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## A MONTHLY JOURNAL “THE SCHOOL MAGAZINE” IN MEDIA COMMUNICATION OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

### **Abstrakt:**

MIESIĘCZNIK „MAGAZYN SZKOLNY” W KOMUNIKACJI MEDIALNEJ  
INSTYTUCJI OŚWIATOWYCH

Dążenie dziennikarzy do coraz lepszego informowania o rzeczywistości wiąże się z zasadą obiektywizmu dziennikarskiego. Przestrzeganie tej zasady uznawane jest powszechnie za niezbędne przy zdobywaniu informacji oraz ich prezentowaniu w mediach. Dziennikarski obiektywizm wymaga skoncentrowania się na faktach oraz zachowania bezstronności w ich relacjonowaniu. Trudność stanowi istotność doboru elementów informacji. Ich selekcja zależy od celów polityki informacyjnej danego medium oraz oczekiwań odbiorców, np. ich wiedzy o rzeczywistości. Bezstronność polega na uwzględnianiu wielu punktów widzenia, dystansie i proporcjonalności w ich prezentowaniu oraz na stosowaniu możliwie neutralnych środków wyrażania: nieemocjonalnych i niewartościujących. Tak rozumiany obiektywizm, jak wskazuje Janina Frasz, pozostanie zawsze kategorią stopniowaną i względną. Szczególnym przypadkiem, ze względu zarówno na treści, jak i odbiorcę są czasopisma branżowe skierowane do środowiska oświatowego. Pełnią one wiele funkcji, są zarówno pomocą dydaktyczną, jak i odgrywają rolę między innymi w tworzeniu obrazu współczesnej szkoły, ukazują jej problemy i sukcesy. W niniejszym artykule skupiono się na roli miesięcznika „Magazyn Szkolny” w komunikacji instytucji oświatowych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** miesięcznik „Magazyn Szkolny”; instytucje oświatowe; szkolnictwo; mass media; informacja; publicystyka.

### INTRODUCTION

Periodicals addressed to an educational environment are not only the didactic aids but also they play a significant role in, among the others, creating an image of a modern school. An aspect concerning the use of these materials by educators is particularly interesting: “It turns out that over 70% of teachers use most of all the objective and methodological periodicals corresponding with their specializations. A much smaller part (30%) is interested in general pedagogy magazines [...]. Only 2%

of teachers admit to a lack of interest in pedagogical readings" [Pławecka 2000/2001: 73-76]. Educational periodicals, probably for a number of reasons e.g. professional advancement, are read by the vast majority of teachers who may use them as an element of their work, as well as a means serving their self-improvement. Educational press reading should be treated as an ingredient of the professional improvement of teachers who, in such a way, take part in the broadly defined activities for educational transformations. As indicated, the analysis of the content and functioning can provide some valuable information on the life of a modern school.

The following article focuses on the role of "The School Magazine" in the media communication of educational institutions. The possibilities of applications of "The School Magazine" are enormous since the formula of the periodical is broad and the periodical founders' aim is connected with the ambitions of indicating a common space- we will find here not only some fragments of interdisciplinary paths but also some issues concerning intercultural communication.

#### GENERAL CHARACTERISTIC OF THE MAGAZINE AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF ITS APPLICATIONS

"The School Magazine" is an official periodical of the Board of Education in Katowice which has been published since 1999, firstly as a biweekly magazine, then as a monthly one (since 2002). The magazine is addressed to over 2500 educational institutions of Silesian Voivodeship (schools, kindergartens, services, etc). Thanks to its presence among educational institutions it is possible to provide principals, teachers and administrative staff with necessary information. As the publisher points out, by the agency of an institutional receiver, the magazine reaches thousands of parents of children being a subject of educational activities. In 1992-2001, the magazine was published under the subheading: The Biweekly Magazine of Silesian Board of Education: Information (from issue No 14/15, 1999). In issue No 5, between 1999 and 2000, the second subheading appeared: News. In turn, between 2001 and 2002 (issue No 5/6), the magazine was published as "The Magazine of Silesian Board of Education." Currently, the periodical is published under the subheading "The Magazine of the Board of Education in Katowice". Since 2009 (issue No 1), Józef Swoboda has been the magazine's editor-in-chief (sub-editor: Agata Olek; graphic studio: Lucjan R. Szreter. The editorial office's address is Dąbrowskiego Street 8, Chorzów. There is also the Board of Education's address in the footer: Jagiellońska Street 25, Katowice).

