture and participated in two Academies for Leaders. The first time was, for sure, the most significant, most important and most intensive one. Everything was new for me. I was 16, my English wasn't perfect, I had no idea what we would do there. In the first few days I was scared and confused. But people there, as leaders and as participants, were so specific, so kind, so different from the people I had known before, and the tasks and activities were so interesting and involving that I couldn't stay aside too long. I improved my English, met great people and I learned much, even though I didn't know about it then. Every next expedition was different from the previous one, even though the "project" was very similar. And this is the best thing about EIC. At the end of the first camp Grzegorz asked us "What is expedition about?" ... I had no idea, but I thought to myself, I should know it after those 2 weeks on camp, so I was searching for an answer for this question. Now, I think it was something, that helped me to reflect, not only about EIC, but about many other things. Do I know the answer now? No, it's changing. It's not one answer for all of us, it's not even one answer for me. Because EIC is a process not an event, I change my opinion on this question after every single camp.

Academy for young leaders is the second project of the EIC association. It was so different, we were participants and "leaders" at the same time. Looking from the point where I am now, those academies gave me an opportunity to try something more than participation. It was more demanding but more exciting and gave me more satisfaction.

When I heard about the organization for the first time, I was in the first grade of high school. I was very active, and brave in contacts with people, open for new experiences and challenges. I was also a little haughty, I was looking down on people and thought I knew almost everything (but who doesn't think like that at the age of 15-16?). Well..., the first days on the camp were like a cold shower for me. I wasn't the best, as in school, I wasn't even good enough, in my opinion. All of the people there were so intelligent, open – minded, brave, active, with many hobbies and "interests." For the first time I wasn't someone special. Now, I think I needed this situation, but then it was a very hard time.

I think it was my first reflection on my experience with EIC. It was a hard one, but important for my future life. Of course there were many experiences and moments on camps, which have had an influence on me.

Do I use what I learned? Of course. First of all I've learned how to learn. On EIC we're shown many methods of learning, which I would never have gotten to know if I hadn't taken part in it. The second thing is: I started to reflect about my decisions and actions. I never did it before. But it really helps, when you think about something a few hours later, without emotion. What else... I stopped underestimating people, and me as well. I would never have thought I can prepare a play, or a presentation in 30 minutes, or prepare and lead my own exercise in 1 hour, but we were doing it at EIC. It is connected, of course, with spending time on a task. Now I know, that if I have less time for a task I work faster and I am better organized, so I don't reserve so much time for one thing. It is very hard to say what I learned from each particular exercise, day, or even workshop.

I couldn't tell what it was, or even if it was something or not. Sometimes I was confused, because after 10 days, after plenty of tasks and activities, I couldn't say much more than "I learned a lot of stuff, I know how big the biggest church is here and it was great to know how to say "bread" in Romanian". But now when I am thinking about it, it is easier to. I know how to cooperate, work in a group, what to do to be a leader (and how hard it is). I am still working on being more patient and to not judge people because of their appearance, stereotypes or prejudices, (but I still do it sometimes). I have self-esteem now, but am not arrogant (like I was when my EIC adventure started). Last but not least I am broad-minded now. After every workshop I feel like nothing is too hard for me, it's like a new energy for life. To be honest it has been for some time, but not always. It's like charging a battery.

Finally I would like to write a few sentences I remembered and which impact my life. They are simple sentences, some of them I knew before, some I heard on EIC for the first time, but even though I had heard them before, I didn't really understand them and believe in them. Even after the first or second Expedition some of them were hard to put into practice:

"There is no good or bad leader, you can be a leader or not" - Grzegorz.

"Judge and criticize the opinion, not people" - Ewa

"You shouldn't be ashamed when you ask for help" - Bogusia

"Cooperate, not compete." - Grzegorz

"You will know me better after one hour of fun, then after a year of conversation" - Plato

"Don't say: "I agree" if you really don't. Discuss!" - me.

EIC - MANAGEMENT OF A BETTER FUTURE

I am Julia Blavats'ka, a graduate from the International Relations department of Lviv National University named in honor of Ivan Franko. I am going to receive the diploma of Masters of International Relations. I do not know where I will work after graduation. I have begun a job search, but at the present moment, I do not have employment secured.

I received an invitation to participate in the Expedition Inside Culture from the All-Ukrainian Association of Teachers of History and Social Studies "Nova Doba" where my former school teacher currently works. She was the leader of a Ukrainian group of students for EIC. I'd never heard about the EIC before, though I was rather active in the social youth life in the University. We used to arrange short one or two days hike tours around the Carpathian Mountains with my student mates. But they were only for practicing tour management and entertainment during vacations.

I decided that it would be a good opportunity for me to join the Expedition and to visit Poland, because I had never been there before. I also wanted to meet new friends and to improve my English.

I took part in the expedition in 2006. I had just finished the second year of my studies. For a city girl like me, the Expedition of 2006 was a challenge. We climbed the high mountains, walked in the rain, and suffered from the extreme heat of summer. EIC was a great physical test for me. However, the most important experience was being able to watch the world from a different viewpoint.

I found out that it is possible to combine education and entertainment, to learn something new using previous experience, to get to know about the history of foreign countries, and to tell others your own. I learned to work in groups, work together as one team, help other people, and know that you can get help in any situation. I learned how to listen to people and their points of view.

All of my expectations were fulfilled. I enjoyed visiting Poland, especially Krakow, which is a beautiful city. It reminds me of my home Lviv. I also met many interesting people, and learned something new about their countries. My English also became much better.

The EIC experience I gained was rather helpful. I learned this in September 2006 when the "Nova Doba" Association held the EUSTORY Academy in Lviv. EUSTORY is the European Network of Youth History Research Works Competitions. Young winners of the Competition were from different European countries and they came to Lviv to compete.

We organized an activity like an EIC scavenger hunt - four groups of participants got the task to investigate the Ukrainian, Armenian, Jewish and Polish quarters of the old city of Lviv. The participants were to find as much information as it was possible about the life of the national communities of our ancient, historic, multicultural city of Lviv in the past and present. They were asked to use different forms of research work - interviewing, meetings with representatives of national communities, visiting museums, cemeteries, memorials, churches and temples, roaming along the streets, searching for the information in the libraries, Internet and in any other possible sources in a definitely rather short period of time – one day.

