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Integral Practice of School Principal Leadership. The Application of Ken Wilber's Conception

Praktyka integralna liderów oświaty.
Aplikacja koncepcji Kena Wilbera

Streszczenie. Koncepcją integralną, jako pewnym rodzajem „mapy” rzeczywistości, posługujemy się na co dzień do analizy problemów w edukacji zarówno w teorii, jak i w praktyce edukacyjnej. W „duchu integralnym” zaprojektowaliśmy i zrealizowaliśmy doskonalące studia podyplomowe na Wydziale Nauk Pedagogicznych UMK dla dyrektorów szkół, których celem głównym była przemiana ich perspektywy oglądu rzeczywistości i dostarczenia narzędzia do radzenia sobie z nią w życiu osobistym i zawodowym.

Model integralny stara się wiązać osiągnięcia różnych dziedzin wiedzy ludzkiej: psychologii, psychologii ewolucyjnej, fizyki kwantowej, biologii ewolucyjnej, logiki, matematyki, antropologii i wielu innych. Kluczowymi założeniami tego metateoretycznego ujęcia są następujące elementy (stąd od pierwszych liter angielskojęzycznych określeń powstał akronim AQAL): Wszystkie Kwadranty (All Quadrants), Wszystkie Poziomy (All Levels).

Model czterech kwadrantów – ang. *All Quadrants* – jest w założeniach mapą terytorium ludzkiej aktywności. Mapa ta obejmuje nieredukowalne aspekty istnienia: intencjonalny – subiektywny, behawioralny – obiektywny, społeczny – interobiektywny i kulturowy – intersubiektywny.

Koncepcja AQAL obejmuje również różne poziomy świadomości – ang. *All Levels*: „Istoty ludzkie już w momencie narodzin rozpoczynają ewolucję poprzez wielką spiralę świadomości – od etapu archaicznego przez magiczny do mitycznego, dalej do racjonalnego, być może do poziomu integralnego, a nawet do domen transpersonalnych” (C. Graves).

Aby osiągnąć poziom integralny, konieczna jest świadomość cielesno-umysłowa, uruchomienie przytomności i uważności w sobie, dbanie o każdą sferę naszej egzystencji, stworzenie wyższej jakości życia. Zwrócenie uwagi na te kwestie było celem naszego projektu. W toku rozmów i egzaminu wieńczącego projekt udało nam się pokazać słuchaczom różne perspektywy oglądu rzeczywistości, spojrzeć z perspektywy integralnej na swoje życie osobiste i zawodowe.

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja integralna, lider edukacji, rozwój profesjonalnym rozwój osobisty.

Summary. To reach the integral level, one has to obtain body and mind awareness, activate consciousness and internal vigilance, take care of each sphere of his/her existence and create a higher quality of life. Our project, implemented within the frameworks of the postgraduate studies for school principals, was focused on emphasising these issues. During the course of conversations and the final exam, we managed to show the students different perspectives of perceiving the reality and look at our private and professional life from the integral perspective.

Keywords: integral education, leader of education, professional development, personal development.

Integral theory. Integral approach

We use the integral concept, as a kind of “map” of the reality, on everyday basis to analyse the issues of education, from the perspective of both educational theory and practice. This “integral spirit” guided us in planning and executing a continuing professional development programme of the postgraduate studies for school principals, which main objective was changing their perspectives of perceiving reality and providing them with a tool to cope with this reality, both in private and professional life.

The perspective, adopted for analysis and further research, introduces certain order into experience, thinking, and understanding the world in the context of evolution and development which resulted in formulating AQAL. In the research on human and society development, this perspective focuses on the so-called integral psychology which combines behaviourism, psychoanalysis as well as humanistic and transpersonal psychology. Each of these domains investigates an important but incomplete fragment of human experience, which is, generally, limited to one perspective. However, each of those provides new information concerning human development. “[...] we must [...] analyze this transformation in terms of all four quadrants (at least), or we’ll miss the factors actually responsible for it. This transformation is being driven by a new techno-economic base (informational), but it also brings with it a new worldview, with a new mode of self and new intentional and behavioural patterns, set in a new cultural worldspace with new social institutions as anchors. And, as usual, specific individuals may, or may not, live up to these new possibilities” (Wilber, 2007, p. 494).