In the years 2005-2011, the magazine's title headpiece has not been changing: the periodical's title has been composed of two colors- the first word in blue, the second one in black. Over the title there is an inscription: "The Magazine of the Board of Education in Katowice," in the lower left corner of the headpiece, in a black rectangle, there are: a current number of issue, month, and ISSN index number (all written in white). The outside cover (p.1) contains full-page photographs connected with the issue's subject

matter, especially with a school life, e.g. beginning of the school year, prom, but also with a current season or month, holidays and other important events throughout the year. In its lower left corner, there are some teasers; their inclusion depends on particular events, leading articles. The last page of the outside cover (p.4) and both pages of the inside cover contain ads and advertisements. The magazine's website: [www.magazyn-szkolny.pl](http://www.magazyn-szkolny.pl), does not play such a significant role as its traditional form; however, it has to be admitted that a reader can find there something more than some basic information constituting a kind of an online card, that is information on the history of the magazine, subscription, tables of content. In a section 'archive' a reader can get familiar with full versions of the magazine in PDF files- equivalents of printed versions. In this case, we can talk about a function of a digital library.

The main fields where a reader will find some teaching aids can be separated as follows:

- Socio-moral education field: rules for living in a group, standards of behavior, cooperation, etc., rights, duties and the world of moral and ethical values, necessity of cooperation, mutual help, the nearest social surrounding, people's work, rules of behavior during games, individual work, collective work, attitude towards parents, friends, teachers, the elderly, etc.
- Health education field: methods of taking care of one's security in different situations, rules of safe behavior during collective games, getting familiar with possibilities of taking care of one's health, showing safe and active ways of spending free time.
- Nature education field: observing and discovering nature's laws throughout the year (animate and inanimate), experiencing diversity of nature's phenomena and objects, items used formerly and at the present, indicating a role of a human being in nature's world, shaping pro-ecological attitude and responsibility for nature.
- Intellectual education field: development of communication abilities, speech usage, support of development of visual perception, motor coordination, vocabulary enrichment, using different sources of knowledge and various ways of recognition of reality, improving the processes of mental operations; contact with belles-lettres of different countries and languages, theatre, art, science, nature, society as a basis of arousing students' interest.
- Cultural-esthetic education field: development of skills connected with both one's and surrounding's esthetics; familiarizing with some elements of art: graphic, music, theatrical; creative activities of students and teachers.

#### CHARACTERISTIC OF THE CONTENT OF "THE SCHOOL MAGAZINE"

Information published in the periodical concerns, among the others, education, regulations, legislation, reports, legal advice, and solutions of educational problems. An important element of the magazine is the presentation of the events and accounts

from communities, schools and kindergartens of the region- undoubtedly, this makes "The School Magazine" stand out from other Polish publications distributed on the territory of Silesian Voivodeship. The magazine is published in A4 size, a content may vary from 30 to 44 pages, covers are in color, inside pages in black-and-white.

Tab.1. Presence of the permanent sections in the particular annuals of "The School Magazine"

Year Section	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
News	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Law	x	x	x	x	x	x	-
Educational forum	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
School graffiti	x	x	x	x	-	-	-
No boundaries	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Information	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Contests	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Creative activity column/ Poetry column	-	-	-	-	x	x	-
Ecology at school/ Ecology	-	-	-	-	-	x	x

In principle, the magazine has maintained unchanged structure which has been proven by the analysis of the permanent sections. However, it should be mentioned that a revision of the columns took place in 2009. The main sections are as follows: 'News,' 'Educational forum,' 'No boundaries', 'Information', 'Contests'.

The above-mentioned columns decide about the magazine's character, their permanent presence has been noted in the annuals of the periodical. Over the years, some new columns have been added to the sections which so far were building the structure of the magazine, the other ones have ceased to exist or underwent transformation. The appearance of some sections of the magazine in the particular annuals has been showed in the table number 1.