I was a leader for one such group and I had an excellent opportunity to practice skills from the Expedition. We researched different sources, conducted interviews in the streets, met with the representatives of the Jewish community in their cultural center, and prepared a presentation of our research work.

My experience from EIC helped me to do this because we held a scavenger hunt there and prepared presentations in Krynica – the final point of the EIC-2006. I remember we invented rather an interesting and funny “Up and Down Quiz” giving scores for the right answers on the questions about our hike through the Beskid Niski.

I think the experience from the expedition will be very useful in my future job. As a future tourist manager I have now the idea how to arrange very interesting, profitable and active tours about my native country and abroad. Western Ukraine where I live is a specific uniting of Ukraine and Europe. My home city – Lviv – is multicultural. It is rich with historic Ukrainian and European sites. My native land has a lot of problems nowadays. Behind everyday needs we are losing our rich historical heritage which is being ruined. My country needs to be researched and learned about, preserved and protected by active young people. Such people are fostered by the EIC. Only then can we hope for a better future for Ukraine in Europe.

As an EIC participant I am sure that wherever I work, I will always be humane, understanding, attentive, helpful, and persistent in reaching goals. I will never forget my farewell tears and the warmth in my heart – the feelings that awakened a new person in me.

A PERSONAL EXPEDITION STORY

Paulo Coelho, a very famous Brazilian author, once said, *"Be brave. Take risks. Nothing can substitute experience."* This quote I believe has summed up my experience with Expedition Inside Culture (EIC) and how I still use it in my life today. I still remember the moment like it was yesterday. I was sitting in my social studies methods class and a girl walks in to tell us about a program that is run through Bowling Green State University. My first thought was, *"Great! I can sit here and relax."* That was before she began to tell us about the program. The girl began to speak about EIC and the different activities that a person involved in EIC would be doing. For example, creating human monuments, blind folded trust games, and role-playing family history. She talked about traveling abroad and interacting with people from other cultures and the different physical challenges that the group would face and how at the end of it all these experiences and activities brought everyone closer together. As I sat there listening to her speak I began to see all these amazing "risks" that would not only benefit myself, but also the people in which I would come to interact with along my journey. After she was finished, I knew I had to be a part of it. Therefore, I sat down that night and filled out my application, wrote my essay, and waited for my interview. It was not until a couple months later that I found out I would be going to EIC as a member of the American group in 2006. I undertook this very important risk. This allowed me to travel around the world, and at the same time, I would grow as an individual.

During EIC, I also undertook more risks. I promised myself that I would try to get out of my comfort zone to the best of my ability. There were experiences that I probably would not have allowed myself to attempt in the states, and these were going to be an open doorway during EIC. For example, allowing myself the experience of talking to many people from different places around Europe. Of course, this meant the members that were in EIC, but it also meant people that I came into contact with on any random occasion. This was one of the greatest risks I took during my whole experience. My experiences ranged from playing soccer (or as they called it "football") with teenagers from a farming village in Southern Poland, to talking to two women from Hungary and countless other interactions that I will never forget.

Another risk I underwent during EIC was listening to other non-American members of EIC tell their stories. This was a great experience because I really permitted myself the opportunity to connect with people who really had very interesting views on a countless number of topics. For example, one of the greatest conversations I had during the trip was with a young man from Germany. His name was Max and he was not only friendly and inviting, but as far as I am concerned open-minded and intelligent. We sat down one night after all of our EIC tasks were fulfilled and had one of the best conversations of my life. We talked about everything; politics, family, daily life, and even what it was like grow-

ing up in our respective countries. I believe I walked away from our conversation with a new perspective on life and the world. It is through EIC that this interaction was possible. EIC took two individuals that had never met, that had a passion for understanding the world around them, and who wanted to learn about other people and they simply placed them in a room to talk. I am a firm believer that the processes and activities that are conducted at EIC are very special, and that you cannot find everyday walking down the streets. Upon taking this new risk, I began to discuss with more people about all sorts of topics. I was not after information; I was after how different cultures have different viewpoints.

One of the greatest tools I had at my disposal was EIC. During EIC, the leaders had us complete different activities and reflections that helped us see how important culture and teamwork are in the big world. When it was time to leave EIC and say goodbye to newly made friends, I was surprised that I was so sad to leave the people that I had only spent two weeks with. It is definitely an amazing process to go through. One day you meet strangers from all over the world, and in two weeks, you find yourself telling them your darkest secrets, your most passionate thoughts, and your greatest hopes for the future. I strongly believe that all of these feelings and emotions that I was feeling at the time were largely due to EIC. The numerous, well-thought-out activities that the leaders have you go through and the reflections that are made throughout the two weeks really open up your eyes to different cultures and different perspectives. It is certain that this process could not be repeated sitting in a classroom or talking over the Internet. These experiences, these interactions were genuine cultural interactions that could never have happened if it was not for EIC and its process. In all, it was amazing that these people could go from being perfect strangers to being family members that you would be willing to do anything for. This brings me to another risk I went through.

When I left EIC and Europe, I left with many possibilities. I left with a new view on my life and a new worldview. I also left with various forms of contact information. Our goal was for everyone to stay in touch, however many did not. But, once again, I took a risk; my risk being to stay in touch with as many of my new found friends as possible. This was going to be a very hard risk to follow through with, because it is very hard to stay connected with friends that you may never physically see again. However, to this day I have stayed in touch with at least seven different international friends.

This brings me to my final risk I underwent with EIC, staying involved as much as possible. I knew that coming home from EIC meant graduating from college, finding a career, paying back college loans, and starting a Masters program. Adding more to my already full plate was a tough decision. However, I knew that EIC would always be in my life and thus I needed to stay involved as much as possible. Through EIC, I have for the most part remained involved in the major program known as Expedition Inside Culture. My involvement in this program has changed from a participant to a member. This is a very important role to have because you can show the new participants coming in that they are now a part of something amazing and worldly. Another program that I am a part of is the Youth Leadership Academy. This program was built on the same principles as EIC. These principles allow students from around the world to take a risk together and work with students from different cultures. They also allow them the precious opportunity to solve problems and understand the world around them through teamwork and democracy.

Although I am involved with these two programs, EIC does not stop there. It is with me in all aspects of my profession and personal life. In my profession, I try to use what I have learned during EIC to better teach my students. I have taught them that working in a group or team is a great way to accomplish many things in your life. I have also demonstrated to them that it is great to meet new people who may have different viewpoints.