The integral model attempts to join achievements from different domains of human knowledge, as psychology, evolutionary psychology, quantum physics, evolutionary biology, logic, mathematics, anthropology and many more. The key assumptions of this meta-theoretical perspective are the following elements (first letters of these words form AQUAL acronym):

All Quadrants

All Levels

According to the integral approach, every sentient being has got four basic, simultaneous perspectives – quadrants – which should be taken into consideration to understand its way of perceiving the world better and in a more integrated way. (Fig. 1).

Interior Individual Upper Left (UL)	Exterior Individual Upper Right (UR)
Interior Collective Lower Left (LL)	Exterior Collective Lower Right (BR)

Fig. 1. The model of four quadrants of Ken Wilber (source: own work on the basis of ibidem)

The upper left quadrant represents the interior of the individual, individual awareness, uses the language of “I” when describing the world. It contains an entire spectrum of individual consciousness, from bodily experiences, through mental ideas, to spiritual experiences.

The upper right quadrant shows objective, external equivalents of interior states of consciousness. This quadrant uses the language of “it”. These are objective relations joining scientific facts concerning a single organism together.

The lower left quadrant contains the interior of the collective, that is, values, meanings, worldviews and ethics shared by the group of individuals. This quadrant uses the language of “we”. It is directly connected with mutual understanding, justice and goodness; it is the so-called cultural quadrant.

However, also this quadrant is rooted in exterior, material and institutional forms, that is, the lower right quadrant. The lower right quadrant, similar to the upper right, uses the language of “it”, therefore, in short, one could mention perspectives or spheres as “I”, “we”, “it” (Wilber, 2006, p. 86–88).

The two upper quadrants concern an individual perspective. We speak of looking from the perspective of observing someone’s interior experience, feelings or behaviours and objects without referring them to the context

and system relations. The two lower quadrants concern the collective and system perspective. These complete an individual perception with a cultural and social perspective. The left-hand quadrants represent the interior, subjective perspective. The right-hand quadrants represent the exterior, objective aspect, that is the facts.

Some people claim that the immeasurable simply does not exist. This approach is sometimes called a “flat earth” as it negates the existence of an internal depth (left-hand side). Each of the quadrants plays a different part in perceiving the reality seen from the interior and exterior perspective, individual and collective one.

The model of four quadrants is assumedly a map of human activity. This map covers the irreducible aspects of existence: intentional, subjective (UL), behavioural, objective (UR), social, interobjective (LR) and cultural, intersubjective (LL). This model is not only helpful to change leaders in orienting themselves in the area of their activity, but also it brings with it an important message that none of the aspects can be omitted, and none of the dimensions can be reduced to other dimension. A chair has to have four legs, and none of the legs can be replaced by the other one, to be a chair. If we want to climb up the spiral of development, we have to take care that the four pillars of the spiral are equally developed.

The AQAL concept also contains different levels of consciousness – *All Levels*: “Human beings are born and begin their evolution through the great spiral of consciousness, moving from archaic to magic to mythic to rational to perhaps integral, and from there perhaps into genuinely transpersonal domains” (Wilber, 2006, p. 97, original source: <https://charlessides.wordpress.com/2015/12/27/embracing-reality-the-integral-vision-of-ken-wilber-by-brad-reynolds/>). In other words, human development would pass through magic, mythic, rational and integral-non-perspective levels; or, when assuming a different division – through pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional stages, or; in other words, egocentric, ethnocentric and worldcentric stages. These are different names derived from well-known concepts for the levels of consciousness of a human being and society.

There is a strict correlation between the most significant concepts of human development, and this may indirectly prove their cognitive and practical values. AQAL uses the concept of development by Clare W. Graves – Spiral Dynamics, which concerns the development of an individual, culture, systems. The particular levels were marked with colours. The Spiral Dynamics constitutes a description of the system of values which is the result of in-

teractions between living conditions and human skills of adaptation to life problems. In other words – it is the system of basic codes determining how people think and not what they think (beliefs) or what they do (behaviours). Beliefs and behaviours are manifestations of basic codes:

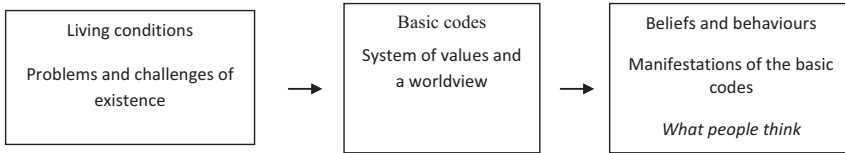


Fig. 2. Environment – codes – beliefs, (Beck, 2016)

This concept distinguishes 8 basic codes and these are described with colours (randomly selected).

