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Cyberbullying Prevention in the Opinion of Teachers

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Abstract

The paper sets out to present the opinions of teachers regarding the implementation of cyberbullying prevention programmes for children and youth. Such perspective is to facilitate a better understanding of the role of the prevention of Internet-mediated risky behaviours in the school environment. The text was created using the interpretative paradigm of the qualitative pedagogical research. The study was conducted using focus group technique with over a dozen of teachers participating. The text was written as part of the project SELI – Smart Ecosystem for Learning and Inclusion, in the second half of 2019. The data collected showed that cyberbullying prevention is a complex phenomenon and requires active engagement not only from the teachers but also from the third parties, parents and students themselves. The teachers who took part in the focus group listed a range of protective factors related to the elimination of cyberbullying: increasing digital literacy, developing universal skills (communication, personal culture, respect to others, critical thinking), support from the police and related institutions, building family relationships, engaging in leisure activities. The teachers agree that rapidly developing technology outdates the knowledge of people involved in media education, making lifelong education necessary.

Keywords: cyberbullying, teachers, prevention, school, parents, digital literacy, Poland.

1. Introduction

Cyberbullying and electronic aggression are a challenge for media education and the prevention of risky behaviours. Like other Internet-mediated behaviours (Plichta, 2017): problematic Internet use, sexting or piracy, different aspects of cyberbullying among the young people have become a global challenge. However, given the scale and the mechanisms of cyberbullying and electronic aggression, this type of unacceptable activity is one of the most frequently analysed e-threats. Despite introducing different didactic forms and methods, cyberbullying is a point of interest of the parties to the education and media pedagogy process (Plichta et al., 2018). Adolescents admit that the cyberbullying effects are painful and the hitherto implemented preventive measures have not eliminated nor significantly reduced the phenomenon in the school environment (Barlińska et al., 2018). The purpose of this paper is to present cyberbullying from the perspective of teachers-practitioners whose daily work involves anticipatory activities and solving problematic situations related to the misuse of the Internet. Such cumulated pedagogical knowledge allows to fill the cognitive gaps by showing the innovative and proves methods of cyberbullying prevention. The authors assume that teachers statements will enable us to design more effective media prevention activities and, thus, increase the digital literacy of the key players of the media education game.

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2. Materials and methods

Cyberbullying is a problem noticeable among the European teenagers. An international research conducted in several European countries (Spain, Poland, the Netherlands, Romania, Iceland and Greece) among the youths aged 14-17 (N=10,930; average age 15.8 ± 0.7 years) showed that the general of 21.4 % teenagers declared they had cyberbullying-related experiences during the last 12 months. Such declarations were most often given by the respondents from Romania (37.3 %) and Greece (26.8 %) whereas young people from Spain (13.3 %) and Iceland (13.5 %) had experienced cyberbullying the least. The international study revealed that the factors which increase the risk of falling victim to cyberbullying are the increased activity in social media and the time of using digital media. Personality traits and problems with relationships in school were also identified as the risk factors.

According to media pedagogues and psychologists, cyberbullying is a serious problem affecting more than one fifth of the surveyed teenagers in Europe. Cyberbullying prevention is one of the priorities of modern media education (Tsitsika et al., 2015). The scale of the phenomenon presented above was confirmed by other quantitative research in which the number of young people with cyberbullying experiences ranged between over a dozen to several dozen percent.

As for Poland, the result was 21.5 % (Athanasidou, et al., 2018). In Russia, for example, the percentage of cyberbullying victims was 23 % (data by EU KIDS Online) (Soldatova et al., 2014), while in Slovakia 42.7 % of young people had experienced cyberbullying and 4.4 % were the perpetrators (Hollá, 2016). The variation in the cyberbullying scale is hard to assess and so are comparative analyses. This is due to the methodology issues such as: different definitions of cyberbullying, different age of the respondents participating in studies, tool structure (operationalisation of the variables), sampling and changing styles of using digital media by teenagers. One thing is certain, however, that hitherto published data indicate that intervention, also within the framework of school education, is a necessity.

When analysing cyberbullying it is also worth pointing out that not all the negative behaviours mediated by media should be classified as cyberbullying. In the subject matter literature, electronic aggression is often confused with cyberbullying. Thus, in order to discern teasing, taunts or aggressive behaviours from the actual cyberbullying, it is worth to refer to several key criteria. Cyberbullying is characterised, among others, by: intentional actions which are meant to harm and are seen by the victim as harmful; such activity is cyclic (repetitive) and often extended to the offline environment; is based on the advantage the bullying person has over the victim (e.g. physical strength, anonymity, dependence, age, level of digital literacy) (Vandebosch, Van Cleemput, 2008). Cyberbullying and offline bullying have many common characteristics but the nature of the Internet often makes it much more severe (multiplication of the online content, unlimited access of the third parties to defamatory content, lack of possibility to quickly remove the harmful content etc.) (Dooley et al., 2009).

