

# INSTRUMENTALITY OF QUESTIONS ASKED AS A PRACTICAL COMPETENCE INSTRUCTED BY SCHOOLS AND MASS MEDIA

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## Abstract

*The article presents difficulties in how to consciously construct questions in many ways. It seems to be essential in order to generate the need and willingness to get interested, delighted, fascinated and passionate. The author maintains that the competence of formulating right questions is useful in searching for inspiration and motivation, which results in creating new opportunities. It makes people aware of their mental resources and inspires them to search for more knowledge. A conclusion has been drawn that the contemporary people have been gradually losing the ability of asking questions. Therefore, in the modern world, as the author assures, wise men may be recognised by the questions they ask, and bright men by the replies.*

**Keywords:** communication, coaching, psychology, education, mass media, social media, press, journalism, business, negotiations, mediations, teachers, school

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## Introduction

How often do we ask questions to ourselves and others? Can we actually appreciate the importance of questions? And what can happen when we ask questions unquestioningly and in a clichéd manner? Can we sometimes draw too rash conclusions in such a situation? Or, perhaps, we ask such questions out of courtesy, without even attempting to listen to the answer and understanding it? Why does it happen? Where can such inability come from?

Those and other questions originated by way of reflection upon the article “*Pragmatic Instrumentality or Badly Asked Questions*” by professor Marcin Szewczyk. The article was published in the book dedicated to the memory of professor Jerzy Chłopecki “*Total Present. Theses on Contemporary Times. Professor Jerzy Chłopecki in memoriam*”.

Expressing his conclusions, Professor M. Szewczyk has written that the inability to pose questions results from the incessant surprising us with the speed of the current world of the hot mass media. As the author, he explains the phenomenon with one of the

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elements of individuality of a social group as “*the acquired and mostly automated understanding of a complicated reaction between knowledge (education and their attitude to it), the components of the reality (the world and their place therein) and the depth of cognition (attractiveness and common understanding of superficial and unreflective explanations)*” [Szewczyk 2015, p. 204]. According to professor Szewczyk, the very combination of the above cited elements reflects the image of the modern society which is unable to generate the need or willingness to learn something more, something available just round the corner, above the minimum the modern man needs to know.

The purpose of the article is to contemplate the current situation, find answers to demanded questions and to seek solutions of the problem. This is quite an important scientific issue as the questions may be inspiring, creative and might motivate to act and search for solutions, and to arrive at the broadest information space for the young generation. Questions are capable of activating the human mind, inspiring, developing imagination and simulating thinking. Creative thinking means breaking the established patterns in order to view matters from various perspectives. People who limit their space to only one point of view happen to be equally limited in thinking. This may result in a situation described by Seneca: “*If one does not know to which port one is sailing, no wind is favourable*” (Lucius Annaeus Seneca) [Baras 2015, p. 24]. Therefore, stirring the mind to stimulate imagination and search for solutions is so valuable. This enables men to know themselves better, to ponder over their lives and make better vital decisions, select from a broader pool of the possible solutions.

The method of the research in this article, is reality observation and empirical analysis of the problems mentioned above. The target of the research is to grant well-reasoned answers to posed questions in this article. The purpose of this article is also to examine the phenomenon, arrive at conclusions and present interesting solutions which may be applied in education enforced by schools and mass media. It is important that starting from the youngest age children, youths and adults learn to appreciate the weight of questions and being capable of their proper formulating. The very questions have a very broad application. Well posed, they help to collect or deepen the information people need. They support creativity and variety of options, possibilities and solutions. They are used to stimulate change in a human being as well as in the human environment, in many areas. It is worth to know, how and when to use the variety of questions, from which questions to resign or limit to the use solely in exceptional situations. It is good to learn how to consciously watch the possible influence of the question asked on the interlocutor and to give the interlocutor the space to reply. Conscious asking questions is managed by reason and logics. It indicates the proper way of acting, in compliance with the possessed experience, the learned habits and beliefs, as well as a mind map thus being crystallised. Thanks to that, the consciousness may communicate with the sub-consciousness, drawing conclusions from the previous experiences, coordinate communication both externally and in the mind, and based thereon make decisions on the direction and type of the asked questions [Zarzycka 2017, p. 24].

The objective of the paper is specifically to shed light on the problem, formulate conclusions and propose solutions for the consciously posed questions. Specifically, the issues will become a field for considerations regarding the teaching of the skill to ask questions from the youngest age and the ability to listen to and hear the reply. What shall we do when the problem of asking questions is growing among the young generation and by way of a deep immersion in mass media, the ability vanishes?

