

**Iwona Morawska\***

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7866-2272>

## The literary and cultural education of “screen readers”. Reflections inspired by the new core curriculum and more

*Literature lessons, as proposed by hermeneutics of H.G. Gadamer, P. Ricoeur and J. Tichner, should pose questions about the presence of values in works of literature, about truth and falseness, about our relationships with transcendence, about the modes of existence in the world, about the understanding of others. What becomes important during lessons is discussion and dialogue, joint yet individual answer to the question of what a text says to me, and what it symbolises for me. That entails the authenticity of existence in the world, the creation of own existence.”*

Stanisław Bortnowski<sup>1</sup>

The current transformations in the Polish school system triggered by the 2017 new core curriculum<sup>2</sup> fit the trend of contemporary discussions and disputes con-

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\* Ph.D. hab., Marie Curie Skłodowska University, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Polish Teaching and Education Innovation, pl. Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej 4a, 20-031 Lublin, iwomorawska@gmail.com

- 1 S. Bortnowski, “Czy literatura piękna przyda(je) się jeszcze wychowaniu? Z perspektywy dydaktyka literatury”, in: *Wychowanie. Pojęcia – Procesy – Konteksty. Interdyscyplinarne ujęcie*, M. Dudzikowa, M. Czerepniak-Walczak (eds.), vol. III, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2007, p. 283. [Unless indicated otherwise, English versions of quotations were translated from Polish].
- 2 *Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14 February 2017 on the core curriculum of kindergarten upbringing and the core curriculum of general education for primary schools, including for pupils with minor or severe mental disabilities, general education for trade 1<sup>st</sup> degree schools, general education for special schools preparing for professional work, and general education for post-high school schools* (Journal of Laws of 2017, Item 356, pp. 59–70).

cerning education, which by being the subject of interdisciplinary studies is often discussed in strict reference to the reality in which it is designed, fulfilled, and evaluated.<sup>3</sup> As Tadeusz Miczka aptly noted, there has been a continuing dispute on whether education is a tool used for taming reality or rather for creating, altering or modelling it. He argued that both opinions have as many opponents as proponents, and that is why in the education-upbringing practice there exists, or at least there should exist, a compromise between the two approaches.<sup>4</sup> That assumption is aligned with the notion of education and the school as an entity which can influence the development of young people in many dimensions:

School occupies within the social landscape a unique place, even if it has already been deprived of its leading role in creating social imagination. It is probably the last body which gathers the representatives of all social groups and cultures, where discussions are held (...) on the meanings and values of collective life, where those meanings can be juxtaposed, and where through that juxtaposition new meanings may arise.”<sup>5</sup>

People have stressed that with the spread, competitiveness and popularity of the new media and virtual reality, school education is still important in the process of life initiation for the existing culture, inherited as the mother culture, but which is also experienced as one which is universal, global, and related to all humans (which entails the functions traditionally assigned to school: adaptation and formation, reconstruction, and emancipation functions). Despite many critical remarks directed at school (some more justified than others), it would be difficult to deny that the knowledge gained through it and the related key skills, attitudes, competences, perceptions, and manners of evaluating the world may and should fulfil the role of a “compass” for young people in their later lives, which they will be able to use to consciously, mindfully, independently and responsibly move through the complicated, hybrid, multidimensional world.<sup>6</sup> This is extremely important,

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3 Vide A. Waško, *Nowa podstawa programowa języka polskiego dla kl. IV–VIII szkoły podstawowej. Podstawowe założenia, filozofia zmiany i kierunki działania* <https://www.ore.edu.pl/nowa-podstawaprogramowa.pdf> [accessed on: 15.10.2017]; J. Żurek, “Szkola na fundamentach”, *Głos Nauczycielski* 2017, issue 7; K. Biedrzycki, “Szkola jak z ‘Ziemi obiecanej’”, *Gazeta Wyborcza* 2016, 25–26.06.2016. Vide also: *Edukacja alternatywna na rzecz demokratyzacji procesu kształcenia*, R. Nowakowska-Siuta (ed.), Impuls, Krakow 2014.

4 T. Miczka, “Glokalizacyjne i multimedialne horyzonty współczesnej edukacji”, in: *Media i edukacja w globalizującym się świecie. Teoria – praktyka – oddziaływanie*, M. Sokołowski (ed.), Oficyna Wydawnicza “Kastalia”, Olsztyn 2003, p. 17.

5 T. Szukdlarek, *Media: szkic z filozofii i pedagogiki dystansu*, Impuls, Krakow 2009, pp. 113–114.

6 B. Mika, “Nowoczesna szkoła – ponowoczesny uczeń”. Wychowanie do uczestnictwa w kulturze jako wyzwanie edukacyjne w erze globalizacji”, in: *Przemiany edukacyjne w Polsce i na świecie a modele wychowania*, headed by Wiesława Korzeniowska, Impuls, Krakow 2001.

particularly now, since as of the 2017/2018 school year the new system of Polish school education has been introduced, which entails systemic-curricular solutions. That means there is a need to once again re-evaluate previously utilised teaching strategies, including those of Polish philological education. It should be stressed that every promise of change<sup>7</sup> naturally offers hope that the existing solutions will be improved. That hope is usually accompanied by the realisation of the necessity of transformations, innovation, and reconstruction in almost every domain of a society's life to modernise and improve it.<sup>8</sup> This often triggers questions directed for common consideration, which originate in researchers who study the changes in culture, community life, and education: What would culture be worth without changes, turns, crises, or without establishing new trends for going forward...?

The main feature of today's world is the state of constant reform: the incessant re-reforming of education without seeing it through. (...). The lack of consistence in fulfilling new reforms and a lack of training for teachers results in chaos or passive opposition, i.e. remaining in inherited habits or the convenient yielding to pupils' emotions.<sup>9</sup> (...) A reform is supposed to release children and teenagers from the burden of unnecessary knowledge useless in their development. It is supposed to change learners' habits, shift focus from the material onto learners and their development, lead teachers from their subject-centred classifications, teach them cooperation, i.e. joining the efforts of teachers of various subjects together to build a coherent vision of the world and integral personalities of learners."<sup>10</sup>

There are completely contrary positions on this indicated problem which are difficult to overlook. These are often an expression of deep scepticism and aversion to the never-ending attempts at "correcting" and "improving" the school system. These attitudes are the result of the fact, as indicated in recent history, that reforms, of education in particular, despite the entailed confusion, amount of effort, and considerable costs, usually only slightly corresponded to society's expectations

7 *Dobra Szkoła. Reforma edukacji. Najważniejsze zmiany. Pytania i odpowiedzi.* Ministry of National Education, <http://reformaedukacji.men.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/broszura-dobraszkoła-plik-internetowy.pdf> [accessed on: 15.12.2017].

