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Doktorantūros komitetas:

**Doktorantūros komitetas:**

Pirmininkas ir darbo vadovas:

Doc., dr. **Rimantas Kočiūnas** (socialiniai mokslai, psichologija, 06S);  
Vilniaus universitetas.

Nariai:

Doc., dr. **Ona-Giedrutė Butkienė** (socialiniai mokslai, psichologija, 06S),  
Vilniaus Pedagoginis universitetas,

Prof., habil. dr. **Palmira Jucevičienė** (socialiniai mokslai, edukologija, 07S),  
Kauno Technologijos universitetas,

Prof., habil. dr. **Sigitas Kregždė** (socialiniai mokslai, psichologija, 06S),  
Vilniaus Pedagoginis universitetas,

Prof., habil. dr. **Romanas Plečkaitis** (humanitariniai mokslai, filosofija,  
01H), Vilniaus universitetas.

**Oponentai:**

Doc., dr. **Danutė Gailienė** (socialiniai mokslai, psichologija, 06S), Vilniaus  
universitetas,

Prof., habil. dr. **Vytis Viliūnas** (socialiniai mokslai, psichologija, 06S),  
Maskvos valstybinis universitetas.

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*Studentų g. 39, LT-2034 Vilnius*

*Tel.: 79 00 53, faks.: 79 05 48.*

## INTRODUCTION

The changes that are taking place in the social life and education both in this and in other countries set qualitatively new demands on schools and teachers. Many authors in different countries emphasize that the attitudes toward the process of education and understanding of the teachers' role in the process tend to change. Though school is quite a conservative institution of society, and teachers' impact on the students' development has been in the focus of the scholars' attention for many centuries starting with Socrates, in the recent decades remarkable changes both of school as institution and teachers' professional roles can be observed.

The British educators L.Anderson and R.Burns (1989) have presented a comprehensive definition of teaching according to which "teaching is an interpersonal, interactive activity, typically involving verbal communication, which is undertaken for the purpose of helping one or more students learn or change the ways which they can or will behave." M.Buchman distinguishes two aspects or two lives in teaching - the active life and the contemplative one. The active life of teaching is that fast-flowing teaching situation where teachers' and students' interactions and decisions constantly take place. The contemplative life of teaching means the thinking of those educational goals that teachers' are aiming at in their teaching. The former aspect can be defined as inter-personal while the latter one as intra-personal. Scandinavian scholars (T.Bergem et al, 1997) reviewing the changes in teachers' training taking place in the region, present a new definition of teachers' professionalism, which they describe in terms of individuals who: 1) see active personal learning as a professional tool; 2) value cooperation, interaction, and communication; 3) see themselves as both autonomous and responsible to society; 4) show devotion to their work. The Polish psychologist E.Czykwin claims that teachers view towards their own personality and the challenges they face in their professional life tend to change: more attention is paid to teachers' self-awareness rather than instrumental dispositions, and attempts are directed to helping the children grow and disclose themselves rather than trying to socialize them.

In the countries of long-lasting democratic traditions, all the three parties - educational politicians, educators and psychologists - consider the problem of values to be of special importance in the area of education. The British philosopher of education, T.H.McLaughlin (1997), states that "education and teaching activities are based on values which are inseparable part of the activity of teachers and educators" (p. 15). He further emphasizes that "relying of education and teaching on values is not just practical, but also logical" (p. 18). The Norwegian researcher T.Bergem also claims that education as a phenomenon is inevitably related to ethics and values, therefore in training teachers attempts should be made "to develop

professional – ethical relationship” (1993, p. 91). Intrinsic relation of values and education place certain demands for teachers’ value orientation.

The scholars define several tendencies relating to changes of the understanding of the essence of teaching and teachers’ role. Teaching is no longer considered as mere conveying of knowledge, but rather as a complex inter- and intra-personal process in which action and contemplation aspects are equally important. The significance of the teachers’ self-awareness, their value orientation, relation to the work, and treating oneself as a tool of his/her work which needs to be known and constantly developed, is emphasized.

Educational reform that is taking place in independent Lithuania set new demands on teachers and teachers’ training conception. For a long time teachers were mostly trained as specialist of a subject, and the knowledge in pedagogy and psychology they gained used to be rather formal, distracted from a school’s reality. Little attention was paid to teachers’ self-knowledge, self-awareness and their personal growth. The research conducted by the Lithuanian scholar Tamošiūnas (1998) proved that the experts considered teachers’ ability to maintain honest and open relationships with the students and their psychological competence to be the most desirable qualities of the teachers, meanwhile the faculty of the pedagogical universities was mostly oriented towards providing the students with professional knowledge. So, the society which has chosen a democratic way of development, set larger, qualitatively different demands for the teachers: to go over the holistic development of student, undertake the meaningful teaching based on personal experience of the learners, and to educate a free and responsible citizen relying his/her behavior on consciously chosen values.

It is obvious, that these aims can only be realized by the teachers who do not only have theoretical knowledge in pedagogy, psychology and the specific subject they teach, but who also possess certain personal qualities: communication skills, ability to consciously choose their professional challenges relying on their values, knowing themselves as human beings and professionals, and those who are able to reflect on their professional activities and make responsible choices in different educational situations. So, on one hand, the necessity of the advanced psychological training of teachers emerges, and on the other hand, the need of scientific research dealing with the issue of the possible changes of the teachers’ values and personal qualities in the training based on the principles of experiential learning is obvious.

In this research we aim to describe teachers’ values and personal qualities enabling them to facilitate students’ personal growth, also to underpin non-traditional ways of teachers’ personal and professional development and to figure out how teachers’ values and personal qualities change in the course of teachers’ participation in the groups based on the Gestalt approach.

## **Scientific novelty of the dissertation**

The approach to values in humanistic and existential psychology has been analyzed and developed, content (specific values chosen by the individuals) and process (one's relation to the values) aspects of the concept have been distinguished. Teachers' personal qualities in the context of their professional activity have been disclosed. Psychological aspects of experiential learning (the role of the reflection in the experiential learning, experiential learning as a source of personal knowledge, etc.) have been elaborated. The main principles of the Gestalt approach as the learning theory have been discussed and the training model based on the Gestalt approach has been elaborated.

The possibility of creating the psychological conditions encouraging changes of teachers' values and personality qualities has been experimentally proved. The conditions are as follows: learning from personal experience in Gestalt groups, oriented towards the expansion of the teachers' self-awareness, when the teachers' disclosure and sharing of the experience are being encouraged.

The relation among teachers values, personal qualities and changes of their professional behavior has been revealed: while the content and the sources of the teachers' values change, corresponding changes of their personal qualities take place and changes in their professional behavior occur.

## **Approbation and implementation of the program and research findings**

Two step workshops based on the Gestalt approach were led in a few regional centers of teachers' professional development in Lithuania, in the Institute of Teachers' qualification and separate schools, as well as for a group of school psychologists in the School psychological service center in Riga and for a group of Slovak teachers (participants of the "Step by step program").

The findings of the research have been presented for the teachers who participated in the research in a conference supported by the Open Society Fund, Lithuania.

The main results and conclusions of the research have been published in seven articles and presented at the international conference "Educational reform and teacher training" in Vilnius, September 1999.

## **Content of the dissertation**

The dissertation contains theoretical and empirical parts. The theoretical part consists of three major chapters. In the chapter under the title *The problem of values in psychology* we elaborated on the differences and similarities of the understanding of the concept by the representatives of humanistic (Rogers, Maslow, Wheeler, Jourard) and existential (May, Frankl) psychology. We also discussed

and presented the research survey of the relation between general and work values, the issue of the naturally occurring and deliberately stimulated changes of values, the problems of value education and the connection among values, attitudes and behavior.

In the chapter *Teachers' personal qualities in the context of their professional activities* the connection of the teachers' personal qualities (those elicited by Rogers, namely teachers' realness, unconditional positive regard of the students and empathy) as well as teachers' self-knowledge and self-awareness, on one hand, and their job performance on the other hand is discussed.

In the chapter under the heading *Psychological aspects of experiential learning* the following issues are discussed: the goals of experiential learning, the role of the group leader in the experiential learning, the importance of reflection in the experiential learning, experiential learning as a source of the personal knowledge, and problems of evaluation of the outcomes of experiential learning. Finally, Gestalt therapy as a learning theory is developed.

The results of the research are presented in 8 charts and 15 graphs. The list of the references contains 139 items in six languages.

### **Research aim and objectives**

The aim of the research is to reveal the characteristics of the teachers' values and personal qualities affecting their ability to facilitate students' significant learning and personal growth, to discuss nontraditional methods of teachers professional development and to underpin a model of the teachers postgraduate training based on the Gestalt approach oriented towards expanding their self-knowledge and self-awareness.

The following objectives were set in realizing this goal:

1. To present a survey of the contemporary theories and research in the areas of values, teachers' personal qualities and Gestalt approach as the learning theory, and to underpin a model for expanding teachers' self-knowledge and self-awareness.
2. To establish the effectiveness of the model by determining:
  - (a) how teachers' general and work values and the sources or the values change in the course of their participation in the program based on the model;
  - (b) how teachers' professional goals and problems they face in their professional life change along with the changes in the values;
  - (c) how participation in the program affects teachers' self-actualization tendencies;
  - (d) how teachers' empathy changes in the course of their participation in the program;

(e) what particular changes in teachers' professional behavior occur after their participation in the program.