More and more often, the researchers studying cyberbullying point out to the non-standard solutions used to minimise this type of risky behaviours. First, there are postulates to develop the universal traits like empathy (Barlińska et al., 2013). For over a decade, the experts emphasise the key predispositions, skills and personality traits, which become the protective factors. Another crucial factors in minimising cyberbullying are the school atmosphere and digital literacy among the young people (Casas et al., 2013). The school environment is the issue which needs separate attention and is a significant intermediate variable in minimising and the occurrence of cyberbullying.

At present, schools and teachers face new difficulties and challenges related to cyberbullying. It is not only the students who see cyberbullying as a visible problem in their peer groups. Teachers have been recognising cyberbullying as a challenge in their schools. Pedagogy experts suggest we should pay attention to the three complementary aspects: development of the digital safety policy, raising awareness among the teachers and development of strategies to deal with cyberbullying with the support of parents. About half of the teachers declared that students report they have been bullied through mobile phone or Internet, and some teachers have been themselves cyberbullied (Eden et al., 2013). The above presented assumptions are the challenge for modern digital school and media education and socialisation. Properly designed and implemented media prevention activities have become the solution to minimise the threats to the digital safety of the students.

3. Discussion

The research into cyberbullying are one of the most popular areas of educational sciences, assigned to media pedagogy (Pyżalski, 2012). At present, the number of available publications on the scale and mechanisms of electronic aggression and cyberbullying among the adolescents is rapidly growing. More and more often, the pedagogical research leverage the advantages of the longitudinal studies which reflect the changes taking place in the recent years (Tomczyk, 2017). Research into cyberbullying has a long tradition also in the area of preventive activities aimed at finding the effective methods of preventing or minimising the occurrence of undesired behaviours in the context of education (Ševčíková, Šmahel, 2009; Ševčíková et al., 2012). The research results presented herein are in line with the international discourse on cyberbullying which, despite extent knowledge and a relatively large number of preventive programmes, has not been eliminated yet (Schultze-Krumbholz et al., 2014; Del Rey et al., 2015).

The results show the bottom-top view on cyberbullying from the perspective of the persons who have to deal with cyberbullying-related problems as part of their daily educational responsibilities. It is teachers who, in many cases, are legally obliged to help the victims as well as the perpetrators (Zych et al., 2015). The opinions and experiences of the teachers expressed during the focus group reveal that these professionals need educational support in the situations of solving the cyberbullying issues. The respondents still feel unsecure when facing situations mediated by digital media (Stošić, Stošić, 2015). Very often, as part of their activities supporting prevention on the first and third level, they use help of external institutions such as Police or City Guards, partly shifting the responsibility and searching for support on the most difficult cases. This situation is typical and observed not only in Poland (Vandebosch et al., 2012).

The teachers most often emphasise the importance of the tertiary prevention, that is, solving the problems as they occur. When a given cyberbullying case is connected with the penal liability, they feel the weight of the problems. Unfortunately, this is still the typical approach to the problem of digital safety, focusing on eliminating the risky behaviours as they occur instead of primary (anticipatory) prevention (Pyżalski, 2012b; Tomczyk, Potyrała, 2019; Tomczyk, Solecki, 2019). However, we need to point out to the new trends which some time ago were absent from the Polish educational system: regular and centrally organised projects to support the teachers. It is the initiatives led by the third sector and the representatives of the first sector (the ministry or school supervising authorities) or businesses implementing their social responsibility values (Pyżalski et al., 2019) support researchers by providing finances to diagnose the negative phenomena and expertise (trainings for teachers in using the effective cyberbullying prevention methods and techniques). However, given the teachers' opinion about such trainings, the offer seems to be inadequate to the actual needs. First, due to the rapid development of the services of the information society, the trainings are often outdated (Ziamba, 2013). The changing cyberspace prevents the teachers from effective diagnosis all the threats of the digital world. Their knowledge often becomes irrelevant (Lokmić et al., 2013). Second, the teachers emphasise the problem of the limited time they have for self-learning, therefore the trainings should focus on presenting the cyberbullying mechanisms using specific case studies (Zych et al., 2017). Third, there are teachers who still believe in the effectiveness of blocking the access to mobile phones in schools. The focus group participants noticed that the model based on restrictions motivates students to engage in other, offline activities and thus eliminates cyberbullying (Blaya et al., 2018). But the restrictive prevention causes other threats like lack of competencies to deal with cyberbullying outside of school, when there are no regulations preventing children and youths from using their mobile devices.