The phenomenon of difficulty in asking oneself and others inspiring questions had been earlier perceived by professor Jerzy Chłopecki. During his long years of work with students and observing them, he arrived at the conclusion that: “*The greatest problem for the students is to define problems, or simply speaking – to formulate questions. Compared to the previous generations, today’s youths know an impressive number of replies, are generally much better educated than the generation of their fathers, but have no ques-*

tions. *Having no questions, they experience no surprises, so most often they are not burning with an insatiable curiosity of the world and its affairs*" [Chłopecki 2002, p. 96]. What can we, therefore, do in order to improve the competence of asking questions by the younger generations? What can be done in order to reverse the situation observed by professor Jerzy Chłopecki?

### **The principles of creating inspiring questions from the theoretical point of view - literature review and discussion.**

As claimed by Olga Rzycka in her book *"Manager a Coach": "A bright person may be recognised by the replies. A wise person may be recognised by the questions asked"* [Rzycka 2012, p. 56]. Also, Albert Einstein attached a great importance to asking questions. He considered that *"The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day. Never lose a holy curiosity. Who cannot ask, cannot live"* [Polski Portal Kultury 1998, online]. This may contribute to a conclusion that the very art of conscious asking questions in specific areas brings the simplicity and joy of life.

In practice, a properly prepared coaching questions schemes contribute to performing a precisely set plan of actions such that the objective becomes more and more clear with every step. This issue refers to either a school lesson, lecture, radio or TV programme, or preparing a project to be performed by a group. A proper set of coaching questions may be used in a business environment by managers who apply a coaching style of management in the professional relations with their staff. For example between the superior – coach, director – coach, head – coach, manager – coach, or regular company employee – coach [Zarzycka-Bienias 2018, pp. 37-41]. The plan of motivating, inspiring or deepening questions may be freely used in mass media by the journalists, or in education by the teachers or lecturers. In order to have it done, a learned and drilled competence to ask adequate questions is needed in order to arouse creativity, motivate to action, search for solutions and arrive at the broadest information space.

Such form of transferring knowledge through questions may initially contribute to the initial difficulty in opening themselves by the questioned people subject to coaching or trusting the questioning person. However, such cooperation is not aimed at introducing frustration, discouragement or manipulation but should help in gradual discovering new space for reflection and drawing one's own conclusions from the observation of a broader spectrum of the matter. It should support the creating of new solutions in the mind of the questioned person, or even in the origination of their many alternatives, which provides for the various possibilities of performance of the same project. Such educational element would enable better decision-making and assumption of liability for one's own replies and, thus, for oneself, boosting at the same time the self-esteem of the questioned person and their belief in their strength. This means that the old routines and patterns of teaching should be replaced with the forms of coaching questions, stirring the mind to think and giving the driving force and energy to act, as well as the space to discover and create. K. Perechuda claims that in this way, through coaching, the old patterns *"are expelled before the new ones are introduced, which gives a guarantee that »the lesson will be learnt and the coached person will be supported in the changes all the time, whereas continuous observation and correcting of errors at work on a current basis will result in a feedback«"* [Perechuda (ed.) 2008, p. 31].

The "feedback" process as a term also appears in mass media and their method of affecting communication. It is described as a model of selecting information between three media spaces: source of information "A" as an institution or person whose objective is to modify the attitudes, thinking and conduct of recipient "B", through a media communicator "C". Messages are formulated by speaker "A" and sometimes re-formulated by intermediary "C". The purpose is to pass the messages to recipient "B" or inspiring the recipient's reactions with questions, making them to reflect and reply. In that mod-

el, either consciously or not, recipient "B" provides feedback to communicator "C", who thanks to that may better adjust their message or training to the interests and level of knowledge of recipient "B". Without the ability of asking the right questions, the process could not exist and the feedback would not occur [Goban-Klas 2015, pp. 61-62].

It appears that improperly asked questions may engage the listener in the play of other people, giving grounds for a game based on the principles of one person striving to achieve their own objective. Questions may attack and accuse, putting the questioned person in the position of a victim. They may manipulate and teach how to guess the expectations of other people. They may be purposefully unclear and incomprehensible. Moreover, questions may introduce suggestions and direct towards specific replies. Incompetently or purposefully asked questions teach stereotypical thinking, killing creativity and independence at the same time. As an example, if after the school trip the teacher asks the class: *'What was the most beautiful attraction in the park?'*, children will reply in accordance with their perception and may not necessarily pander to the taste of the teacher. Such situation will have the features of the *'Guess what I think?'* game, which is based on manipulation and too general, unclear communication. The teacher implies guessing the expectations of the others and adjusting the replies to such expectations by hiding the actual thoughts of the student.

