
The Influence of Educational Teacher-Learner Interaction on Adolescent Self-esteem

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Abstract. The teacher-learner interaction, which is of relevance to the contemporary learning paradigm, is grounded on goodwill, mutual respect as well as trust and enables a learner to become autonomous, proactive and responsible. The essence of the teacher's activity can be determined in the following way: it is most important to focus on maturity of learners' personality, development of their intellectual powers, their own active and conscious learning providing all the support necessary for learners to enable them to develop competences that are relevant in life. Next to such competences to be developed as learning to learn, communication and creativity, a particular role is played by personal competence, which targets at education and development of an individual, who is dignified, self-respected and able to adequately self-evaluate. There is a transition from the teacher's role as the head of the process of education to those as a learning organiser, opportunity creator and advisor, when the development of learner's autonomy, independence and responsibility become underlying values of education. Following educational researchers, there exists a close link between the learner's self-esteem and autonomy and the freedom of choice provided by teachers. The teacher's respect for learners, his/her attention, encouragement and positive expectations contribute to the strengthening of learner's self-confidence and self-esteem.

Keywords: *teacher's personality, educational teacher-learner interaction, adolescent self-esteem.*

Introduction

Educational scholars such as M. Barkauskaitė (2008), E. Martišauskienė (2010), B. Bitinas (2004), G. Gedvilienė (1999), M. Teresevičienė (1999), G. Petty (2006), A. Hargeaves

(2008), T. McLaughlin (1997), P. Sahlberg (2005) and others emphasise the significance of the teacher's personality on the maturity of the learner's personality and successful learning activity. According to the aforementioned scholars, the interaction constructed by the teacher's personality with the learner is based on confidence, goodwill and absolute respect is seen as one of the factors of self-esteem enhancement.

Pedagogical activity is a specific area of professional activities, which is characterised as unique system of value-orientations, principles and behaviour norms. The teacher's activity frequently embraces non-standard pedagogical situations, which make up the object of professional activity. Namely this circumstance predetermines the need for more demanding professional ethical norms compared to other professions. McLaughlin (1997) draws attention to inevitability of value education, emphasises the significance of teacher's role and claims that every statement of the teacher, his/her pedagogical action or abstention from an action is based on values. Teachers cannot escape values by attempting to be "neutral" or "non-judging" <...>, every aspect of school embraces a value assumption and, thus, directly or indirectly conveys a value-based "message". According to T. McLaughlin, having encountered moral issues, teachers seek neutrality or impartiality nowadays. But they cannot avoid value obligations (McLaughlin, 1997). The author justifies the teacher's neutrality and suggests maintaining neutrality only having encountered a disputable question, when a huge variety of justified attitudes emerge <...> and there is no one clear answer, which could be delivered to learners. In such cases school learners are provided with the right to make independent and autonomous decisions, which are not affected by the position expressed by the teacher. It is stated that there is no any other profession compared to that of a teacher, where a personal example has such a strong educational effect. The essence of the educational impact on a learner is that being fascinated by a positive example a learner accumulates experience of good behaviour and consolidates valuable motives of behaviour in own psyche <...> actively influencing thinking, interests and feelings, an example becomes a standard, according to which learners start to evaluate own behaviour. The teacher's authority is understood as an aggregate of personality features, which has an impact on others and evokes absolute trust and respect. According to P. Jarvis (2001), teachers, who have earned authority, "do not need to demonstrate own knowledge seeking for an impression; their goal is to participate and collaborate in the process of learning" (Jarvis, 2001, p. 10).

The contemporary concept of learning marks the changes in the roles of the teacher and the learner. The traditional teaching meant the teacher's responsibility for what the student learns. Following the new concept of teaching/learning, according to P. Sahlberg (2005), the aim of the teacher is to learn and understand his/her learners, to guide their learning and to coordinate it. Moreover, Sahlberg states that the teacher has to transfer responsibility for learning to learners, to encourage them to rely on their own activity because the bigger extent of learner's responsibility is achieved planning learning togeth-

er. Such partnership-based teacher-learner activity that is grounded on the principle of parity setting learning goals, choosing learning methods, creating learning environment, evaluating learners' achievements enhances the learner's self-confidence, encourages them to independently set goals for self-directed learning.