Cyberbullying prevention is a complex activity (Tomczyk et al., 2019; Zych et al., 2016). This means that, according to the teachers, effective elimination or reduction of the behaviours classified as cyberbullying requires the efforts of both parents and students. The respondents said it is parents who are responsible for this type of activities their children engage in while online. However, they emphasise that the parents are still insufficiently involved in education of their children in the cyberspace. Lack of rules of using the Internet, poor knowledge about the services young people use in social media or insufficient engagement in the world of the young people leave the adolescents without the significant protective factor of parents' involvement in the education of their children (Wąsiński, Tomczyk, 2015; Tomczyk, Wąsiński, 2017). When led only by the teachers, such activities have insufficient impact. According to the teachers, prevention in the family does not require specialist knowledge but is based on building the relationships with the children and developing empathy towards the suffering of others. However, there is a group of teachers who

clearly refer to the intergenerational transfer within which building bridges between the adults and children helps to understand the nature of the new digital services, including the threats, without creating unnecessary stereotypes. At the same time, the respondents emphasise that they themselves together with the parents, lack advanced digital literacy which is in line with the diagnoses commissioned by the Ministry of National Education (Tomczyk, 2018; Tomczyk, 2019).

When referring to minimisation of cyberbullying, the teachers also focus on the styles of using digital media by the young people and say the problem is also rooted in poorly developed critical thinking. Schools do not help their students to function in the cyberspace; there are no activities focusing on developing the universal skills which would be useful online and offline. The teachers are right when they say that in many cases, new media are introduced to schools without providing the proper methodology grounds. The technocratic vision of school saturated with new media but lacking proper educational activities and awareness raising, only strengthens the undesired behaviours. In this situation, the teachers recognise the need to design proven and quick procedures of responding to cyberbullying. In addition, the respondents notice the fact that cyberbullying in schools is more and more often addressed not only to peers but also to the teachers. Cyberbullying towards the teachers is very often a taboo. Teachers share many concerns and lack digital literacy to be able to protect themselves against such phenomena.

4. Results

The paper presents the results of the focus group study into the widely defined cyberbullying and expectations related to prevention-educational activities in this area. The study was conducted as part of the project SELI – Smart Ecosystem for Learning and Inclusion – SELI ERANet17/ICT-0076. The project focuses on the development and implementation of an open model of access to the ICT-based tools and environments in order to encourage digitisation of the learning ecosystem through strengthening the educational solutions (detailed methods) and improving integration and availability of the ICT in the European Union and Latin America.

The objective of the research was further determined as the following research problems:

- What are the teachers' experiences related to their participation in the activities to increase their knowledge about cyberbullying prevention?
- What difficulties do the teachers face as they implement cyberbullying prevention activities?
- According to the teachers, what are the needs and expectations of children and youths related to cyberbullying prevention?
- How do teachers evaluate the existing cyberbullying prevention programmes?

Sample characteristics and research procedure

The sample consisted of the teachers who were postgraduate students at the Pedagogical University of Krakow in the academic year 2019/2020. The qualitative study was conducted in May 2019 using the focus group method. The respondents had different educational backgrounds and were teachers of different subjects. The study was carried out in two separate random groups (two faculties of the postgraduate studies). For the purposes of the research, an interview questionnaire was designed, divided into 4 thematic sections respective of the detailed research problems.

The focus groups took place on 12 May 2019. The sample consisted of 13 persons (teachers-postgraduate students of: childcare and guardianship education, pedagogical diagnosis and therapy in the Faculty of Pedagogy of the Pedagogical University of Cracow). The group consisted of 13 females. They were mostly teachers (primary and secondary education). One of the respondents was a school director. The age of the group was 33-49 years. Most of the teachers worked as appointed and chartered teachers in primary schools and secondary general and technical schools. All the respondents gave their consent to take part in the study, thus the ethical standards of the research were met.

Analysis of the quantitative data

The study was conducted using the interpretative paradigm of the pedagogical research. The starting point for the analysis of the qualitative data is the assumption that the focus is on an individual. Their problems, feelings and experiences are the starting point. The existing research results are the background rather than the theoretical framework for the research development. The studies within the interpretative paradigm are usually a small-scale research, such as in the presented case. The human activities (in this case, related to cyberbullying prevention among the teachers) reflect the social reality in a micro space. Research within this paradigm are subjective and require personal engagement of the researchers (members of the SELI project) (Łuszczuk,

2008). The study is based on the pedagogical phenomenology (Peters, 2009; Ryk, 2011). Such formulates assumptions allowed to explore the individual views of the teachers-practitioners of cyberbullying prevention. Phenomenology-based assumptions are used in the research into educational phenomena which have not been sufficiently explored in the individual perspective (Bolton, 1979). The researchers are aware that the qualitative data collected can be also applied in practice (designing cyberbullying prevention teaching materials) and may contribute to the diagnosis within the positivist (quantitative) research.

Some of the respondents took part in regular meetings addressing the issues of cyberbullying, organised by the police or city guards (usually as an annual meeting for all the students and teachers from a given school).