By way of a conscious or unconscious plan on the part of the questioning person, criticism may be switched off at the recipient. By way of such communication impact, either in mass media and in education, namely focus on instigating certain views and emotions in the recipient, manipulation occurs [Kall 2015, p. 20]. Such influence results in a change of attitude and conduct of the recipient. It is quite typical when promoting and advertising various types of products or services in mass media and through other channels. It is possible because the whole advertising business is based on a change of proportion between the needs and the commercial offer, or *'in the internal lie'*, as claims Marian Golka [Golka 2008, pp. 244–248].

Such teaching of asking questions and constructing replies is quite dangerous and may result in origination of an intimidated society. The people may be worried to speak and to risk the "faulty reply" [Bałutowski 2017, online]. This may also be one of the reasons for which small children are capable of pouring questions on the adults and with time this ability abates in them.

Along with the growth of coaching popularity, there is hope that the valuable competence of asking motivating and creative questions which open and unveil the potential of the interlocutor will become a chance to teach the value and the importance of asking questions. The basis for asking questions is to show that everybody has a potential to be successful in various fields. Therefore, the question of the teacher could be correctly formulated like that: *'Children, what do you think I liked the most in the park?'*

With regard to the above and the frequent incompetence of the teachers and tutors in creating understandable questions, the purpose of this article is to discuss the competence of conscious question asking, with particular focus on the basis for such questions creation in the work of a coach, as a teacher, tutor, educator, lecturer, journalist, superior, businessman, manager, parent, trainer and other professional and in various situations.

Along with the growing popularity of coaching, the coaching approach is growingly better recognised in the world of education, business and mass media, questions are back in grace, particularly during the classes held in the form of workshops, but also in radio, television and press interviews. Questions serve mainly the maximum utilisation of the potential of the coaching subjects, e.g. pupils or students, in more effective learning, by way of brain activation leading to pondering, astonishment, searching for new solutions, creating new ideas, bold planning and decision making, without knowledge served on a tray and prompting the ready solutions. The most effective tools in asking

wise, inspiring and strong questions are those which building their contents are aimed at creating theses, conclusions and gathering information as an effect. Most often they start with:

*What...? What for...? For what purpose...? In what way...? What happened?*

*Who...? Who with...?*

*When...?*

*Where...?*

*Which...?* [Lisowska-Magdziarz 2004, pp. 32-37]

In practice, any information needed in a certain matter may be attempted to be received by asking a series of questions starting from the above words. So, we may initially ask: What does that mean for you? What can you do about it? What have you done yet? What would you change in that? Why do you want to do it? Why should you care? Why do you want to apply it? What do you want to achieve? Whereas the word "what" means the specific reasons, desires, intentions, and the benefits deriving from the goal achievement [Mechło 2013, p. 24].

In another situation, we may ask: *Who will help you in it? Who can know a reply to that question? Who would you like to talk to about that? Who will it be easier for you to work with?*

By performing various tasks and projects, we will use "what" questions to obtain adjectives. For example: *What materials and support do you need to learn that? In what way do you want to do that? What do you need it for?*

Other forms of questions will help us to learn where and when something is going to happen: *Where will you look for information about that? Where can you implement your plan? Where will you go first of all? Where will you apply that? When will you start doing it? When will you make your next step? When will you do it? When will that be useful for you?*

The above set of questions does not include two popular questions: 'How?' and 'Why?', which will be discussed separately further in this article. They are equally important as all of the above presented questions. They may apply in preparing lesson summaries for various types of training and workshops. The questions may be helpful in preparing projects and questionnaires, writing scientific works and creating interviews, media messages or radio and television programmes. The questions support reflection on the purpose of the work, the research hypothesis, why and how to formulate conclusions. The very questions: Why? How? In what way? What? What for? When? Where?, prompt and indicate how to operate and what to do for the purpose of achieving the set out objective [Łączyński (ed.) 2009, p. 70].

Questions 'Why?' and 'How?' must be asked with particular care, delicacy and tact adequate to the situation. The questions often bring a critical suggestion and may result in a defensive attitude in the interlocutor. The questions serve more an analysis and justification than a free exploration. Therefore, an incorrectly formulated question starting with 'Why?' may force the questioned person to ponder about the problem, go on to the defensive in order to protect oneself and give explanations. When we ask somebody 'Why?', their attention may be moved to the past for the purpose of searching justifications.

