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Teacher of Education for Family Life as an innovator in the reformed system

Nauczyciel wychowania do życia w rodzinie jako innowator w reformowanej szkole

Abstract

The analyses performed for this paper focused – among other things – on legal regulations concerning creative activities of a teacher-innovator and on various solutions in the area of curricula, methodology and organisational matters in regard to teaching, education and care at the new school. Pedagogical innovations implemented in everyday educational work involve, for example, replacing one methodological or organisational solution with another, expanding syllabuses and methodological solutions and enhancing the effectiveness of teaching and educational activities. These innovations help a teacher of education for family life to reinforce student creativity, develop an active attitude in students and prepare them for responsible participation in social life. Teachers' of education for family life commitment, their creativity in thinking and actions and their thoughtfulness and professionalism are of great importance.

Keywords: creativity, pedagogical innovations, teacher, reformed system, Education for Family Life.

Abstrakt

W analizach podjętych w niniejszym artykule zwrócono uwagę na regulacje prawne dotyczące twórczego działania nauczyciela innowatora oraz na różnego rodzaju rozwiązania programowe, metodyczne, organizacyjne w obszarze nauczania, wychowania i opieki w reformowanej szkole. W codzienności edukacyjnej innowacje pedagogiczne polegają m.in. na zastąpieniu jednego rozwiązania metodycznego lub organizacyjnego drugim, uzupełnieniu treści programowych i rozwiązań metodycznych, wzmacnianiu skutecznych

działań dydaktyczno-wychowawczych. Dzięki nim nauczyciel wychowania do życia w rodzinie może rozwijać kreatywność uczniów, kształtować w nich postawy aktywne i wdrażać do odpowiedzialnego uczestnictwa w życiu społecznym. Niezwykle istotne jest tu odpowiednie zaangażowanie nauczyciela wychowania do życia w rodzinie, jego kreatywność w myśleniu i działaniu, refleksyjność oraz profesjonalizm.

Słowa kluczowe: kreatywność, innowacje pedagogiczne, nauczyciel, reforma oświaty, wychowanie do życia w rodzinie.

‘Innovator’ is an attractive concept, well-received in a teacher’s professional life and their didactic and formative work¹. It has received special prominence in the most recent educational system reform in Poland, which has been under implementation since 1 September 2017². The *Act of 14 December 2016 – Law on Education*, introduced new regulations concerning teachers’ innovative activities³. This undoubtedly also affects a teacher of Education for Family Life (EFL). It is therefore worth asking what pedagogical practices a teacher of this subject should undertake as an innovator in a reformed school. So far, this problem, although significant both for research and practice, has seen no academic exploration to analyse the innovative character of the EFL teacher’s work. The choice of this avenue of investigation for the present paper is therefore emergent from current educational needs and a thematic gap that we mean to fill – with the hope of a fruitful discussion to follow.

In researching the stated question, we will be focusing exclusively on the Polish school and the Education for Family Life teacher’s work in this school. The analysis will be based mainly on legislative acts and the available Polish literature⁴, since the state of Polish research concerning Education for Family

¹ The concept of pedagogical innovation was formulated in the 1980s. Cf. e.g. Przyborowska, B. (2013), *Pedagogika innowacyjności. Między teorią a praktyką* [Pedagogy of Innovation. Between Theory and Practice], Toruń.

² The reform was initiated by Anna Zalewska, Minister of National Education in the cabinets of prime minister Beata Szydło and prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki.

³ Cf. Dz.U. of 2017, item 59.

⁴ It is noteworthy that foreign literature discusses only sexual education. For instance, in European Union countries, sexual education is connected with preparing students for social life and health education. Education for Family Life classes are unique for the Polish curriculum. Cf. the discussion in Kuby, G. (2013), *Globalna rewolucja seksualna. Likwidacja wolności w imię wolności* [Global Sexual Revolution. Elimination of Freedom in Freedom’s Name], Kraków; Mińko, M., A. Barańska, U. Religioni, M. Religioni, M. Mińko, S. Burma (2014), *Edukacja seksualna jako element kreowania polityki zdrowotnej w Europie* [Sexual Education as Part of European Health Policy], *Hygeia Public Health*, 49(2), 348–352; cf. Król, T. (2015), *Dobre, bo polskie wychowanie do życia w rodzinie* [Polish Means Good; Education for Family Life], in: Ryś, M. (Ed.), *Dylematy dotyczące ludzkiej płodności* [Dilemmas in Human Fertility], Warszawa, 191–203; Rzewucka, P. (2017), *Wychowanie do życia w rodzinie*

Life teachers' professional activities, not only with respect to innovation, leaves much to be desired. There is a paucity of publications from Polish authors analysing the nature of innovation, as well as its scope, its forms and the ways of its implementation in the relevant field. The present paper is intended as an introduction to the discussion of these matters.