I mean, I had [some experiences], but through the prevention meetings with the police officers in Bochnia. We just invited the officers and they came to the class and talked about the legal-penal consequences related to cyberbullying, situations they recorded in the region and pending cases. We have been introducing this type of prevention activities for two years in our school.

We had the same type of preventive programme in our school. Someone from outside the school who trained both parents and teachers. There were talks with the children, combined with different activities like making posters about cyberbullying – prevention posters.

Some teachers had an opportunity to participate in trainings as parents. This experiences provided them with additional knowledge about the barriers to effective prevention.

I also took part in such a meeting about cyberspace but as a parent. It was led by a police officer. It was to address a certain situation many people were involved in and parents were completely unaware how serious the threat was. They seem to listen but like it was not related to them or their kids.

Only in one out of the 13 schools represented by the respondents, the director appointed a cyberbullying coordinator. Usually, this type of problems are solved by the teachers or school psychologists or counsellors.

In our school there is the cyberbullying coordinator who is responsible for training for the teachers and parents, we invite police officers, psychologists dealing with cyberbullying. Recently there was a police officer -psychologist who was the cyberbullying expert and that was a great meeting.

According to the respondent, this role *must be additionally paid because it requires extra trainings this person must complete to be able to share their knowledge and recent news.*

The respondents declared they knew the existing prevention programmes such as Bezpieczna+ (Safety+) or IMPACT. These are the activities implemented as part of the national programmes to improve the level of digital literacy among the parents, teachers and children. The activities are organised centrally and financed by the institutions responsible for supervision over the schools.

In Krakow, all the four-graders and their parents are under the programme led by the police. Police officers come to the general education classes and meetings with parents. So we begin with the fourth grade, in a systemic manner.

However, the interviewed teachers were a little sceptic about the effectiveness of these programmes. They signalled that knowledge in this area changes so rapidly that they are not able to update it.

It all changes so incredibly fast that it is really hard to keep up with all the news. We would have to spend all the time in social media and track everything what is going on there.

This way, they emphasised the need to establish institutions or roles, which would focus solely on updating the knowledge about the new forms of cyber abuse and cyberbullying. Young people who are often active observers could play an important role in such updating process.

Thus, the respondents have been most often using the experience and expertise of the invited guests (mainly police representatives). In their opinion, only a person in full uniform, who gives the specific examples of the legal consequences of cyberbullying is convincing for both, the students and their parents.

The above mentioned meetings focused most often on the legal issues related to the consequences of cyberbullying (mainly publishing photographs or images without the consent of the party involved and hate speech). The most engaging were actual examples, often from their own environment.

The participants of the focus group pointed out to the necessity to make students aware that all the images shared in the Internet remain there even after they are removed from the social networked portals. This communication channel is the most popular among the young people, and often parents, who carelessly share their holiday or family photos. These images often are beyond the good taste and show too much nudity (for example, a mother posting her photos in bikini while her child's friends comment them).

I witnessed that parents really are not aware that sharing photos online can be dangerous. For example, in a Facebook group "Moms from Krakow" a girls wrote that she would do a free photo session and asked to send her the photographs of children so she could choose the best ones. And actually, those mothers shared the photos of their beautiful daughters in comments, completely unaware that these images may go who knows where within minutes.

The teachers admitted that parents the weakest link in the prevention and fighting cyberbullying. First, their over-involvement in the cyberbullying acts and the need to protect their children hinder the work of the teachers and the police. Second, thanks to their thoughtless attitude towards the online activities their children are exposed to cyberbullying. The young generation observes the behaviours of their parents and follows them. If Facebook is a place where parents create their image and share everything with everybody, their children will adopt the same attitude.

One of the respondents mentioned a highly media-covered case of sharing the photographs of intimate body parts by a teenage girl. It was then the focus of a cycle of trainings. What concerns the teachers, is the lack of awareness of the threats or even ignoring them by the parents.

I have been recently on a meeting where we wondered how to ask the parents if they actually know what is cyberbullying... The parents have no awareness at all.

Other teacher added:

The parents do not know there is something like cyberbullying, they cannot deal with it themselves. I suspect that some suicides, problems with attendance and behaviour problems result from the fact that children experience some problems online, to which the parents do not respond.

Another problem are parents who give their consent to create Facebook accounts of their children who are under 13. Such profiles are outside the parental control.

You can impose parental control on any device but the parents have no idea that something like this exists.

Other issue addressed during the meetings with parents was the use of mobile phones at school, which may be used to record ridiculing or harassing videos. Unfortunately, many schools have no idea how to practically execute the ban on mobile phones. Confiscating the phones at the beginning of the classes has met with the resistance of children and youths.

The moment we introduced the ban on mobile phoned in the school and started to take them away, every morning a lady comes with a box to collect the phones. Of course, not everybody gives their phone away. If they do not and I see them using them during a break, I confiscate the phone. One of the parents is supposed to come and take it but it does not always work.