As for my personal life, I see EIC in every step I take. Even while writing this essay, I have three men seated behind me in a coffee shop talking in a language that I have not ever heard. The pre-EIC Cory would find this an uncomfortable situation. However, the post-EIC Cory finds me trying to understand their conversation and wishing I could speak their language so that I could communicate with them.

All and all, EIC was the risk of a lifetime that I am thankful for being able to experience. It has led me back to Europe a couple times and has followed me down to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil teaching international students the value of working together. Furthermore, I believe that EIC will continue to present itself in everything I do; whether it is teaching seventh grade social studies to American students or traveling back to Europe to visit my friends made through my travels. Anyway you examine EIC, I am happy that I have experienced it for myself and will continuously urge anyone looking to take a risk to participate in EIC.

VALUES AND HOPES

The EIC expedition that took place in the summer of 2007 was adventurous, enriching and truly marvelous! It added to my experience of interaction and understanding people of various cultures. I am sure, that for most of the participants, the expedition was an opportunity to develop communication skills, was an opportunity to immerse themselves into a new intercultural surroundings, and a chance to get in touch with people of other values with different life stories. I experienced this before in my life and I think that it is extremely important to provide young people with such a chance.

There, of course, were some challenges that EIC participants encountered. Participants kayaked down the Czarna Hancza River while it was raining. Despite this challenge, it was breathtaking and quite enjoyable. We even slept in a barn.

In our expedition, I felt our DEVOTION to our common values of peace, friendship and help, RESPECT for everyone's country, INTEREST in everyone's culture, history and personal life, and GRATITUDE for every day of splendid time together. My biggest sense of appreciation was for the opportunity to find unique personalities and lifetime friends. I have met people who amaze me by their spirit!

I first joined the Expedition as a participant, but soon felt that any future participation should be among co-creators. In less than a month after EIC 2007, I became a participant of the summer school for Pedagogical Universities' students. It was part of the new project arranged by "Nova Doba" the History Teachers Association. During the summer school sessions, we worked in the local community of Kamienets-Podilskiy in southwest Ukraine. I felt that I already knew how to create and organize many interesting activities in small groups and in the larger groups. I shared my EIC knowledge and experience, and I felt that I grew as a trainer. In the summer of 2008 during the second students' summer school, I was already in the group of organizers and in the initiative group. This group made the decision to create the "Young Branch" of the "Nova Doba" Association. We called our young organization "Nova Doba – Perspective."

Two years ago during EIC 2007, I was a Pedagogical University student and was going to be a teacher. I wrote down the description of the activities we had performed in order to practice them in my future teaching. Now that I teach, my university students and I are involved in civic education activities in Ukraine. I find these to be very helpful! Interactive methods. Experiential learning is still not very popular in my country, and I try to

introduce them in every way possible way. I am confident in the fact that something can be perceived by the five senses – which develops critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which allows us to make our own decisions (or mistakes), something that does not give the “right” answer, but helps us to think on our own is the best way to learn cognitively, and the best way to teach. Being a student group tutor, there are numerous issues to solve with my students. I need to work with the students on some communication concerns in order to make young individuals a team. In these situations, I again feel the helpful impact of EIC. I teach foreign language students. Of course I want them to become excellent specialists in the future. But I’d like them to be first of all active young leaders for social life. So I arrange various activities with students to achieve this goal. They are integration activities, team building, individual and group work.

This summer we will try to organize a similar expedition on a national level in Ukraine with the help of the “Nova Doba” History Teachers’ Association. I hope that it will succeed and that it will become possible to hold one at the international level. What makes an expedition so special is the exploration of the country: talking with the people, investigating geographical landscapes, and simply living in another country.

Surely, I would change some things about our expedition. There is always scope for improvement. For example, I would propose to take a course in healthy/sport lifestyle (more exercising and physical activities, etc.) and incorporate challenges that are more physical.

So far, I believe that the EIC expedition has a future. It is a unique life experience in a terrific environment with amazing people! I hope that the lack of finance that students usually face does not prevent EIC expeditions being brought to life.

TRAVELING OUTSIDE MY COMFORT ZONE

Throughout my involvement with Expedition Inside Culture, I have never fully known what to expect. I risk being outside of my comfort zone each time I participate in an Expedition. I have this same observation of my career in the field of education. Yet somehow, I always return for more. My participation within the organization grew quickly from participant to leader in what felt like seconds. Again, I had the same experience when I became a teacher. One minute I was the student learning to teach and the next minute I was expected to do the teaching. As quickly as the transition from student to teacher came, I found that I was better prepared after my summer at EIC to enter the classroom in this new role than I had been walking into my interview a couple months prior trying to prove I was the best for the job. At EIC I had taken on challenges like hiking in the mountains with people who were practically strangers to me and led discussions where I was not positive of what the end result should or would be. Before the first day of school, I had yet to fully realize how well EIC had prepared me for my first year of teaching and beyond.

Walking into a classroom filled with privileged ten-year-old girls on my first day of teaching is not a moment I will soon forget. I was beginning my teaching career in a private-independent-all-girl school on the east side of Cleveland – a far cry from the Beskid Niski Mountains of Poland, where I attended my first Expedition, yet that was all that was on my mind. Thousands of questions raced through my head as all of their eager faces looked up excitedly and expectantly at my colleague and I for some pearl of wisdom we could share. I found myself in awe of the moment. My first real class was sitting right in front of me and, with the exception of about a week's worth of lesson plans, I had no idea what the world geography curriculum I was supposed to teach would look like a week, let alone nine months from then!

That coming school year would be the one where I created a completely new World Geography curriculum for the fifth grade. My starting point was the Ohio State standards, but that was my only lead. I had every resource available to me – Internet, computers, projection, a well-stocked school library – just no textbook or set of previously used plans to use as a starting point. As exciting as it might sound to be able to recreate the curriculum to what I wanted it to be, creating a new curriculum from the ground up was a daunting task, in addition to being a new teacher. I quickly began to research how others teach world geography and what skills or knowledge were associated with having learned world geography. I asked fellow colleagues in the history department for their advice

on what should be taught, on what kinds of skills or knowledge they attain in fourth grade, and on what they should be expected to know by sixth grade. I also consulted the librarian to help me find useful texts and websites as resources. I realized that EIC had reinforced in me that seeking help or guidance was not only acceptable, but necessary to have a complete picture of what you are looking to understand. After many long days and nights, I found that using the five themes of geography as a guide, while the students and I “traveled” to each of the seven continents of the world, would provide the framework for the curriculum.