The success of the individual's professional, social and cultural activities is impossible without respectful human communication and mutual understanding. According to J. Juul (2010), the process of communication is more important than its content and the essential question, according to Juul, is "*not what but how? <...> this is not about the reasons for arguing or disagreement but about how we tend to communicate?*" (Juul, 2010, p. 81). Hence, the essence of communication is a dialogue, where the question *the way (how) communication works*, with the main focus on authentic mutual relation communicating with another person, is much more significant than the question *who engage in communication*. According to V. Legkauskas, the sense of understanding and closeness "while communicating with others, first of all, depends not on the extent to which an individual understands what another person says but on the degree to which she or he understands what we feel" (Legkauskas, 2013, p. 114). The teacher-learner dialogue grounded on unconditional acceptance and respect allows for a feeling of human dignity as well as for that of being heard and understood.

A frequent reason for conflict situations and learning failures is unequal, imperative communication and disrespect for the learner's personality. The principle of equivalence means that equal ethical requirements have to be imposed on the entire individual regardless his/her social status and age. Evaluating learners' behaviour, the teacher has to follow the same requirements set for herself or himself. The essence of partnership-based communication consists of well-intended teacher-learner relations based on partnership, understanding, acknowledgement of individuality, when every learner is free to express own opinion. It can be stated that partnership-based communication creates conditions for learner's personality maturity, creates conditions for self-revelation and self-learning.

Analysing the reasons that precondition school students' learning problems, the scholars emphasise the importance of teacher's expectations. D. G. Myers (2000), who investigated the importance of expectations of social environment, identified correlation between the teacher's attitude towards the learner and academic achievements and behaviour of the latter. He stated that teachers have good opinion about the learners, who are successful. And this happens, according to Myers, because teachers know what their learners are capable of and how they learn (Myers, 2000, p. 145). The author thinks that social beliefs and judgements are important because they have the power of effect and have influence on individual's self-assessment. Myers also presents the results of experiment conducted by R. Rosenthal and L. F. Jacobson, which show that the teacher's expectations are not so relevant because modest expectations do not ruin a gifted child just as high expectations do not make any miracle and do not turn an inapprehensive child into a talented one. However, the majority of conducted scientific research confirms

the statement that high expectations of teachers particularly encourage lagging students, who are strongly influenced by a positive attitude of a teacher (Myers, 2000, p. 145).

According to A. Hargreaves, the teacher's profession requires trust in processes and people. The scholar states that "this professional trust is not a matter of passive blind faith in others. It involves active commitments to shared work, openness, and reciprocal learning" (Hargreaves, 2008, p. 40). Teachers' trust is significant to learners because it enhances their self-confidence, which is preconditioned by the teacher's objectivity, avoidance of stereotypes and bias. It is important for each learner to feel that she or he is valued and acknowledged on an equal basis and that his/her efforts to learn are noticed and evaluated in an objective and unbiased way. The learners, who have experienced teacher's biased behaviour, feel under-evaluated, less gifted, insignificant and, therefore, they do not get into "the circle of the chosen ones". Bias can manifest itself evaluating, when teachers compare learners with each other rather than the learner's present achievements with his/her earlier ones. P. Black and D. Wiliam claim that requirements for each learner have to be set focusing on the outcomes achievable to a particular learner, feedback has to be specific with recommendations about what has to be improved (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Comparison of learners emphasising advantages of some learners and disadvantages of others, categorical division of learners into gifted and talentless, into advanced learners and laggards consolidate stereotyping. According to G. Petty (2006), stereotypes have influence on people's thinking and selective memory. Following stereotypes in interpersonal relations, an opportunity to understand an individual as a personality is lost. It is necessary to draw attention to the fact that the teachers prejudice, sticking labels of "a bad learner", "a lazy bone" and "a loser" mean evaluation not of a particular action or behaviour but that of the learner's personality. According to D. G. Myers, labelling can carry out the function of a self-fulfilling prophecy, i.e. "sticking labels" not only changes understanding but can also change the reality: being frequently called a sluggard, a learner identifies himself or herself with the label used and starts behaving the way it is expected from him or her (Myers, 2000, p. 543).