The sections 'News' and 'Information' – they contain mainly accounts of some special events, inaugurations, tournaments, celebrations, anniversaries, jubilees, open days, festivals, feasts, fairs, etc. The section 'Law-Legislation' – 'Review of Legislation' is a permanent element of the column. 'Editorial Mail' is also an element of the column. The content of the extensive section 'Educational Forum' mainly consists of articles on problems concerning the opportunities and threats for a modern school, as well as the history of education. The section 'School Graffiti'- consists mostly of texts written by the students, frequently the laureates of various contests. 'No Boundaries' – the column contains characteristics of programs addressed to schools. 'Creative Activity Column' / 'Poetry Column' – the column appeared for the first time

on February, 2009. The following information was then enclosed: “From the current issue of <<The School Magazine>> on, we begin to publish artistic works of teachers from Silesia. You will find here poetry, pieces of prose and drawings. We invite all the people connected with education to show their talents in the pages of our magazine. Every month, on the last page, we will publish some selected works. The column has been inaugurated by the poems by Barbara Biło-Olszewska (1926-2000) and Józef Bolesław Korzeniowski (1914- 1998)”. ‘Ecology at School’/ ‘Ecology’ – the aim of this section is to popularize ecological knowledge. The section ‘Contests’ contains accounts of resolved competitions, information on currently announced contests.

The magazine is addressed to educational institutions, therefore – as it is easy to guess – the texts published in its pages are generally written by teachers and students of journalism art. This, in turn, is connected with encouragement of respect of superior rules, as well as of cultivating tradition. We can find realizations of various generic forms, both informative and journalistic texts. It is worth reminding that in the journalist statements in which the informative function dominates (signals, news, notice, memo, message, account, report, summary) the subjective opinions and judgments should be avoided; consequently, the words marked emotionally and evaluatively ought to be omitted (genres numbered among informative forms: profile, announcement, reportage and interview – they always contain a certain interpretation of the presented facts, therefore, a sender’s subjective attitude is already inscribed; thus it is difficult to demand neutrality from the author of these texts). In turn, the so-called journalistic genres, most of all commentary, article, feuilleton, diary are the forms designed for the unconstrained expression of opinions (of an editor, journalist, publisher, etc). Below, the characteristics of the most frequently appearing generic realizations in the magazine are presented.

Announcement (teaser) – this kind of statements are usually published on the first or last page of newspapers or periodicals. An announcement encourages to read the texts published in a current issue or in a next one. In “The School Magazine” teasers are not very frequent; first of all, they appear in a simpler form on the first page of a cover: *Their first prom* (February, 2008); *Oh, these proms!* ( February, 2007); *New Year – New Challenges* (September, 2007); *More Objective Final Exams* (May, 2007); *Hello School! The Year 2010/2011 Started* (September, 2010); *The dog that can heal* (April, 2008); *The School Demanding in a Friendly Way* (September, 2008).

Reports – they appear quite frequently in the magazine because of the periodical’s connections with the activities of institutions- educational, educational-cultural. It is related to the necessity of giving periodic reports. Among the others there are published reports from: ceremonies connected with promoting teachers or awarding exceptionally talented students; conferences; exhibitions; debates of the sections operating at the departments of The Polish Teachers’ Union; feasts; concerts (e.g. charity concerts); anniversaries of schools; contests; competitions, tournaments; scientific

festivals, the Olympiads; aid programs (e.g. a program helping exceptionally talented children), operational programs; ceremonies (e.g. festival of a patron saint of a school, inauguration of a club's activity); panel discussions; workshops; reunions; meetings (for students) with artists, members of the local government, etc.

Profile- it is not a purely informative genre since it combines both informative and persuasive functions – it always presents a person in one way or another, it contains some elements of a direct or indirect opinion. A profile (or a portrait) is a presentation of another person in terms of genealogy. It adapts different forms, most of all such genres as: memo, message, announcement, journalistic article; also interview and reportage (along with modifications of compositional framework of the above-mentioned generic exemplars) [Wojtak 2004: 121]. Among the profiles-memoirs published in "The School Magazine" there dominate texts dedicated to deceased educators, former employees of the schools from Silesian Voivodeship: *Marian Batko – A Meritorious Silesian Teacher* (February, 2009); *A Memoir – Tomasz Kawka (14.09.1964 – 26.10.2008)* (December, 2008); *A Funeral Card – Teresa Szostak (2.11.1956 – 12.05.2008)*. In this kind of texts it is significant to root a characterized person in a school environment.

Reportage – it is a genre particularly hard to define; multiplicity of forms and openness to transformations cause that it is less frequently put among the informative genres but more often considered as the journalistic – literary genre. Because of the high demands of the genre as well as the small amount of place in the magazine, this genre rarely appears in the periodical, mostly on the occasion of the announced contests. In the May, 2007. Issue, the reportages of the laureates of XII National Contest for Radio, Press and Television Reportage "In Search of a Master of Reportage" were published.

Interview – in "The School Magazine" there are mainly published interviews with the representatives of institutions associated with education.