### **Research hypotheses**

Relying on the survey of the literature presented in the theoretical part of the dissertation, the following hypotheses were set:

In the course of teachers' participation in the Gestalt groups their values and the content of the latter will change: the teachers will more often choose being values and become more relying on themselves, rather than outer sources while choosing of what really matters in their lives.

In the course of teachers' participation in the program based on the principles of Gestalt approach, the goals they set for themselves as professionals and the problems they face in their professional lives will change. It is expected, that the goals the teachers will set will be more student-oriented and the problems will be more related to human aspects of their work rather than those related to the teaching curriculum.

Participation in the program will affect the teachers' personal qualities: their empathy and self-actualization tendency will increase.

After the participation in the program the teachers' professional behavior will change: it will be based on different, more humanistic-oriented attitudes, and the teachers will implement new methods of teaching.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

In order to examine how teachers' values and personality qualities change in the course of their participation in the Gestalt groups, the teachers were invited to participate in the educational program consisting of two workshops 30 hours each.

The model of the program is based on the Gestalt approach and ideas of confluent education (Perls 1968, 1972; Brown 1975, 1990; Grendstad 1990, 1996). The main methodological principles of the model are those of holistic understanding of a human being and the Gestalt approach as learning theory. The main factor directed to promote the changes in teachers' values and personality qualities is expanding and deepening the teachers' self-awareness. We distinguish two aspects of the latter. *First*, awareness of the actual experiences here and now, and *second*, more general knowing of oneself as a person and a teacher. Perls maintains that awareness *per se* makes change, and accepting of ones thoughts and feelings are the most important factors of becoming oneself (paradoxical theory of change). G.Wheeler claims that self-awareness is an integrative force of the personality.

Appreciating one's experience and learning to rely on it while making important decisions and choices is one more important aspect of the model. In the group

work a few more therapeutic factors, elicited by Yalom (1983) were taken into consideration, i.e., group cohesiveness and mutual understanding of the members, universality, interpersonal learning, catharsis, insight and here and now focus. The program was structured, but flexible to some extent.

During the workshops three equally important issues were taken into consideration: personal experience of the teachers', their cognitive activity and interpersonal relations among the participants. The work of the participants is organized so that they learn by discovering. Thus the teachers acquire both the knowledge of basic ideas of humanistic psychology and education, and learn about themselves: become aware of their own reactions, of what the knowledge they get means to them personally and how they can apply what they learn in their everyday lives and work. The following methods are used in the program: work in small groups, guided imagery, "hot chair" work, free drawing, meditation, unfinished sentences, and journal writing.

In the first workshop attention is directed toward the participants' self-knowledge and self-awareness more generally, while in the second the teachers are provided with the possibility to learn about themselves as professionals more deeply.

## **Subjects**

115 teachers working at different school levels in a few regions and towns of Lithuania took part in the program and research. The experimental group consisted of 69 teachers (66 females and 3 males, average age being 38.6 years). The control group consisted of 46 teachers, 45 females and 1 male, average age being 37.1 years).

## **Means of assessment**

In the research we combined qualitative and quantitative methods of assessment.

In order to examine the teachers' values (their content and the sources) we used two questions from Deep Meaning Questionnaire (or Values questionnaire) elaborated by S.B.Shapiro (1976). The teachers were asked to answer the following questions in written form:

*What really matters for you in your personal life and for you as a teacher?  
How do you decide what really counts in your life?*

By the first question we attempted to separately clarify general and work values of the teachers. The latter question is directed to reveal the sources of the values.

Another questionnaire was designed to clarify the teachers' perception of the main goals they set for themselves and the problems they face in their professional lives. According to F.C.Emmerling, as quoted by C.Rogers in his *Freedom to Learn*

(1969, p.116), teachers can be divided into two groups regarding their perception of the problems they face in their work. Those who regard their most serious problems as developing learners' potentials, fall into an "open", or "positively oriented" group. The other category of the teachers' are those who tend to see their most urgent problems in negative terms and in terms of students' inability and deficiencies. This group is called "closed", or "negatively oriented". We also assume that the goals which teachers see as the most important in their professional life are important factors ruling teachers' professional behavior. So the teachers were asked to answer the following questions:

*What are the most important problems you face in your work as a teacher? Please name three in order of importance.*

*What do you consider to be the most important goals in your work as a teacher? Please name three in order of importance.*

For assessing the teachers' empathy we used The Questionnaire Measure of Emotional Empathy (Mehrabian, Epstein, 1972), and Shostrom's Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) was used to determine teachers' self-actualization tendencies.

The questionnaires were administered in the following order:

**The experimental group** filled the Empathy questionnaire and POI five times: just before and immediately after each step of the program (there was a two months period between the two workshops), then after four months after the whole program. They answered the questions about values, goals and problems before the first, immediately after the second step of the program and after four months after the whole program. Besides, immediately after the second workshop the participants were asked two following questions:

*How did the participation in the program affect your answers to the questions about values?*

*What specifically influenced your answers to the questions most significantly?*

After four months after the participation in the program the teachers answered two more questions:

*What did you get from the course as a person and as a teacher?*

*How did your professional behavior change as a result of the participation in the course?*

**The control group** was tested twice. There was a six months period between the two times. Meanwhile the members of the group did not take part in any course of the professional development.

The teachers' answers to the questions about the values, goals and problems were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The data acquired by using Empathy questionnaire and POI were analyzed by using Paired-Samples T-test.

# RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

## Changes of the teachers' values

The teachers' answers to the question *What really matters for you in your personal life and for you as a teacher?* reveal which values the teachers chose in their personal and professional life, i.e. their general and work values. While analyzing the answers to the question, we distinguished general and work values and grouped the answers of the subjects into several categories.

The subjects' answers to the question about general values were grouped into 11 categories (in the experimental group the answers were grouped into 9 categories before the participation in the program and two more categories emerged after the participation). The following are the typical answers for each of the category:

*Belonging, relationship with the family and other people:* my family – my wife, the children and other relatives, friends; to love and be loved; to feel compassion with the other people.

*Human qualities:* to be fair, sincerity and sensitivity; being honest and just.

*Personal and family health and wellbeing:* to be healthy and to have a job; health of my family; health and wellbeing of my family.

*Inner harmony and self-knowledge:* to know myself and to use my strengths; inner serenity and harmony; being myself.

*Search for the meaning and goal fulfillment:* to have a goal in my life and to strive for it; to know what I am striving for, to realize myself and live meaningfully.

*Knowledge, competence:* searching for the knowledge; competence.

*Safety:* to feel safe; not to worry about the future.

*Having a job:* to have a job; not to be afraid to lose the job.

*Being values:* love; goodness; truth; justice.

*Knowing and accepting the people:* to understand the other people; to accept the other people, to be able to listen and hear them; to accept people, especially the children, the way they are.

*Material wealth:* to have a solid material basis; for my children and me to have the most important things for living.

The percentage of the teachers who chose each category of the values in the three stages of the research (1st testing – before the participation in the program, 2<sup>nd</sup> testing – immediately after the program, 3<sup>rd</sup> testing – after four months after the program) and the corresponding data of the control group were calculated.

As it is seen from the table, after the teachers participated in the program, the major changes occurred in the four categories of their general values: the impor-

**Table 1.** Changes in general values (percentage of the experimental and control groups of the teachers choosing the following categories of values)

Values	Experimental group			Control group	
	1 testing	2 testing	3 testing	1 testing	2 testing
Belonging, relations	69.3	31.5 (I-II)	67.2	57.7	44.4
Human qualities	33.9	14.7 (I-II)	27.3	33.3	28.9
Wealth and health	6.4	12.8	0	17.7	13.3
Inner harmony, self-knowledge	10.6 (I-III)	73.5 (I-II)	35.7 (II-III)	13.8 (E II, III)	0
Meaning, goal fulfillment	8.5	6.4	13.0	8.9	2.2 (E III)
Knowledge, competence	6.4	0	0	11.1	0
Safety	6.4	6.4	2.1	2.2	6.7
Having a job	16.8	0	6.4	8.9	8.9
Being values	10.6	18.9 (I-II)	4.4 (II-III)	8.9	15.5
Knowing and accepting the people	0	18.9	8.5	0	0
Material wealth	0	2.1	2.1	14.3 (E II, III)	8.9

I-II: significant difference between 1 and 2 testing ( $p < 0.05$ )

I-III: significant difference between 1 and 3 testing ( $p < 0.05$ )

II-III: significant difference between 2 and 3 testing ( $p < 0.05$ )

E - II: significant difference between the corresponding results of the experimental and control groups ( $p < 0.05$ ).

tance of inner harmony and self-knowledge and being values significantly increased, while the importance of belonging, relations and human qualities decreased. An important new category of values – knowing and accepting the people – emerged. In 4 months after the participation in the program the values of belonging and human qualities regained their original significance. The importance of inner harmony and self-knowledge decreased but still remained significantly higher than in the first testing. No significant changes occurred in the content of general values in the control group.