The primary goal of this analysis is a theoretical characterisation – based on the existing legal acts – of the Education for Family Life teacher as an innovator in the reformed Polish school. In pursuit of that goal, we must first define the key concepts of 'educational innovator' and 'reformed school', that is, to delineate their content and relate them to the operative legal regulations concerning innovation in the reformed school. It will be these regulations that predominantly decide which curricular, organisational, and methodological innovations are undertaken by a teacher of Education for Family Life. A presentation of these questions requires a look at daily teaching activity, in which pedagogical innovations will be designed, prepared and implemented. The matters being touched upon here may be of service, both in theory and in practice, to those seeking new approaches to subject matter and teaching methods (e.g. for professional development of Education for Family Life teachers).

1. Key concepts

At the basis of the analysis undertaken in the present study lies the proper understanding of key concepts. The first of these is the 'educational innovator'. Often, in common parlance as well as in the literature on this subject, it is said that an 'educational innovator' is an educator who improves the process of teaching, learning and formation, who introduces small changes, modernises their own educational activities and brings new, positive ways of organisation and methodology (Kamińska, 2014, 229–230; Petlák, 2017, 9–24; Schulz, 1990, 10; Przyborowska, 2014, 149–156; Zielińska, 2016, 227–232). Undoubtedly, the characteristics of an educational innovator can be thus defined. An educational innovator is a person who is creative in their thinking and actions, capable of enriching their pedagogical experience with new values, involved in the creation of novel ideas and in introducing them in their own practice of teaching, formation, and prophylaxis (Nowak-Dziemianowicz, 2016). Such a teacher can improve on their existing work methods, introduce new solutions, and creatively realise

w polskich szkołach [Education for Family Life in Polish Schools], in: Domagała-Kręcioch, A., B. Majerek (Eds.), *Kategorie (nie)obecności w edukacji* [Categories of Presence and Absence in Education], Kraków, 271–278.

the programme guidelines of successive educational reforms (Wiśniewska, 2009, 59–69). An educational innovator generates new ideas in realising their didactic and formative tasks, and is capable of conscious change in their professional practices with the purpose of perfecting their existing standard of pedagogical work (Kamińska, 2014, 230; Cichocki, 2017, 281–290). They are characterised by an original approach to problem-solving and an ability to practically, creatively and thoughtfully implement the results of theoretical research, as well as their own experimentation (Kamińska, 2014, 233–236). In practice, an educational innovator shows the ‘ability to create new (...) [worthy] ideas and activity designs’ (Morzyszek-Banaszczyk, Iwicka-Okońska, 2007, 2; cf. Bałachowicz, Adamek, 2017; Cichocki, 2017, 281–290) and to undertake methodological solutions that depart from the commonplace. This, in turn, requires the educational innovator to be capable of original thinking and action, free from schema and of questioning, seeking answers and reflecting on their own practices (Morzyszek-Banaszczyk, Iwicka-Okońska, 2007, 2). It is of no less value to exhibit personal characteristics, such as: creative imagination, eagerness to learn, high overall intelligence, pedagogical talent, readiness to take risks, fearlessness in expressing their own convictions, independence of thought, decision and action, as well as perseverance in overcoming obstacles (Dubis, 2010, 189–191; Sawiński, 2017).