This makes a transforming conversation impossible, and the very question "Why?" drives us away from the solution. Every question of accusing nature, such as "Why?", closes the conversation with a short reply, or very common expression, like "Because", "Why not". Therefore, questions and replies "Why – Because" posed in an incompetent manner, narrow the choices and the ability to discover alternatives, bringing us back to the stereotypes originating in the past [Atkinson 2010, pp. 54–55]. Such questions may also be perceived as a suggestion that the interlocutor is "wrong". In the respective situation, the question "Why?" is better replaced with a constructive method of action, using

the words “What?”, “What for”, “Which?”, e.g. ‘*What do you expect to achieve by such actions?*’ or ‘*What is the reason that you have not prepared yourself?*’, ‘*What is the reason you are doing this for?*’, ‘*What is the reason for your being sad?*’, ‘*What made you change your mind?*’ or ‘*What made you do this?*’.

Viewing it from another perspective, when the “Why?” question is properly formulated, it may become perfect to determine the reasons for someone’s actions. In this way we may strengthen the motivation to change and turn that in action, for example: ‘*Why have you decided to change your way of working?*’, ‘*Why do you think it is a good idea?*’, ‘*Why have you selected this very objective?*’. Such questions make the listener focus on listing optimistic reasons for selecting the objective, theme of work, making changes, and bring the opportunity to improve the internal motivation of the interlocutor and perform the task set out for themselves. We may also ask: ‘*Why is the achievement of the result so important for you?*’. That question may reflect the values of the interlocutor, inspire them and show the values which are important for them in the vision of the performed objective, project, challenge and also their future. Such type of questions show respect for the person, with no humiliation, forcing inferiority complexes, hurting the feelings or lowering self-esteem. At the same time, it may build trust and self-confidence by making the person aware they are capable of overcoming any obstacles on the way to the objective achievement by themselves [Sinek 2013, p. 59]. Defining their own “why” motif is one of the best methods for a long-lasting success. It facilitates decision making and determining the pace of innovation, resulting in broader opening to solutions and freedom of action. A reply to the word “Why” in the context of internal motivation is understood to be the important reasons for striving to achieve an objective, the intention of the objective, and the related values underlying the actions of the interlocutors. This brings to light the beliefs of the persons which motivate the road to achieve the objective [Sinek 2013, p. 49].

Another dangerous question starting with ‘*How...?*’ may sometimes result in a defensive attitude if we ask it, for example, in the following way: ‘*How is that possible?*’, ‘*How could you do that?*’, ‘*How could you act like that?*’, ‘*How come you did not know?*’. However, if we ask, for example: ‘*How have you solved the problem so far?*’, ‘*How do you understand it?*’, ‘*How are other people doing it in order to achieve good results?*’, ‘*How can you do it yourself?*’, ‘*How can you achieve it?*’, ‘*How do you imagine your life in 5 years?*’, it appears that they will be very good and proper questions inspiring reflection, pondering or even astonishment with oneself. To make the questions more differentiated, the word “why” may be replaced with a phrase ‘*In what way...?*’ or ‘*What steps brought you to...?*’. These are descriptive questions, which are of particular importance in coaching [Atkinson 2010, pp. 54-55].

Questions must be asked prudently, as they should not force a selection or suggest anything, nor to limit the possibilities or discretely criticise the interlocutor or their actions, as in the following example: ‘*What made you to act so aggressively today?*’. Such unfavourable opinion on the actions of the interlocutor may result in their defensive reaction and disputing whether the action was “aggressive” or not. Asking a slightly different question: ‘*What made you to act like that?*’, ‘*What could you have done differently, in order to avoid that?*’, will make the interlocutor consider their own action and select another, perhaps better, solution in the future.

The key to the effective research of the phenomenon are broadly open questions which inspire to a longer statement, instead of only ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. For example: ‘*How did you react to that?*’ [Stoltzfus 2012, p. 39]. In such case it is important that the asker might discover by listening, what the interlocutor needs for their development. The clarifying questions may include open ones, which invite to a broader and broader reply, trust and openness, focusing on desires, visions, dreams and goals. A good transforming conversation is a merger of instrumental questions and answers, enclosed with a space for listening. It is particularly important to give the listener the space and opportunity to reflect

at the time adequate for them, as in silence, the interlocutor undergoes the process of discovering, getting astonished and changing [Atkinson 2010, pp. 38-39].