The work values named by the subjects were grouped into 10 categories (the subjects of the experimental group named 7 categories before the participation in the program and 3 new categories of work values emerged after the participation). The following are the typical answers for each of the category:

*Relationships with the colleagues and students:* to have good relationship with the colleagues; to be able to communicate with the young people successfully.

*Professional growth and development:* to grow as a professional; not to stay at the same place as a professional; to learn from my own experience and that of the other people.

*Loving the job and good performance:* to do the job I love; to love my job; to fulfill my duty well.

*Development of students' personality:* to help the children to live among the people; to teach the students to be independent; to teach the children to defend their opinion.

*Appreciation and approval of the others:* appreciating of my efforts by the others; to be approved by the people around me.

*Creating a good atmosphere in a classroom:* to create a comfortable and calm atmosphere in a classroom; to give the children as much warmth as possible.

*Providing the knowledge:* to teach my subject; to give the students knowledge.

*Realizing being values at work:* love for the human beings; to bring the goodness to the people.

*Understanding and accepting the people:* to understand the students and to help them disclose their potentials; to be able to accept the students the way they are.

*Helping students to learn about themselves and find a meaning of life:* to teach the children to know themselves; helping the students to become aware of their feelings and actions; to help the children to look for the meaning of their lives.

The changes of the teachers' work values are presented at Table 2.

It is seen in the table that teachers' work values changed not as remarkably as general values. The only value category, in which the change was significant, was creating a good classroom atmosphere for the children. The importance of the category for the teachers increased even more in 4 months after the whole program. After the teachers participated in the program three important categories of work values emerged, i.e. realizing being values at work, accepting the people and helping students to learn about themselves and find the meaning of life. Though after 4 months the percentage of the subjects naming those values decreased, the values still remained important for teachers. In the control group significant changes of work values did not occur in the period of 6 months.

The comparison of general and work values shows that there are several similar categories of values: first, the relationships with the people, second, the being values, and third, the knowing, understanding and accepting the people. Only the second category had a similar pattern of change in the different stages of the research: before the participation in the program none of the subjects had mentioned

**Table 2.** Changes in the work values (percentage of the experimental and control groups' teachers who chose the following categories of values)

Values	Experimental group			Control group	
	1 testing	2 testing	3 testing	1 testing	2 testing
Relationship with the colleagues and students	35.7	33.6	42.1	19.9 (E I,II,III)	11.0 (E I,II,III)
Professional growth	6.4	8.5	12.8	13.2	6.7
Loving the job, good performance	16.8	12.8	16.8	4.4	6.7
Development of students' personality	16.8	10.6	16.8	33.3 (E I,II,III)	31.3 (E I,II,III)
Appreciation and approval of the others	4.2	2.1	6.4	0	4.4
Creating a good classroom atmosphere	2.1	6.4 (I-II)	8.5 (I-III)	4.4	0
Providing the knowledge	4.2	2.1	4.2	4.4	11.0
Realizing being values at work	0	16.8	14.7	13.2	6.7
Accepting the people	0	27.3	20.9	0	0
Helping students to learn about themselves and find a meaning of life	0	10.6	4.2	0	0

I-II - significant difference between 1 and 2 testing ( $p < 0.05$ )

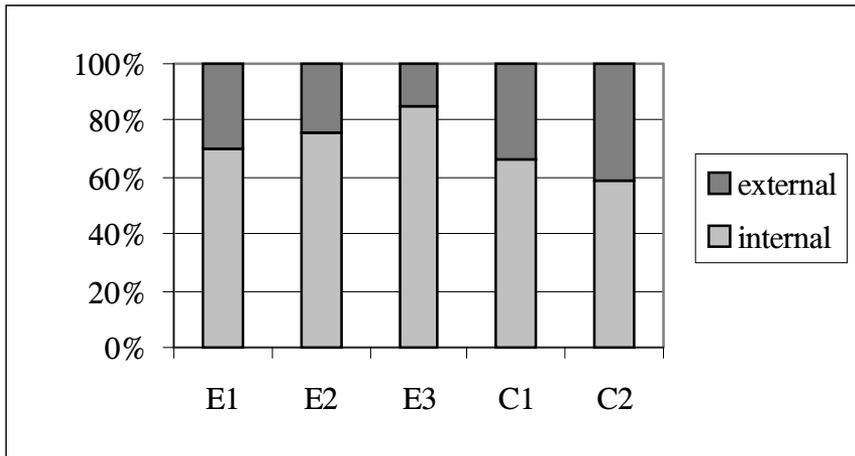
I-III - significant difference between 1 and 3 testing ( $p < 0.05$ ).

E I, II, III - significant difference between corresponding results of the experimental and controls groups ( $p < 0.05$ ).

the value; immediately after the participation it was mentioned by 18.9% teachers as general value and by 27.3% of the teachers as work value, and in 4 months after the whole program - by 8.5% and 20.9% of the subjects, respectively.

The answers to the question *How do you decide what really matters in your life?* reveal locus, or the source of the chosen values. Those can be categorized into two groups: such answers as "I rely on my feelings and intuition", "I know it from my experience" fall into *internal* group. The answers such as "I think how the other people will feel or think", or "It depends on the situation" are considered to be *external*. That is, people either tend to make decisions about values relying on themselves, or they rely on other people and/or situation. The graph in Fig. 1 illustrates the distribution of the percentage of internal and external sources of values of the teachers' of the experimental and control groups.

E - results of the experimental group, C - results of the control group. Figures show the number of the testing.



**Fig. 1.** Distribution of internal and external sources of values.

It is seen in a graph that before the teachers of the experimental group participated in the program, their sources of the values and those of the control group differed slightly. After the teachers of experimental group participated in the program, their tendency to rely on the internal sources of values increased and the tendency grew in the period of four months after the participation in the whole program.

In Table 3 the dynamics of the sources of values in the course of teacher par-

**Table 3.** Changes of the sources of values in the course of the teachers' participation in the program (the figures mean the percentage of the subjects' naming the source).

Sources of the values	Experimental group			Control group	
	1 testing	2 testing	3 testing	1 testing	2 testing
Intuition, feelings	56.5	76.1 (I-II)	73.9 (I-III)	53.3	36.8 (E II, III)
Reasoning, consideration	26.1	17.4	23.9	15.6	21.1
Experience	17.4	6.6	23.9 (II-III)	6.7	10.5
Conscience	2.2	0	0	0	0
What is useful for me	2.2	0	0	0	0
Situation, circumstance	21.8	15.2	8.7 (I-III)	13.3 (E I)	15.6
Feelings and opinions of the other people	13.0	17.4	10.9	22.2 (E I, III)	31.7 (E I,III)
Upbringing, education	8.6	0	2.2	0	0
Moral attitudes of a society	0	0	0	4.4	0

ticipation in the program is shown more specifically. If a teacher named two or more sources of values in one answer, they all were assessed. For instance, if the answer was “I consider the situation and rely on my intuition”, it fell into two categories: external (situation) and internal (intuition). In the table 1 to 5 sources of the values are internal, while the rest are external.

As it is seen in the table, in the first testing the subjects of both the experimental and control groups most often named intuition and feelings as the source of their values. Though the control group teachers significantly more often relied on other people and more rarely on the situation as a source of value, in general there was no significant difference relating externality – internality between the two groups. In the period of 6 months the sources of values of the control group did not change significantly.

After the teachers of the experimental group participated in the program their tendency to rely on their feelings while choosing their values increased significantly. The tendency to rely on a situation and circumstances was decreasing during the period.

Further, the teachers’ answers to the question about the goals they set for themselves as professionals and the problems they face in their work were analyzed. 12 categories of teachers’ professional goals were singled out. They were as follows: 1) development of students’ personalities and skills necessary in life; 2) maintaining the relationships with the students, their parents and colleagues; 3) providing the knowledge; 4) professional and personal growth; 5) knowing the students; 6) realization of specific values at work; 7) teaching the children to know themselves; 8) accepting and respecting the students; 9) creating a supportive atmosphere in the classroom; 10) being oneself; 11) being a model, 12) evoking the desire to learn. The categories from 1 to 6 were on the list before participating in the program while those from 7 to 12 appeared after.

The majority of teachers in both groups considered development of students’ personalities and skills necessary in life to be their most important goal. The first testing revealed differences between the control and experimental groups: the subjects of the latter were significantly more concerned about their personal and professional growth and knowing their students’ ( $p < 0.05$ ).

After the teachers of the experimental group participated in the training program, their perception of the goals they set for themselves in their work changed remarkably: their concern about keeping good relations with the others decreased (from 44.7% up to 34.1%), and the number of the teachers thinking that their professional and personal growth is an important goal increased (from 40.8% up to 51.1%). In the list of the goals new issues appeared: to teach students to know themselves – 10.7%, accept and respect students the way they are – 12.8%, to

create a warm atmosphere in the classroom – 10.7%. In the period of four months after the participation in the program the importance of two latter goals increased even more (each up to 14.9%).