Next, as each week passed I planned the coming week’s activities. One activity, in particular, is my favorite. Witnessing first hand at Expedition how powerful personal accounts of history can be, each student completed a project on their family history to find out how or why they came to America by interviewing family members and then researching one of the countries from which her family came. Along the way, the students were able to learn about a part of their family that in most cases had been forgotten and they found themselves tied to at least one other place in the world. With this connection, the



students became more excited with every continent that brought them closer to studying the one from which their family came. We studied everything from the Three Gorges Dam in China, to the establishment of the European Union, to the traditional dances of Argentina and Chile, to apartheid in Africa. As the year passed by, I continued to bring other speakers into the classroom to talk to the students about their personal experiences, in addition to some of my own, traveling to the places we studied. What was most surprising were the days when students had experiences to share or thoughtful questions to ask and discuss, and then twenty minutes had passed without the blink of an eye. EIC taught me to embrace those moments because they are by far some of the most educational.

That is how EIC influenced me so much more than the four years I spent preparing to enter the “real world” of teaching during my undergraduate studies. Before my application for EIC was even finished, I knew EIC was an opportunity that I should not forego. Now, having been a part of EIC, I am thankful that I followed my instinct and gave it my all to become a part of it. EIC made the world in which I would teach real. EIC pushed me to rediscover all of the tools I had been given to be a good teacher, and showed me how to use them most effectively. Among all of the many teaching strategies that I came across throughout my education, EIC illustrated time and again the importance of seeking collaboration with colleagues, allowing for flexibility in planning, and devising activities that both challenge and promote discussion to be the most crucial for me in teaching.

As a teacher, I have found that I share my ideas and experiences from Expedition Inside Culture to demonstrate to my colleagues the wonderful ways we can enhance our

students' learning experiences in education. EIC revealed the value of collaboration through the multicultural research groups we were placed in to try and discover the historical events of an area in Poland. Each group member was able to present his or her opinions and understanding of the interactions we had with locals while researching in the towns we visited. Collaborating with colleagues, whether on general curriculum or a specific lesson is invaluable. Pooling expertise and multiple perspectives only makes sense. As an educator, I brought back to the United States a renewed sense of purpose to collaborate with my colleagues to ensure that what is planned for our students is effective and influential.

Planning itself is crucial in education. Yet, the willingness to stray from those plans and welcome a change in course proves just as important. During my second year of involvement with EIC, I held a partial leadership role. I was charged with the task of leading several debriefing discussions and found very quickly that of all the questions I planned on asking the participants to stir discussion, the very first question was often times the only prepared question used. The skill of reading your audience's reception to the activity or discussion you have planned takes time to develop. Learning when to move on and when to dig deeper into a topic allows for those "teachable moments" to happen. EIC helped to provide me with more experience in this area, not only because I practiced the skill, but also because I had the opportunity to see this skill implemented effortlessly by other veteran leaders from EIC.

For me, one of the most difficult areas of education is creating activities that inspire and challenge my students. Without fail, each of my experiences with EIC has challenged me in some way. In 2006, during my first Expedition, I was challenged by what seemed to be a lack of detail or direction for our final presentation about our findings of the Lemkos people we researched. However, what I came to realize afterwards was that the fewer the directions we received, the more room we were granted for creativity. It was not a lack of planning on the leader's part, but rather a strategy to encourage the creative process. Most importantly, despite the lack of detailed explanations, what we did have was a final goal, and that was what kept us on the proper path, even with our ability to go in any number of directions.

I am still learning to create these same challenging activities for my students, to plan without feeling remorse for those well-thought out plans completely changing course, and to develop relationships with my colleagues where collaboration is assumed rather than forced. I long to go back and participate in an Expedition time and time again because I know each Expedition will reveal not only a reminder of what I have already learned to be so important, but also something new for me to consider in my career in education. And, even if I cannot change each one of my colleagues' minds to appreciate the power we hold as educators, I, at the very least, return from each Expedition feeling more empowered and refocused about *my* role as an educator than ever before.

| HOPE FOR THE BEST

I am Ivan Kendzor from Lviv, Ukraine. I am 17 years of age, and now am a first year student of Lviv Polytechnic. In the future, I am going to be a manager. Before my participation in the Expedition Inside Culture, I was a student of a physics and mathematical secondary school. I had participated actively in the school's pupil council. I also participated in countryside research projects. Through this, I had some experience in communication and civic interaction with other students.

When I came to know about the expedition, I was enthusiastic to take part in it. It was very interesting for me to acquire a new experience and to communicate with young people from other countries.

Now I am very glad to tell you how the Expedition Inside Culture influenced me. When going to Poland, I did not expect that EIC would be such a significant event. In the first 2-3 days, I realized where I was. I realized that the next two weeks would be unforgettable.

I had a great opportunity to participate in the expedition twice, in both 2006 and 2007. It was amazing. The feelings I faced, the impressions I received, and the experiences I acquired changed my life completely. I have learned about communication skills, team-building strategies, and how to help others. I learned how to better understand other people in spite of their differences, how to live in a peaceful society, and how to be tolerant. I liked the variety of activities we took part in – in different places. For example, I had an opportunity to participate in a scavenger hunt and acquired skills to gather oral histories from local communities. Scavenger hunt – is a very interesting group activity. It is a kind of a game in which participants get tasked to collect specific information and materials in a certain place and in a limited period of time. It is a powerful research activity that gives great profit both to the participants and to the community because the outcome of this activity makes a definite “product” that contains information and can result in social projects and deeds.

I came to understand that the most important goal in my life is to be open-minded and sincere with other people. Another important concept I learned was that people should not wait for someone to help them to make their life better. Personally, I believe that young people should be active in their own lives; we should do something, and cooperate for making life in our community better.

Many events have happened during the last two years of my life. Now I am a student at the polytechnic. I believe EIC has helped make me a successful person. I have gained many new friends and my own life has improved. I am more confident and I am a member of the European student organization “BEST” at my polytechnic. We, the members of the “BEST,” organize different activities, workshops, conferences, job fairs, comput-

er festivals, and competitions. My experience through the expedition is used effectively in my life today. I am currently in charge of arranging a motivation workshop for new members of the organization in spring 2009. I plan to use some activities from the expedition in this workshop.