Relevance of the issue. The scholars, who focus on the construct of self-esteem, emphasise the significance of self-esteem on individual's personality development, psychical health, learning motivation and interpersonal relations. However, the problem of building adolescent self-esteem in Lithuanian schools has not been comprehensively analysed from the educational point of view. The research focused on the revelation of significance of such factors of the educational process as the teacher's personality, methods and ways of teaching/learning, assessment and self-assessment of academic achievements and progress, learning environment to adolescent is very scarce. The article aims to reveal the aspects of educational teacher-learner interaction that enhance or diminish adolescent self-esteem raising the following **problem question**: which aspects of educational teacher-learner interaction enhance and which diminish adolescent self-esteem?

The object of the research: the aspects of educational teacher-learner interaction that enhance or diminish adolescent self-esteem in the natural process of education.

The aim of the research: to identify the aspects of educational teacher-learner interaction that enhance or diminish adolescent self-esteem.

The objective of the research: to reveal adolescents' attitude towards the aspects of educational teacher-learner interaction that enhance or diminish adolescents' self-esteem.

Methodology

The qualitative research aimed to reveal the in-depth experiences of the major agents of education, teachers and learners, with the focus on adolescents' opinions and observations envisaging the meanings and evaluations assigned to the phenomena. The questions of the qualitative research were designed seeking to better understand the phenomenon under investigation, to reveal interpretational explanation that derives from the analysis of the situation, on the basis of own experience. Conducting the qualitative research 7–9th formers were provided with the semi-structured interview in writing, which aimed to identify and describe the factors that enhance or diminish their self-esteem at school reflected on the basis of adolescent experience. Employing the questions of the semi-structured interview, the participants in the research were encouraged to disclose their experience. Seeking to identify adolescent experience about the factors that increase or lower their self-esteem, the school learners were asked to answer the following questions: *“remember and describe the situation, when you felt important, evaluated, respected”* and *“remember and describe the situation, when you felt humiliated, unappreciated and unregarded”*, *“how, in your opinion, teacher could show respect to you”*. The research aimed to identify teachers' behaviour that enhances or diminishes adolescents' self-esteem with the help of the following questions: *“What kind of teachers' behaviour strengthens your self-esteem?”*, *“What kind of teachers' behaviour lowers your self-esteem?”*.

Methods of data collection for the research. The analysis of research literature sources made it possible to underpin the relevance and novelty of the topic, also to identify the socio-educational factors of adolescent self-esteem enhancement, and to define the methodological assumptions of research.

The partially-structured interview was used to reveal the in-depth experiences of the two major agents of education, teachers and learners, with the focus on adolescents' experiences that can disclose their self-esteem enhancing or diminishing factors in the process of education, and also revealing teachers' attitudes towards specific factors that increase or lower adolescents' self-esteem in the process of education.

Methods of data analysis of the research. The accumulated qualitative data were analysed by applying the method of *content analysis*, based on multiple readings of the text and dividing it into sections directly related to the object of study. Statements of closely related meanings were grouped into categories and subcategories. Subcategories were established with the help of heuristic approach, namely, *“while reading the answer of the respondent, its abstracted informational content was identified and placed under*

a certain subcategory <...> different subcategories were united under the same category when there could be recognized a unifying common idea, worded in the category; several categories made up a common topic group” (Žydzūnaitė, 2012, p. 31). While grouping the statements that illustrate separate subcategories, the most typical and originally-sounding statements of the respondents were selected.