The analysis of the teachers' answers to the question *What are the most important problems you are facing in your work as a teacher?* showed that the answers could not be classified just into two groups (positively and negatively oriented), as it was presented in Emmerling's research. In our case the teachers' answers were much more varied. They were grouped into the following nine categories: 1) poor relationships with the colleagues and administration; 2) lack of professional competence; 3) relationships between the school and society; 4) objective problems; 5) material and financial problems; 6) other colleagues' negative attitude toward the children; 7) problems relating to the parents of the students'; 8) psychological problems; 9) negatively oriented problems.

The problems the teachers most often mentioned as typical in their professional life before their participation in the training were poor relationships with their principles and colleagues (31.9%), lack of professional competence (34.1%) and those called by Emmerling negatively oriented, i.e. lack of students' motivation to learn, their passivity, etc. (34.1%). As in the case of professional goals, the differences between the control and experimental groups were obvious already in the first testing. The subjects of the former significantly more often mentioned the following categories of problems: material and financial difficulties, problems related to the students' parents and those negatively oriented. The teachers of the experimental group more often mentioned lack of professional competence, poor relationships with the colleagues and principles, and psychological problems. The differences between the groups can be explained by the fact that the teachers of the experimental group freely chose to participate in the psychological training program oriented toward self-knowledge, knowing the students and their own professional and personal growth. Their interests and concerns are reflected in the perception of the professional goals and the problems they face at work.

After the teachers of the experimental group participated in the training program, their tendency to perceive poor relations as the main problem increased even more – up to 42.6%, while the frequency of the negatively oriented problems the lack of professional competence decreased (to 29.8% and 19.2%, respectively). The former tendency can be explained by reluctance of the school administration to accept the novelties the participants of the program tended to implement into their classrooms: after the participation in the program the teachers mentioned such specific difficulties of the relationships with the principles and colleagues as “unwillingness of the administration to implement changes” and the like.

After the participation in the whole program the teachers were asked two more

questions: *How did the participation in the program affect your answers to the questions about values?* and *What specifically influenced your answers to the questions most significantly?*

The teachers' answers to the questions showed what aspects of the experience the teachers acquired while participating in the program were important to them in relation to the changes of their values. The answers to the first question were rather different in respect of both the amount and the content. They were grouped into four categories. Below are listed the typical unedited answers of each category:

1. Specific values did not change, but the attitude towards the values changed:
  - My values did not change, but I got a new perspective about my values.
  - I became more self-confident and am not afraid to look “imperfect” when I answer the questions about the values.
  - My conviction that a human being is the ultimate value became stronger. The participation in the course did not change my values, but it confirmed that I have a right to freely choose what really matters for me.
2. The values changed distinctively:
  - The course totally changed my answers to the questions. I became aware that the most important thing for me is to live here and now and to experience different feelings. I realized that I have my own values.
  - The participation in the program helped me to perceive the human life in a quite different way.
  - The program encouraged me to think about things I even did not know had existed before.
3. The participation in the program encouraged awareness and reflection:
  - The participation in the program made me think about my life and myself.
  - I drew my attention towards myself in a positive way: earlier I only used to blame myself, and now I understand, that it is important not to adjust to the others but to be myself.
  - I learned to listen to my inner voice and trust it while deciding on what is important in my life.
4. The self-knowledge became deeper:
  - I got a deeper understanding of my possibilities as a teacher.
  - I deeper understood myself as a human being. Now when I do something, I know it is right, and I see the meaning of my work.

The number or the subject who gave the answers of the listed categories spread as follows: 34.9%, 16.3%, 27.9% and 20.9%, respectively. The analysis of the answers shows that the teachers were aware of the changes of their values or the relation to the values. It is interesting to note that in some instances the teachers' content of the values did change (new categories of the values emerged) even in

the cases when the participants themselves claimed that just their attitude towards the values changed.

The teachers' answers to the question *What specifically influenced your answers to the questions most significantly?* were grouped into six categories. The following are the examples of the answers of each category:

1. Deepened awareness, reflection and personally meaningful discoveries:
  - The experience I got while listening to my body and learning to be aware of myself.
  - The discovery that much in my life depends on myself.
  - I realized that tears not necessarily mean weakness and that it is possible to manage the anger.
  - I experienced that I can afford to make mistakes and thus became freer.
  - I learned to listen to myself and recognize my feelings.
2. Communication and a good atmosphere in the group:
  - The atmosphere of safety, good will and openness in a group.
  - The good - willingness of the members of a group and nonjudgmental attitude.
  - No rules or formulas of the "right" behavior were given. I experienced the joy of discovery and was not afraid to make mistakes or to be laughed at.
3. The possibility to name one's thoughts, feelings and to share them with a group:
  - For me it was very important that I got the possibility to express my thoughts loudly. Earlier I would not dare to share my thoughts.
  - Saying loudly what I thought gave me self-confidence.
  - Sharing of the feelings and experiences let me feel close with a group.
4. Specific methods used in the program:
  - Free drawing and analysis of the drawings mostly influenced my answers.
  - Meditation exercises.
  - Drawings and unfinished sentences.
5. Peculiarities of the group leader:
  - Calmness and calm voice of the leader.
  - The freedom given by the leader, no pushing or judgement.
6. The acquired knowledge:
  - My answers were influenced by what I learned about subpersonalities and will.
  - I learned many new things.

The number of the subject who gave the answers of the listed categories spread as follows: 52.9%, 17.7%, 9.8%, 5.9%, 5.9% and 7.8%, respectively. Thus, more than a half of the subjects claimed that changes of the values were caused by the

personal experience and significant personal discoveries, every sixth thought that the main factor causing the change was the group climate and almost 10% of the teachers considered that the changes were mainly promoted by the naming and sharing the feelings in a group. It is obvious that the teachers attribute the changes of the values basically to the emotional rather than cognitive aspects of their experience.

### Changes of the teachers' personal qualities

The results obtained using the Questionnaire of Emotional Empathy revealed a slight dynamics of the quality in the course of teachers' participation in the training program. The results are presented in Table 4.

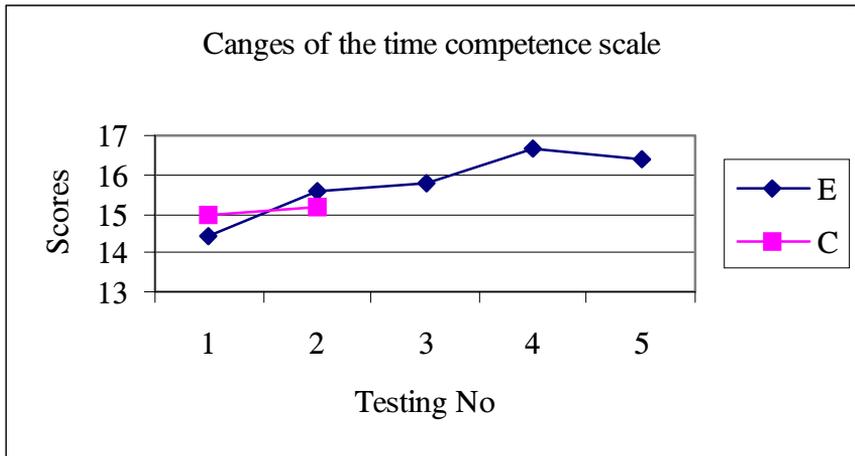
As it is seen from the table, initially, empathy mean scores of the experimental and control groups did not differ significantly. In a period of six months the mean score of the control group slightly decreased. After the experimental group participated in the first step of the program, the mean score of the teachers' empathy increased from 39.1 to 41.2 ( $p=0.20$ ). When the experimental group was tested just before their participation in the second step of the program, i.e. two months after the first step, their empathy score was even lower than initially, but it increased remarkably after the whole program (up to 43.5). Four months after the teachers had finished their training saw their empathy level the same as it was just after their participation in the program. So teachers' empathy tends to increase while they participate in the program based on the Gestalt approach, and it remains stable for a certain time (at least four months).

The further analysis of the data revealed that those teachers who had low and average score while first tested, after participating in the program tended to show higher results, and those whose scores at the beginning were much higher than average tended to have more moderate scores afterwards.

Analyzing the data of the POI we first counted the mean scores of the two main scales. The changes in the teachers' time competence scale are presented in Fig.2.