Table 1. The concept of development by Graves (Beck, 2016; Cowan)*

Level (colour, age1)*	Basic code	Basic needs
Beige Age: 0–18 months	Survival	Satisfying basic needs: food, water, shelter, procreation; survival at any price
Purple Age: 1–3 years	Bonds	Finding security and protection, protecting a family nest, defending relatives
Red Age: 3–6 years	Egocentrism	Taking up challenges, affirming oneself, living in the present, finding pleasure in action
Blue Age: 7–8 years	Purposefulness	Telling the truth, being true to one's beliefs, being dedicated to the future, self-discipline
Orange Age: 9–14 years	Initiative	"Producing" a good life, creating technologies, being successful, designing progress
Green Age: 15–21 years	Humanism	Renewing the focus on human beings, searching for harmony, pluralism of values, sympathy

* Attributing the level to the age is solely of statistical significance. In particular cases, there might be no relation between age and level of development, for instance, a 20-year-old may stay at red level.

Table 1. Cd.

Level (colour, age1)*	Basic code	Basic needs
Yellow Unspecified age	Integrity	Authenticity finding, structured thinking, all-embracing planning, taking care of the nature
Turquoise Unspecified age	Holism	Holistic perception of the world, agreeing on the details, renewing deep spirituality

According to the researchers who take advantage of the concept of spiral dynamics, an individual as well as social groups use basic codes as universal tools enabling them to understand the reality and act within it. In other words, a basic code, specific for the particular level of development, is a relatively stable (that is, unchangeable in a certain time perspective; still, evolvable) reality management tool (Beck, 2016).

Through the levels pass developmental modules, lines and streams: cognitive, moral, emotional, spiritual, aesthetic, kinaesthetic, psychosexual and other. Individuals may show different levels of development in the particular lines: in one, they can be in the early stage of development, in other, they can be highly developed. Each single developmental line increases successively; higher stages continue and include previous stages. One can skip no stages as they appear in certain order which cannot be changed by environmental conditions or social support. The course of developmental lines or streams is relatively independent. A psychopath and criminal might be at a high level of cognitive development but at a low level of emotional and moral development.

AQAL does not limit itself to three perspectives: quadrants, levels, lines. A number of perspectives is practically unlimited. However, when assuming a perspective of perceiving reality, one should take the principle of integrity into consideration (Błajet & Przyborowska, 2012). This means, for instance, that if we perceive and try to explain the world from the temporal perspective without taking the risk of reductionism, we should consider the past, the present and the future. Quite common is the error of historicism, that is, reducing explanations of the present events to the past conditions without taking “here and now” and future aspirations, pursuits and goals into consideration. Another perspective error might be reducing explanations of an individual’s behaviours with referring to past experiences (psychoanalysis) or external conditions (behaviourism).

An example of integral development practice

The integral perspective has been applied to the practice of private and professional life. “Integral development – all-embracing, complete, sustainable self-improvement, and systematic personal excellence. On one hand, it means working on own consciousness, deepening knowledge, self-awareness and wisdom; on the other hand, it means developing personal power and effectiveness” (Teyesseire, 2016, own translation).

Integral Life Practice (Wilber, 2008) constitutes a proposal of improving own development established by Integral Institute in the USA and known since 2006. It is addressed to a wide range of receivers, including active and busy people who have to cope with everyday challenges of professional and private life. The integral development means a path of self-improvement based on modern and all-embracing understanding of a human being and his/her development. It makes a constant increase in maturity, wisdom, personal power and competence possible; it organises and directs developmental work. ILP divides developmental work into four main modules: physical, mental, spiritual and shadow area. It offers many practical exercises (the so-called practices). The general idea of integral practice is clear: “train your body, mind, soul and spirit in the areas of self, culture and nature” (Meaning: try to train the whole spectrum in the areas of I, we and it*). Choose a basic practice in every category, or in as many categories as practically possible, and do them in parallel. The more categories you choose, the more effective they become (since they are interrelated as aspects of your being). Let your practice be diligent and your integral efforts be coordinated to develop different abilities of your bodymind so that it starts to develop itself in the Void, and this whole journey becomes a foggy recollection of a travel that never took place.

