

## SPIS TREŚCI

### I. STUDIA I ROZPRAWY

AGNIESZKA CYBAL-MICHALSKA, <i>Constructing a career as a process of investing in its portfolio</i> .....	7
MAGDALENA PIORUNEK, <i>Poczucie koherencji w konstruowaniu kariery (kontekst całościowego rozwoju jednostki)</i> .....	21
EMILIA SZYMCZAK, <i>Spoleczne (re)konstrukcje zawodu inżyniera w kontekście rosnącego udziału kobiet w tradycyjnie męskich obszarach zawodowych</i> .....	39
ZBYSZKO MELOSİK, <i>Totalna piłka nożna i pomarańczowa tożsamość narodu holenderskiego</i> .....	55
DOBROCHNA HILDEBRANDT-WYPYCH, <i>Kulturnation kontra Verfassungsnation – historyczny spór wokół obywatelstwa i narodowości w Niemczech</i> .....	69
KINGA KUSZAK, <i>Poważna rola niepoważnych rymowanek. Zabawa (gra) słowna w literaturze dla dzieci – jej wartość edukacyjna</i> .....	89
IZABELLA KAISER, <i>Poziom kompetencji matematycznych dzieci kończących edukację przedszkolną w systemie Montessori. Perspektywa badawcza</i> .....	113
ALEKSANDRA TŁUŚCIAK-DELIOWSKA, URSZULA DERNOWSKA, <i>Kultura współpracy w szkole w percepcji nauczycieli szkół gimnazjalnych</i> .....	127
MAGDALENA CUPRIAK, <i>Uczeń gimnazjum: wykreowana tożsamość „pomiędzy”</i> .....	149
EWA BIELSKA, ANDRZEJ CZERKAWSKI, <i>Ryzyko, kryzys, trauma jako przedmiot oddziaływań reprezentantów profesji pomocowych – wybrane konteksty społeczne i psychologiczne</i> ..	163
BARBARA JANKOWIAK, <i>Rodzinne i partnerskie uwarunkowania dobrostanu studentów</i> .....	177
AGNIESZKA SKOWROŃSKA-PUĆKA, <i>Sytuacja edukacyjna małych matek, wychowanek placówek opiekuńczo-wychowawczych. Perspektywa biograficzna</i> .....	191
MIROŚLAWA CZERNIAWSKA, <i>Postawy wrażliwości społecznej versus postawy pragmatyczne i ich osobowościowe uwarunkowania</i> .....	213
STANISŁAWA BYRA, JANUSZ KIRENKO, <i>Kwestionariusz Reakcji Przystosowawczych (KRP) – polska adaptacja Reactions to Impairment and Disability Inventory – RIDI H. Livneha i R.F. Antonaka</i> .....	229
ZOHAR BIBER, <i>Attitudes of Adolescents to the Involvement of their Parents in the School: the Relations Between Parents and Teachers</i> .....	261
IBRAHEEM ABU AJAJ, <i>A Comparative Look on the Dropping out of Adolescents in Situations of Risk from the Bedouin Educational System in the Negev</i> .....	283

IBRAHEEM ABU AJAJ, <i>A Comparative Look on the Dropping out of Adolescents in Situations of Risk from the Bedouin Educational System in the Negev</i> .....	283
CHEN EDEN, <i>What is the Relationship Between Theory of Mind and Social Attachment and What Can We do About It?</i> .....	305
SALI MANOR FRANCO, <i>The Labeling of Students in Educational Institutions in Israel According to Their Economic Affiliation</i> .....	327
SHIRI GONEN-AVITAL, <i>Cultural Diversity and its Implication on Parents' Attitudes Toward their Child Learning Disability – An Outline of a Research Study</i> .....	353
MIRI HILAI, <i>Project Based Learning (PBL) as a Promising Challenge of Teaching Mathematics</i> .....	379
SARIT ALBALDES LIVIATAN, <i>Multicultural Aspects in Educational Counseling in Israel</i> .....	411
S. IZABEL RAMADAN, ROUTH HADAS, <i>The Implementation of the Educational Consultation Method in Arab Schools in Israel from the Perspective of Teachers</i> .....	421

## II. REVIEWES AND NOTES

Zygmunt Bauman, <i>Obcy u naszych drzwi</i> , Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2016, ss. 128 (ANNA DĄBROWSKA) .....	435
Małgorzata Franc, <i>Technika dostrzegania problemu T3/ZOOM. Kontekst edukacyjny</i> [Малгожату Франц, <i>Техника для восприятия проблем T3/ZOOM. Образовательный контекст</i> ], LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing RU: OmniScriptum GmbH & Co. KG, Saarbrücken, Deutschland 2016, ss. 68 (MYROŚŁAWA WÓWK, OLGA BANIT) .....	448