**Table 4.** Dynamics of the teachers' empathy in the course of their participation in the program.

Group		Means and standard deviations of the groups				
		1 testing	2 testing	3 testing	4 testing	5 testing
Exper.	Mean	39.1	41.2	37.1	43.5	43.3
	Std. Dev.	16.9	16.6	19.9	19.9	18.9
Control	Mean	37.7	35.1			
	Std. Dev.	16.3	14.7			



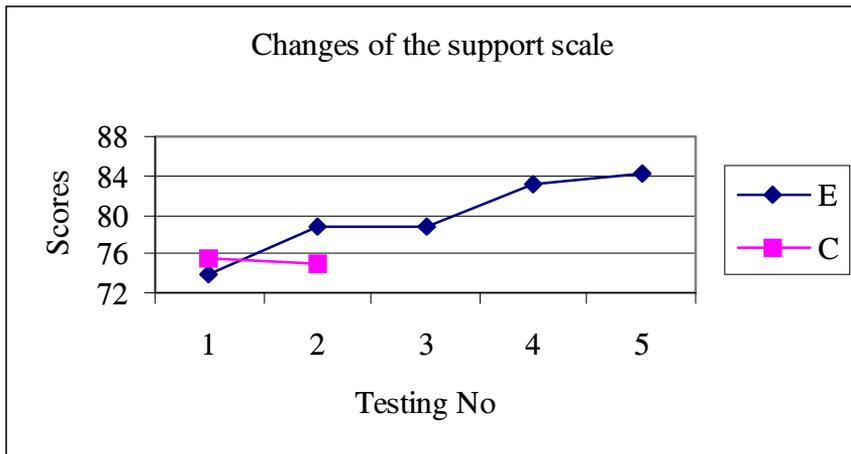
**Fig. 2.** Changes of the time competence of the teachers in the experimental (E) and control (C) groups.

It is seen in the graph that before the experimental group teachers participated in the program their time competence score was slightly lower than that of the control group. After the participation in the first step of the program, the time competence of the experimental group teachers improved significantly (from 14.5 up to 15.4,  $p < 0.001$ ). After the participation in the second step of the program, the score increased even more and remained significantly higher after four months ( $p < 0.006$ ). The score of the control group did not change significantly in the period of 6 months.

In the course of the participation in the program the number of the teachers reckoned among self-actualizing personalities according to the time competence/time incompetence ratio was constantly growing from 4.5% in the first to 16.0% in the fourth testing and 13.0% in the fifth. So the teachers became more present oriented, living more fully in the here and now, and able to tie the past and the future to the present in a meaningful way.

The other main scale of the inventory is the support scale. The changes in the teachers' support scale are shown in Fig. 3.

It can be seen in the graph that in the first testing the scores of the support scales of the control and experimental groups were almost the same. In the period of six months the score of the control group did not change while after the experimental group teachers participated in the first step of the program their score of the support scale changed significantly (from 73.8 to 78.7,  $p < 0.000$ ). The score also in-



**Fig. 3.** Changes of the support scale of the teachers in the experimental (E) and control (C) groups.

creased significantly after the teachers participated in the second workshop (from 78.6 to 83.0,  $p < 0.001$ ). The score kept growing in the period of 4 months after the participation in the whole program.

According to the self-support/other-support ratio there were no self-actualizing teachers in the experimental group before their participation in the program, while after the first step of the program the number of self-actualizing teachers was 2.9%, and the number kept growing in the successive testings (4.7%, 6.0% and 8.5%, respectively).

The analysis of the scores of the complementary scales of Shostrom's POI shows that after the first workshop the scores of the teachers increased in all scales but one (nature of man, measuring the view of the nature of a human being and masculinity/femininity). The most significant changes occurred in the following scales: existentiality (ability to react situationally or existentially without rigid adherence to principles); feeling reactivity (sensitivity to one's own needs and feelings); and capacity for intimate contact. Changes in the scores of some scales (existentiality, self-acceptance, synergy, and spontaneity) continued to increase in the period between the first and second workshops and just before the second workshop (3<sup>rd</sup> testing) were significantly higher than immediately after the first one (2<sup>nd</sup> testing). After the second workshop (4<sup>th</sup> testing compared to the 3<sup>rd</sup>) the scores of all scales increased, most significantly the following ones: self-regard, existentiality, capacity for intimate contact, and feeling reactivity. The results show that majority of the changes, which took place in the course of the teacher's participation in the

program stayed stable for the period of four months (the scores of self-regard and self-acceptance slightly decreased, but remained significantly higher than before the training).

The POI scores of the control group initially did not differ significantly from those of the experimental group. There were only slight differences of the first testing and the re-test after six months of the control group.

### **Analysis of the teachers' subjective experience of the program and changes of their professional behavior**

In four months after the participation in the program the teachers answered two more questions. The first one was: *What did you get from the course as a person and as a teacher?*

While answering to the first part of the question more than half of the teachers mentioned two aspects of their experience: (a) deepened self-awareness and (b) increased self-confidence. Some of the other answers were as follows: "I learned how to realize my own need to change"; "I realized that I am somebody"; "I understood that I cannot take responsibility for the others"; "I learned to be aware of my feelings and express them verbally".

While answering to the second part of the question, the majority of the subjects claimed that as teachers they realized that it is important to accept the students the way they are, they became aware of their strengths and weaknesses as teachers and learned how to control their anger. A few of the less typical answers were as follows: "I realized that I chose my profession not by an incident and understood what qualities of mine influenced the choice"; "I am not afraid to defend my point of view if it is for the children's benefit"; "I realized that it is not my knowledge but rather my communication skills and the ability to convey the knowledge that really matters".

The other question answered by the teachers in 4 months after their participation in the program was: *How did your professional behavior change as a result of the participation in the course?*

The answers were grouped into five categories. The categories and the examples of the specific answers were as follows:

1. *Decline of the old modes of behavior*: "I stopped trying to change or reform the children", "I ceased moralizing about the meaning of learning".
2. *Important personal qualities got more expression*: "I became more tolerant"; "I became more sincere and am not afraid to be this way with the students and the colleagues"; "I became calmer and more patient".
3. *Changes in communication*: "I smile more often, so I am less tired and associate easier not only with the children but also with the colleagues"; "I

became better at listening to the people and feel more self-confident while communicating with the students and the colleagues”; “I learned to forgive”.

4. *Changes in relation to oneself*: “I more trust myself and feel much stronger”; “After the course I became calmer and stronger, I became more critical in relation to myself, I reflect more and stay with myself more often”; “I more often analyze my actions and decisions”.
5. *Applying new approaches and teaching methods in the classroom*: “I try to understand every student and develop their self-esteem”, “I understand that providing the knowledge it is not as important as creating the conditions for the students to discover, to develop their imagery and help them to learn about themselves, and I try to work in this direction”; “I try to figure out what need of a child is beneath each of the action and I teach the children to find appropriate ways of meeting their needs”; “I share my experiences with the students and emphasize our similarities”; “I realized that I must direct my teaching towards developing child’s personality rather than knowledge or achieving some ‘result’ “.

The teachers’ descriptions of their experience they got while participating in the program and their notions about the changes of their behavior enriched the data obtained by quantitative methods and revealed aspects of the teachers’ experience which would not be disclosed while using only formalized quantitative questionnaires.

## **Discussion**

The research revealed a few tendencies of the changes of the teachers’ values in the course of their participation in the program based on the model of the Gestalt approach as learning theory.

First, the content of values, which the teachers mentioned as important for them has changed. Among the general values, the importance of the inner harmony and self-knowledge grew most of all; a new category, namely, knowing and understanding the people, appeared among the teachers’ values mentioned by the experimental group teachers. This shows increased humanistic orientation of the teachers both in relation to themselves and to other people (students). The work values changed respectively: the importance of creating a good classroom atmosphere for the students increased significantly, new categories of the work values (knowing and accepting the students the way they are, helping the students to learn about themselves and find the meaning of their lives) appeared.

Second, after the teachers participated in the program, the sources of their values have changed: a distinct move to the internalization of the sources of the values

took place. The tendency to rely on one's feelings and intuition while deciding on what really counts in one's life increased most significantly, and the tendency to rely on a situation and external circumstances decreased. The tendencies became even more distinct in 4 months after the participation in the program.

The representatives of humanistic psychology (Rogers, Perls, Maslow, Jourard) maintain that an individual's ability to rely on him/herself is a decisive characteristic of one's psychological maturity. For instance, Rogers claims that individuals' self-direction, or relying on his/her organism while making choices of values ensures moving "in the direction of personal growth and maturity" (1968, p. 253). Affected by the external pressure, people learn to reject their own experience and move the locus of the values to the others. Then the content of the values – specific values, which an individual claims to be important, is not authentic, but introjected. In this respect Maslow wrote: "We are trying the new experiment of differentiating value-as-fact from value-as-wish, hoping thereby to discover values that we can believe in because they are true rather because they are gratifying illusions" (1979, p.145). The values the sources of which are external *are* "values-as-wish", they are not an integral part of the personality and cannot affect one's behavior.

The disconnection from the inner sources of valuing can be overcome, according to Rogers, in the process of psychotherapy, when individual's contact with his/her experience is restored. The individuals who are in touch with their experience and rely on inner sources of the valuing "come to value such directions as sincerity, independence, self-direction, self-knowledge, social responsivity, social responsibility, and loving interpersonal relationships" (1969, p. 256).

While participating in our program the teachers were constantly encouraged to be aware of their experience moment by moment and to make the meaning of the experience. As a result, they became more self-relying while choosing what really matters in their lives. The importance of feelings and intuition as a source of the values grew at the expense of merely intellectual decisions about values. According to Rogers, relying on both feelings and thought is a positive sign in respect to the personal growth: "(individual) realizes that if he can trust all of himself, his feelings and intuition may be wiser than his mind, that as total person he can be more sensitive and accurate than his thoughts alone" (1969, p. 250).