I also participate in the Association “Nova Doba” and its activities with other former participants of the expedition and students of pedagogical universities from various regions of Ukraine. I am going to participate in the expedition in Ukraine in the summer of 2009. We plan to arrange a trip along the Dniester River and work in the local communities on the way. Some ideas are to organize workshops for high school students on how to work in social projects to improve everyday life, to help development of the native land, preserve the past and promote the future.

EIC helped me to change my perception of the surrounding world. The world has become more colorful, understandable, and better. A lot of new friends and events developed because of these experiences. I would like more and more young people to join the Expedition activities, to be ready to change our life for the BEST.

THE IMPACT OF EXPEDITION INSIDE CULTURE

The most difficult aspect of Expedition Inside Culture is trying to explain the experience in simple and clear words. I can only assume that this difficulty comes from the fact that the experiences and changes one goes through during just one expedition are so meaningful and complex that it is hard to put together, not to mention explain.

I think that the most important thing Expedition teaches you is to always get out of your comfort zone and challenge your limits. Whether it is the way you interact with others, the effort you go through while hiking, or kayaking, these experiences make you reassess your perception of your capabilities. At the same time, the dynamics of the group create a safe environment for you to explore. EIC allows you to focus on what you need at a certain point. You are free to take with you what you feel is useful for your personal development. Perhaps the situations one faces during the camp are not so unusual for some, but the difference between the expeditions and every-day life is that you are given the time (and task) to reflect on what happens to you. By understanding and enjoying it, the value of the experience increases.

The kayak trip in 2008 was, for me by far, the most difficult part of the Expedition. It was my first time on a boat and camping. I did not know what to expect and even if I had known, it still would not have been enough. I was really focused on the things I did not feel comfortable with, and refused to accept many of the influences from the outside. It all reached a climax on the second day when the night caught us paddling. I will always remember the contrast between the despair and exhaustion I felt and the strong feeling of joy and relief that came from hearing two of our colleagues approaching while looking for us. It struck me right then that I was able to paddle longer in spite of being really tired. I just needed to know where I was going. That certain situation made me feel insecure, vulnerable, and unsafe and I reacted as a consequence to that. I learned not to take for granted the sense of security or any other elements of my everyday life such as electricity, milk, food, or Coca Cola. I appreciate them more now. In addition, the strength of the group, the patience, and encouragement they showed us (the beginners) made me overcome my fears and all the obstacles I faced.

Secondly, EIC teaches you to see places, people, and to understand how they work and why they are the way they are. It makes you wonder about all the connections you could make at home just by walking through your town. It is much easier to realize

the impact a culture or an event has at a certain point in history by witnessing what is left behind it, as opposed to just by reading about it in books. What is really striking is that after an EIC experience, one perceives events one had just read or heard about as being real and as leaving marks on communi-



ties. For instance, after my first expedition I came back to Bucharest, my home town, and looked into the history of the city and the way it developed. I found myself comparing old pictures with the way those parts of the town look today and I started noticing the boards on buildings saying which important person lived there or what role that building played throughout the years. Some might say it has nothing to do with the expedition, I just happened to pay more attention, but the truth is I was born and raised in this town and to this day I feel like I can't grasp all the things it has to offer. I feel embarrassed when tourists approach me on the street asking about a church for example and I have no idea where it is and most of all why they are so interested in it. What Expedition did, was to trigger a curiosity regarding the city I live in and the way it functions.

Last but not least, Expedition Inside Culture is all about getting involved. It is about identifying and understanding the needs of your own or any other community and trying to do something about it. The camps prove to be an efficient networking tool, establishing a database of people who can bring their input to projects developed worldwide. The enthusiasm and eagerness to apply the things you experienced during the expeditions contributes to the successful follow-ups organized in each of the participants' countries. Personally, I tried to share parts of the experience with the high-school children I work with in a training program. I conducted some activities regarding identity, prejudice, and stereotypes which made them realize how influenced they are by things they don't even think about. Some of them came to me afterwards and told me that those activities influenced the way they look at everything around them and that they pay more attention to the assumptions they make about people and situations. This is in my opinion the contribution I can make for people around me right now: telling them about what happens in EIC, trying to make them see things from other perspectives so that they question aspects of their daily lives that they take for granted.

All in all, Expedition Inside Culture is a teaching and learning incubator that helps you grow until you are strong enough to get into the real world on your own. It does not do everything for you; it just provides you with a start. The responsibility for continuing the discovery process by yourself or with others is still the biggest challenge.

SIGHT EFFECTS

There is a Polish saying “punkt widzenia zależy od punktu siedzenia” which can be translated as “what you see depends on where you sit”. It is often used to explain or excuse someone’s behavior and put the blame on the role we play or situation in which we find ourselves. Some time ago I discovered for myself that I am not able to use this explanation, because I know it is just a cheap excuse. And I believe this finding is one of the outcomes of my involvement in the Expedition Inside Culture Association (EIC). What associations, memories and feelings do I have connected to EIC? What lessons, knowledge and skills have I gained as outcomes from my engagement in this organization and its projects? And how do I use them in my work and everyday life.

When I try to recall EIC in my mind it is hard for me to recall some specific memories. Usually the name – EIC – brings with it a chain of situations, people and emotions. One of my oldest memories is that I got sick and stayed alone in a stinky cabin for two days, when all the rest went kayaking, on my first EIC project in Studzieniczna. And I remember the feeling that I had missed out on something very important when everyone got back from the kayak trip richer in common experiences and memories. In general, I see pictures of me and my friends preparing activities, playing cards, arguing about some issues, trying to convince one another how to get to some places in the quickest way, sitting and talking by a bonfire, getting to know each other better and better each year. I remember there were moving situations when I was close to crying and I remember hard, tensed moments of disagreements and quarrels. I guess EIC is the scene on which I got to know what a public performance is about and how to deal with the stress which appears in such situations. For sure it became, for a very long time, a great field of experiences for me in the area of training skills, intercultural and interpersonal relations and a huge source of knowledge, which was not accessible in such an interesting way and friendly atmosphere. Probably I could enumerate and describe the skills, attitudes and knowledge. I gained during my involvement in EIC, but I know they are not crucial. I know I could have possibly learned them some other time, some other way and some other place. But I am convinced I gained something which cannot be taught in the best school or on the greatest course and after trying to define what it is I have gotten to the point, that I cannot name it but I will try to describe it. What I feel is a permanent aspect which has appeared somehow during the past years and I would compare it to some kind of sight defect. It results in a distortion of reality as I used to know it (which was simple and understandable) and leads to a situation when I can see how multidimensional, complex and, sometimes, even unclear the world around me is. I do not consider this a skill, because in my understanding skills we use when we want to, and this phenomenon I have called ‘a defect’ because