All the activities of an educational innovator are set in a specific educational context (Bałachowicz, Adamek, Bałachowicz, 2017). Currently, this context in Poland is the educational reform of 2017, which encompasses not only organisational changes, but also new educational solutions, especially aims and contents of education (Department of Education and Promotion, Ministry of National Education, 2017). The reform correctly stresses the importance of integrating education and prophylaxis in the school (Dobra Szkoła – Reforma Systemu Edukacji [*Good School – Education Reform*, Ministry of National Education pamphlet], 2017). Changes introduced by the Ministry of National Education after 1 September 2017 are aimed at creating a school which is modern and at the same time strongly rooted in Polish tradition. We write about the work of a Education for Family Life teacher as an innovator in the reformed Polish school not so much with the structural changes in mind, as with the curricular and organisational ones. These have been outlined for the coming years with the purpose of providing each student, ‘no matter their place of origin or the material status of their parents, with a good school and good education’ (Dobra Szkoła – Reforma Systemu Edukacji, 2017). Therefore, the concept of ‘reformed school’ is practically equivalent to the slogan ‘change for the good in education’ (Ministry of National Education, Dobra Szkoła, *Zmiany w zakresie wychowania w szkołach* [*Good School, Changes in Formative Polic-*

es in the School], 2017). It comprises all changes introduced in schools since 1 September 2017. These rightly include the restoration of the rightful place of 'formative and prophylactic practices' (Ministry of National Education, Dobra Szkoła, Zmiany w zakresie wychowania w szkołach, 2017). The catalogue of educational objectives has been 'supplemented with objectives underscoring the formative function of the school' (ibid.), which is worth noting and stressing. The formative and prophylactic programmes have been merged, and rightly so. Each school or educational establishment is obliged to develop a formative and prophylactic programme 'based on the assessment of needs and problems faced by the given school community' (ibid.). This programme – as evident from the analysis of existing legislation – should encompass adjusting 'the contents and activities of formative nature directed to the students' (ibid.) and 'the contents and activities of prophylactic nature directed to students, teachers and parents' (ibid.) to the students' educational needs. Crucially, in the reformed school, formation is understood 'as assisting the child in development towards full physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and social maturity, which should be reinforced and supplemented by prophylactic measures addressing the problems of children and young people' (ibid.). At the same time, new school guidelines correctly stress the role of in-school volunteering "as an important element in shaping community-oriented attitudes in students" (Ministry of National Education, Dobra Szkoła, Wolontariat w szkołach i placówkach [Good School, Volunteering in Schools and Establishments], 2017). It is mandated that school charters regulate the organisation and implementation of volunteer work (e.g. as projects) (ibid.). The guidelines concerning the reformed school described above are intrinsically connected with guidelines regarding innovations in curricula, organisation and methods, as well as pedagogical experiments conducted in the school or educational establishment (Ministry of National Education, Dobra Szkoła, Eksperyment [Good School, Experiment], 2017; Ministry of National Education, Dobra Szkoła, Innowacje i eksperymenty w szkołach [Good School, Innovations and Experiments in Schools], 2017). It is advisable to tie these activities in with fostering students' creativity and "enterprising dispositions which aid in active participation in economic life" (Ministry of National Education, Dobra Szkoła, Innowacje i eksperymenty w szkołach [Good School, Innovations and Experiments in Schools], 2017). These broadly delineated objectives take a key position in the operation of the Polish school. They require involvement of the school management, as well as teachers, parents and the local government. They show that the Polish education reform encompasses various areas of a teacher's work and requires taking on various professional initiatives. Indirectly, they call for building creativity

and self-reflection already at the stage of preparing teacher trainees for future pedagogical work and for a change in the teachers' understanding of their professional role and the scope of their responsibilities.

The key concepts presented above reveal a rich meaning, which cannot be disregarded in the analysis of the subject of this paper. Furthermore, these clarifications enable the proper understanding of the new regulations concerning innovative activities in the work of a Education for Family Life teacher.

2. Legal regulations concerning innovative activities in the school

The educational system reform launched on 1 September 2017 includes the change of procedures governing innovative activities in the school. New regulations concerning the work of a Education for Family Life teacher are found in the *Act of 14 December 2016 - Law on Education* (Dz.U. of 2017, item 59; cf. Dz.U. of 2017, item 60). The new law removes the prerogative of the Minister of National Education to delineate by way of regulation the requirements for introducing innovative activities by schools (Dz.U. of 2017, item 59, article 15[29b])⁵. Concurrently, many changes were introduced concerning curricular, organisational, and methodological solutions within teachers' innovative activities. The requirement that schools notify the school superintendent and supervisory body about pedagogical innovations has been lifted. There are also no longer formal conditions in the law for a teacher to undertake innovative activities. In consequence, schools no longer send pedagogical innovation sheets to the superintendent's office. The offices have discontinued the collection and publication of innovation lists. In the light of this, the school's director and the teaching staff have not only the right, but the duty, to make independent decisions concerning the innovations to be implemented and the ways in which they should be documented (Pakulniewicz, 2017). These new regulations are impactful. They do away with past solutions, which were very bureaucratic and empower both the schools' management and its teaching staff.