Research proves the relation between self-awareness on the one hand, and morality, or value-based behavior on the other. D.Wegner and R.R.Vallacher (1977) claim that self-awareness (or, as they prefer to call it, 'self-focussed attention') increases an individual's responsibility and internal causality of his/her behavior. While being aware of him/herself, an individual builds a self-theory, and "the individual who behaves according to his mature self-theory is both moral and independent" (p. 276). In our research, when the teachers during the workshops were en-

couraged to practice self-awareness, their values and the sources of the latter changed though there were no direct attempts made to influence them. The results of the research proved the relation between the content and the sources of the values: when the teachers became more inner-oriented while choosing their values, such categories of humanistically oriented values as inner harmony, knowing the people, justice and love in relation to the students were mentioned more often.

Along with the changes in teachers' values, the main professional goals set by the teachers have changed. The number of the teachers who considered helping the students to learn about themselves and find the meaning in their lives increased, as well as the number of teachers mentioning respecting and accepting the students and creating supportive atmosphere in a classroom as their main professional goals. The findings confirm conclusions of the scholars about interrelation of values and teachers' implicit theories on which their professional behavior is based (Bergem, 1993; Handal, Lauvaas, 1983). As the survey conducted by the Norwegian scientists (Johannessen et al, 1997) has shown, the students value exactly those qualities and behaviors of the teachers which the teachers in our research tended to name as their professional goals after the participation in the program. Bandura and Lazarus claim that "feeling secure, being accepted and well-being are important to people, and such positive emotions (feelings) relate positively to learning (quoted by Johannessen et al, 1997). So there is a sound reason to believe that after the training program the teachers will have better possibilities to communicate with their students and thus to create better conditions for their learning.

The answers of the teachers to the questions on *how* their values changed in the course of their participation in the program and *what promoted the changes*, show that the teachers were aware of the changes of their values (both their content and sources) and the conditions influencing the changes. Calm atmosphere in the group, reflection and sharing the feelings with the members of a group, making meaning of the experience were the changes promoting factors named by our subjects.

The comparison of values most often mentioned in our research with Rokeach's lists of terminal and instrumental values shows that the majority of values mentioned by our subjects fall into the category of the terminal values. Those are friendship, love (in our research they were grouped into the category "belonging, relationships with the family and other people"), family security, comfortable life ("personal and family health and wellbeing" and "material wealth", respectively), inner harmony (in our research the latter was united in one category with knowing oneself) and some of the being values mentioned by the teachers (freedom, wisdom). The teachers in our research mentioned just one instrumental value from the Rokeach list, namely, honesty (falling into the category of "human qualities").

The fact that in our research terminal values were mentioned considerably more

often than instrumental could be explained by the peculiarities of the research methodology. In the research conducted using Rokeach (or alike) lists of the values, the subjects rank the given values (separately terminal and instrumental), they have limited possibilities to chose from and cannot supplement the lists by the values which *they* mean are important to them. Meanwhile, when the individuals freely answer the question on what really matters in their lives, they name values of a wider spectrum and ontological, rather than instrumental values, which in Rokeach list are expressed by adjectives (courageous, clean, polite, etc.). In our opinion, by qualitative research of the values when the individuals are asked to freely answer the questions about values, much richer and more exhaustive information is obtained.

The research proved that in the course of the teachers' participation in the program their empathy tended to increase (though not significantly) and it remained stable for the period of four months.

Many scholars claim that empathy is closely related to knowing oneself. R.Kvalsund (1995) maintains that without 'knowing thyself' empathy is superficial (a technique). N.Kagan (quoted by U.Holm, 1996) states that in order for an individual to experience empathetic response he/she must have an ability to endure the feeling evoked by the contact with the other without repressing it or being overwhelmed by anxiety. If one is not able to tolerate a particular feeling in oneself, one cannot correctly recognize the feeling in someone else. Goleman (1996) writes in a similar way: "Empathy builds on self-awareness; the more open we are to our own emotions, the more skilled we will be in reading feelings" (p. 96). We believe that in our program the participants, due to their engagement into awareness training (especially that of their feelings), have become more tolerant towards their own feelings and thus their ability for empathetic understanding of the others increased. The fact that the teachers whose empathy scores were initially rather high tended to show lower scores after the program, might have at least two explanations. First, the increased teachers' self-awareness and self-knowledge they gained during the participation in the program might have corrected (made more adequate) their self-esteem; second, the teachers' wish to give socially desirable answers might have decreased due to their deepened self-awareness and self-acceptance.

In the course of the teachers participation in the program their self-actualizing tendency was constantly growing: significant differences of the scores of all 12 scales of the POI were observed (comparing the results of the first and the fifth testing).

Increased time competence of the teachers indicates their growing ability "to tie past and future to the present in a meaningful continuity" (Shostrom, 1966), and increased tendency to relate their aspirations to present working goals.

The representatives of the Gestalt approach consider individual's ability "to

stay in the now” to be not just an important characteristic of a mature personality but also a significant prerequisite for the learning from experience (Brown, Grendstad). A learner can only discover something being concentrated in the now, since the experience is always related to what is taking place here and now, and the realization of the meaning of the material the learner is dealing with is only possible in an immediate contact with the “object of the study”. So the increased teachers’ time competence, partly their ability to stay in the present, will enable them to keep in contact with their experience and better learn from it.

The scores of the other major scale of the POI, support ratio, show the growing inner-direction of the teachers - participant of the program. The percentage of the self-actualizing teachers in the experimental group increased from 0% before the program to 8.5% after four months after the participation.

Shostrom defines inner - directed person as the one who “goes through life apparently independent, but still obeying this internal piloting, who is guided by internal motivations rather than external influences”. The representatives of humanistic psychology also consider individual’s relying on his/herself one of the most important characteristics of the mature personality. In our research, an increased tendency of the teachers’ to rely on themselves rather than obeying external pressure means that the teachers became stronger while withstanding the social pressure and more independent when making important decisions, among the others - those related to the goals and modes of behavior. This tendency corresponds with the findings of the research of values: after participation in the program the teachers more often based their value decisions on the inner sources.

The changes of the scores of the complementary scales of POI also indicate significant changes of the various characteristics of the teachers’ self-actualization tendencies.

Growth of the scores of the scales of self-actualizing values and existentiality indicate that the values the teachers tended to choose after participation in the program were more like those of the self-actualizing personalities; on the other hand, the teachers became less dogmatic and more flexible in applying values in their life. The results correspond to those of the value research: after the participation in the program the teachers more often mentioned such general values typical of self-actualizing personalities, such as inner harmony, searching for the meaning and goal fulfillment, as well as being values.

Increase in the scores of the feeling reactivity and spontaneity scales indicate changes in the emotional domain: in the course of the participation in the program the teachers became more sensitive to their feelings and needs and more capable to express them. To some extent, those characteristics constitute the basis for empathy: the individual’s ability to be aware of his/her feelings, attentiveness to his/her

needs and the ability to express the feelings enables the individual to understand emotions of the other people and express the understanding, i.e. to experience the empathetic feelings and to behave empathetically. The dynamic of the two scales coincides with the changes of the empathy scale. The teachers' sensitivity to their feelings and needs might have been promoted by the peculiarities of the group work, which the participants of the program noted as important factors affecting the changes of the values: safe, non-judgmental atmosphere, benevolence of the group members, and so on.

Constant growth of the scores of acceptance of aggression and capacity for intimate contact scales in the course of the teachers' participation in the program indicates their increased interpersonal sensitivity. Increased score of the acceptance of aggression shows teachers' improved ability to accept their aggressiveness as natural without oppressing or denying the feeling. Rogers and other representatives of humanistic psychology consider individuals ability to accept his/her anger to be crucial in the teacher's work, since the expression of anger, as well as other feelings, ensures authentic contact between students and teachers, meanwhile the oppression or denial of the feeling prevent such a contact. Since the teachers assert that anger is the feeling they experience rather often at their work, about six hours were allotted for dealing with anger in the second workshop of the program. Teachers' increased ability to accept their aggression should be considered as a positive change affecting their professional behavior. Not less important is the increased ability of the teachers to make and maintain close and meaningful contacts with the people, among others – with their students.

Two scales of the POI, self-regard and self-acceptance, reflect the individual's self-perception. In our program special attention has been paid to the teachers' self-regard and self-acceptance in different contexts. After the participation in the program the teachers' self-regard and their ability to accept themselves in spite of their weaknesses and deficiencies increased. Since self-acceptance is closely related to the ability to accept the others, there is a sound reason to believe that the teachers' ability to accept the students the way they are also increased. This is confirmed by the fact that the percentage of the teachers asserting that accepting the other people is an important work value has increased.

Shostrom claims that the nature of man and synergy scales represent individual's awareness. They measure the ability to see the opposites of life as meaningfully related. In our research the teachers' scores of the scales grew less than those of the other scales, but still the results of the fifth testing were significantly higher than those of the first testing. Thus teachers' ability to accept dichotomies of life and to be synergetic in understanding human nature has increased.

