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Interplay between the sport camps participants and tutors

Oddziaływanie wzajemne między uczestnikami obozów i opiekunami

Keywords: sport camp, interaction

Słowa kluczowe: obóz sportowy, oddziaływanie wzajemne

INTRODUCTION

In the world the notion of a camp has been known for a long time, and everybody has good, and usually nice memories associated with the word *camp*, memories that constitute our life experience, notions about many things. While working in a camp a duty of every camp tutor is to facilitate a positive interaction among the participants and tutors, to take care for the children to avoid negative emotions, to develop their personality and their social skills.

A man according to his nature is good, however everybody has different abilities. We can judge about one's ability by how fast he acquires the action or task he is interested in, or how good his memory is, what is his inquisitiveness and interest (Zirdziņa 1995).

In a camp every participant has a wonderful possibility to develop his social skills, there is a possibility to use his own experience to learn from each other, to develop one's self-esteem and to be acknowledged. It creates interest and care for others, for a group result, positive interaction and responsibility (Izglitibas... 2003).

A successful development of children's social skill is formed in the socialization process of children and adult interaction (Andersone 2004).

Psychological well-feeling, personality development and growth of the people around depend to a great extent on every person as a potential partner of communication (Omarova 2003). Therefore, it is very important to have harmony and the atmosphere of positive interaction in the relationship of the people involved. Nobody is an isolated island, and everybody has numerous links with many other people (Ozolina, Vidnere 1998).

A camp is a special environment where there is an interplay in interrelations between the tutors and participants, also among the participants and among the tutors. The achievement of the tasks and aims is closely linked with the interplay of the participants and tutors, as well as with the positive tendencies of this interplay.

Analyzing eight years of organizing and leading camps questions arise and make us think about the problems that we have during the camp, for example, why there are children who do not know their group mates' names in the end of the camp, or why some tutors find mutual contact easily, while others don't? In my opinion, the answer is as follows – a lack of communication skills, communication problems and a lack of the model of pedagogical activity to facilitate a positive interplay. The new means of communication break into our lives, and children are the most open ones to these novelties, and recently there are more and more children and teenagers who better communicate with their friends through e-mail (according to the data given by Riga Addiction Prevention Center).

Stabins writes that only a part of a teacher's mission is to teach knowledge, but the most part is to prepare children for life (Spona 2001).

How these children are prepared for life, what are their skills to cooperate, communicate and solve conflicts, etc., will depend on the methods, means and a pedagogical activity model used by the teacher.

What relationships will be between the tutor and children and among the children will depend on the pedagogical activity model used. Therefore, it is necessary to develop such pedagogical interaction model which would facilitate a positive interplay in the camp among the participants, as well as between the participants and tutors.

Several authors have described their pedagogical activity model to be used in the general education institutions. Spona writes in her book that if a teacher succeeds to cooperate with children on the equal basis despite the differences of experience and age, then the following scheme of relationships develops between them: subject – subject. In this situation the interaction is the most successful and education work is maximally effective. If a teacher treats the group participants as a subjected object to affect (directing, commanding), the child's

action can become formal, it does not become an education means. When cooperating, both the teacher's and the child's self-esteem develops (Svence 1999). A tutor's work in the camp differs essentially from the work at school. In the camp a tutor is in close contact with the participant during all time spent not only in his classes. On the other hand, a tutor has a short time to carry out his tasks in comparison with a teacher at school. Therefore, a special model of pedagogical interaction is needed, the model that could facilitate a positive interaction in the relationships of the tutor and the participants.

The problems mentioned above are not the only ones in the work of the camp tutor. When participants arrive in the camp their parents fill out a form where they give information about the children health, psychological state, however, experience shows that parents forget to write the most important things. Perhaps it is not easy for parents to write that they have recently divorced and their child takes it to his heart, or that the child has some psychological problem, which seems unimportant to his parents, but it becomes more acute when the child is in an unfamiliar environment. In these situations the tutor has to use all his knowledge and experience to find pedagogical approach to solve the problem and realize the camp tasks successfully.

How to help the tutor to solve these problems? The tutor cannot change the parents' attitude but he can change the approach to work with the camp participants. Therefore, to help the tutor to find solution and make his work easier, a positive interaction model of pedagogical activity has been worked out.

The aim of our research was to state and develop such model pedagogical activity that would facilitate a positive interaction between the camp participants and tutors in the summer camps.