The respondents notice that the teachers themselves are not united in this regard: *some teachers resist to take the phones away because they believe they are the source of information.*

It is the fact that using mobile devices in the school changes the way young people function during the breaks. They have the opportunity to respond to the lack of exercise during the classes. One of the respondents presented a thorough analysis of the changes in the students' behaviour.

When we introduced this rule in our statute, suddenly the kids have become more loud, began to run and talk to one another. As long as they could use their mobiles, it was quiet in the halls. I was shocked each day I walked the corridors. Well, maybe not a deafening silence but it was quiet. And now I know that this school is a normal school, that these kids can rest after each class. It may be annoying for us, adults, but they need to vent their energy. We know very well that kids need to run and need to shout, the psychology says so. That is why I think it is stupidity to hand them mobile phones. It is simply stupidity which at some point will have negative impact on their mental well-being.

According to the respondents, one of the difficulties in the implementation of the prevention activities related to cyberbullying is the intergenerational barrier.

We had to explain the parent the basics which their children comprehend every day.

The school students are the generation for whom telecommunication technologies are the natural habitat. Young people are fluent using these technologies but they are not mindful (they lack critical thinking). They do not realise the threats they are exposed to in the virtual reality.

Let us remember that very often students provoke such situations themselves by posting their photos, weird photos and they are then shocked it fires back. I also had a situation in the school: a girls, not even 15 years old, so the police had to question half of Krakow because people shared the photographs. The mother was appalled and could not comprehend that it was her daughter who posted the photographs, she is still in shock that someone is sending out these photos. She does not understand these mechanisms.

Again, the last sentence resonates with the problem of the generational barriers between the parents and their children. And children do not think, *that if something gets into the network, it will stay there and not vanish.*

The careless attitude of the parents is related mainly with the activities of their children in the social networked services: Facebook, Instagram or Instastory. Children create closed groups so that adults could not control them.

Parents feel released from the responsibility to trace and control what their children do, everything is on the school – it is the school that teaches them wrong, has wrong programmes etc.

Access to these closed groups is limited and we do not have access to where teenagers can act and get away with it. This limits the teachers greatly when it comes to any interventions.

Some teachers try to monitor activities within such groups but after a while, they give up. One of the teachers pointed out that young people have their own language, abbreviations and slogans so that adults would not understand what they talk about.

The respondents hope that introduction of the new regulations will cut the impunity of cyberbullies.

In 2020 there is supposed to be a new regulation that all comments must be signed with a name and a surname or a nick. Police has now much difficulty to identify the perpetrators because, as you said, half of Krakow was questioned because they cannot track the IP of the one who wrote this or if it was written from someone else's notebook. They say that now it will be like this, as part of the protection so people are aware they are responsible for their words and can be punished for it. Good that they have introduced it. There should not be so much anonymity.

The teachers pointed out that one of the barriers to cyberbullying prevention is the particular cruelty of the young offenders and the accompanying conspiracy of silence. In such circumstances, it is difficult to identify the initiator and encourage the witnesses to testify.

I have been through a situation in my own school, my own, because it has been my school for years. Our son was attacked on Nasza Klasa portal. It works like a pack of wolfs, this is how these children function. One kid attacks and immediately the whole group joins in. They literally act like a pack. And my son told me: "Mom, I will never go to that school again!" So it only because I have a good relationship with my kid, I know that much. So thanks to my reaction he changed his mind and it is ok, but is something like this happens and no one knows... the problems grow bigger and bigger with each year.

Another barrier mentioned by the respondents is the lack of time and will to talk to their children openly. The statistic 15 minutes a day is not enough. According to the teachers, the primary and tertiary prevention means that *one simply needs to talk to them and again, talk. It is not that they do not understand. One just needs to calmly, without attacking them, explain the problem in simple words. I think one can achieve a lot this way.*

The respondents noticed the fact that ever younger children become the Internet users, which leads to the increase of addiction to modern information technologies.

A child comes to the clinic, a 2-year old, and they wait in line. Suddenly the mom says: look what a beautiful bird and the child comes to the widow and tries to zoom it with their fingers like on the phone. So what does it mean? That this 2-year old has contact with a phone all the time and already has this zooming mechanism worked out.

Other teacher added:

I have read that Poles [which is strange because we are not a rich society] buy mobile phones very early. Something is wrong because this is not about giving the child a mobile phone.

Adults push children into phone addiction. More and more often these devices serve as nannies or enhancers of learning (reference to the behavioural psychology). There are different

results of such behaviours: from speech-related disorders to neurologic symptoms like temporary nervous paralyses or epileptic seizures. In this situation, the priority are the wide-spread prevention activities addressed directly to the parents with small children.