In the Law on Education of 1 September 2017, innovative activities are considered integral to the school's operation, which seems correct and justified. The law stresses the importance of a school community's multi-faceted effort in the educational field under consideration in the present paper. The legislator is right to appreciate the significance of innovative curricular, organisational and

⁵ It is worth noting that the *Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 9 April 2002 on the Conditions for Innovative and Experimental Activities by Schools and Establishments* (Cf. Dz.U. of 2002 No. 56, item 506, as amended) expired on 1 September 2017.

methodological solutions allowing a school to provide all students with opportunities to develop their creativity and enterprising dispositions which aid in active participation in economic life (Dz.U. of 2017, item 59, article 1[18]). Schools are obligated to create the conditions for varied activities for their pupils and to support their creative development (Dz.U. of 2017, item 59, article 44[2.3]). Through these provisions, the legislator points to the pedagogical innovations' formative dimension. The Law on Education rightly couples innovative activities of schools (including teaching staff) not only with didactic work, but also with formation and prophylaxis.

It also seems pertinent that the law contains a provision calling for inspiring teachers, as part of pedagogical supervision, to undertake tasks that will improve or create new teaching solutions. It advises using innovative curricular, organisational or methodological activities, directed at developing the competences of students as well as teachers (Dz.U. of 2017, item 59, article 55[1.4]). Apart from that, the school director is supposed to create 'conditions to operate in the school or establishment for volunteers, associations, and other organisations, in particular scouting organisations, whose chartered goals are formative practices or the expansion and enrichment of didactic, formative, fostering and innovative practices of a school or establishment' (Dz.U. of 2017, item 59, article 68[1.9]). The legislator clearly states that 'associations and other organisations, in particular scouting organisations, but with exception of political parties and organisations, may operate within the school, provided that their chartered goals are formative practices or the expansion and enrichment of didactic, formative, fostering and innovative practices of a school or establishment' (Dz.U. of 2017, item 59, article 86[1]). This provision in the Law on Education deserves special attention, since it opens for the school's director and teachers a broad range of innovative activity, undertaken individually or in collaboration with other teachers or with third parties. It not only raises the requirements in the educational field under consideration, but also points to the need for cooperation and collaboration with third parties charged with holistic education of children and young people. It places greater value on interdisciplinary coordination and the principle of integrating all initiatives made by the school with the family and the local community. It constitutes a baseline for the development and introduction of new didactic, formative and prophylactic solutions involving various entities concerned for the upbringing of the young generation.

It seems relevant that the existing provisions of the Law on Education 'do not outline whether and how a school should officially process the introduced innovations after 1 September 2017' (Winczewska, 2017). The law also does not regulate whether teachers should still express written consent for participation

in pedagogical innovations or independent introduction of a given innovative activity (Pakulniewicz, 2017, 1–2). In practice, this may create uncertainty, or even lead to chaos in planning and introduction of pedagogical innovations. On the other hand, it does reduce (at least in theory) the *bureaucratic*, excessive, and irrational *formal* requirements. With the significance of well-organised educational and fostering efforts in mind, it seems prudent to develop an in-school procedure, passed as a teachers' council resolution, which would specify the guidelines concerning the introduction and realisation of pedagogical innovations. It is worth remembering that innovations requiring additional financing, just as any activities exceeding the financing plan, must be approved by the school's supervisory body (Pakulniewicz, 2017, 1–2). Under these circumstances, the outlining by the school management and teaching staff of the baseline (minimal) formal requirements is not only advisable, but practically necessary. It will expedite the school's didactic, formative and prophylactic work, while staving off disruptive chaos and misguided creativity.