The positive interaction model of pedagogical activity offered in the research has been worked out basing on: the theory described in the books "Social Psychology of a Class" by J. Kolominskis (2003), "Education Theory and Practice" by A. Spona, Z. Cehlova (2004), the research by K. Levins (2000) and the dissertation materials of J. Rozenblats (1998).

Taking this theory as the basis, a positive interaction model of pedagogical activity has been worked out including the ideas that:

– all tutors work as one pedagogical team;
– the tutors use the democratic leadership style;
– the tutors take part in all activities as group participants.

INTERPLAY BETWEEN THE CAMPS PARTICIPANTS AND TUTORS

To carry out a pedagogical experiment, an educational summer sport camp was organized in the period from the 2nd July, 2006 up to the 9th July, 2006 for children and adolescents aged 8–15 from all Latvia. The groups of the camp participants took part in the experiment: an experimental group and two control groups (Fig. 1).

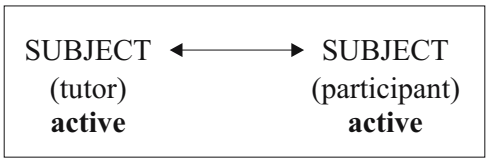

Fig. 1. The positive interaction model of pedagogical activity
Model pozytywnej współpracy pedagogicznej

The positive interaction model of pedagogical activity shown in Figure 1 was used by the experimental group (E) during the camp. In this model both subjects – the participant and the tutor are active and take part in all activities. The tutor is one of the group E participants in this model (Fig. 2).

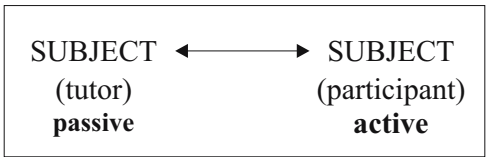

Fig. 2. The pedagogical model in which the tutor does not take part in activities
Model pedagogiczny, w którym opiekun nie bierze udziału w zajęciach

In both control groups (K1 and K2) the tutor organized activities, held the classes but did not take part in them.

Unlike the theories of the above mentioned authors which are more suited to schools during the study year where a teacher teaches, helps and directs but himself is passive. In this model a teacher did not take part as a participant. The actions of the camp tutor and participant when using the positive interaction model of pedagogical activity in sports activities are shown in Table 1.

The table reflects the interaction of the tutor and the participant during sports activities while the tutor uses the positive interaction model of pedagogical activity.

To test the influence of the model on the interaction of the camp participants and tutors, a pedagogical experiment was organized during the camp. Different educational and physical activities were included in the camp content: 5 educa-

Tab. 1. Interaction of the tutor and camp participant in sports activities, for example, relays, applying the worked-out model of pedagogical activity
Interakcja pomiędzy opiekunem i uczestnikiem obozu w zawodach sportowych, przykłady zastosowania wypracowanego modelu aktywności pedagogicznej

Organization stages	Interaction in the work process	
	Tutor's activity	Participant's activity
Psychological preparation	Disposes the camp participants for the relay, encourages emotionally, explains the point of the classes. In connection with the camp legend participates in working out of the relay tactics.	Understands the task, prepares for the relays. Together with the teammates works out the tactics of the relay execution.
Practical preparation	Explains the relay rules, arranges the place of the relay.	Helps the tutor to arrange the place of the relay.
Action realization	Together with other group mates executes the relay.	Executes the relay together with the tutor as the group participant.
Assessment	Finds out the participants' opinion about the relay, feelings while doing the relay, about the chosen tactics, discusses the further group action in other activities, stimulates the group participants to tell their opinion and to listen to others' opinion.	Participates in discussions about the relay, expresses own opinion about group cooperation, makes decisions about further group actions in other activities.

tional classes (visual arts, geography, history, music and English), 22 sports and recreation classes including 12 movement games, 5 relays, 5 different games and leisure activities, for example: swimming classes, rugby, tourism hurdles (or steeple chase) and others, as it was said by Kurzemniece “a lack of movements is very harmful, and it cannot be replaced by any medicine”.

The classes were organized in workshops. Physical activities were often organized by the sea where it was possible to combine the classes and relaxation. The place at the sea was chosen following the wish of the participants expressed in the forms, and the main reason to participate in the summer camp is the possibility to swim, sunbathe, as well as to take part in different interesting and exciting attractions by water and using water (relays, etc.).

When planning the camp content the principle of continuous activity was observed. The intensity of the activity increased gradually during the camp, in the end the forwarded task was fulfilled. The classes were planned basing on the result achieved on the previous day.