8 Vide, e.g.: B. Przyborowska, *Struktury innowacyjne w edukacji. Teoria. Praktyka. Rozwój*, UMK, Toruń 2003; R. Schulz, *Kształcenie dla innowacji dydaktycznych*, UMK w Toruniu, Toruń 1992; *Pedagogika alternatywna: postulaty, projekty i kontynuacje*. Vol. 2, *Innowacje edukacyjne i reformy pedagogiczne*, headed by B. Śliwerski, Impuls, Krakow 2007.

9 B. Chrzastowska, "Szkoła w zapaści czy ożywienie", *Polonistyka* 2013, issue 3, p. 3.

10 B. Chrzastowska, "Czego Jaś się nie nauczył...", in: *Problemy współczesnej edukacji historycznej*, M. Kujawska (ed.), UAM, Poznań 2001, p. 73. Vide also "Edukacja polonistyczna w perspektywie najnowszych zmian. DYSKUSJA PANELOWA", in: *Edukacja polonistyczna. Metamorfozy kontekstów i metod*, M. Karwatowska, L. Tymiak (eds.), UMCS, Lublin 2017.

and hopes for a real improvement of the quality of education and the results of the work of schools.<sup>11</sup> That has led many to believe that all changes in education continue to lead in the wrong direction, that they cost too much, that they offer little in return, that they constitute an element of ideological and political battles, or that for many other reasons “they harm the school system.”<sup>12</sup> Not wishing to deny anyone the right to air such opinions, I find it difficult to disagree with the fact that... “fortunately the school system is not created solely by curricula and textbooks (not even the core curriculum – note by I.M.), but living and thinking people: teachers and pupils.”<sup>13</sup> They must, however, have a good understand of what the designed changes are to consist of, as many specialists in the field have stressed. (...) **A teacher cannot be an obedient executor of someone else’s ideas. They must be the co-creators of “the new thing”. They have to want to identify with “the new.”**<sup>14</sup> Barbara Myrdzik spoke in a similar vein stressing that

(...) one cannot forget about the need to create conditions which can help teachers feel as the CREATORS OF THE REFORM (...) they should have the sense of real freedom from any mandates, directives, guidelines, (...) Only when teachers stop being afraid of the risk of personal liability for the shape of the undertaken educational activities, will they be able to ensure subjectivity.<sup>15</sup>

When discussing the issue of teaching literature and culture to 4–8<sup>th</sup> graders (in 2017) in the context of the statement quoted, it would be difficult to deny that good changes, innovations, and modernisations are necessary for the school system even if these entail sometimes controversial, decisions, or other unknown risks. What is important is to be always guided by the thought that:

The need to introduce changes improving education, including in terms of teaching language and the mother tongue, does not relieve us of our obligation to indicate those areas of Polish philological education which constitute a point of reference for innovations. An improvement-oriented change is meaningful only if permanent

11 Vide Z.A. Kłakówna, *Jakość i jakość. Subiektywna kronika wypadków przy reformowaniu szkoły (1989–2013)*, Universitas, Krakow 2014.

12 Vide, e.g.: K. Biedrzycki, “Szkoła jak z ‘Ziemi obiecanej’”, *Gazeta Wyborcza* 2016, 25–26.06.2016, p. 23. J.S. Żurek, “Szkoła na fundamentach”, *Głos Nauczycielski* 2017, issue 7.

13 B. Chrzęstowska, *Słowo wstępne do: Programu liceum ogólnokształcącego, liceum zawodowego i technikum*, Warsaw 1990, p. 6; B. Chrzęstowska, “W trosce o szkołę i język polski”, *Polonistyka* 2009, issue 4.

14 “Wszystko w rękach nauczycieli” (editorial discussion), *Nowa Polaszczynna* 1998, issue 3, p. 3; S. Bortnowski, *Jak zmienić polonistykę szkolną*, Stentor, Krakow 2009.

15 B. Myrdzik, “Czy stać nas na podmiotowość w szkolnej edukacji”, *Język Polski w Szkole dla klas IV–VIII 1997/1998*, col. 1, p. 14.

and durable points of the area of life being modified are indicated, points which constitute a cultural bridge between “former and earlier years.”<sup>16</sup>

The core curriculum is a mandatory document (serving the function of a constitution), that fulfils a regulating and coordinating role, that requires the interested parties to fulfil the objectives, tasks, content, etc. specified in it, and that serves as the basis for creating examination tasks, etc. However, one cannot deny that the question of whether it will be understood and if so, how people will understand it, and what the strategies of its implementation will be, strategies eventually determined by teachers and pupils (parents and other entities participating in school life). Despite many reservations raised regarding the document (some more justified than others), its contents and major assumptions seem to have created conditions enabling various pedagogical and teaching strategies in terms of planning and fulfilling the process of Polish philology education, in line with the core curriculum’s underlying vision of the “good school” as an institution which plays a major role in the lives of pupils; one which is modern yet rooted in tradition, which adds value, understandably, to the significance of the national ethos, and which operates for the benefit of the propagation of universal values:

**One should remember that the core curriculum is a strategic document with a framework character—the task of supplementing it with detailed teaching content and selecting the forms, methods and teaching means remains the personal choice of every teacher** (emphasis – I.M.) who fulfils a curriculum accepted for use at a school by the headmaster. It is the individual curricula that enable the consideration of many variables, which determine the level of education depending on, e.g.: educational, upbringing or environmental situations, the needs of pupils, and teachers’ personalities and preferences. Therefore, it constitutes both “a tool and a justification for coordinating pupils’ work, equipment, and teaching. That helps schools offer the proper learning conditions.”<sup>17</sup>

The top-down yet rather generally formulated recommendations for schools and education require interpretative and contextual reading. Those contexts, to which I will continue to refer when trying to discuss selected phenomena, features and determiners which could define the cultural and literary education of 4–8<sup>th</sup> graders framed “anew”, mainly include the aspects and conditions of school Polish education which influence its shape, meaning, quality, importance, success,