The findings of our research to a great degree coincides with those of many

other researchers (O'Leary, 1992; Foulds and Hannigan, 1977, Cote 1982, and others) who examined the impact on the Gestalt groups on individuals' self-actualization tendencies.

Generalizing the results of the survey of the changes of teachers' personality qualities in the course of their participation in the program, we can say that the teachers' ability for empathetic understanding and their self-actualizing tendencies have increased. The analysis of the result of the separate scales of the POI shows that the qualities, which the representatives of humanistic education consider as essential for the teacher as a facilitator of meaningful student-oriented learning, got more expression after the teachers' participation in the program.

Along with the changes of the teachers values and personality qualities, important changes in the teachers' behavior took place. The teachers noticed the following changes taking place after their participation in the program: their relationship with the students and colleagues improved, the teachers declined obsolete modes of behavior, became more sincere, calmer, more patient with the students. They learned to better control and express their anger and started using new teaching methods. Teachers' altered values got an overt expression in the teachers' professional behavior and their attitudes towards teaching changed: the teachers attempted to create a non-judgmental atmosphere in the classroom and better conditions for the students' discoveries, help them to learn about themselves, promote their self-esteem.

We think that the teachers' changed behavior is a very important result of the teachers' self-awareness and self-knowledge training based on the Gestalt model, since the ultimate goal of any teachers' professional development program should be the altered behavior, rather than just changes of some internal dispositions. In this context the question of duration of the changes seems to be of great importance.

Our research revealed two different tendencies of changes in the teachers' values and personal qualities. The results of the research showed that some of the changes that took place in the course of the teachers' participation in the program diminished and some of the others remained stable or even kept growing.

The instances of the *first tendency* are some of the general and work values and the sources of the values, as well as frequency of some professional goals and problems. Before participation in the program, belonging and relationships with the family and other people were the most frequently mentioned as the general value, after participation in the program the frequency decreased almost twice, and after four month reached the original quantity. The most distinct increase was observed in relation to the inner harmony and self-knowledge as a general value, after four months the number of the teachers' mentioning the value decreased al-

most twice, but still remained more than three times larger than before participation in the program. Knowing and understanding the people was not mentioned by the teachers in the first testing, but after participation in the program it was mentioned almost by every fifth teacher, and after four months – twice less. The dynamics of some of the work values was similar. Immediately after participation in the program such new categories of the work values emerged (compared to the first testing): understanding and accepting the people, helping the students to learn about themselves and seek for the meaning of life, and after four months the frequency of those values decreased. Some corresponding professional goals and problems changed in a similar way.

This dynamics of values, professional goals and problems shows that, on one hand, the values which had to do with some of the topics addressed in the program, like teachers' personal experiences, knowing oneself and the others, personal and professional growth changed most dramatically. On the other hand, the values, which were among the most important ones before participation in the program, regained their previous significance after four months. The significance of the newly discovered values decreases in the period of four months but the values still remained among important for the teachers. The same can be said about the teachers' professional goals and problems.

The *second tendency* of changes of the teachers' values and personal qualities is the continuing increase of the changes in the period of four months after participation in the program. Compared with the results obtained immediately after participation in the program, in the period of four months the changes of the following variables kept growing in the same direction: inner locus of the values, frequency of some values (creating a good classroom atmosphere for the students as work value), the importance of some professional goals (personal and professional growth, knowing the students, creating a safe atmosphere in a classroom) and problems (the frequency of the problems concerning the relationships with the administration was increasing and the lack of professional competence was decreasing). Meanwhile the scores of the POI kept growing (by the way, in the course of four months neither of the scores of the inventory decreased significantly).

The British scholars Hall, Hall and Aboci (1996), Hall, Hall and Ahmet (1997) report similar effects of the teachers' experiential learning based on Rogers' model. In their study, the teachers exhibited only slight changes of behavior and personal traits (increased empathy, congruence and positive regard in relations to the students, attitudes to self, reflection and expression of the feelings) immediately after participation in the interpersonal skills training, but after one year the changes appeared to be "dramatic" and were observable even after three years time.

Continual increase in the changes stimulated by participation in the experien-

tial learning course can be explained by the fact discovered by Joyce (quoted by Hall et al), who asserts that experiential learning sets up “dynamic disequilibrium” in the learner which initially produces confusion, as old patterns of thinking and behavior are frustrated. It takes some time before new learning is properly organized in the way, which is affective in terms of establishing behavior changes. Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993) also notice that the effect of experiential learning can manifest itself later than immediately after the experience takes place. They maintain, that “the experience itself may not change but the learning from it can grow, the meaning of it can be transformed, and the effects of it can be altered” (p. 9).

Collating the changes of the teachers’ values and personal qualities as well as their professional goals and problems revealed in our research with the changes of the teachers’ behavior we can see that the teachers more frequently mention the behavioral changes which correspond with the changes of dispositions that did not change or kept growing in the period of four months. A good illustration of the statement is the following succession: *creating a good classroom atmosphere* as work value, *creating supportive atmosphere in a classroom* as a professional goal, applying new approaches and new working methods in a classroom (creating a nonjudgmental atmosphere in a classroom, promoting students’ positive self-esteem) as new modes of behavior.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The research proved that the program based on the approach of the Gestalt therapy and oriented towards teachers’ self-knowledge and self-awareness affected the teachers’ values. After the teachers’ participation in the Gestalt groups the content of their values changed: the importance of being values and inner harmony increased significantly, new category of values (knowing and understanding the people) emerged. There was a significant change concerning two of the work values, namely - professional growth and creating a good classroom atmosphere for the students. New categories of the work values (realizing the being values at work, knowing and accepting the people as they are, helping the students to know themselves and to find the meaning of the life) emerged. The tendency to rely on the inner sources of values increased significantly.

2. While participating in the educational program based on the Gestalt approach, the teachers got the possibility to deeper know themselves, to become aware of their feelings and thoughts, and it resulted in the changes of the teachers’ self-actualization tendencies: the teachers became more relying on themselves, their time-competence and other self-actualization characteristics improved.

3. After the teachers’ participation in the program, the professional challenges

set by the teachers changed: the teachers became more people-oriented – both in relation to their own personal and professional growth and in relation to their students (such professional goals as knowing the students and helping them in their attempts to learn about themselves were mentioned significantly more often by the teachers).

4. Changes in the teachers' values and personal qualities were accompanied by corresponding changes of their behavior: their communication with the student and colleagues became more sincere, the teachers became more self-confident, they declined some old non-productive modes of behavior and started applying new teaching methods in their classes.

5. The results of the research indicated that the assessment of the durability of the impact of the program on teachers' values and personal characteristics is a complicated matter. The majority of changes in the teachers' values and personal characteristics, which occurred immediately after their participation in the program, tended to grow. In four months after participation in the program the following characteristics tended to become more expressed: internality of the values and the frequency of some of the values (creating emotionally positive atmosphere in the classroom as the work value), importance of some of the professional goals (personal and professional growth, knowing the students, creating a warm atmosphere in the classroom) and the scores of six scales of the POI (support, self-actualizing value, existentiality, capacity for intimate contact, nature of man and especially synergy). Some other variables which had changed distinctively after the participation in the program, in four months regained the original score. The teachers' behavior was affected mostly by the characteristics, which did not decrease or even became more distinctively expressed in the period of four months.

## **REZIUMĖ**

### **MOKYTOJŲ VERTYBIŲ IR ASMENYBĖS YPATUMŲ KITIMAS GEŠTALTINĖSE GRUPĖSE**

Pastaraisiais metais vykstantys pasikeitimai socialiniame gyvenime, moksle kelia kokybiškai naujus reikalavimus mokyklai ir mokytojams. Daugelis įvairių šalių autorių pabrėžia, kad keičiasi ir požiūris į mokymo procesą, ir mokytojo vaidmens sampratą. Mokslininkai išskiria keletą tendencijų, būdingų mokymo esmės ir mokytojo vaidmens kaitai. Į mokymą nebežiūrima vien kaip į žinių perdavimą, o kaip į sudėtingą intencionalų inter- ir intrapersonalinį procesą, kuriame vienodai svarbūs veiklos ir kontempliatyvusis aspektai. Pabrėžiama mokytojo savęs išsąmoninimo reikšmė, jo vertybinių orientacijų, santykio su darbu svarba, mokytojo kaip savo darbo įrankio, kurį reikia pažinti ir nuolat tobulinti, vaidmuo.

Lietuvai atgavus nepriklausomybę demokratijos keliu pasukusi visuomenė mokytojams kelia didesnius, kokybiškai skirtingus reikalavimus – pereiti prie visuminio (holistinio) vaiko ugdymo, prasmnio mokymo, pagrįsto asmeniniu besimokančiųjų patyrimu, ugdyti laisvą ir atsakingą pilietį, grindžiantį savo elgesį įsisa-  
monintomis vertybėmis.