I don't think I can get rid of it anymore. When I discuss an issue with someone I think of my interlocutor's perspective. Not only if it is close to mine, like I used to do some time ago, but also where it comes from? Is it (this perspective) connected with this person's nationality? social status or background? gender? anything else? And I am convinced that there are many perspectives which represent different identities in every person. And I am aware that some of them are accessible for me, and some others are not. But they all matter and influence who we are. This conclusion may be seen as very complicated and trivial at the same time, but I think it is important to know that we live in a world which is varied and this diversity is its pure value, but it is also a source of troubles and misunderstandings. When we omit the multitude of aspects which determine who we are and we decide to pick only one place from which we observe people around us, not only do we miss the opportunity to see the richness of the world, but also it is harder to understand other people, their motivations and actions – namely it is harder to feel safe in the today's world. My experiences may be very different from someone's who was born in a different culture, in a contrasting religion, dissimilar neighborhood, is of the opposite sex/gender and so on, but thanks to my 'sight defect' I am able to find common ground for fruitful discussion and exchange of thoughts and points of view. This openness allows me to feel safe even if sometimes I do not understand clearly other person's reasons or motives. Of course this applies only in situations, where one basic condition is granted: mutual respect and its common understanding. On EIC we build this common basis for human rights, and I believe it also works for me in my everyday life.

Before I describe how I apply this mechanism in my life, I want to remember again, that I called this phenomenon 'a sight defect' also because this process is not always pleasant and satisfying. And I don't want to give the impression that it is easy. But since I explained that I believe it is not possible to get rid of it, I strongly believe that it is worth looking at the benefits it brings.

All my professional life I have been involved in the NGO sector, and – in my opinion - one of its crucial characteristics is that "it is all about people". It is about people's needs, people's aspirations, motivations – all actions in the Third sector are somehow connected with other human beings. For the last 7 years I have worked in the field of education, in its wider meaning: formal and non-formal. During this time I have built my understanding of teaching and learning processes, conditions which help and disturb those processes, teachers' and learners' roles, approaches, methods and so on. A brace which ties together those two aspects – people and education – is the need to understand how the above mentioned 'sight defect' works and use it – because I believe it makes the teaching and learning process authentic. If I was to describe it as simple as possible I would say that what we need to do is to start our work with others from thinking about who we are; what is our perspective; where it comes from. This gives every person a starting point – if I know who I am, I am ready to get to know others. And by getting to know others I am able to see other perspectives, different opinions, multiple identities and I am able to understand and accept this variety. Such an attitude allows me to build safety and self-confidence in the surrounding world and this enables an authentic teaching and learning process (which is never one way, we always teach and learn at the same time). In my work as an anti-discrimination trainer this approach is very effective and brings a lot of satisfaction as well as is a great source of knowledge about other people and myself.

DESIGNING
A
WORLD:
EPILOGUE

RE/INTRODUCING LEADERSHIP

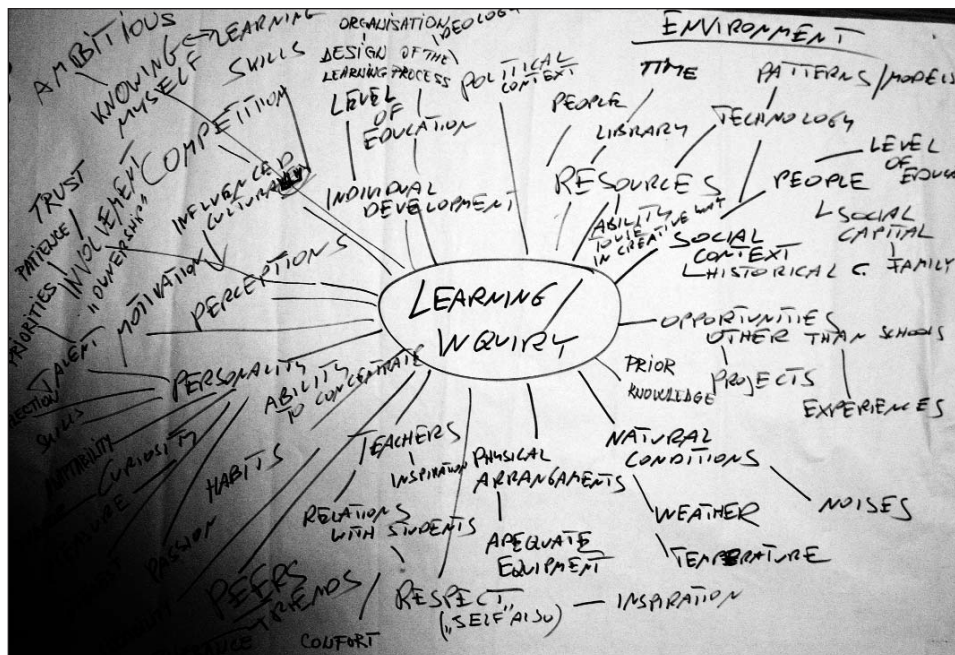
Education is not a preparation for life, it is life itself. That opinion of John Dewey is critical for understanding the deeper meaning of all the processes that might be observed in schools and other institutions of the formal systems: in educational projects run by different organizations from the NGO sector to business; in various initiatives designed in the local communities and organized by media; or on-line events. It is also critical for understanding every situation in which individuals experience the sensation of learning, discovery and development.