I think we should teach parents at least from the kindergarten, how the new technologies can affect their children's development. My neighbour sits her son on a potty to teach him hygiene, gives him the phone with a cartoon, and he sits there for 20 minutes. We used to give them books.

Other respondent added: *one needs to tell the parents because they are not aware, they just think they are doing well, they try their own ways, sometimes better, sometimes not but they try, they do not think there is a threat.*

Some respondents also postulated that preventive activities should be implemented using media, including television. They suggested cartoons for children, addressing these issues, for example "Seep in the net" (cartoons by Sheeplive.eu). The wider audience the better, especially that our society focuses primarily on media messages. The more often do the parents see these type of content, the greater chance the educational and prevention activities will bring effects. Let them know that our typical, constant commenting on someone's look or decisions may result in hate speech.

Interestingly, one of the respondents suggested that schools are too enthusiastic about the modern technologies. There is a common opinion that a good school is the one where technologies take the central place. The respondent think a golden mean is needed

because is they watch a movie, they may remember maybe 10% of it. At some point the child will switch off and go into the sleep mode. The problems I see with focus result from the fact that children are over stimulated and tired of staring into different screens. At some point, an information shock occurs and there is not much left in their heads.

Other teacher noticed that some parents, especially the older ones who remember the times where there were no screens in schools, see the escalation of mediatisation in schools.

We had open days and the parents came. They came to us and asked why there is an interactive board in the first grade class, instead of a traditional, blackboard. Maybe it is their sentiment from their childhood.

It is hard not to agree that the present technological transformations have changed the way people learn and function, especially in the area of fine motor skills. Some of the respondents tend to explain the causes of dysgraphia and dysorthographia with the reduction of writing exercises in schools. They believe that students learn to scroll and click the screens in the first place. This leads to problems with writing letters or holding scissors.

One the barrier may be the attitudes of the parents, that is, their thoughtless, unprofessional approach to cyberbullying cases. Another barrier is also children's ability to hide the truth. A student can be very kind and well-behaving in the class while bullying other online with a particular cruelty. It is very difficult to identify such offender as no one even suspects him or her. Another issue is the language young people created for cyberbullying purposes. These are special abbreviations – a slang children use in the Internet. They do not make sense for outsiders, but young people know it perfectly. A blend of consonants may be a very specific insult. In this way they safeguard themselves.

They have created their own language and we, the teachers, are "not in". Seemingly, there is nothing going on in this group but when I began to search and made some screenshots, it turned out there were plenty of insults. They know what an insult is, they know what it means. Some of them are hard to figure out. To be honest, when I saw some of them, it made me think too. I came up writing many meanings on the paper.

The problems related to the cyberbullying prevention are most often addressed by the respondents during the general education classes. However, many teachers use these classes to catch up with their own subject curricula and the prevention of the new forms of risky behaviours is completely ignored.

When asked what is the most common type of electronic aggression they had encountered, all the teachers agreed it was: ridicule, mocking, mean and offensive, often very vulgar comments towards specific persons in the closed Fb groups. What is interesting, potential victims are first banned or removed from the group and remains unaware she or he is cyberbullied. The other group members are bind with the conspiracy of silence so certain acts of violence come to light when bullying is already at a huge scale. The victim usually withdraws from the class life.

When there are closed Messenger groups and someone shares an offensive photo and then adds insulting comments, both parents and the kid do not react because the child has been removed from the group. Neither the parents nor the child have access to that group. I had such situation at school, because I regularly control such groups in the Messenger. Not, that I have too much time but sometimes I think it is necessary. Children talk about different things there. In my daughter's class there was a boy whose photograph was posted to a group. He was banned from the group so he was not aware the comments others wrote. I reported it to his mother and she talked to him but the post disappeared from the group, were deleted as soon as it became the point of attention. This is difficult to deal with.

One of the teachers noticed that the groups do not serve the purposes for which they are officially created. In general, children do not like to share their homework or explain one another what are the assignments about. Even when all the group members are active, help requests remain unanswered, both those posted in a forum and individual.

It is a trend, and I heard that from many friends that children do not want to help one another with homework. They just have many other things to do and, surely, updating friends about the classes is not one of them.

According to the respondents, today's young people lack emotional intelligence or simple empathy. This should be the starting point in designing training and prevention curricula. One of the respondent was very specific about this issue.

I think the general education classes should be used to teach children how to express emotions. They should focus in particular on identifying difficult emotions before they accumulate, on teaching children how to use "I-messages" to say what they dislike in other people's behaviour by focusing on the facts and without insulting anyone. The students should learn how they can change this behaviour so they could function better in the class.

According to the teachers, possibility to comment all the information by the Internet users is not a good solution because it ensures them that they may speak regardless of their knowledge and culture level. The anonymity of the comments encourages behaviours which break the commonly respected social standards.