Integral development practice in educating principals: authors’ own proposal

The programme of postgraduate studies: *Principals as Leaders of Education* offered in the Department of Education of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń was based on the assumptions of the AQAL concept. One of their objectives was improving the skill of using the integral approach in profes-

* “I” area – UL quadrant, “we” area – LL quadrant, “it” area – UR and LR quadrants.

sional and private situations. This objective was also lying behind the curriculum and it was the motivation for the lecturers trained for this task.

In the final project, which had to be prepared as one of the conditions of graduation, the students recorded actions within the areas of professional and private life which were significant to them. The basic assumption of the integral approach is the rule saying that an individual develops not so much through exterior events, but through the significance he/she attributes to those events. That was the main assumption of the implemented project, and these were the resulting detailed assumptions:

- Each life event – challenges, successes, failures, wounds, traumas – might be a valuable lesson;
- Each present moment creates new possibilities;
- Practicing during unplanned and unpredictable life events requires vigilance and conscious living – an integral life practice is the opposite of living “on autopilot” and thoughtless repetition of inherited and acquired habits;
- Each realm of life can be a place of practice.

The records were made by the students in the following way: first, they did weekly reports on developmental practices in a form of a table divided into private and professional life. Then, their records were transferred into the Integral Development Matrix: TxDxS. The Matrix includes temporal (T) and developmental perspectives (D) as well as the sphere of impacts (S).

Table 2. Integral development Matrix: TxDxS (source: own work)

Time	Past			Present			Future		
Sphere	"I"	"We"	"It"	"I"	"We"	"It"	"I"	"We"	"It"
Level of development	Sphere	Sphere	Sphere	Sphere	Sphere	Sphere	Sphere	Sphere	Sphere
Beige									
Purple									
Red									
Blue									
Orange									
Green									
Yellow									
Turquoise									

5. Effects of the programme. Selected results

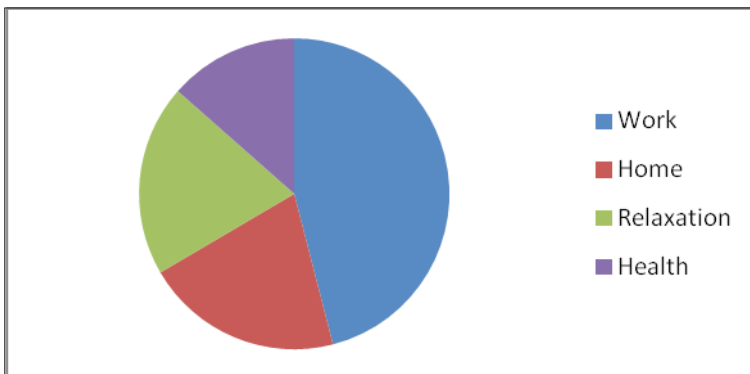
Records made by the students included in their final projects were classified into domains and forms of activity (Table 3). The below table also includes exemplary records of the respondents.

Table 3. Domains and forms of activity of the respondents

Domain	Domain	Domain	Domain
Work	Home	Relaxation	Health
Didactics	House	Active mental	Mental, learning
Administration	Family	Active physical	Physical
Education		Meeting friends	
Outside school			

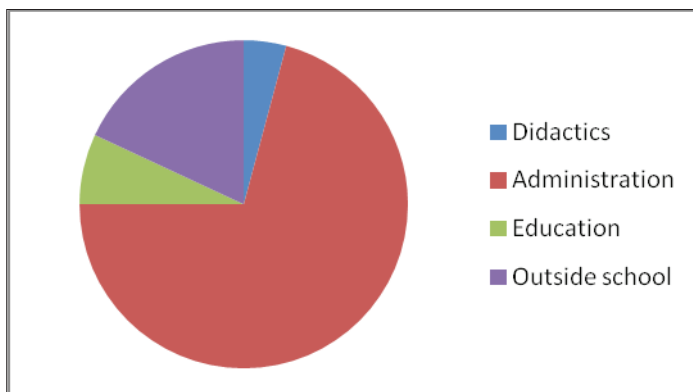
Below, one can find the selected results of the research in percentage distributions.