## III. SCIENTIFIC LIFE

Report from the Seminar „Critical pedagogy of peace”, Poznań, 11-27 listopada 2016 roku (BEATA IWANICKA) .....	451
Report from the Scientific Seminar „Miejsce i rola instytucji opiekuńczo-wychowawczych i edukacyjnych w rozwijaniu kompetencji rodzicielskich”, Poznań, 16 czerwca 2016 roku (MAGDALENA GAJTKOWSKA) .....	453
Information of Authors .....	461
Information for Authors .....	463

# I. STUDIA I ROZPRAWY

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## CONSTRUCTING A CAREER AS A PROCESS OF INVESTING IN ITS PORTFOLIO

ABSTRACT. Cybal-Michalska Agnieszka, *Constructing a career as a process of investing in its portfolio* [Budowanie kariery jako proces inwestycji w portfolio]. *Studia Edukacyjne* nr 40, 2016, Poznań 2016, pp. 7-19. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. ISSN 1233-6688. DOI: 10.14746/se.2016.40.1

Multicontextual social changes imply definitely new ways of interpretation and determine reflections about the condition of contemporary humans, including the human being as “a manager” of his own career.

A society has become an area where individuals can show their initiative. A contemporary study of careers demands the inclusion of multicontextual changes in the job world. These changes face employees with new requirements. The most important ones are the increase of the role attached to a career and the ability to plan, manage and monitor one’s own career in a lifelong perspective. Considerations about a career cannot leave out the issue of the subjective sense that an individual finds in one’s own career in the context of possibilities that a man can have a satisfactory career. The world of careers is a world of numerous micro-changes. In the “portfolio” of micro-changes, the time between changes is reduced and after a period of stability renewed separation comes increasingly quickly.

**Key words:** career, “boundary-less career”, career planning, constructing a career, career monitoring, subjective sense of career, satisfactory career

A contemporary study of career requires us to take into account the multi-contextual changes occurring in the world of work, which create new requirement for the employees. The most important among them include the increased importance of the role attributed to career and the ability to plan, manage and monitor one’s own career in a lifelong perspective. Career development and career management programs, which are crucial issues both from the perspective of individuals and organizations, are focused on many

aspects: "from individual careers and relations between work and family; to the policies and strategic dilemmas, such as the aging of the labor force, the application of new technologies, or organizational efficiency".<sup>1</sup> When we look at the problem from from this perspective, "the study of careers is the study of changes in individuals, as well as changes in organizations, and changes in the society".<sup>2</sup>

The pace of changes in the modern world of work, and even the "end of work" (J. Rifkin), changes the role of the quality of education and the required qualifications. The outlined changes in the highly competitive and demanding labor market are well illustrated by the statement that "short-term projects are becoming more common than a permanent job at one company (...) and *multi-skilling* is becoming a groundbreaking and crucial phenomenon".<sup>3</sup> The zeitgeist also implies, as A. Bańka puts it, the trans-culturalization of the economic context, which in turn contributes to the trans-nationalization of personality development. That process is manifested "in the universality of the experience required for the achievement of the optimal level of life competences allowing for the realization of a boundary-less career".<sup>4</sup> The presented reflections correspond to the category of the "career portfolio" developed by Ch. Handy. The career portfolio which is a tool for renewing career capital, is "a set of investment activities of an individual, included in career plans (...) it is a planned source of competences that have a measurable commercial value in the labor market".<sup>5</sup> In the knowledge-based economy, which in turn determines the orientation of contemporary society towards knowledge, the career development of the members of society and the investment in career "portfolio" becomes a crucial element.

The world of careers is a world of numerous micro-changes. In the "portfolio" of micro-changes the time between changes is reduced - after a period of stability renewed separation comes increasingly quickly. In addition multiple career changes may occur simultaneously.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> M.B. Arthur, D.T. Hall, B.S. Lawrence, *Generating New directions in career theory: the case for a transdisciplinary approach*, [in:] *Handbook of career theory*, Eds. M.B. Arthur, D.T. Hall, B.S. Lawrence, Cambridge 2004, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> J.G. Maree, *Brief Overview of the Advancement of Postmodern Approaches to Career Counseling*, *Journal for Psychology in Africa*, 2010, 20(3), p. 362.

<sup>4</sup> A. Bańka, *Psychologiczne doradztwo karier* [Psychological career counseling], Poznań 2007, p. 47-48.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p. 89-90.

<sup>6</sup> See: W. Mayrhofer, A. Iellatchitch, *Rites, right? The value of rites of passage for dealing with today's career transitions*, *Career Development International*, 2005, 1, p. 58.