3. Types of innovation in the work of a Education for Family Life teacher

All innovative activity of a Education for Family Life teacher, like that of other teachers, is based on the regulations analysed above. This requires approval of, and amenability to, the new curriculum while being creative in planning and action. In practice, innovation in the work of a EFL teacher encompasses both the changes in the curriculum of EFL classes (at the preparation and realisation stage) and new elements in pedagogical work (Kamińska, 2014, 230–231). Any innovation in the teaching of Education for Family Life requires a clear determination of goals and contents, which should comply with the core curriculum for the class. Furthermore, it is not possible without a planned, organised and evaluated pedagogical initiative of the teacher. Such innovative activities undertaken by a EFL teacher are referred to as 'micro-level' (Such, 2017, 1–2). They pertain to the teacher's individual professional activity. Micro-level innovations are tied to medium-level ones, realised in the educational operations of the school. These, in turn, are undertaken in response to macro-level innovative activities, initiated and realised in the education system as a whole, e.g. in connection with successive structural and curricular reforms of education (Such, 2017, 1–2).

The above types of pedagogical innovation are only an example of an overarching classification. In education practice, it is difficult to distinguish them as separate elements, since they are intrinsically tied with the overall educa-

tional and prophylactic work of a Education for Family Life teacher. Structural changes, the abundance of goals and contents of the Education for Family Life curriculum, to which innovative activities of the teacher in the reformed school pertain, give rise to the need for a comprehensive approach to innovation and for the constant awareness of its formative dimension. The reformed Polish school, as already mentioned, is supposed to not only teach, but also to form the students' attitudes. Apart from the passing of knowledge, it stresses the shaping of abilities and civic attitudes, as well as the promotion of proper social behaviours based on universal values and moral norms. (Ministry of National Education, Summary of the National Polish Debate on Education, 2017). Innovations in the work of a Education for Family Life teacher seem indispensable to the realisation of these goals. They are of great formative and prophylactic importance. They also set up avenues ripe for creative pedagogical work. For example, such work could include a EFL teacher's involvement in the school's volunteer programmes, educational projects promotion of a healthy lifestyle and initiatives undertaken in collaboration with the workers of Municipal Welfare Centres (including family assistants, coordinators for foster family care, and social workers), Psychological-educational Counselling Centres, Family Counselling Centres, psychologists, geriatric nurses, family mediators, obstetrician-gynaecologists, nurses, and midwives. The particular initiatives undertaken by a Education for Family Life teacher depend on their creativity, involvement in the formative and prophylactic activities in the school, and their educational functions, to name a few factors, as well as on the school and local community.

Undoubtedly, in accordance with the guidelines for a reformed Polish school, volunteer programmes sponsored by a EFL teacher provide ample possibilities for formative innovation. The school's charter is required to regulate the organisation and realisation of volunteer work. It also allows for a volunteering council to be set up within the school, comprised of members of the student government. Both of these provisions are conducive to attempting new strategies and formative activities directly connected with Education for Family Life classes (Dz.U. of 2017, item 59, article 85[6.7], article 98[1.21]). Innovative educational projects, supervised by a EFL teacher, should enable active participation from pupils and thereby promote new experiences, responsibility for oneself and others and social abilities such as dialogue, cooperation, constructive conflict resolution, negotiation and mediation (Ministry of National Education, *Dobra Szkoła, Wolontariat w szkołach i placówkach* [Good School. Volunteering in Schools and Establishments], 2017, 1–2). Each of the activities of a EFL teacher mentioned above can be treated as a noteworthy form of innovation-fostering.

The structural and curricular changes in the reformed Polish school necessitate a change in the EFL teacher's style of work and undertaking new educational tasks. These include curricular, methodological and organisational innovations, as well as their combinations: curricular-methodological, methodological-organisational, and organisational-curricular (Dudel et al., 2014, 55–59; Kamińska, 2014, 231–232). Curricular innovations include, i.a. expanding the curriculum with new contents or modifying it (without violating the guidelines of the core curriculum for general education, or the school's own educational and prophylactic programme), as well as developing and introducing a teacher's original programme for the Education for Family Life class (Such, 2017, 2–3). These are especially important in the light of institutional changes to the general education curriculum. These activities are closely tied to methodological innovations, which pertain to methods of teaching, learning and formation, including the forms of presentation, the use of modern teaching aids and evaluation of the EFL teacher's educational work (Dudel et al., 2014, 56). In practical terms, methodological innovations often involve organisation of class space (rearranging desks inside the classroom to foster dialogue and negotiation of meaning) and collaboration between the Education for Family Life teacher and third parties (e.g. an institution of higher learning, a teacher training centre, a psychological-educational counselling centre, a healthcare institution) and specialists of the relevant fields (e.g. a psychologist, pedagogue, psychiatrist, gynaecologist, NaPro technologist and family mediator). Another example are multimedia presentations or short educational videos prepared by teachers of Education for Family Life. It is certainly worth including interviews with individuals who enjoy respect among young people, and also hold pro-family world views and heed universal values in their lives. However, mere verbal explanations of these subjects often seem of little effect. They are worth supplementing with illustrations, videos, or even meetings with “interesting” people. Even if these methods do not seem very innovative, they can stimulate active learning and improve knowledge transfer if applied skilfully and enhanced with multimedia aids (e.g. an interactive whiteboard). They also depart from direct instruction methods in favour of a more active learning environment in the EFL class.