As for the already mentioned need for the students learn how to deal with emotions, it is important to teach them how to handle difficult emotions, especially the negative ones. The ability to manage emotions is one of the main protective factors. The victim's response always depends on their psychological wellbeing. Unfortunately, the teachers do not feel competent to lead workshops or trainings for young people in this area. It would be good if qualified emotional intelligence coaches would get involved in such activities. This type of investment in the students would surely bring the long-lasting benefits.

As the second most common bullying behaviour the respondents mentioned publishing sneak peak photos taken in a dressing room or a bathroom with a mobile phone and modifying pictures or posting memes which illegally use someone's image. Most of these activities is initiated out of boredom. The teachers noticed that young people do not like any effort and are not interested in doing anything. Thus, the training materials should include the content related to the development of the socially useful attitudes: *values, for example, diligence, I was able to raise my son this way so maybe it is possible and it will be beneficial for them in life. The problem is that young people simply do not want anything.*

This issue provoked the discussion over the effective use of time and the advantages of different mobile applications to measure the time spent online. According to the respondents, cell phone addiction is also present among the teachers. Sometimes a mobile is an excuse to avoid confrontation with a student.

There is another phenomenon in schools and it is not only among the children but also teachers who simply forget why they come to the class. I personally know 3 teachers who come their class and take out their mobile phones. Children are supposed to work with their textbooks while the teachers are busy with Facebook, Instagram and other stuff. Adults should receive addiction treatment too...

One of the teachers referred to the threats related to the relationships initiated and developed through social networked services like Facebook. An initial fascination may turn into a relationship which is hard to disentangle from.

I know from my daughter's experience. She was texting via the Messenger with a boy she had met there and he fell for her a little and then, the emotional blackmail began. My daughter

did not want to write to him anymore, and he was telling her about some serious family problems. He expected her to help him, but she was only 14. She blocked him so he set up another account. And she was communicating with him again. The blockades did nothing because he kept creating new accounts. Fortunately, she told me about it and I reacted. It ended well but that was cyberbullying.

An important issue mentioned in the context of the needs and planning the training activities was dealing with cyberbullying once it happens. The teachers emphasised that it is parents who often report the incidents, but they knew about them from their children. Such information comes from the children unless they have good relationships with their parents. Thus, the training resources should include the content addressing building healthy, trust-based relationships between the children and adults.

It may be disturbing that some parents ignore the signs of cyberbullying. They think it is a silly child's play (videos recorded with mobile phones) or natural conflicts (verbal attacks in groups or through SMSes) which will dissolve with time. Only when there is an external intervention, e.g. by the police, or when a tragedy happens, they realise how damaging these seemingly innocent (in their eyes) behaviours were. According to the teachers, the particular focus should be on educating the parents, and it will be best done using the actual examples. It is hard to do during scheduled, standard meetings with parents because many of them do not participate.

Asked, how can they deal with cyberbullying experiences, the respondents said it depends whether they work with the perpetrators, the victims or the witnesses. First of all, young people must be ensured they can always come with any problem. And that they will always receive help and no one will criticise them but try to understand what they feel.

I did not have any problem with that in my school because for several years I had built a partnership relation with the students, so the kids were voluntarily showing me screenshots with cyberbullying, showed me what others wrote in the Messenger and how the group responded. Children come by themselves, they just ask me to be discrete so no one knows it is them reporting”.

Second, the witnesses should be aware it is their duty to react to and report cyberbullying to the teacher. If they do not do it, they may bear the consequences, also legal. One of the focus group participants, recalled a situation when a boy was bullied by his peers. Someone pasted his face into a photograph with a naked body and then uploaded as the desktop background of the school computers. The Police was called and they tried to determine from which computer it was uploaded and who did it. They found the perpetrator. It turned out that quite many students knew about it but no one stopped the bully or reported the abuse.

Other teachers noticed that in their school cyberbullying and Messenger storms begin in the fifth or sixth grade. So the school began to organise meetings for the fifth-graders, their parents and invited police officers, during which they sign a contract. Then, they listen to information about the consequences of breaching the law. Usually these meetings turn out to be effective. In the seventh grade, the interest in messaging decreases. There are no incidents like the one mentioned above.

Students, in turn, are educated most often through talks delivered during different subject classes or dedicated meetings. One of the respondents signalled the need to develop a dedicated general education lesson curriculum, during which the students could talk about such values as: respect for others, responsibility for one's own actions or personal culture.

The respondents think there should be special procedures developed of conversations with the victims, offenders and witnesses. Communication is the basis for all the preventive and intervention activities. The teachers hold conversations based on their own intuition and knowledge of interpersonal trainings, yet sometimes they lack quick, ready-to-use solutions.