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<sup>16</sup> M. Wróblewski, “Innowacje, innowacje”, *Polonistyka* 2012, issue 4, p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> *Podstawa programowa kształcenia ogólnego z komentarzem* (W. Kozak). *Szkoła podstawowa. Język polski* (commentary, <https://www.ore.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/jezyk-polski.-pp-z-komentarzem.-szkola-podstawowa.pdf> [accessed on: 30.10.2017].

etc. Those include, first of all, **subjective conditions**, which refer to pupils and school Polish teachers, whose engagement and the role they play or which they may play, as entities within “the process of education, depend on the philosophy of education assumed by the executors of the reform (i.e. teachers, authors of curricula and textbooks, examiners, education superintendents, etc.) and the related axiology, in line with the theoretical assumption that education always entails a philosophy of the human (of culture or values) which (...) can result from both realised development procedures and unrealised theoretical approaches; it can be clearly articulated in, or omitted from, the basic layer of a theory. Either way it is always present, and its nature determines the approach to people, and the educational priorities and objectives.”<sup>18</sup> Allow me to add that it would be a good thing if the related decisions, choices and strategies of actions drew from trends and concepts matching the principles of anthropocentric and activity-based education, cultural education and aesthetic education discovered anew, and the new humanities, i.e. trends which focus of subjectivity, dialogueness, openness, and other humanistic values. Other **subject-based conditions** of school **education**, which mostly consist of literary and cultural content (in its strict association with knowledge about the language and linguistic education, communication, art, the media, and the axiosphere), are included in the area of the objectives and tasks of the Polish language as a school subject. Their significance and strategic role in the education of the younger generation is undeniable, though they largely depend on the conceptual and methodological assumptions on which the Polish education taught in schools is based upon. Specialists have justifiably argued for it to be strictly associated with contemporary interdisciplinary scientific thought, at the same time stressing that:

Polish lessons are probably one of the few elements of reality where one can still discuss matters related to aesthetic taste, and where it is befitting to discuss art and its role in human existence. Mind you, Polish lessons prepare young people for something more than just passing another exam (...) their objective has been, and it should continue to be to make young people interested in internal mental culture perceived through a teacher’s experience and through what pupils know about the world. An obvious element to be raised in this context would be the importance of language in communication, and the value of language itself.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> J. Gora, “Koncepcja człowieka jako kwestia przedzałożeniowości myślenia i postępowania pedagogicznego”, in: *Fundamenty edukacyjnej wspólnoty*, J. Danilewska (ed.), Krakow 2005, p. 266.

<sup>19</sup> M. Wróblewski, “Gra o polski”, in: *Polonistyczne drogi*, M. Wróblewski (ed.), UMK, Toruń 2008, p. 255.

The quoted statement corresponds to the set of education conditions which could be referred to as **process oriented**. They mainly consist of answering the questions about strategies in education at its planning, fulfilment and assessment stages. That means solutions which would ensure success and attract the younger generation to culture and literature education, and which would most of all counter the phenomena of which the school system is often accused, and sometimes rightly so; these include: traditionalism, conservatism, conventionalism, materialism, mindlessness, instrumental approach to pupils, "teaching to match tests", etc.:

Schools closed shut against the nature of civilisational changes and the needs of pupils are not able to initiate conditions which would foster the development of adequate cognitive skills (including information literacy) necessary for them to function in the modern world,<sup>20</sup> nor will they be able to answer many important questions, including, e.g.: "How the proportions between authority and freedom should be defined, between individual strivings and the respect for an individual's entitlement to free choice, between their own lifestyles and the necessary formation of their characters and the related will to appropriately direct their axiological choices, so that those individuals could one day become fully-fledged members of a growing community (...) how adherence to national culture and the need to meet the requirements of ever growing complexity of the modern civilisation should be reconciled,<sup>21</sup> etc.

Among the (intratextbook, extratextbook and intertextbook, interpretative, etc.) contexts strictly related to Polish philological education discussed in the subject literature, a major role is played by the so-called external contexts, which in the light of interdisciplinary research into education in the "screen age" (including Polish philological education) should play an important role in designing and modernising it. They are associated with, e.g. the notions in the new humanities, the new media age, the "web society", and other phenomena, trends and streams of scientific, cultural, social, etc. development, which not only determine the exceptional nature of "our times", but which, most of all, should motivate people to seek and implement solutions, including educational, which would enable people to offer answers in a wise, interesting and successful manner for all entities of social life, but especially the younger generation, about the challenges and opportunities offered by the modern world often referred to as hybrid. Its peculiarities and challenges are the focus of many studies:

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<sup>20</sup> K. Borawska-Kalbarczyk, *Kompetencje informacyjne uczniów w perspektywie zmian szkolnego środowiska uczenia się*, Wydawnictwo Akademickie "Żak", Warsaw 2015, p. 448.

<sup>21</sup> T. Szkołut, "Edukacja dla Europy i edukacja dla Polski w epoce globalizacji", in: *Sztuka - edukacja - współczesność*, A.M. Żukowska (ed.), UMCS, Lublin 2007, pp. 98, 112.

In the hybrid world, education gained a new area, mainly information and communication-oriented, which considerably exceeds the traditional school framework – it has spread widely and every recess of the hybrid space can be a field for practising education, and many other forms of activity. Those include education which ever so often steps out of schools and which is informal, spontaneous (...), in which the content of the intellectual space of people migrates to the virtual space as especially the young generation is eager to treat cyberspace as an extension of their minds, memory in particular. (...) the influence of the internet and, more generally, other ICT tools on the intellectual functioning of people, mainly depend on the rationality of their usage. Persons who are intellectually rich, i.e. wise, can use internet resources to multiply their knowledge and their “intellectual stock”, while persons who are intellectually poor often limit their activities to “copy/paste” operations thus not only becoming even poorer intellectually, but they also expose themselves to legal problems. By expanding the notion of educational space, the hybrid world offers (...) new opportunities and carries new hazards. Therefore, it requires users responsible for their own development. The problem is that excessive immersion in the digital world leads (...) to a lowering of the sense of responsibility of modern humans.<sup>22</sup>