When working out of the activity complex, the camp group development phases were observed: the orientation phase included the activities (games – “Icebreakers”) with the aim for the participants to get acquainted, to make a free

atmosphere; the phase – struggle for power included the possibility for the participants to show their talents in different sports games, physical skills and abilities, in art, music, as well as to show their organizer's skills, which facilitated the choosing of the leader and duty distribution in the groups; the trust phase included the activities directed to pair cooperation, for example, "the longest liana", or team cooperation as "forming figures" and "the blind worm"; the activities of the differentiation phase facilitated the group cooperation and group project development; the parting phase included the activities which facilitated a constructive parting and developed positive memories about the camp life in general.

To state the effectiveness of the new pedagogical model, questionnaires were worked out for the camp participants and they included the questions about the mutual relationships, interaction among the participants – between the participants and the tutors, about the participant attitude towards the tutors as participants in different camp activities.

The answers to the question "Do you wish the tutor to participate in all camp activities as a participant?" are shown in Figure 3. The questionnaire was given both in the beginning and end of the camp (Fig. 3).

This diagram shows that in the end of the camp in the groups E and K1 there is a positive interaction observed between the participants and the tutors and positive attitude towards the camp tutor as a participant. The group E has a more dis-

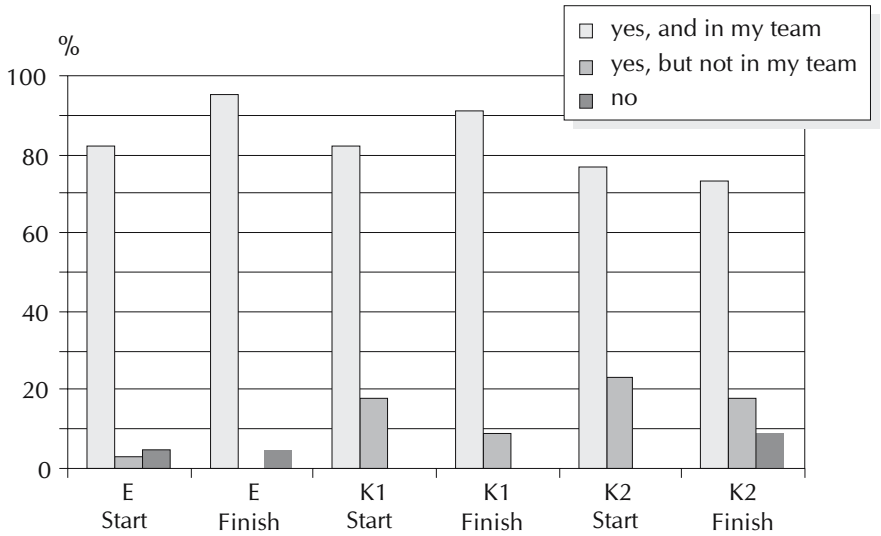

Fig. 3. E, K1, K2 group participant attitude in the beginning and end of the camp towards the tutor participation in the activities

Postawy grupy uczestników E, K1 i K2 na początku i pod koniec obozu wobec udziału opiekuna w zajęciach

tinct tendency, but among the group K2 participants negative attitude towards the camp tutor as a participant has increased in the end of the camp.

One of the research methods to state positive interaction tendencies among the camp participants and tutors was sociometry which reflected the camp participant mutual relationships during the camp.

This diagram (Fig. 4) is made basing on the choices of the groups E and K1 to name the camp participants with whom they had the friendliest relationships during the camp. As we see in the group E 81% of the choices were from the own group, and 19% were from the K1 group.

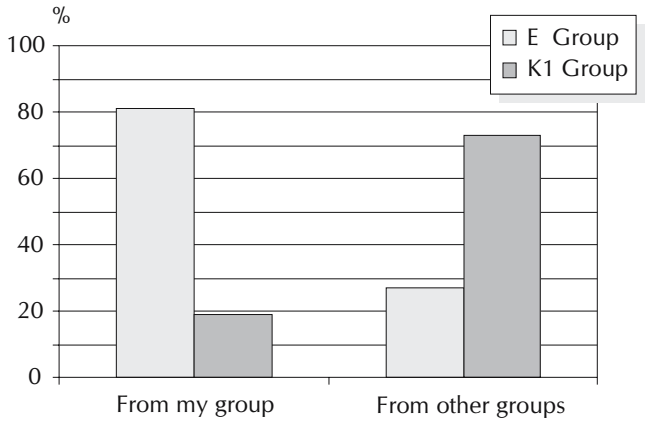

Fig. 4. E and K1 group participants' positive interaction when choosing friends
Pozytywna współpraca grupy uczestników E i K1 podczas wyboru przyjaciół

In the questionnaire of sociometry the tutor was mentioned as one of the camp participants (Fig. 5).