Maciej Bennewicz in his book *“Coaching TAO”* pays special attention to ability to stay silent in all men, and specifically in coaches. He thinks that acquiring the ability is not simple, so he recommends to practice silence for half an hour every day [Bennewicz 2010, p. 144].

It may be concluded from the above that the role of the asker is also to listen and to respect the possibility to listen needed for the other person to reflect, to go deeper in their thoughts and ideas, to ponder, get astonished and to admire for a longer moment [Kućka 2013, pp. 26–27].

Adequately asked questions invite the listener to insight their inner self. These would be such questions, for example: *‘Could you consider your today’s decision from that perspective?, ‘Please imagine yourself in a year’s time and tell me what you see, what you feel and what you hear?’*. Many questions are capable of blocking the old, ineffective ways of thinking. It happens that after hearing them, the listener stays silent for a longer while. It is valuable to accept that we will not always receive a reply immediately. Adam Mickiewicz wrote about such moments in *“Pan Tadeusz”* as follows: *‘A great thought would usually force the mouth to become silent’* [Mickiewicz 2013, p. 107].

The shorter and simpler the questions are, the stronger their impact is on the coaching subject. A skilled coach (educator, superior) commences the conversation from asking general questions. Along with the progress of the conversation, the questions may gradually go into more details. Five examples referring to the absence of detailed contents, lack of information, generalisation and stubborn sticking to an idea are presented below. The questions which focus on broadening the issue and accessing the deeper layers of auxiliary information are presented as well. They are simple, precise questions which may be used to determine the importance of a problem and arriving at its common understanding. They result from the hidden importance present in the interlocutor’s statements. Examples:

General statements	Discovering importance by asking questions
<u>Lack of information:</u> I am confused. I am not fit for it. I cannot manage.	What specifically makes you confused? What are you not fit for, specifically? What cannot you manage, specifically?
<u>Generalisation:</u> It will be better for us.  Everybody is doing it now.	Better than what? How much better? For whom, specifically? How many people would that be? Everybody? Who, specifically?

<p><u>Sticking to an idea:</u> We need to do it.</p>	<p>What makes you think so? Who else thinks so? Does anyone think differently? What makes them have a different opinion? What will happen if you don't do it? What will happen if you do it?</p>
<p>We cannot live like that.</p>	<p>How, specifically? And what else?</p>
<p>The truth will always win.</p>	<p>And what is the truth? What do you need for the truth to win? What will happen if the truth doesn't win?</p>

The questions handle the three main reasons of misunderstandings during a coaching conversation:

- lack of specific information,
- generalisation,
- stubborn sticking to one thing [Dembkowski 2014, p. 53].

An experienced coach is usually capable of probing. This gives them the possibility to deepen the first reply of the client, which is often an artificial rationalisation or a reply compliant with the common standards and expectations.

The authors of the book *"Coaching for the Managerial Staff"*, S. Dembkowski, F. El-drige and I. Hunter write about four various forms of probing in coaching. Conversational probing consists in asking about the details of a certain activity or experience: *Who?, Where?, When?*. Probing repeated by the sequence with a simple question *'And what else?'*, encourages the listener to further talking and deeper consideration, with some astonishing results in some cases. By probing the last sentence, the coach applies the technique of using a fragment of the client's statement for arriving at better understanding and clarity. Probing with simple, repeated expressions, such as *'What else...?'*, *'And what else...?'*, *'And when that happens, what else can you do?'*, stimulates the listener to ponder and to express what they have not expressed earlier, what they have concealed or have not thought about. Such asking technique creates a transformation core for the purpose of obtaining broader information from the listener and coming even closer to the proper reply deriving from the unconscious. Thus, it leads to a better insight in the situation and the contents of the reply, and to more effective learning about oneself or the world thanks to that.

A challenge for the asking person is sometimes to use silent probing. As it appears, impatient people find it hard to keep quiet for a longer time. A coach is often silent when awaiting the reaction of the listener, for the purpose of quiet exploration of their own emotions and considering the specific challenge, matter or situation. Sir John Whitmore writes about such coaching process as the instrumentality of asked questions as follows: *'Probably the most difficult of all the things a coach needs to learn is to stay quiet'*. This is indeed one of the important techniques supporting the listener in their deep reflection [Dembkowski 2014, p. 55].