Considering the general provisions of the core curriculum, and the above discussion of the conditions related to its implementation, one would find it difficult to negate the position that the process of cultural and literature education of 4–8<sup>th</sup> graders should have much in common with the subject literature discussed in projects of media, integral, creative and axiological education, “education towards wisdom”, and competences (media, literature, and linguistic skills included in them (including reading, interpretative and creative skills, social skills, intercultural skills, self-development skills, etc.)). Indeed, cultural and literature education designed in a multifaceted manner should be also marked by categories and phenomena which have been assigned the dominant significance in defining the trends of the contemporary and future cultural and educational development by modern humanistic thought. These include, e.g.: intermediality, intertextuality, interactivity, cultural transgressions and transformations, intersemioticity and multi-sensoricity, the combination of real and virtual forms of participation in culture, dialogueness, discursivity and plurality, innovativeness and creativity, the combination of modernity and tradition, the restoration of culture’s existing markers, values and symbols, triggering culture memory, etc. The only indicated spaces available for educational usage display a strict association with the objectives and tasks “of the Polish language in primary schools” as described in the new

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<sup>22</sup> J. Morbitzer, “O nowej przestrzeni edukacyjnej w hybrydowym świecie”, *Labor et Educatio* 2015, issue 3, p. 427.



core curriculum. The participants of the process include, apart from teachers, 4–8<sup>th</sup> graders, who are referred to (through a mental shortcut) as "screen readers"<sup>23</sup> thus trying to emphasise the exceptionality/distinctiveness/uniqueness of the cultural experiences which apply to early teenagers, and to their attitudes, their preferred lifestyles, forms of communication, the ways in which they value the world, etc. One cannot omit it when trying to properly design and later successfully implement a dedicated process of literature and cultural education for them.

As stressed by many researchers, the dominant role of the new media and technology in contemporary culture, and the related cultural changes and inter-generational differences, are an excuse for creating metaphorical determinations, which are used to define the young generation of "the internet age", which is also referred to as: "the web generation", "the e-generation", "tablet children", "digital natives", "screen people", "Born Digital", "net-generation", etc. The author of one of the many publications devoted to the issue indicated that:

A new generation is beginning to have a say. A generation which grew up in front of the screens of computers and cellular telephones. A generation which can easily move through various applications, navigate websites, use communicators and e-mail every day, and spend their time chatting online (...) It is a generation of new readers accustomed to different sentence structures, different text layouts, and non-linear delivery; to pictograms, emojis, tables, and colour highlights; to scrolling text up and down, to copying and compiling, to unobstructed use of intellectual property. (...) It is a generation which at will copies and pastes into their own works fragments of other people's texts; which is accustomed to receiving answers immediately (...) accustomed to poorly developed content, intentionally violating in their communication with each other the rules of spelling and punctuation.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> The category of a "screen reader" was introduced to the language of Polish philological education by Aniela Książek-Szczepanikowa (vide idem., *Ekranowy czytelnik wyzwanie dla polonisty*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, Szczecin 1996). According to my underlying assumption, the semantics of the notion includes the contemporary younger generation, i.e. children and teenagers (but not only) growing up surrounded by media screens, who are therefore also sometimes referred to as "the web generation", "digital natives", "tablet children", etc. Regardless of which one is used, each carries meanings, connotations and determinations which bring to mind forms of cultural behaviour specific for contemporary teenagers, which to a large extent are a result of the impact of the new media and technology. Vide also: Z. Zasacka, *Nastoletni czytelnicy*, IKiCz Biblioteka Narodowa, Warsaw 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Ł. Gołębiewski, *Śmierć książki. No future book*, Biblioteka Analiz, Warsaw 2008. Vide also idem., *Gdzie jest czytelnik*, Biblioteka Analiz, Warsaw 2012; A. Kowalska, *Nowy odbiorca. Przemiany obrazu odbiorcy w wybranych koncepcjach współczesnej kultury*, Oficyna Naukowa, Warsaw 2014.

The indicated problem, apart from the fact that it matches the course of many debates on education in the “e-book age”, applies to the need, commonly felt today, to re-evaluate and expand the traditional forms of participation in culture and the related processes of education. That need is forced by the new media and multimedia, information and communication technologies, and the ever-present screens, all developing dynamically, which have been assigned a landmark culture-making significance in reference to the history of reading, readership and the book culture (the so-called “screen age”):

The space of human existence is saturated by various types of screens which causes some researchers to see in them a new cultural category and to term the contemporary social formation as the screen society. The members of the generation of contemporary teenagers, considering their constant use of audio-visual media, are referred to as “screen people” (...), while interpersonal relations increasingly consist of relations between the screens of various communication technologies. (...) Apart from screens which are the creations of culture, civilisation, and technology, there are also screens of nature, e.g. water or the sky. (...) A screen also functions as a window onto: the social reality (television), the illusion of reality (film and cinema), as well as an announcement of alternative forms of existence (various forms of online communication), which open for users a considerably extensive field for self-creation activities, e.g. in computer games, chat rooms, and blogs.<sup>25</sup>

It is worth stressing what many specialists in the field have noted; that in the times of the dominance of hypermedia and the dynamic development of cyberculture, traditional reading usually associated with the logosphere, i.e. the culture of thoughts, words, meanings, and wisdom, is actually not becoming inferior. On the contrary, it is perceived as an irreplaceable means of learning such rare yet highly sought after skills of “liquid modernity” such as, reflexiveness, critical thinking, understanding, assessment, etc. Many authors agree that the cyberculture being born before our very eyes is generating, in addition to the existing ones, new modes of reading and a reading culture, the characteristics of which include selectiveness, randomness, “jumping from here and to there”, non-linearity, hypertextual reception, etc. The “new screen reading” is done with a mouse click or by switching channels; its nature is visual and tabular, intersemiotic, polymedial, multi-sensory, interactive, etc. Without delving deeper into the descriptions of the specific phenomena of the “screen reading culture”, one should stress that the one thing that is present in all the studies devoted to it is the need for arranging educational situations which would support the younger generation in their acquisition of the

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<sup>25</sup> A. Ogonowska, “Od społeczeństwa ekranów do społeczeństwa nadzoru”, in: idem., *Między reprezentacją a symulacją. Szkice z socjologii mediów*, Krakow 2007, pp. 191–209.

skills necessary for independent and meaningful functioning in various areas of life (real and virtual, material and spiritual, personal and social, communication network, etc.) That mainly applies to media and information competences, which, it should be strongly emphasised, should be strictly related (and thus developed) to the competences associated with the area of literature and cultural education.<sup>26</sup> In line with the theoretical assumptions, they constitute the inseparable element of general education (being its expansion), which forms the basis for "human becoming". Regardless of the expansion of new media, the progressive use of technology, and digitalisation, human personality, identity, autonomy, and subjectivity should be and still are understood as, e.g.:

- shaping and developing in people their humanity, which requires individual discovery, understanding and experiencing culture (both its heritage and contemporary culture), and internalisation of the fundamental values of humanities, as well as stimulating the pursuit for their fulfilment in various areas of activity, which will enable every person to discover the meaning of their lives and make them reality; (...)
- development of the aesthetic sphere (sensitivity, skills) of the human and the multi-faceted mental developed triggered by the experience of art, beauty (...); – introduction into the world of values and the symbolic culture enriching people's lives to include extra-utilitarian values (...) Those could be referred to as raising in the spirit of humanistic values and for participation in the symbolic culture and the multi-faceted mental development, and developing a rich and autonomous personality under the influence and through the processes of that participation.<sup>27</sup>

In light of the discussion up to this point, one could conclude that the process of designing literature and cultural education for contemporary pupils should include the combination of various forms of participation in culture (traditional and those related to the mediasphere and technosphere), particularly as aptly noted by some researchers:

(...) there is actually no major difference between the traditional and the electronic forms of receiving literary content if words interact with an unlimited imagination and imagination of a recipient, which in themselves are the main source of all "special effects. (...) technology as an auxiliary factor in perfecting the reader experience (works in such a way that – note by I.M.) everything is basically based on the same

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<sup>26</sup> Vide Z.A. Kłakówna, "Kształcenie językowe jako rozwijanie kompetencji kulturowej", in: *Wiązanie kształcenia językowego z literacko-kulturowym w gimnazjach i liceach*, headed by Z. Uryga, R. Jedliński, M. Sienko, Wadawnictwo Naukowe AP in Krakow, Krakow 2007, pp. 37–50.

<sup>27</sup> Dz. Jankowski, *Edukacja wobec zmiany*, Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2006, pp. 199–200.

scenario: a person reaches for a book, gets engrossed in it, and feels, to some extent, as part of the story they are reading.<sup>28</sup>

In the context of the quoted remark, cultural and literature education which include contemporary reading lessons should constitute an invaluable experience for young people, which through skilfully arranged lessons and socialization exercises will support the learning of literary and non-literary cultures (including film culture, theatre culture, art culture, audiovisual culture, etc.) in its extensive relations to the axiosphere, media-sphere, and techno-sphere, and the culture of everyday life. It is important to foster in pupils the practice of connecting reading set books with references to various sources of information (about a book, its versions, adaptations, etc.), including to the internet, dictionary and encyclopaedia publications, online discussion forums, utility texts, and other so-called quasi-texts. One cannot omit the fact that today:

Literary texts usually function in certain environments; they also cover other texts, which exist within a specific distribution in relation to one another. Those quasi-texts, located in the fringes of media categorisation which applies to them, refer to specific works of literature by taking the form of, e.g. a blurb addressed to readers and placed on the back cover of a book, which, in fact, functions as an invitation to read the book.<sup>29</sup>

When young people are convinced that they are able to understand something better, in a similar situation when reading a future, i.e. different, book, thanks to explanations from other sources, they will seek explanations on their own. They will discover that thanks to reading they will know more and better understand themselves, others, and the world. It is important to ensure that a well-devised process of education, which respects the subjectivity of pupils and the reality in which they develop, enables young people to find in their readings various cultural texts, as in the following experiences:

A person with a keen interest in the world will find something interesting in every book. (...) They can find something interesting in everything and such reading (...) offers greatest pleasure. (...) Furthermore, reading can be practised virtually

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<sup>28</sup> M. Skibińska, *Technicyzacja kultury czytelniczej*, [http://www.pkult.amu.edu.pl/2\\_2009/Skibinska\\_Technicyzacja.pdf](http://www.pkult.amu.edu.pl/2_2009/Skibinska_Technicyzacja.pdf) [accessed on: 30.08.2017].

<sup>29</sup> J. Paech, "Niezwyczajny świat paratekstualności", in: *Pogranicza audiowizualności*, A. Gwóźdź (ed.), Universitas, Krakow 2010, p. 59. Vide also: M. Maryl, *Życie literackie w sieci. Pisarze, instytucje, odbiorcy wobec przemian technologicznych*, IBL, Warsaw 2015; A. Ślósarz, "Wiedoliteratura jako ekspresja pełni emocjonalnego doświadczenia", *Annales. Educatio nova* 2017, issue 2.

everywhere and throughout one's life (...). There are very few such pleasures which cost so little, which never end, and which do not require any special preparations. /.../ The true pleasure in reading consists of (...) also that one can put down a book, look into the sky and think about what they had read or simply daydream. On top of that /.../ one enters a community /.../ of all who have read or are reading the same book. /.../ The true joy in reading is the ability to read for hours without stopping, to completely detach oneself from the world around us and immerse oneself in the book. /.../ That who can read /.../ will never be bored. Boredom is a great hazard both for people and the entire society!<sup>30</sup>

The thoughts of Andrzej Drózdź provide an interesting expansion and complementation of the quoted remarks, which are worth quoting at this point as an important source of inspiration for the cultural and literary education of contemporary teenagers:

Every reader opening a book has something in them of a character in a literary utopia: traveller, castaway or dreamer exploring unreal lands. Books encourage people to become nomads, to travel from one title to another, upon going through a few pages, to live for a while in the open landscapes of chapters. (...) Those with the greatest determination would eagerly say about their books using Heraclitus' words: "gods make presence here, too." (...) Books which remind people about timeless values restore people's faith, freedom, and their lost power. (...) Within books, there exist sacred places marked by heroism, to which readers return as in a cleansing pilgrimage to become certain the choices they made were just. Heraclitus' "here, too", referring to a place where gods live, helps people understand the spaces of books in which readers reside together with the characters of their readings. Thus, their private homelands of their imagination, where they live seemingly and truly, the borders of which have been the subject on continued disputes.<sup>31</sup>

That does not mean, though, that the fulfilment of the core curriculum's assumed objectives and tasks cannot occur as an intentional combination of traditional and modern media, methods, and forms of education. It is obvious that when devising the process of educating "screen readers", a responsible and competent teacher will consider not only the old tried and tested means, but also new tools and technologies, e.g.: social media, virtual worlds, blogs, online games, opened

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<sup>30</sup> M. Król, "Czytanie", *Tygodnik Powszechny* 2006, issue 33, p. 16.