Graph 1. The percentage of records with regard to the domain of activity (source: own research)

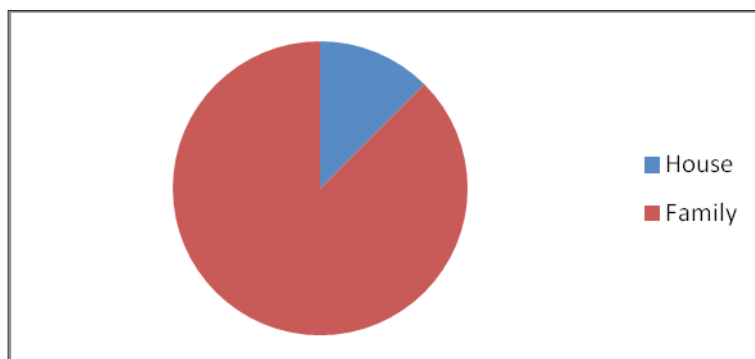


The graph shows that the highest number of records – 46% – concerned work. This was also confirmed by our observations and discussions with the students and lecturers. The principals’ actions oscillated around work and family environments. In some way, leisure time was simultaneously a family time. Relatively little attention was dedicated to health.

Graph 2. The domain of activity: work. The percentage of records with regard to the form of activity (source: own research)



Graph 3. The domain of activity: home. The percentage of records with regard to the domain of activity (source: own research)

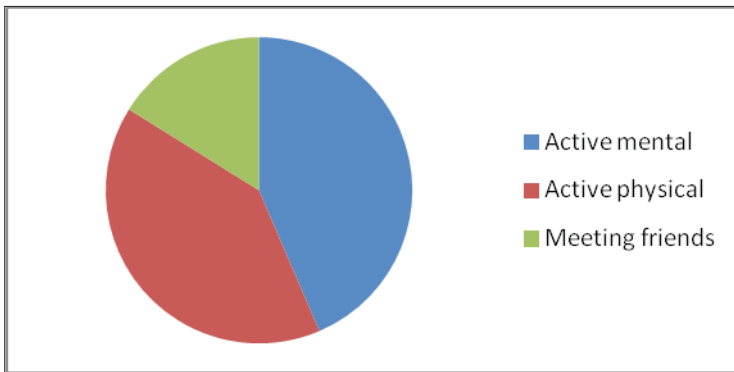


The highest number of records was connected to administration activities – 71%. Very little time was spent on reflection concerning teacher’s – 4% and

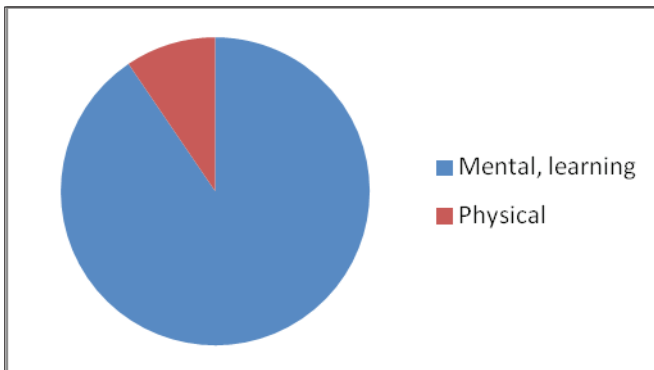
educator's work – 7%. One could say that functioning and development of school principals take place mainly within the systemic quadrant. This is the area of doing the highest number of tasks and coping with the highest number of problems. There is very little time, energy and strength left for analysing own and education process participants' interiors. The analysed principals also admitted it in conversations.

To the respondents, a home was, first of all, a place of family relations – 88%. Apart from the workplace, that was the main place of activity and development of relations.

Graph 4. The domain of activity: leisure. The percentage of records with regard to the domain of activity (source: own research).