The basis of the empirical research and its sample. *The sampling of respondents for the qualitative research* was preconditioned by the aim of the study, namely, to investigate the immediately relevant phenomenon in the broad perspective and rather intensive but not extensive way. The informativeness of the respondents in terms of the aim of the study preconditioned their selection. It is not generally indicated in research literature how the sufficient sample of the qualitative research should be selected. In the process of study, it is usually relied on the concept of *saturation* (the number of ‘saturated opinions’), which states that the sample is big enough if the information obtained from respondents starts repeating itself, and the additionally received opinions of the respondents do not influence the results of the study. The decision to limit the population of respondents to forms 7 to 9 was based on the assumption that adolescents of this particular age group best represent their age group-specific characteristics, with the greatest number of physical and psychic changes taking place exactly at this period. The overall sample was made up of 136 learners in forms 7 to 9 and 86 teachers.

Analysis of results

The qualitative research aimed to reveal the teacher’s behaviour that strengthens adolescent self-esteem. The school learners were asked to answer the question relying on their own experience: *what kind of teachers’ behaviour strengthens your self-esteem?* The responses of adolescents are presented in Table 1.

The school learners pointed out that their self-esteem is strengthened by teacher’s acknowledgement, praising for “*well-competed assignments*”, “*well-performed job*”, etc. According to G. Petty (2006), praises for well-performed tasks or appropriate behaviour have to be expressed as soon as possible and then a student will increase his/her efforts to attain better results compared to the one, who gets reinforcement only after some time. M. G. R. Robichaud (2007) draws attention to the importance of formulating the text of the praise – it is necessary to differentiate an action from a person, i.e. a teacher has to notice and encourage actions, which would help a learner to successfully perform tasks in the future.

Table 1

Subcategories revealing teachers' behaviour that strengthens adolescent self-esteem

Category	Subcategory	Statements for illustration
Positive relations with teachers	Attention, support to adolescents	<i>"When a teacher helps or encourages me"; "When a teacher takes care of me, talks to me and this helps me to better understand myself"; "I feel valued, important and respected, when teachers notice my work and evaluate my efforts".</i>
	Confidence, trust in adolescents	<i>"When a teacher put me in charge of attendance"; "When I was elected head student, I was very happy because I understood that my classmates and the teacher rely on me".</i>
	Respectful, polite behaviour	<i>"When the teacher behaves in a tactful and polite way"; "When teachers behave politely and show that they respect me"; "When teachers ask for my opinion, they express their respect to me".</i>
	Tolerance, respect for opinion	<i>"When the teacher praised me for having my own opinion"; "When the teacher asks for my opinion".</i>
	Assigning responsibilities for a learner	<i>"When teacher put me in charge of announcing the festive event"; "When I was responsible for the project of physics"; "When the teacher made me responsible for group work".</i>
	Acceptance of adolescents' ideas, respect for opinions and attitudes	<i>"When the teacher agreed with my ideas and told that it was a great idea"; "When the teachers accept my ideas and support them"; "While organising class events, when I suggest ideas, they are accepted"; "When the teacher took my ideas about scenario into account".</i>
	Support to an adolescent, acceptance of him/her the way he/she is	<i>"I felt very good, when the teacher supported my side in the presence of the class"; "When I receive encouragement and support from teachers though I am not good at learning".</i>
	Evaluation of adolescents' abilities through public praising and acknowledging	<i>"When the teacher praises you for learning well publicly in the classroom"; "when the teacher told everybody that I do everything very carefully and thanked me"; "when the teacher praised my performance, even though I did not win anything".</i>
	Learner's support/help to a teacher, joint activities	<i>"When I helped the teacher to prepare for a lesson and she praised me for this"; "When the teacher praised me for help in the classroom"; "When I was the only one to stay and help the teacher, she thanked me"; "When I helped the teacher to correct works".</i>

Adolescents think that the teacher's encouragement and support are also of significance to their self-esteem. They stated that "*through noticing and encouraging me*" teachers provide young people with self-confidence. Having analysed the influence of external measures (reward, punishment), A. Adler (Адлер, 1997) emphasises a more considerable significance of encouragement, which, according to Adler, strengthens courage and provides confidence even in such cases, even when support from surrounding people is weak, whereas a reward for good behaviour teaches a learner to rely on people around more than on own decisions and capacities. V. Legkauskas (2013) argues that encouragement most effectively sustains motivation only when it is timely and well-balanced.