<sup>31</sup> A. Drózdź, *Od liber mundi do hipertekstu. Książka w świecie utopii*, Biblioteka Analiz, Warsaw 2009, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, p. 346-347. Vide also: Ch. Vandendorpe, *Od papirusu do hipertekstu. Esej o przemianach tekstu i lektury*, trans. A. Sawisz, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warsaw 2008.

educational resources, “participatory culture texts”, etc.<sup>32</sup> Their usage should be accompanied by a commonly shared conviction that success in a world of constant and rapid technological and communication developments will be available only for those who are able to balance their personal, social and technological developments. That applies to the “strive for *harmonia mundi*”, i.e. the achievement of a desired state of balance between the human being, nature and technology; for the human to triumph over technology, not the other way around, to paraphrase Alvin Tofler. That can be aided by: a well-developed mind, a passion for learning, and the ability to apply knowledge in practice..., which are considered *the new keys to the future* and are discussed in more detail in studies of information and meta-cognitive competences.<sup>33</sup> If absorbed during the literary and cultural education of 4–8<sup>th</sup> graders, they should trigger inspiration drawn from numerous currently highly valued streams, concepts and studies into the process of education in the digital age. At this point, one could recommend, e.g.:

- the assumptions of cognitive psychology and constructivism in the process of education (J. Piaget, L. Wygotski, J. Bruner) in relation to pupils and their social and cultural environment (including the linguistic and communication environment), which in practice can be fulfilled, e.g. through cooperative education, which elevates the value of the advantages of learning in cooperation and “from one another;”<sup>34</sup>
- the key theses of humanistic psychology (C. Rogers), where every person possesses the necessary resources for coping with their own problems and taking liability for their actions; resources which in certain situations should be activated and developed thanks to well-organised educational and upbringing and prophylactic influences;
- the principle of triple subjectivity, which integrates new scopes of the rights and obligations of teachers, pupils, and parents, understood within the categories of cooperation and self-fulfilment, authentic dialogue, negotiations and decision-making, as well as the shaping of an atmosphere of trust in the search, discovery and fulfilment of common values;
- the vision of the good, safe and modern school as a “place of educational opportunities”, which satisfies the mental and developmental needs of pupils, and

32 Vide I. Pulak, “Kompetencje informacyjne i medialne nauczyciela/ucznia we współczesnym świecie”, in: *Edukacja w przebiegu życia: od dzieciństwa do starości*, Impuls, Krakow 2010; *Teksty kultury uczestnictwa*, A. Dąbrowska, M. Maryl, A. Wójtowicz (eds.), IBL, Warsaw 2016.

33 The Labor Secretary’s Commission’s report on Achieving Necessary Skills, *What Work Requires of Schools*. As quoted in A. Cudowska, “Rozwijanie zdolności metapoznawczych dziecka jako niezbywalny element jego podmiotowego bycia w świecie”, in: *Media elektroniczne w życiu dziecka w kontekście wartości wychowawczych oraz zagrożeń*, J. Izdebska, Trans Humana, Białystok 2008.

34 Z. Meger, *Strategia edukacji kooperatywnej z przykładami realizacji*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warsaw 2017.

which is an "environment of authentic learning, work on oneself, the art of co-existence, cooperation, dialogue and agreement in an atmosphere of kindness, mutual understanding and openness,"<sup>35</sup> etc.

- the concept of upbringing understood as an "introduction to worthy life", where the lead thought and the general assumptions are contained in the subsequently designed educational situations and the related interactions between pupils and teachers who care about the subjectivity of young people, a fact which can be expressed in the following words directed to pupils: "Do you wish to enter a worthy life? Then come and try walking alongside me but try walking on your own and do not imitate me. Let my walking beside you be only your protection, because I want you to feel that you are not alone, that you do not have to rely only on yourself when you do not know what is happening inside you, when your view of your situation and the sense of the values calling you become blurred. You can turn to me for help to see more clearly and to understand more deeply. Never ask me what you are supposed to do or what you should value highly, but you can always ask me whether in that which you intend to do, in your sense of values I see any delusion, falseness or simple reactivity. I will only tell you what I myself can see, what I myself understand. And sometimes I will turn to you with the same question;"<sup>36</sup>
- the message of the "pedagogy of the heart in the 21<sup>st</sup> century", emphasising the importance of raising a good and responsible person prepared "for such a use of freedom not to harm themselves or others, and to love selflessly, faithfully, wisely and generously, to be a person of a righteous heart,"<sup>37</sup> because, as many proponents of education thus oriented argued: "in the world of high technology, there is a need (...) for a tender touch of another person. Excessive loneliness is inefficient. (...) for "lamp" words which give light and warmth, magical wands of the formative assessment cannot be replaced by the cold screen of cutting-edge computers, tablets or smartphones (...) there is a need for interactive education open to the needs of others,"<sup>38</sup> but the researchers of education

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35 Vide: E. Mikoś, M. Feiner, "Zmiany w sposobie myślenia o szkole", *Polonistyka* 2002, issue 4; J. Morbitzer, *Szkoła w epoce płynnej rzeczywistości*, <http://www.edunews.pl/badania-i-debaty/opinie/1767-szkola-w-epoce-plynnej-nowoczesnosci-2>, [accessed on: 15.02.2017]; A. Murzyn, *Wokół Kena Robinsona kreatywnego myślenia o edukacji*, Impuls, Kraków 2013.

36 S. Ruciński, *Wychowanie jako wprowadzanie w życie wartościowe*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warsaw 1988, pp. 131-132.

37 Vide M.B. Rosenberg, *Porozumiewanie bez przemocy. O języku serca*, trans. M. Kłobukowski, Jacek Santorski & Co., Warsaw 2003; B. Śliwerski, "Pedagogika serca w XXI wieku", in: *Pedagogika serca. Wychowanie emocjonalne w XXI wieku*, E. Lewandowska-Tarasiuk, J. Łaszczuk, B. Śliwerski (eds.), "Difin", Warsaw 2016.