As it has been stressed numerous times on pages of this volume, the involvement in the education process and ability to implement the skills learned or information gained in a way that enriches someone's life, is determined through an individual's perceptions, not by any external factors or decisions. Unfortunately, we forget about this often, when we loose the intrinsic value of education--covering it with administrative tasks and formal procedures. As a result we decrease the number of places and moments (situations) where and when we learn, which also leads to the implication that education happens only in purposefully designed and run institutions of the formal system and when provided by certificated professionals. This is a basic misunderstanding. As has been stated in this book, education can not be done to the people, it has to be their enterprise, their project, their life. During expedition, and also through all our actions, we try to support people in their natural quest for development, happiness and that important feeling of success. While thinking about sustainable development and the future, we focus our attention on the values and conditions of education, not on the result of tests or exams after every stage of education. We believe that participants of the education process need to be awakened as owners, designers and facilitators of their learning. In order to achieve that state we try to empower them and equip them with the tools they would need (and of course, the decision about the tools needed should involve the learners). It is difficult to obtain the skills to co-lead the process of teaching and learning in a way where the autonomy of the learner is the center of the whole endeavor. It is hard also because we all inherited traditional, very often oppressive, approaches to education. However, it is possible to overcome them and this volume is one example of how that might happen.

One of the examples of the traditional approaches that we try to overcome in this particular educational initiative is a notion of leadership, as well as the distribution of power and authority during our projects. We (facilitators) went a long way from the position of being the only designers and the source of decisions, to the position of an element of the chain in the decision making process and a member of the leaders team. It was not easy, both for us and participants. Very often we faced difficult moments, when after long delib-

eration, frustrations were raised and visible demands appeared. The demand, as always, was for a strong person with authority who could solve conflict or decrease our inability to make a decision. In those moments it was obvious that we believed that some things might be done better if only one person decides. We (facilitators) had those moments of doubts and numerous times we decided to intervene with our "wisdom and experience". Maybe it was not a bad strategy to use experienced members of the group in order to solve problems, but it was never better than allowing participants to do it themselves. Facilitators' decisions only postponed the necessity of taking responsibility. For a moment participants were allowed to think that we had selected the best option. For the blink of the eye we let ourselves believe that it was authentic education. Always we needed to go back to this painful process of negotiation, the process of forging leaders who were not afraid to speak up, step forward and be present. Present not only in the physiological sense, not only to use oxygen and space, but to be present and aware in order to understand and enjoy life.

Every time we discuss difficult concepts as a group we are able to find a deeper meaning and construct our knowledge--knowledge that we need. It is not easy. We understood this as a result of a discussion about leadership in Spring 2008 during which it was so difficult to abandon strong, charismatic, military like persona as a leader and see the real meaning of participatory, network leadership. The next year, during Spring 2009 in Romania, we tried to draw a picture of contextual learning. After a long brainstorm we were able to prepare a mind map that includes almost all the most important factors influencing the process of learning. That session offered us more than the typical passing of information from the top down. EIC participants are aware that learning is a process which never ends and makes them able to change, and also, that it is a painful process. Painful because education really changes our selves.



The traditional culture of leadership, instead of inspiring or motivating, very often is hindering or limiting people's activity. In that model the presence of the leader makes members of the team "paralyzed" – because only leaders are supposed to think, be creative and responsible. One of the exercises we run during expedition is called "blind workers" in which the leader can see the site and directs the work by giving orders and blind folded workers build "something". Every time when the attention of the leader is not focused on a person, he or she just stands and waits. I have realized that, unfortunately this is a metaphorical image of our reality. When leaders take the whole responsibility in reality it means they "unteach" team work – people stop thinking and working because they wait for instructions.

We need to support the development of a new kind of leader – educational leaders who share authority and motivate their co-workers to use their potential for the common good. Leadership means an ability to build a team that can reach established goals within a sphere marked by accepted values: dignity, freedom and a vision of the future. Educational leaders can not work instead of others, they should not even plan others' work, rather they should create situations which might inspire co-workers toward the best. The leader's main responsibility is to fight against the feeling of dependency on authority.

The secret of leadership develops through reflection and awareness about ourselves – it is impossible to lead if we do not understand our own behavior. So the basic questions for every leader, in every possible sector are those so often asked during an Expedition– about identity, understanding people, perceiving the world, and a willingness to act. Participants struggle, during activities and, especially, during debriefing sessions when suddenly they realize how narrow a vision we present as a group, how framed our reactions are, how we lack, as a group, the ability to "go out of the box". Slowly the need for a "bigger picture" becomes very apparent.

And so again I want to stress my personal belief that authentic leadership is mainly the great talent of unleashing people's capacity and ability to fulfill chosen tasks in the best possible way, with dignity, respect for others and satisfaction. Allowing co-workers and students to decide about outcomes is difficult but possible, we only need to understand that we are not risking our future by letting them commit mistakes, but that we are risking much more when we do not do it. We need to see that the necessity for radical innovations is a necessity for a change in teaching and learning and leadership. We do not want the existing order, we want something better. This is autonomy, something that will help us to achieve a new educational system, not an administrative discipline.

Mass-production has ended. It is time for individual solutions designed by empowered professionals. Involvement is always a starting point for real learning and real learning leads to professionalism and competence. Those qualities, however, can never be fully developed without leadership. Do not teach "good students", try to help develop leaders for good and bad times – we need them more desperately than anytime before. We need leaders, not to raise the effectiveness bar, but to 'see' people as the highest value.

ABOUT CONTRIBUTORS

About the Editors

John M. Fischer – is an Associate Professor in Social Studies Education at Bowling Green State University. He locates most of his teaching with the Middle Childhood (grades 4-9) and the Masters in Curriculum and Teaching programs. At Bowling Green State University he helped to begin the International Democratic Education Institute. Currently he serves as the project director for the BGSU GEAR-UP Learning Center, an almost 10 year effort to collaborate with two urban schools in Toledo, Ohio. He also serves as the U.S. partner for Expedition Inside Culture. He is the co-editor of a set of classroom materials, entitled Comparative Lessons for Democracy, published by the Center for Civic Education in the United States. His recent publications have focused on school reform issues, teaching about tolerance, as well as the use of technology in social studies classrooms. His work appears in Theory and Research in Social Education, Social Education, Reading Online a journal of the International Reading Association, Educational Horizons, Inquiry- Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines, the International Journal of Social Education and Pedagogies.

Grzegorz Mazurkiewicz – is a Sociologist, and a faculty member in the Department of Management and Social Communication at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. Since the first day of his work he has been involved in education. He started as a teacher and was a co-founder of the Association Expedition Inside Culture. During his entire professional career he has been looking for the best ideas and collecting thoughts from everywhere. In his thinking and teaching he tries to follow the values of democratic education, which allow people to develop and to find their own ways. He believes that people are able to learn, cooperate, and co-lead for common and individual benefit. The majority of the projects he participated in or led never ended with spectacular successes, but he always witnessed people who were involved, active, and supportive.