The adolescents' need for attention manifests itself in their attempts to distinguish themselves from the others or to be noticed and evaluated. The school learners pointed out that they think they receive attention from teachers "*when they [teacher] notice efforts*", etc. It is obvious that the teacher's observation and attention are particularly relevant to distrustful adolescents with low self-esteem. Adolescents understand teachers' support as some advice, efforts to help or explain what learners fail to understand. The teacher's attention satisfies the adolescents' need for taking care of them and allows for a sense of security. Educational researchers state that adolescents' violations of discipline are most frequently related to their wish to compete for attention towards them.

Adolescents' respectful treatment of themselves and others is strengthened by respect shown to them. V. Legkauskas (2013) defines the need for respect as a certain dependence on evaluation of positive qualities and activities of an individual received from other people. Adolescents state that experiencing teachers' respect and polite behaviour, they feel important and significant and this results in their respect for teachers.

The teacher's tolerant and reasonable behaviour has influence on strengthening adolescent self-esteem. The tolerance is perceived by adolescents firstly as teachers' respect for their opinion and attitudes. Adolescents state that it is important to them, when teachers "*respect their thoughts and opinion*", "*appreciate an opinion or at least listens to it*". Adolescents need the teacher's understanding, which is perceived as the teacher's ability to notice and understand a learner, who has encountered critical situations (for example, "*complicated situations*") and such as an ability of "*understanding of learners' problems*", etc. Emphasising the significance of understanding in communication, psychologists emphasise that it encourages stronger confidence, which results in an intention to get under influence of the people, who are trusted (Legkauskas, 2012).

The adolescents' responses expressed their opinion that teachers could rely more on them and delegate more complex tasks or obligations, which would enable them to feel independent and responsible. The atmosphere of mutual trust is important, as relying on a learner, the teacher provides him or her with more autonomy and responsibility.

According to psychologists, being unable to objectively evaluate own abilities and potential, adolescents most frequently rely on adults' evaluation; therefore teachers have to carefully evaluate learner's abilities and opportunities. Taking into account the

significance of teacher's evaluations to adolescents, it can be stated that one of the most important aspects of educational activities is *development of learner's self-confidence*, ability to find arguments, which would convince learners in their own potential to improve. Learners particularly need the teacher's comments, which assess their efforts even if their academic achievements are not high.

Adolescents think that objective and unbiased behaviour of teachers contributes to their feeling respected and important. Such behaviour is understood as "*application of the same rules to everybody*". On the basis the responses of learners, it can be stated that each learner wants to feel respected, objectively evaluated and accepted, his/her efforts and learning outcomes are assessed without any bias. It is obvious that the reputation of an objective and unbiased teacher is built comparing his/her learning achievements with previous results, the teacher's ability to justify the decisions made.

Seeking to identify the teacher's behaviour that lowers adolescent self-esteem, school learners were asked to indicate *what kind of teacher's behaviour* weakens their self-esteem on the basis of their own experience. The responses are presented in Table 2.

The responses of adolescents revealed the teachers' personal qualities and aspects of behaviour that lower learners' self-esteem. Presenting the examples of teacher behaviour, which diminish their self-esteem, the school students lay particular emphasis on public humiliation and insulting. They also state that disrespect to them is expressed by "*disrespectful comments, shown contempt*" of teacher or "*when I am shouted at in the presence of all the classmates*". The responses of the school learners confirm the need for such qualities of a professional teacher as poise and self-control. The teacher's self-control is also important because his or her restraint has an educational effect on learners in itself. In educational activities it is particularly important to observe discipline of emotions, i.e. emotional neutrality or positivity, whereas negativity is strictly forbidden.