## Conclusion

Questions are the best way to receive information and learn, to write scientific papers, to follow self-development and change the life. This is the method to learn '*Who am I?*', '*What is important for me?*' and '*What is important for others?*'. Questions are used in negotiations and mediations for alleviating stress, disputes and conflicts, and for developing common values and objectives. In order to skilfully use questions, proper competencies must be acquired, by way of learning the proper questions and practising them. Good coaching questions have three common features. They should be simple, posed with an idea behind them, and such conceived as to bring a positive effect on the listener. They should not control or test the interlocutor, or to suggest anything, as this could become manipulation. Too chaotic and too elaborate questions, or the ones which comprise a question within a question, may result in the listener's confusion and hinder the process of understanding.

Competently asked questions may instigate thinking, analysis, better seeing of a situation or feeling it in a specific part of the body. They may lead to a deeper engagement in a task or project. Thanks to that the questions may arouse awareness, bring concentration on feelings, behaviour or areas of key or critical importance. Questions, similarly like a "lighthouse", may illuminate dark areas, improving the visibility of various matters and, thus, show the road leading to an objective.

Competent questions asking may stimulate replies of descriptive nature, broaden self awareness, and check the understanding of the subjects discussed. It may improve responsibility for using the internal resources and arriving at solutions. It may become a driving force and stir to actions, initiate changes and motivate for more extensive decision making, and bring the commitment of the listener to meet the challenge within a specific timeframe.

It is worth mentioning that, for instance, in a coaching process open questions are most frequently used, while closed questions are avoided. Open questions are to encourage a listener to explore their own experiences and resources by formulating longer, descriptive replies. Closed questions are answered shortly: 'Yes', 'No' or 'I don't know'. Undoubtedly, from time to time, closed questions are used in order to learn the engagement or the consent of the client and obtain declarations, e.g. '*Are you ready to do that three times in the coming three weeks?*' [Marilee 2007, p. 105].

It turns out, that skilful question asking requires reflection, well-thought-out questions and foreseeing their consequences by observing the listener's reactions. Thus, developing of the skill of asking useful questions among young generation seems to be an important process nowadays. It should comprise practical exercises, experimenting, getting astonished and reflection. How can we do that? Who and when should deal with it? What classes may be introduced to improve the use of such instrument as question asking? Whether the issue of "Instrumentality of questions asked as a practical competence instructed by schools and mass media" will be reflected in education, instruction, business and mass media or remain only within the sphere of wishful thinking of the author of this article, will be seen in the future [Lisowska-Magdziarz 2004, pp. 32-37].

Observations, repeating the behaviours of others, acquiring habits and customs, as well as knowledge gained by youths, determine their future actions, behaviours and characteristics as adults. It would be ideal if the example to follow went top down and was naturally bequeathed to the younger generations by schools, universities or mass media, in the form of good conduct models. This would bring a chance for spreading the question asking instrument by extending the competence to further generations, in accordance with the popular saying "As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined". It is of major importance according to Professor M. Szewczyk, the type of medial message is to a great extent one of the bases for perceiving and interpreting the world which surrounds us, and forming the modern society [Szewczyk 2015, p. 203].

However, as long as education is focused on frequent introduction of subsequent reforms and even faster imposing of numerous definitions and knowledge on the overloaded school curricula, instead of teaching how to think by asking questions which stir reflection and discovering the world, the society will not be able to develop the competence of instrumental question asking for the purpose of stimulating independence, creativity, criticism, openness, assuming responsibility by the young generations, in consideration of learning, work, action and private lives, based on dialogue and building good and happy relations. Constructing questions is actually strictly related to the ability of building interrelations by people, engaging in a dialogue, getting more precise information, and –consequently– the ability to listen and hear. This may become increasingly difficult for new generations, brought up in the multimedia world, where listening prevails, and the contents pouring on us are accepted in a passive, unquestioning manner, as contrasted with meeting people in a traditional way and talking to them face to face to be able to observe the reaction of the interlocutor [Wasilewska-Kamińska 2016, p. 12].

The element of mirror neurons consisting in imitation and learning by repeating templates has nothing in common with sitting in front of a TV or computer screen for long hours. Therefore, it is not surprising that the ability of using brilliant rhetoric has been disappearing, and is being replaced by mental short-cuts, or even pictographic script, as the short forms of expression [Sawicki 2011, pp. 27-33]. How, therefore, can we talk about learning how to ask questions which stir the mind to thinking, when seemingly there are ready answers to everything in the mass media?

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