

Abstract

The diaries analysis presented in this dissertation is the first complex attempt to present and elaborate on Halina Semenowicz's (1910-2004) affluent autobiographical material. She was the inventor and propagator of Freinet movement in Poland.

The dissertation consists of five chapters. Chapter one is a theoretical framework of the research. It begins with presenting methods of understanding phenomenon of human biography. Presented are different biography definition expressions which do not exclude themselves but are complementary to each other. Also described are possibilities of biography research. Next, shown is biography as an important category of understanding human learning processes and theoretical conception in biographical research. Discussed is supposition of biographical paradigm in pedagogy especially in adult education and understanding of biography as a personal competence. Next part of the first chapter focuses on category of biographical learning which is a theoretical framework of Halina Semenowicz's diaries analysis. Shown is the context of search, defining and understanding of biographical learning fields in Halina Semenowicz's diaries. Connecting of individual's life experience with the biographical perspective is the initial point of describing biographical categories of learning which enables researching of educational processes found in biographies. Based upon Paul Lengrand book "Areas of learning basic to lifelong education" (Warsaw 1995), described are fields of learning in which adults live, act and build their identity. The first chapter ends with deliberations about regularities in adults learning in the ending phase of their life. Defined are notions of ageing and senility by invocation to positive model of ageing.

Chapter two is a biography of Halina Semenowicz – exponent of idea and practice of Celestine Freinet pedagogy on Polish ground. The biography is based on numerous personal documents left by her: diaries, memoirs, notes, articles and also on her daughter (Aleksandra Semenowicz), her friends and co-workers memories

Methodological assumptions of conducted research are focal point of chapter three. The biggest impact is set on external criticism of research material – Halina Semenowicz's diaries which she was writing for 37 years.

The fourth chapter presents the results of research material analysis. It consists of analysis of nine life fields in which Halina Semenowicz's learning occurred. The fields have been isolated based on Paul Lengrand's "Areas of learning basic to lifelong education" (Warsaw 1995). The analysis of H.Semenowicz diaries enables deep insight into her everyday life while being on pension, her relationships with daughters, friends and co-workers from SAPCF. It also helps to learn her thoughts on social and political matters, which values were most important to her in everyday life and relations, her passions, hobbies, interests with special focus on their education aspect. As a result of the analysis it is possible to show the process of Halina Semenowicz's ageing, its phases and countenances which for readers of this work can be taken as an example of active and dignifying passing away in harmony with people, world and nature.

The fifth chapter is an attempt to summarize and draw conclusions from the conducted analysis. It characterizes learning process of Halina Semenowicz: its most important fields and the biggest obstacles met by her during the process itself. The dissertation ending try to draw attention on strong and weak aspects of the conducted analysis, doubts and difficulties faced while performing the research.

The dissertation attempts to remind and introduce the figure of Halina Semenowicz from the perspective of analyzed sources, (auto)biographical materials - her diaries. The work is therefore a report from biographical research which illustrates the history of life and learning process of Halina Semenowicz during her old age. It must be underlined that this dissertation is a pedagogic work and is not a historic research although it exploits historical sources. As the thesis author I have a deep hope that this work will inspire educationists, pedagogues, adult educators, teachers, students and all readers to active and creative life.

Keywords: biography, biographical paradigm, biographical learning, Halina Semenowicz, diaries