According to adolescents, their self-esteem is diminished by teachers' derision, mockery and irony: "*concealed derision (irony) in the teacher's words, when the words are addressed to you, though your name is not mentioned directly, everybody knows that they are for you*". It is necessary to point out that such behaviour of the teacher is particularly harmful because it as if legalises the phenomenon of bullying in the classroom. The adolescents stated that their self-esteem is lowered by comparison with their peers, when shortcomings are emphasised, for example "*the teacher always compares me with my desk mate and always to my detriment*". The answers of the learners evidence the lack of tact shown by teachers; they have to avoid comparison of learners' academic achievements (particularly in public); learners' academic results can be compared only with his/her previous results and progress.

Table 2

Subcategories that reveal the teachers' behaviour that lowers adolescents' self-esteem

Category	Subcategory	Statements for illustration
Negative relations with teachers	Ignoring of an adolescent, insufficient attention to him/her	<i>"When I wanted to answer the question because I knew the answer very well, my teacher deliberately did not ask and ignored me"; "The teacher did not give high evaluation to my compositions though I think I wrote not worse than others"; "When I complete tasks the first and my teacher pretends she does not notice this".</i>
	Distrust or disbelief in an adolescent	<i>"When the teacher did not trust my abilities to do the job well and independently"; "When I felt teachers' distrust in me"; "When they blame me in what I have not done".</i>
	Intolerance, under appreciation of opinion or attitude	<i>"When the teacher never takes into account what I say but listens to others"; "When the teacher did not listen to me, did not hear my suggestion and said "nonsense" at once"; "When the teacher does not take into consideration my opinion or what I suggest".</i>
	Treatment of adolescents as unreliable or irresponsible individuals	<i>"When teachers think that I cannot perform anything well and that is why does not ask me anything to do"; "These are the situations, when the teacher does not assign any works to me because she thinks that I am not capable to do this on time".</i>
	Unfairness, bias	<i>"When the teacher singles out a couple of children from the class and communicates with her differently than with the rest"; "When the teacher values me unfairly, being certain in advance that I cannot learn";</i>
	Negative public remarks, comments	<i>"When the teacher discussed my behaviour in the presence of the whole class"; "When the teacher scolded me in the presence of the whole class"; "When the teacher comments on my silly mistakes and everybody laughs"; "When after receiving a bad mark, the whole class is informed about it and about all the drawbacks of mine".</i>
	Shouting, public humiliation, shaming	<i>"When I fail to complete tasks together with everybody, the teacher shouts at me"; "These are the situations, when teachers notice only what I do wrong and shouts at me"; "When the teacher shouts at me and shames me almost all the time in front of the class almost all the lesson".</i>
	Comparison of learners, "sticking labels"	<i>"The teacher always compares me with my desk mate and always to my detriment"; "The teacher singles out a group of children during mathematics lessons, who are not so talented and treat them like fools"; "When the teacher said that I always lag behind and that I am a loser".</i>

Overreaction to criticism and painful reaction to failures are characteristic of adolescence. Unwillingness to hear learners, indifference to them and their ignoring are of concern to adolescents. It is obvious that an adolescent, who undergoes constant criticism and ignoring, will feel inferiority, his or her self-confidence and self-esteem will deteriorate. Undoubtedly, teachers and school learners have to speak about their academic failures or inappropriate behaviour but it is also important to provide young people with hope that difficulties can be overcome. Belief in a learner, an optimistic attitude towards his/her abilities is very important. Even if it appears to be slightly excessive. It is not necessary to overdo praising but it is strongly recommended not to belittle learner's potential and abilities.

Having analysed the learners' responses, it can be stated that adolescent self-esteem is lowered by negative relations with teachers, which manifest themselves through the ignoring of adolescents, unresponsiveness, distrust, intolerance of their opinions, an attitude towards adolescents as unreliable and irresponsible individuals, as well as through the teacher's unfairness, negative remarks, comments (public in particular), public humiliation and "sticking of labels". The learners' responses reveal teachers' unprofessional behaviour, lack of pedagogical ethics, which manifests itself in teacher's overconfidence in his/her sense of justice, negation of partnership-based interaction with a learner.