About the Contributors

Cory Aron – is a 7th grade social studies teacher at Willetts Middle School in Brunswick, Ohio, USA. He is also a resident in Brunswick, where he has lived his entire life. When he is not at school or working on lesson plans, he enjoys anything in the great outdoors. Mountain biking, backpacking, kayaking, climbing, alpine skiing and international travel are among the top activities that he likes to do.

Tamara Eugenia Baleanu – has a Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology from the University of Bucharest. She is also a Co-founder of the "Expedition Inside Culture" Association, Romania.

Doug Bell – is beginning his 18th year as an 8th grade Science teacher in the Toledo Public School district in Ohio, USA. He has 3 children, Madison 11, Brooke 8, and Nathan 6. He serves as the Program Director for Expedition Inside Culture activities in the United States. **Julia Blavats'ka** – is a graduate from International Relations department of Lviv National University named in honor of Ivan Franko, magister of international relations, she is also a manager and English language translator.

Matt Daniels – is a High School physics and chemistry teacher at Elyria High School, Elyria, Ohio. He was born and raised in Strongsville, Ohio and upon graduation from Strongsville High School attended Bowling Green State University where he received his Bachelors of Science in secondary education integrated science and Masters in Reading education.

Joanna Duda – is from Zabrze, Poland. Since 2007 she studies economics at the Institute of Economy and Management, Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. This year, in June, she will finish the 2nd year of a bachelors degree. She is going to stay on at the university and work on a masters degree. After graduation she would like to start her own business. The best in travel is to get lost somewhere, then you always find something that you would never have found going by the path.

Alexandra Ioan – is currently working for the CODECS Foundation for Leadership, in Romania, managing a national leadership program for students in middle school and high school. She is also a student at the National School for Political and Administrative Studies where she is studying Communication and Public Relations.

Zeb Kellough – is a middle school science teacher at Toledo School for the Arts (TSA) in the state of Ohio, USA. He received his Master's Degree in Education from Bowling Green State University. He has been using his experiences from Expedition Inside Culture and makes connections between the science and art curriculum while collaborating with various TSA faculty.

Ivan Kendzor --is a first year student of the Management Department of the "Lviv Polytechnic University." He is also an active member of the student international non-governmental organization, "Best."

Jennifer Lawless – is a graduate of Bowling Green State University with a Bachelor's degree in Integrated Social Studies Education and a Masters degree in History. She has been a high school Social Studies teacher at Jesup W. Scott High School in Toledo, Ohio, USA for five years and was recently promoted to serve as the Director of Social Studies and Foreign Language for the Toledo Public Schools system.

Jan Łuczyński – is a faculty member in the Department of Management in Education, Institute of Public Affairs, Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland.

Jessica Niekamp – is 7th grade Reading teacher at Canal Winchester Middle School in the Canal Winchester School District outside of Columbus, Ohio, USA. She has a Bachelors degree from Bowling Green State University's College of Education and Human Development. She has been an active member of the U.S. Expedition Inside Culture group for over five years.

Kathleen Nitschmann – was born and raised in a little village in the eastern part of Germany. After finishing school (Gymnasium) in 2003 she went to Munich to work for the intercultural street soccer project "buntkicktgut". One year later she was heading off to Australia to spend 12 months working and travelling around it. Back in Germany in September 2005 she moved to Leipzig and a short time later started volunteering on a youth- and children's farm in the middle of Germany near Gotha. Just recently (July 2009) she finished her studies of "Social sciences with focus on cross-cultural communication".

Melissa Nowak – is currently an Art I, II and Digital Photography educator in outside Columbus, Ohio, USA at Big Walnut High School. Soon to be "Melissa A. Maxson", she has a Bachelor of Fine Arts, and a Masters in Curriculum and Instruction, both from Bowling Green State University.

Olha Pedan-Slyepukhina – is a history and civic education teacher-methodologist in Lviv secondary school #65 and a trainer for the All-Ukrainian Association of Teachers of History and Social Studies "Nova Doba." She is also the coordinator of EIC in Ukraine.

Ana-Maria Rampelt – is currently the President of the "Expedition Inside Culture" Association, Romania and is also a Teacher of English, at "Mihai Viteazul" National College. She is a long time partner with The Expedition Inside Culture Association in Poland.

Maciek Śliwa – is a teacher of History and Social Studies in middle and high school in Zabrze, Poland. He is also an Amnesty International human rights trainer and a member of the Expedition Inside Culture Association.

Ewa Stoecker – is a member of Expedition Inside Culture Association. She holds a MA degree in Applied Psychology and also studied American Studies – both at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. She works in the field of formal and non-formal education, in the NGO sector as an anti-discrimination trainer, projects coordinator, support staff – depending on the project and its needs. She is involved in projects focused on cross-cultural communication, gender education, multicultural issues, anti-discrimination and non-violence education – with special interest in prevention of violence against women.

Diana Tereshchuk – is a graduate from the Foreign Languages department of Ternopil National Pedagogical University, magister and junior member of teaching and research staff of the Foreign Languages department. She is also an active member of the youth branch of All-Ukrainian Association of Teachers of History and Social Studies “Nova Doba - Perspective”.

Elena Daniela Ududec – is a student working towards a Bachelor of Law degree, University of Bucharest (2nd year student). She is a member of the "Expedition Inside Culture" Association, Romania.

Irmína Wachna – Sosin – is a graduate of the Management in Education faculty of Jagiellonian University and has a Masters in Curriculum and Teaching from Bowling Green State University. Also completed postgraduate studies in evaluation of social programs at the University of Warsaw. Currently works at Wszechnica UJ, a Jagiellonian University Extension Office where she is responsible for quality assurance and evaluation of the training and projects organized by Wszechnica UJ.

Victoria Zalik– is a 5th grade Math and Social Studies Middle School teacher at Laurel School in Cleveland, Ohio. She has been involved with Expedition Inside Culture since 2006, attending the 2006 and 2007 summer Expeditions, and she has continued her involvement by presenting on action research and presentation skills at the Academy for Leaders of Intercultural Dialogue: Youth Action Against Stereotypes conference held in Poland in March of 2008. She was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio, where she returned after she attended Bowling Green State University for her undergraduate studies in Middle Childhood Education. Currently, she is attending Notre Dame College for her Master's of Education with a Technology/Computer Endorsement.

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