38 A. Karpińska, "Dydaktyczne myślenie o szkole jako miejscu edukacyjnej szansy – dydaktyczne dylematy i strategie", in: *Edukacja w perspektywie wyzwań współczesności*, A. Harbartski,

in the “digital age” are increasingly more appreciative of the constructivist and connectivist approach,<sup>39</sup> logodidactics supporting the personal and community-oriented development of people seeking the key to a wise and happy life,<sup>40</sup> and, finally, neurodidactics, which utilises to a fuller extent the capabilities of the brain in the process of education.<sup>41</sup>

If intended to constitute education “with the pupil in the centre” “in which a treasure is hidden”, literary and cultural education devised in the new core curriculum cannot avoid elements, contexts and competences considered in scientific discourse and in studies on contemporary education as its indicators, aspects and components. Those are, apart from those already mentioned above, the following notions and forms of influence:

forms of educational influence	possible implementations in cultural and literary education (example tasks for pupils – “screen readers”)
development of subjective competences, including narrative, social and communication competences necessary for building identity (in its personal, community and cultural dimensions)	Provoking, particularly 7–8 <sup>th</sup> graders, e.g. within “literature strolls through the internet”, personal reflections (and then sharing them with the whole class) on topics which cannot be settled in a finite manner and are important for various reasons for personal and community development, e.g.: “Is it necessary to know the Epilogue and the Invocation of A. Mickiewicz’s Pan Tadeusz or C. K. Norwid’s <i>Moja piosnka</i> (II) in the age of computerisation, modernity and openness of national borders?”
inclusion of notions associated with media education in the process of “education for and through reading” literature and other media	e.g. Prepare a multimedia presentation on a set book. Read internet opinions on a set book and write your opinion about the topic.

E. Krysztofik-Gogol (eds.), Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2016, p. 33. Vide also A. Grodecka, “Dydaktyka polonistyczna w kontekstach neuronalnych”, in: *Edukacja polonistyczna. Metamorfozy kontekstów i metod*, M. Karwatowska, L. Tymiakin (eds.), UMCS, Lublin 2017; A. Grodecka, A. Podemska-Kałuża, *Wielozmysłowość. Filozofia i dydaktyka*, UAM, Poznań 2012.

<sup>39</sup> J. Garbula-Orzechowska, “Perspektywa konstruktywistyczna w dydaktyce”, in: *Paradygmaty współczesnej dydaktyki*, L. Huryło et al. (eds.), Impuls, Krakow 2009.

<sup>40</sup> I. Majewska-Opiełka, *Logodydaktyka w edukacji: o wychowaniu mądrego i szczęśliwego człowieka*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Sopot 2015.

<sup>41</sup> Vide M. Żylińska, *Neurodydaktyka: nauczanie i uczenie się przyjazne mózgowi*, UMK, Toruń 2013; *Neuroedukacja. Jak wykorzystać potencjał mózgu w procesie uczenia się*, W. Sikorski (ed.), „Dobra Literatura”, Słupsk 2015.



creating opportunities for acquiring information-communicational and media competences within literature and cultural education	e.g. Compare posts on fora devoted to school set books and present your findings and your opinion about them.
supporting the integration of various forms of participation in real and virtual culture	e.g. "Draft a Wikipedia entry", "Respond to an e-mail or a text message", "Review a website" (selected ones, devoted to one of "our" set books, note by I.M.) <sup>a)</sup>
elevating the value of the place and role of ethical norms, procedures, speech and communication ethics, creation of bonds, supporting spirituality and spiritual development, etc.	e.g. Triggering set book-inspired questions <sup>b)</sup> : What is important for man and why in Jan Kochanowski's epigram <i>Na dom w Czarnolesie</i> ?; Why did the Little Prince seek a friend? What was the motivation behind the decisions of the characters in the book and film "Kamienie na szaniec"? etc.
integrating in the educational practice the culture of words and images, the audio and videospheres, multimedia, primary and secondary orality, literacy and tele-literacy as alternative forms of reading activity	e.g. Select for discussion one of the provided sentences using the available sources of information (including the internet): - Scandal in paintings or not? – discussion spurred by some versions of Virgin Mary in European painting. - Desecration or elevation of masterpieces? The Last Supper and other works of art in the workings of modern advertising.
considering inter-cultural notions in Polish philological education content, motivation for seeking and discovering dialogue between cultures in tradition and modernity	e.g. Interpretative reading of international documents defining human rights and the rights of nations to freedom, emphasising the importance of cultural heritage and universal values in building inter-personal relations, mutual communication (e.g. fragments of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, fragments of John Paul II's homilies, etc.);

- a) S. Bortnowski, "Czy literatura piękna przyda(je) się jeszcze wychowaniu? Z perspektywy dydaktyka literatury", in: *Wychowanie. Pojęcia - Procesy - Konteksty. Interdyscyplinarne ujęcie*, M. Dudzikowa, M. Czerepniak-Walczak (eds.), vol. III, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2007, p. 283. [Unless indicated otherwise, English versions of quotations were translated from Polish].
- b) A. Ślórsz, "Szkolny polonista wobec imperium ekranów", in: *e-polonistyka*, A. Dziak, S.J. Żurek (eds.), KUL, Lublin 2008, p. 166.

Own work.<sup>42</sup>

In the light of existing research, "screen readers" require support in acquiring tools enabling them to move confidently, safely, responsibly and wisely through the "information jungle", which will protect them against "web loneliness",

<sup>42</sup> Cf. B. Bodzioch-Bryła, *Z nowymi medi@mi „w kulturze” i „o kulturze”. Studia Kulturoznawcze*, WAM, Krakow 2015.

“loneliness of the soul”, and the emptiness of thought and actions. Clearly, the term “digital natives”, often used in reference to them, is not actually true, as it is difficult to consider as such those “web children” and somewhat older teenagers who have problems with concentration, drawing general conclusions or assuming a broader viewpoint under the influence of long-term contact with on-screen media and modern technology. They are hampered by their “shallow minds” caused by excessive immersion in the world of new media, helplessness in facing the overflow of information which they cannot understand, interpret, evaluate or use. As a result, there are fewer and fewer people, including young people, who possess the skill of being creative, highly-valued in today’s world, related to the art of creating themselves in the reality of the constantly changing and unstable world.<sup>43</sup> Such diagnoses trigger postulates regarding the school system, and its place in culture and the lives of young people:

(...) the school system’s challenges have included for many years the need to shape intellectual and moral competences in pupils and to prepare them for participation in the understanding and interpretation of cultural phenomena, as well as to prepare them for life in the society. A pupil should make the effort to formulate their needs and values, while school should offer them the opportunity to receive culture free of trivialisation, nihilism, and popular availability. School surely does not have to be a place where the analysis of the phenomena of reality occurs through the process of explaining from “simple to even simpler.” The social project of intellectual and spiritual life assumes the existence of a certain, fulfilled rationally and critically, obligation on the part of the communities of educators and teachers. They cannot submit to the rules of marketisation, or the fancy of emotions or temporariness.<sup>44</sup>

An important role to be played in that process is that of the culture of a school created by a specific community, i.e. teachers, pupils, parents and other entities cooperating to build a community of people who learn and who are able to draw mutual advantages from this knowledge, who appreciate their own work and achievements, who can assign it a broader scope through various forms of cultural animation at school and outside it (subject-oriented and inter-subject competitions, celebratory meetings, hobby groups, exhibitions, projects, pupils’ own creativity, etc.) Thus, the designed and understood process of integral education,<sup>45</sup> of which cultural and literature education is an inseparable part, fits the framework of thin-

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<sup>43</sup> A. Karpińska, “Dydaktyczne myślenie o szkole jako miejscu edukacyjnej szansy – dydaktyczne dylematy i strategię”, in: *Edukacja w perspektywie wyzwań współczesności*, p. 31.

<sup>44</sup> B. Kleboko, “Czytelnik w mediosferze – współczesny uczeń wobec wyzwań obowiązkowych lektur szkolnych”, in: *Edukacja wobec przemian kulturowych*, I. Morawska, M. Latoch-Zielińska (eds.), UMCS, Lublin 2017.

<sup>45</sup> Vide W. Andrukowicz, *Edukacja integralna*, Impuls, Krakow 2001.

king about pupil activity as postulated by the authors of various publications devoted to the issue, as indicated in the fragment quoted below:

The causative power, being a feature of creative activity, is increasingly often considered in relation to human self-creation. A creative activity, in the past reserved only for some, has become one of the basic postulates of the modern school, democratic in its assumptions and practise, while the *homo creator* is the upbringing model in various curricula throughout the world. (...) To be active means to be ready to fulfil an updated value, and to treat life as a task. (...) The creative activity of the human mind is shaped and developed using language, culture codes, traditions, etc., i.e. in a living relationship with others, both those former and contemporary. In the education process young people should, therefore, not only absorb the "set of tools" developed by culture, including those of linguistic and communication competences, but also their own visions of the world and themselves.<sup>46</sup>

There is no doubt about the fact that, apart from pupils, the strategic role in that process is to be played by Polish teachers:

It is they, as aptly stressed by Paweł Sporek, who predominantly shape the course of the education process and have a direct influence on the organisation of pupils' contacts with works and thus with specific attitudes of characters inscribed in literature and art. When a Polish teacher proves to be a person sensible to the mental autonomy of their pupils and if she/he is aware of the fact that the path towards role models must lead through a space of human freedom of choice, one can hope pupils' identities will be built through their contacts with various role models, some closer while others distant from young readers. Of course, that also has to occur within the space of the freedom of the teacher, who will be able to influence the selection of books to match the complexity of the human and the world, and the attitudes presented in them will serve as material for creative discussions in class on the values in the life and actions of individuals.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> B. Myrdzik, M. Karwatowska, "Wstęp", in: *Twórczość w szkole. Rzeczywiste i możliwe aspekty zagadnienia*, B. Myrdzik, M. Karwatowska (eds.), UMCS, Lublin 2011, p. 12.

<sup>47</sup> P. Sporek, "Ideał i wzorzec w edukacji szkolnej", *Nowa Poliszczyzna* 2007, issue 2, p. 48.

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Iwona Morawska

## **Edukacja literacko-kulturowa „ekranowych czytelników”. Refleksje inspirowane nową podstawą programową i nie tylko**

### *Streszczenie*

Artykuł jest głosem w dyskusji nad zmianami, które wiążą się z nową reformą polskiej oświaty (wprowadzaną od roku szkolnego 2017/2018). Ważną jej część stanowi projektowany w podstawie programowej proces kształcenia kulturowo-literackiego uczniów klas 4–8, którzy są tu opisywani jako reprezentanci pokolenia „ekranowych czytelników”. Przyjęta perspektywa pozwoliła przedstawić możliwe kierunki postępowania dydaktycznego wobec potrzeb rozwojowych i społeczno-kulturowych uczniów wzrastających pod znacznym wpływem nowoczesnych mediów i technologii. Zaproponowane rozwiązania są przykładem i zachętą do interpretacyjnego, refleksyjnego, twórczego czytania i wdrażania aktualnej podstawy programowej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** edukacja polonistyczna, kultura i literatura, reforma oświaty, podstawa programowa, strategie kształcenia, uczniowie, czytanie, „epoka ekranów”

## **The literary and cultural education of “screen readers”. Reflections inspired by the new core curriculum and more**

### *Summary*

The article is a voice in the discussion on the changes entailed by the new reform of the Polish education system (introduced as of the 2017/2018 school year). An important part of it is the process of the cultural and literary education of 4–8<sup>th</sup> graders described in the core curriculum, who are described as representatives of the generation of “screen readers”. The assumed perspective enabled the author to present the possible directions of educational activities in the face of the developmental and socio-cultural needs of pupils growing up under the major impact of modern media and technology. The proposed solutions offer examples and encouragement for interpretative, reflective and creative reading and implementation of the binding core curriculum.



**Keywords:** Polish philological education, culture and literature, reform of the education system, core curriculum, education strategies, pupils, reading, "the screen age"

**Iwona Morawska**, dr hab. prof. UMCS w Zakładzie Edukacji Polonistycznej i Innowacji Dydaktycznych w Instytucie Filologii Polskiej UMCS w Lublinie; wieloletnia nauczycielka języka polskiego; autorka i recenzentka licznych publikacji z zakresu kształcenia polonistycznego; współorganizatorka i uczestniczka wielu konferencji naukowych; autorka warsztatów i szkoleń metodycznych dla nauczycieli języka polskiego jako ojczystego i języka polskiego jako obcego; członek Lubelskiego Towarzystwa Naukowego, Sekcji Psychologii Klinicznej i Edukacji Zdrowotnej PAN/oddział w Lublinie; członek Komisji Edukacji przy Komitecie Nauk o Literaturze PAN; w 2012 odznaczona Medalem Komisji Edukacji Narodowej.