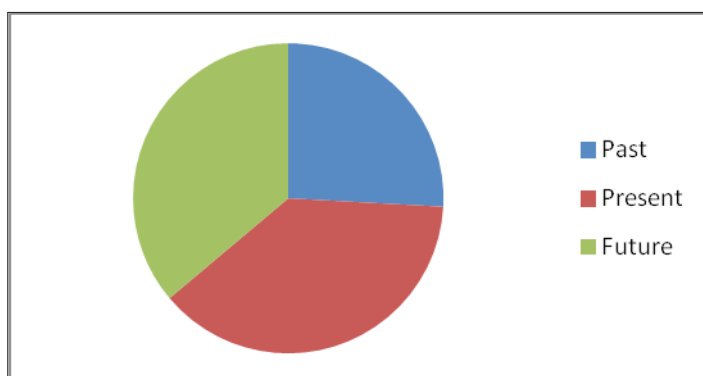
Graph 5. The domain of activity: health. The percentage of records with regard to the domain of activity (source: own research).



The respondents were equally focused on active psychological and physical leisure. They were less focused on meeting friends.

The principals generally associated leisure time with the sphere of psychological health and this the sphere they concentrated most of their efforts on. Results showing that there is no or very little space for physical health (10%) in their lives are alarming. Taking care of physical health was often the subject of conversations and discussions. After analysing the results, the respondents realised that this sphere also requires attention and they declared that they would take specific actions in this scope (e.g. going for a walk, riding a bike, doing yoga practice)

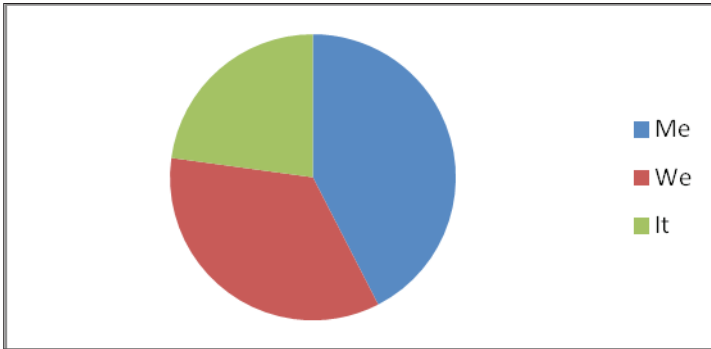
Graph 6. The percentage of records with regard to the time perspective (source: own research)



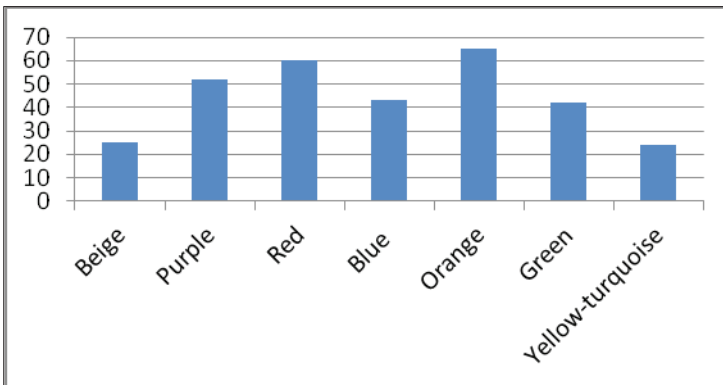
Generally, the results concerning the time perspective showed certain balance. However, the present and the future were two dominating perspectives of functioning. The past constituted a little less strong perspective in the perception and planning of the principals.

I sphere took up the most space in thinking of the respondents. We sphere was equally important, then there was It sphere. This situation was significant to the respondents who perform a function of principal and feel burdened, responsible and the need and ability to form relationships.

Graph 7. The percentage of records with regard to the sphere of activity (source: own research)



Graph 7. A number of records at the particular levels (source: own research)



Generally, the distribution of the levels of development related to the records was similar to a normal distribution. The fewest number of records was at beige and yellow-turquoise level. Quite surprising was the percentage of records at blue level as it is very important in education with regard to its relation to certain norms, rules and procedures. There was a specific leap to orange level dominating here (specific for the age of school education). The domination of this colour was not very surprising since the role of modern education is based on values related to knowledge and the idea of progress. However, a strong position of red egocentric colour, and green, less socio-centric colour, was worrying.

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Tłumaczenie
Pracownia przekładu MONO