The didactic and formative activities described above require the teacher of Education for Family Life to innovate in terms of care, i.e. to aid in improved discharging of the school's duty of care (Kotarba-Kańczugowska 2009, 19). This includes, i.a. changes concerning the recognition and fulfilment of students' developmental needs, and creating appropriate conditions for learning and rest (Dudel et al., 2014, 58). For example, a teacher of Education for Family Life can get involved in organising cultural, educational, and sporting events in the school

(e.g. family-themed picnics). Equally important are changes pertaining to students' safety in the school, hygiene and health, as well as recreational activities and protection against dangers of the modern day (e.g. poverty, violence, addictions, and early sexual initiation). Thus defined care-related innovations require varied strategies of care and education, undertaken by a teacher of Education for Family Life in cooperation with the family, Churches, non-governmental organisations, and market institutions providing care and educational services. Care-related innovations in the new conditions of the Polish educational system under reform are intrinsically linked with formative efforts, especially those supporting the students in holistic development and thus deserve special attention of EFL teachers. They can include artistic activities, which the teacher of EFL can animate by preparing nativity plays with the participation of students, but also parents, siblings, and grandparents, or by organising an All Saints Ball, a Memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels in the school, Gratitude Day, Valentine's Day, Regional Culture Day, Healthy Nutrition Day, Healthy Living Promotion Day, etc. Each such initiative creates great opportunities for creativity, first at the planning stage, and then at the stage of developing specific organisational and methodological solutions.

The examples of innovation mentioned above create opportunities for creative design and realisation of educational projects in the reformed school. In practice, each of them has a mixed character (Dudel et al., 2014, 58), since they promote improvement in the planning of a EFL teacher's professional activities and invite the employment of innovative, creative methodological solutions with the intention of improving the classes (Dudel et al., 2014, 58).

It is noteworthy that each of these pedagogical innovations, due to its pertinence to all areas of educational and care-related work, is not only consistent with the guidelines of the *change for the better in education*, but also needed in the reformed Polish school. That is because it fosters the students' creativity and active attitudes, enabling them to responsibly participate in various social structures (e.g. the family and the local community). It can also contribute to the value of the Educations for Family Life class.

4. Innovation in daily education

Since it is no longer required to submit pedagogical innovations for the school superintendent's office and the school's supervisory body's approval (including filling out the Pedagogical Innovation Information Sheet) and since the formal requirements for initiating innovative activities are no longer in force, creative

undertakings of EFL teachers seem to be a much simpler matter, free from unnecessary red tape. It is indicative of the higher value placed on the teacher's initiative and creativity. Furthermore, innovative activities are to improve on the quality of work done in the school. However, they must not lead to a change in the school's profile or to a change in the rules of admission (e.g. undermining universal access to the school). A school's director is obligated, through pedagogical supervision, to support teachers of Education for Family Life in their innovative efforts and to provide them with the appropriate conditions for their realisation (Dz.U. of 2017, item 59, article 1(18); article 55(1.4); article 68(1.9), article 86(1.1); article 98(2.3)). The director is also entrusted with promoting the innovative curricular, methodological, and organisational solutions among the parents and in the local community. For that reason, it is also worth seeing to the creativity of school directors, as well as their skills in communication, cooperation and organisation.