The respondents also suggested creating a professional support network for teachers. It could function as a forum to exchange experiences and share proven solutions. The teachers openly admitted that they are the first ones the bullied students usually turn to for help. In such situations, they become the ones who organise the whole support network and need to be equipped in the professional and relevant knowledge as well as receive the support from their environment. One of the teachers declared:

Support from our colleagues is very important. Thanks to it, we can solve many problems quickly and effectively. During the conventions, we always share our difficulties and educational challenges. We are an informal support but also supervision group. I value my friends' comments

like: “you know, you do not achieve much using this strategy” or “be careful because this may turn against you”.

Such support seems to be necessary when dealing with the cyberbullying cases, especially that it has been taking on more and more sophisticated forms. The respondents admitted they had never been cyberbullied by their students but they had heard about such cases. For example, one of the teachers was ridiculed and insulted in a closed group. After a while, the students get bored with it and when the case was brought into light, it was already over. This does not change the fact that teachers should know how to deal with attacks from the students. This is true as, given the nature of their profession (evaluating students), they are particularly prone to it. Confiscating mobile phones before the classes is to prevent recording or taking photographs of teachers but where is a will there is a way.

The respondents were rather sceptic towards the existing prevention programmes which are mainly based on e-textbooks for parents, teachers and students. Despite attractive graphics, it is still verbal messaging. They also said that the offer of in-house trainings does not bring sufficient results. First, they provide the participants with information about cyberbullying, its types, perpetrator and victim profiles and legal consequences. But they lack practical solutions and case studies teachers could use to work with students and their parents. A specific example will be always more engaging. Also, due to too many responsibilities, trainings for the teachers are short and quite superficial. Teachers willingly collaborate with police officers as they provide them with an up-to-date knowledge and real life examples. Students also gladly take part in the meetings with uniformed officers. Their uniforms and experiences earn the students’ respect.

Another weakness of this type of programmes is that they are occasional. In the opinion of the respondents, this type of classes should be obligatory at all stages of education. Young people are extremely creative in this area therefore we need regular updates. One of the suggested forms of training was short question and answer methods. The questions usually raised by the teachers and parents, and the answers which would provide specific guidelines. The content of such trainings could be published as an e-guidebook.

When asked what are the biggest weaknesses of the cyberbullying prevention programmes and trainings, the respondents listed:

- One-sidedness of the training content (definitions, types, causes and results of cyberbullying). There are no content related to managing emotions or conducting intervention and therapeutic conversations. And while there are many resources on how to talk to the parents (difficult parents, using different strategies of action), the Internet lacks similar materials on how to talk to students. The materials on how to use the “I-messages” are not enough. The respondents signalled the need to obtain more knowledge, for example how to talk to a child who has had traumatic experiences or is planning a suicide.

- Training materials should be designed and trainings led by specialists: police officers, psychologists. It would be worth to consider students’ contribution, as they often possess many practical knowledge in this area. And maybe parents who would be interested in collaboration? The teachers also postulate creation of a database of individuals and institutions who can support the prevention activities implemented in the schools. The more experts engaged, the greater potential effectiveness of the actions taken.

- More emphasis on the obligatory character of this type of trainings, especially among the parents. These issues should be addressed throughout the whole school year, at every stage of education. The sooner the primary prevention activities are introduced, the less work will remain for the future.

The trainings offered should contain ready-to-use, attractive scenarios which adopt many different solutions (mini presentations, videos, case studies, Webquests scenarios of project ideas). These expectations were justified with the lack of time to create their own scenarios. diversity of the materials offered would allow them to adapt them to the actual needs of their didactic and care career. In addition, all the materials should be written with plain language to be understandable for the students and the parents, who represent different intellectual environments and levels. The simpler the language the easier it is to digest the content delivered.

5. Conclusion

When referring to the effectiveness of digital media education, the interviewed teachers mentioned many challenges for modern “digital schools”. Among them they listed legal support

(regulations eliminating anonymity in the Internet), combining prevention online and offline, including teachers in the process of the lifelong learning with particular focus on the new trends emerging in the cyberspace. There is also a shift in the methods used to eliminate the undesired phenomena through developing the universal traits and competencies, which are at the same time the universal protective factors. For example, the respondents emphasised the importance of working with students' emotions, developing respect to others, personal culture and adequate response to other person's suffering (from observer to defender).

Cyberbullying prevention which is, in fact an attempt at developing digital literacy among the students, parents and teachers, has been discussed in the subject matter literature and praxis for more than twenty years (Potyrała, 2017). The evolving view on cyberbullying (joining the online and offline spheres), using diverse forms and methods, avoiding information methods and including the characteristics of the developing information society helps the teachers to implement prevention activities more and more intentionally. They have been facing the growing number of educational challenges related to the e-threats but at the same time their awareness of the complexity of the risky behaviours (such as cyberbullying or event-time convergence has been also increasing (Morbiter, 2007). This is one of the predictors of the technological maturity in the society and the global challenge in media education (Fedorov, 2008; Gilbert, Fedorov, 2004).

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