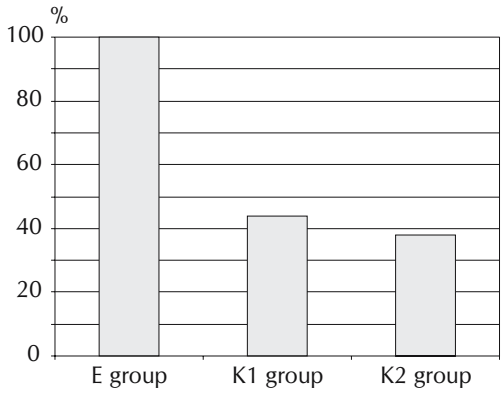

Fig. 5. Group participants' positive interaction with the tutor as one of the camp participants
Pozytywna współpraca grupy uczestników z opiekunem jako jednym z uczestników obozu

The results obtained from the questionnaires show (Fig. 5) that 100% of the group E (every group participant) chose the tutor as the person with whom he/she had the best relationship during the camp, while in group K1 this index was 44%, but in the group K2 – 38%.

The last diagrams demonstrate that both the complex of the activities used in the camp and the positive interaction model of pedagogical activity have succeeded a positive interaction not only among the camp participants, but also between the camp participants and tutors.

Applying the described positive interaction model of pedagogical activity it should be taken into account that the tutor who participates in the activities personality also plays an important role.

In the further years using the positive interaction model of pedagogical activity and the worked-out complex camp tutors will have better interaction, which will facilitate better realization of the aims and tasks adding to the harmonious development of camp participants, as well as will give a possibility to facilitate a positive interaction in camps.

CONCLUSIONS

The positive interaction model of pedagogical activity has been worked out and applied in practice (in the experimental group E). Having summed up the answers in the questionnaires about the participants' interaction, it can be concluded:

1. As to the question "Do you wish the tutor to participate in all camp activities as a participant?" the indices have increased in the end of the camp in the groups E and K1: in the group E, 95% of the inquired answered positively, and this index was by 15% higher than in the beginning of the camp. In the group K1 there was an increase from 82% up to 91% in comparison with the beginning. But in the group K2 there was a decrease by 4%, respectively from 77% up to 73%, but the best index testifying a lack of positive interaction in the group K2 is that from 0% in the beginning of the camp up to 9% in the end of the camp – such is the increase in the number the participants who evaluate negatively the tutor participation in the activities;

2. Analyzing the results of the answers to the question about mutual relationships during the camp in the sociometry questionnaire, we can conclude that the interaction of both the participants of the experimental group (E) and the control group (K1) had a positive tendency. In percentage significantly better positive interaction was in group E, as the worked out positive interaction model of pedagogical activity was used in this group: 81% of group E participants

noted that the best relationship they had with their own group mates, but in the group K1 only 18% of the participants chose their own group mates. The best influence of the positive interaction between the camp tutors and participants was seen in the results of the sociometry questionnaire, where 100% of the E group, 44% of K1 and only 38% of K2 group participants chose the tutor as one of the camp participants to have the best relationships during the camp.

Analyzing the answers in all questionnaires it can be concluded that applying in practice the positive interaction model of pedagogical activity, positive interaction between the camp participants and tutors will be achieved in children and adolescent camps.

The carried out research in the children and adolescent summer camp shows that in this age group applying this model of pedagogical activity positive interaction is facilitated, but it does not mean that in other age or social group the results will be analogous. Therefore, to state how this model works when used in other social and age groups, several experiments will be carried out in the framework of this promotion work.

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STRESZCZENIE

Na całym świecie pojęcie *obozu sportowego* znane jest już od dawna, a każdy z nas ma swoje wspomnienia związane z tym słowem. Celem badań było stworzenie i rozwinięcie takiego modelu aktywności pedagogicznej, który ułatwiłby tworzenie pozytywnych relacji pomiędzy uczestnikami i opiekunami na obozach letnich. Eksperymentalnie, w dniach 2–9 lipca 2006 roku, zorganizowano letni edukacyjny obóz sportowy dla dzieci i młodzieży w wieku 8–15 lat z całej Łotwy.