Discussion

Following the theoretical analysis and the results of the qualitative research on the factors of building adolescent self-esteem in the natural process of education, it can be stated that the problem of building adolescent self-esteem remains relevant nowadays. The qualitative research revealed that the educational teacher-learner interaction is not always grounded on the culture of communication. It can be stated that there exists a sensitive problem of teachers' distrust in learners. It is necessary to pay attention that such distrust of the teacher in learners frequently predetermines disfavour, restriction of independent decision making and responsibility that contributes to emergence of learners' sense of inferiority.

The priorities of education, such as learner's academic achievements or development of his/her personality improvement, have been discussed in the society and the community of teachers. Both goals of education are closely interrelated and predetermine each other. The answer to the question, which goal is prioritized, results in a choice of teaching methods and the style of teacher's work. The essence of discussions is precisely expressed by Hargreaves (2008), who states that contemporary education exclusively focuses on academic results, achievement standards and very little thought or attention is given to "what counts as the substance of children's achievement" (Hargreaves, 2008, p. 63). According to Hargreaves, learning is turned into "a clinical and disengaging race

toward targets or fill teachers' time with technical tasks so no time is left for creativity, imagination, and relationships – for all those things that fuel the passion to learn”. Hargreaves states that one of the most important reasons for experiencing learning failures is that the school fails to provide ample opportunities for learners to feel the value of own personality and to perceive the importance of *self-directed learning*. Following the self-worth theory introduced by Covington, it can be stated that the trend to equate the individual's achievements with his/her value prevails in society, i.e., the higher one's achievements are, the worthier (more deserving) s/he is. Is such a tendency promoted at school? Do learner's academic achievements reflect his/her personality development? If this is the case, the school learners can start confusing abilities and value. Such a situation encourages learners not to seek personal development but to avoid academic failures. Searching for identity of personality, adolescents encounter challenges achieving high academic results, if they go through situations of anxiety, do not feel safe, relations with their peers or teachers are not successful or they encounter disagreements with parents, etc. Some responses of adolescents showed that they associate self-esteem with fulfilment of parents' and teachers' expectations that firstly relate to good academic achievements. Undoubtedly, high learning outcomes contribute to earning respect from peers and parents but, according to Legkauskas (2012), “if a learner demonstrates efforts only to impress others, his/her motivation loses an important element, i.e., curiosity and a pleasure to learn new things, and it tends to consequently weaken”. It is necessary to emphasise that inadequate requirements for adolescents' potential and expectations can lead to a sense of inferiority, result in depression, feelings of inanity and school fear. Teachers should take into account that self-assessment of learners is closely related to evaluation of adults. It should be observed that adolescents attach high significance not only to evaluations of peers but also to those of adults (most frequently they make attempts not to show this). The qualitative research showed that peers opinion about a certain adolescent is built on the basis of the teacher's attitude and evaluation.

Active teaching/learning methods applied in a contemporary school demonstrate an obvious change in the position of communication between the teacher and learners. Partnership and equality in such activities become inevitable. The teacher-learner interaction grounded on equitable and mutual respect and trust constitute the bigger part of positive emotional psychological environment at school that predetermines learners' wellbeing, contributes to their wish to attend school and seek improvement. A significant role here is played by the teacher's personality. The research revealed that adolescents emphasise the importance of such qualities of teachers as sincerity, tolerance, objectivity, empathy, attention and responsiveness. School learners particularly appreciate the teacher's ability to ground mutual communication and collaboration on trust and equality, to create democratic relations based on mutual responsibility. The adolescents in the research pointed out that the teacher's unconditional respect and an attitude, which demonstrates

that a learner is valued and respected for being just the way s/he is, contribute to their feeling valued.