Considering how crucial good organisation is for educational and care-related efforts of the school, it is advisable to develop in-school procedures. Although existing regulations do not specify any steps or determine whether teachers (including EFL teachers) still need to consent to participating in pedagogical innovations, it seems justified to create robust plans for any such activities and pass a resolution of the teachers' council regarding the introduction of innovations in the school (Kamińska, 2014, 231–232). These actions should be prefaced by the development of rules for innovation in the school (Dudel et al., 2014, 70 ff.), consulting the school board (or the teachers' council, if a school board has not been established), and securing written permission from author(s) the innovation's (Kamińska, 2014, 231–232).

There is no doubt that in the daily educational work a teacher's innovations must be rooted in what has previously been developed in theory and tested in practice. They need to build upon the achievements of pedagogy and the teacher's knowledge and experience. The changes that are being introduced can be, for example, substitutions of one methodological solution with another, like replacing worksheets with original e-worksheets, or traditional lessons with classes featuring guest experts and involving field trips (e.g. to a counselling centre for marriage and family, a healthcare institution or a Municipal Welfare Centre). An example of an organisational substitution would be a trip to a healthcare centre or a meeting with a gynaecologist, a NaPro technological specialist or a midwife. Similar educational value is represented by trips to places connected with customs and family traditions in the region, or by lessons of "living history", which accentuate timeless pro-family values based on the examples of historical figures and accounts of famous families.

The reformed Polish school also places value on creative initiatives of Education for Family Life teachers which supplement the curriculum with clear references to Christian values. Such changes are in line with the Polish Law on Education. They serve to enrich the Education for Family Life curriculum with numerous extracurricular questions and methodological innovations. They are also useful in breaking the routine and fostering the students' creativity and social skills (Ministry of National Education, Education Development Centre, 2017). At the same time, they present multiple opportunities to exemplify such values as the dignity of the human person, marriage, family, fidelity and responsibility, honesty, truth, friendship and love.

Apart from the innovative practices, the reformed Polish school asks of Education for Family Life teachers to disseminate good practices. So far, this aspect has been neglected, as evidenced by the lack of descriptions of innovative solutions both in the academic literature and educational publications and in online materials. By this, we do not mean detailed descriptions, which could tempt other interested teachers of Education for Family Life to retrace the actions of others in a copy-and-paste fashion. A greater educational value for the reformed Polish school could come from adapting good practices and ideas from other school environments, after they have been creatively transformed to suit the students' needs and predispositions, the teacher's abilities and the local conditions (e.g. the school, the class complement, the local community), in other words, the adaptation of innovations (Dudel et al., 2014, 57 ff.; Such, 2017, 2–3). Adaptation of innovations deserves special attention in educational practice. It requires the teacher of Education for Family Life to reach into the pedagogical experiences of other teachers, to undertake creative reflection and independent action. It drives the educational innovator to constantly seek out pedagogical inspirations which would enhance and enrich their didactic, formative and care-oriented tool set and to introduce novel methodological solutions.

5. Concluding remarks

The didactic, formative, and care-related activities of an innovative teacher of Education for Family Life in the reformed Polish school, as presented in the course of this paper, appear as a pressing task and a worthy challenge. Thanks to the creative efforts of a EFL teacher, students receive the support they deserve in developing their own various activities and creativity, and in acquiring social skills necessary for responsible participation in adult life. The teacher, in turn,

has many opportunities to undertake collaboration in other quarters, which is rightly held as important in the reformed school, including multidisciplinary coordination between Education for Family Life and Polish language, history and civics.

The innovative activity of a EFL teacher also serves to develop and improve their professional skills, since any change regarding education and care stimulates their own creativity. It also contributes to a better professional discharging of pedagogical duties. It requires a teacher of Education for Family Life to remain engaged and to search for novel curricular, methodological, formative, and care-related solutions, which meet the current needs of the students and the challenges of education, interact with all aspects of personality, foster comprehensive development and prepare for a responsible social life.

Innovative ideas within the discipline of Education for Family Life deserve to be promoted as part of good practices and educational projects undertaken by students under the EFL teacher's supervision. The visible gap in available materials suggests these proposals should be publicised and carefully evaluated. This, in turn, requires support for the Education for Family Life teacher (e.g. through in-school training programmes, workshops organised by institutions of higher learning, graduate courses) in becoming a thoughtful practitioner, creatively engaged in all aspects of school life. This goes beyond the mere awareness of the subject matter and calls for its thorough understanding and conscious, consistent introduction of innovations into the work of a Education for Family Life teacher.

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