Akivaizdu, kad tokius tikslus realizuoti gali mokytojai, ne tik turintys teorinių pedagogikos, psichologijos, savo dalyko žinių, bet ir pasižymintys tam tikrais asmenybės ypatumais: gebėjimu bendrauti ir bendradarbiauti, sąmoningai pasirinkti profesinius uždavinius bei tikslus remiantis esminėmis savo vertybėmis, pažįstantys save kaip žmones ir profesionalus, gebantys reflektuoti, įsisa-  
moninti, sąmoningai ir atsakingai rinktis bei apsispręsti įvairiose pedagoginėse situacijose. Tad, viena vertus, iškyla atitinkamo mokytojų psichologinio parengimo, alternatyvių psichologiškai pagrįstų jų kvalifikacijos kėlimo programų būtinybė, antra vertus, – poreikis mokslinių tyrimų, kurie atsakytų į klausimus, kaip keičiasi mokytojų vertybės ir svarbūs jų asmenybės ypatumai mokytojams dalyvaujant į savęs pažinimą, asmenybės brendimą nukreiptuose užsiėmimuose, kokie profesinio elgesio pokyčiai atsiranda kintant mokytojų vertybėms ir asmenybės ypatumams.

Šio darbo tikslas – atskleisti mokytojų asmenybės ir vertybių, kaip esminių veiksnių, lemiančių mokytojų gebėjimą ugdyti ir visapusiškai veikti mokinio asmenybę, ypatumus, aprašyti netradicinius mokytojų tęstinio ugdymo būdus, pagrįsti geštalinės terapijos principais paremtą mokytojų tęstinio ugdymo modelį, orientuotą į mokytojų saviviznos plėtrą, ir įsitikinti jo veiksmingumu. Realizuojant šį tikslą, buvo iškelti tokie uždaviniai:

1. Nušviesti nagrinėjamų klausimų teorinius aspektus ir išnagrinėti šiuolaikinius šių sričių tyrimus bei pagrįsti ugdymo modelį, paremtą geštalinės terapijos principais ir nukreiptą į mokytojų savęs pažinimą bei įsisa-  
moninimą.
2. Nustatant geštalinės terapijos principais grindžiamo mokytojų profesinio tobulinimo modelio veiksmingumą, ištirti:
  - a) kaip mokytojams dalyvaujant geštalinės terapijos principais grindžiamoje mokymo programoje keičiasi jiems svarbios vertybės ir tų vertybių šaltiniai;
  - b) kaip keičiantis mokytojų vertybėms kinta jų įvardijami profesiniai uždaviniai ir darbe sutinkamos problemos;
  - c) kaip dalyvavimas programoje veikia mokytojų saviraiškos tendencijas;
  - d) kaip mokytojams dalyvaujant programoje keičiasi jų empatijos lygis;
  - e) kaip po dalyvavimo programoje keičiasi profesinis mokytojų elgesys.

Disertacijoje pagrįstas mokytojų tęstinio ugdymo, nukreipto į jų savivizną bei savęs įsisa-  
moninimą modelis. Šiuo modeliu pagrįstoje mokymo programoje (dvie-

juose seminaruose po 30 valandų) dalyvavo 69 mokytojai. Mokytojų vertybių, profesinių uždavinių bei darbe sutinkamų problemų pokyčiai buvo vertinami kokybiškai, empatijos kitimui įvertinti buvo naudojamas lietuviškas Mehrabian ir Epstein empatijos skalės variantas, o mokytojų saviraiškos pokyčiams tirti – E.Shostrom asmenybės saviraiškos klausimynas. Saviraiškos ir empatijos tyrimai buvo atliekami penkis karus (prieš ir po kiekvieno seminaro bei praėjus 4 mėnesiams po dalyvavimo visoje programoje), vertybių, profesinių uždavinių ir problemų – tris kartus (prieš dalyvaujant programoje, iš karto po dalyvavimo ir praėjus 4 mėnesiams po dalyvavimo visoje programoje). Mokytojai vertino savo profesinio elgesio pokyčius praėjus 4 mėnesiams po dalyvavimo programoje. Palyginimui atliktas kontrolinės grupės tyrimas. Ją sudarė dirbantys tose pačiose mokyklose 46 mokytojai, kurie 6 mėnesių laikotarpyje tarp dviejų tyrimų jokiose kvalifikacijos kėlimo programose nedalyvavo.

Tyrimo rezultatai atskleidė mokytojų vertybių – jų turinio bei šaltinių – pokyčių tendencijas, mokytojų asmenybės saviraiškos ir empatijos kitimo ypatumus, pasireiškusius po dalyvavimo geštaltinės terapijos principais grindžiamoje mokymo programoje. Svarbus tyrimo atskleistas dėsningumas – tai, jog didžiausią įtaką elgesiui turi tie mokytojų vertybių, asmenybės ypatumų bei įvardijamų profesinių uždavinių ir problemų pasikeitimai, kurie laikui bėgant išlieka nepakitę ar sustiprėja. Mokytojų įvardinti profesinio elgesio pasikeitimai, įvykę po dalyvavimo programoje, analogiški tiems, kuriuos daugelis šiuolaikinių autorių, cituotų darbo įvade bei literatūros apžvalgoje, nurodo kaip svarbius mokytojo profesijai keliamus reikalavimus. Galima teigti, jog mokymo(si) iš patyrimo programa, pagrįsta geštaltiniu požiūriu, ne tik sąlygoja mokytojų asmenybės ypatumų ir vertybių pokyčius, bet ir keičia mokytojų požiūrį mokinius, save pačius, savo darbą apskritai, skatina naujų darbo metodų taikymą klasėje. Tad ši programa, greta mokytojų dalykinės kompetencijos tobulinimo, galėtų tapti sudedamąja jų kvalifikacijos kėlimo dalimi.

## Išvados

1. Mokytojams dalyvaujant geštaltinėse grupėse kito jų vertybių turinys: reikšmingai padidėjo buvimo vertybių, vidinės darnos kaip bendrųjų vertybių reikšmingumas, tarp mokytojų įvardijamų vertybių atsirado nauja vertybių kategorija – žmonių pažinimas ir supratimas; reikšmingai padidėjo tokių darbo vertybių kaip profesinis tobulėjimas, mokinių emocinio komforto užtikrinimas svarba; tarp mokytojų minimų darbo vertybių atsirado naujos kategorijos: buvimo vertybių realizavimas darbe, žmonių pažinimas ir priėmimas, pagalba mokiniams pažinti save ir ieškoti gyvenimo prasmės; sustiprėjo tendencija remtis vidiniais vertybių šaltiniais – intucija, jausmais, savo patirtimi.

2. Mokytojams dalyvaujant geštalinės terapijos principais grindžiamoje mokyimo programoje, kai jie turėjo galimybę giliau save pažinti, įsisąmoninti savo jausmus, mintis, buvo skatinama jų refleksija, keitėsi mokytojų saviraiškos tendencijos: mokytojai tapo labiau besiremiantys savimi, pagerėjo jų kompetencija laike ir kiti saviraiškos ypatumai.

3. Po dalyvavimo programoje pakito mokytojų įvardijami profesiniai uždaviniai: mokytojai tapo labiau orientuoti į žmones – ir į asmeninį bei profesinį savo pačių tobulėjimą, ir į mokinių pažinimą, pagalbą jiems ieškoti gyvenimo prasmės.

4. Mokytojų vertybių ir asmenybės ypatumų pasikeitimus lydėjo atitinkami profesinio elgesio pokyčiai: jų bendravimas su mokiniais ir kolegomis tapo nuširdesnis, jie ėmė labiau pasitikėti savimi, mokytojai atsiskė kai kurių senų neproduktyvių elgesio būdų, ėmė taikyti pamokose naujus darbo metodus.

5. Tyrimo rezultatai parodė, jog programos poveikio mokytojų vertybėms ir asmenybės ypatumams ilgalaikiškumas – nevienareikšmis dalykas. Daugelis iš įvykusių vertybių bei asmenybės ypatumų pokyčių turi tendenciją laikui bėgant didėti: praėjus po dalyvavimo programoje 4 mėnesiams, padidėjo vertybių internališkumas, kai kurių konkrečių vertybių pasirinkimo dažnis (emocinio mokinių komforto užtikrinimo kaip darbo vertybės), kai kurių profesinių uždavinių svarba (asmeninio ir profesinio tobulėjimo, mokinių pažinimo, palankaus klimato klasėje kūrimo), kito įvardijamų darbo problemų dažnis (reikšmingai padaugėjo santykių su kolegomis ir vadovais, sumažėjo dalykinių problemų dažnis). Didėjo šešių saviraiškos klausimyno skalių įvertinimai (palaikymo, saviraiškos vertybių egzistencialumo, artimo kontakto, žmogiškos prigimties ir ypač sinergijos). Kai kurie kiti rodikliai, ryškiai pakitę iš karto po dalyvavimo programoje, po 4 mėnesių atgavo pirminę išraišką. Mokytojų elgesio pokyčius labiau veikė tie dispozicijų pokyčiai, kurie laikui bėgant išliko nepakitę arba stiprėjo.

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**VITALIJA LEPEŠKIENĒ**  
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**GEŠTALINĒSĖ GRUPĒSĖ**

*Daktaro disertacijos santrauka*  
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