A letter to the editor and response to the letter – they have their permanent place in the column "Editorial Mail". In case of "The School Magazine" we have to do with an assumption that the column "Editorial Mail" is of legal advice. The response to the letter to the editor and the letter itself are usually placed in the same issue. The response contains a discussion on a problem, quotation and explanation of applicable legal regulations, and also a specific advice how to behave in a given situation.

Editorial- it appears in a prominent place and expresses the editor's point of view. It is a text informing about the program, assumptions, editorial policy. In the magazines it traditionally concerns: discussion on the contents of the issue, recommendation of the most important articles, etc. It is signed by the editor-in-chief or the editor who wrote a text- a person being a representative of the editorial staff. With regard for the magazine's profile, the Silesian Superintendent Of Schools is usually the author of the editorial; however, there are exceptions to this rule. The articles are mainly focused on one superior topic, for example:

- the place of catechesis in school education (February, 2007),
- results of final exams (May, 2007),
- the necessity of constant development of the education’s quality through improvement of planning and realization of the processes of education (September, 2008),
- the integration of student governments around initiatives connected with presentation of the history of Silesia and cultivation of tradition (February, 2008),
- the cooperation of organizations and associations supporting education and upbringing (especially the activity of The Scouting Association of the Republic [ZHR]) (September, 2007),
- the development of the teaching staff at the schools of Silesian Voivodeship (September, 2007),
- the role of the Piłsudski’s organizations in patriotic education (December, 2007),
- the school year 2010/2011 as The Year of Discovering Talents (December, 2010),
- discovering a passion for education in the new school year 2011/2012 (September, 2011),
- the summary of The Year of Discovering Talents (May, 2011),
- the preparation to the competence exams (2008),
- the 10th anniversary of the educational system reform implementation (September, 2009),
- the modern technologies in the schools of Silesian Voivodeship (February, 2011).

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is worth raising the economical problems which have not been discussed so far. Such problems frequently concern this kind of magazines and are related with some changes of the title’s functionality on the press market. The analysis of the number of advertisements in the particular years gives reliable information- a downward trend has been observed<sup>1</sup>. Over the years 2005-2006 the decline was rather slight, in 2007, it increased, and the next year brought another reduction of the advertisements. However, the worst was the year 2009 – almost a double decrease has been noted in relation to the previous year. This situation is alarming since the advertisements are one of the sources of financing each magazine. A lack of interest of advertisers can result in the financial condition of “The School Magazine”. The analysis of the reasons of the advertisers’ discouragement seems to be essential.

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<sup>1</sup> Research conducted by Aleksandra Sarna.

It seems that in case of "The School Magazine" the main problem may be connected with the fact that the periodical is addressed mostly to teachers – a group which is, on the one hand, highly educated but, on the other hand, poorly paid. From the advertiser's point of view, this group may not have a sufficient purchasing power. Because of education, the group can be more resistant to marketing manipulations than the rest of population. The analysis of the advertisements placed in "The School Magazine" leads to the conclusion that they can be grouped with regard for the supposed receiver. A part of advertisements is addressed to an individual- they regard different types of services, the most frequently the financial ones (bank offers for teachers). To the second group there belong offers addressed to schools – they concern mainly equipment for posts, but also school-connected services. The third group of the receivers is of mixed character – offers are addressed both to teachers and schools (e.g. offers concerning teachers' post-graduate education). It seems that the ads addressed to schools would not be necessarily highly effective. Entities have to put the majority of objects out to tender- consequently, the advertisement is rather a piece of trade information than an advertisement itself. The advertisements of the first and third type may be of high effectiveness. Moreover, it should be remembered that the association of an advertiser's functionality with the field of education can have a longer, positive image effect. Undoubtedly, this is a chief asset.

The subject-matter, which has so far concerned preschool education of six-year-old children, becomes an object of interest of schools. Therefore, the magazine addressed to teachers must pick up the gauntlet by, for example, extending the scope of the articles concerning behavior problems and adding some texts regarding problems characteristic for younger children. Also the increase of the articles concerning the techniques and methods of supporting education in the youngest age group can be expected – not necessarily concerning new technologies, but also educational games enabling six-year-old children to master the material provided for the first class. The changes being introduced to the running magazine are usually hazardous- the maintenance of an old reader and gaining a new one seem to be uncertain. However, the very fact that "The School Magazine" is still present on the market, shows that the periodical is evidently needed, and the attempts to change made in 2009 turned out to be effective, even though they were not revolutionary.

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