Conclusions

The qualitative research disclosed that experience at school that strengthens or diminishes adolescent self-esteem is related to two important factors, i.e. positive and negative relations with teachers. The teacher's behaviour that supports the learner and gives him/her dignity also enhances adolescent self-esteem. The demonstration of teacher's power diminishes the learner's self-esteem. Clarification of adolescent experience allowed for identification of the teacher's behaviour that enhances self-esteem of learners. The following aspects of teacher's behaviour as respect for a learner, tolerance and goodwill, confidence and trust in a learner as well as objectivity can be distinguished. It can be stated that the provided support is a particularly important means of enhancement of school learners' self-esteem and motivation for learning, on which academic achievement and a wish to improve are highly dependent. The essence of positive evaluations of teachers consists of adolescent's focus on his or her good or bad qualities. The analysis of adolescents' responses regarding situations that diminish their self-esteem revealed that negative attitude of a teacher makes learners feel under-evaluated, humiliated and disregarded. Negative teacher's attitudes express themselves as undervaluation or unappreciation of learners' efforts, ignoring of learners, failure to hear learner's opinion, its disregard, negative comments and remarks. It is necessary to pay attention to public commenting on learner's mistakes and behaviour, public learner's shaming and blaming. Following the learners' statements, it can be noted that teacher's public attitude, which humiliates adolescents is particularly painful as the teacher's negative opinion can serve as basis for building up a negative opinion of peers about that particular adolescent.

The analysis of learners' responses revealed that the self-respect of adolescents grows together with positive responses from teachers, when learners are guaranteed respect, unconditional acceptance and can feel their significance. Adolescent self-esteem is affected more severely by demonstrated disrespect towards them, by distrust, intolerance, non-constructive and offensive criticism spoken out in public than by academic failure, lack of abilities, communication problems or physical appearance. If the conditions to experience positive self-esteem are absent, a sense of unworthiness develops, and there is a risk of encountering serious psychological and social problems hindering coherent cognitive, psychological, and social development in the period of adolescence. The analysis of the learners' responses allows for a conclusion that the teacher's personality is a particularly significant phenomenon, which has influence on adolescent self-esteem, i.e. on enhancement of adolescent self-esteem, realisation of their abilities lying in the nature and individual needs.

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Ugdamosios mokytojo ir mokinio sąveikos įtaka paauglio savigarbai

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Santrauka

Šiuolaikinei mokymosi paradigmai aktuali mokytojo ir mokinio sąveika, grindžiama geranoriškumu, abipuse pagarba ir pasitikėjimu, įgalinančiu mokinį tapti savarankiškam, iniciatyviam ir atsakingam. Mokytojo veiklos esmę galima apibrėžti taip: svarbiausia – dėmesį sutelkti į mokinio asmenybės brandą, intelektinių galių plėtojimą, į jo paties aktyvų, sąmoningą mokymąsi, suteikiant mokiniui reikalingą paramą, kad jis išsiugdytų gyvenimui svarbių kompetencijų. Tarp siektinų kompetencijų, tokių kaip mokėjimas mokytis, komunikavimas, iniciatyvumas ir kūrybingumas, svarbus yra asmeninės kompetencijos, arba oraus, save gerbiančio, gebančio adekvačiai save vertinti žmogaus, ugdymas. Mokytojas nuo ugdymo proceso vadovo vaidmens pereina prie mokymosi organizatoriaus, galimybių kūrėjo, konsultanto vaidmens, svarbiausiomis ugdymo vertybėmis tampa mokinio autonomiškumo, savarankiškumo ir atsakingumo plėtotė. Edukologų požiūriu, egzistuoja glaudus ryšys tarp mokinio savigarbos ir mokytojų suteiktos autonomijos, pasirinkimo laisvės. Mokytojo pagarba mokiniui, dėmesys, padrąsinimas, pozityvūs lūkesčiai didina mokinio pasitikėjimą savimi, stiprina savigarbą.

Esminiai žodžiai: *mokytojo asmenybė, mokytojo ir mokinio ugdomoji sąveika, paauglių savigarba.*

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