Education through Chess in School – Teachers' Training Program

Magdalena Zielińska
Polish Chess Federation
Magdalena Zielińska

- Coordinator of the Project 'Education through Chess in School' of the Polish Chess Federation responsible for the Methodics
- chess teacher in a Warsaw elementary school
- chess instructor (certificate of the Polish Ministry of Sport)
- trainer of chess teachers and instructors
- author of the school textbooks published by the Polish Chess Federation 'Grajmy w szachy' ('Let's play chess')

Contact:
magdazielinska777@gmail.com
m.zielinska@pzszach.org.pl
+48 784 113 301
www.szachywszkole.pl
Goal of the Project of the Polish Chess Federation

The main goal is improvement of mathematic competence as well as general (educational, social and emotional) development of Polish children →

→ by introducing teaching chess as a regular subject to official school agenda in elementary schools throughout the country.
Three pillars of the Project

Polish Chess Federation and its regional affiliates

Elementary school

Local government and its teachers’ centers
Five main rules of the Project

- Chess as obligatory lesson
- Run by teachers trained by the Polish Chess Federation
- Research on the influence of chess on general kids' development
- With grades on school certificates
- Extra chess tournaments for the kids involved
Role of The Polish Chess Federation

- preparing and training teachers to teach chess
- providing schools with free chess equipment
- organization of annual national conference on Chess in School
- providing methodological support for teachers
- providing textbooks in preferential price for kids participating in the Project
- helping schools in organization of chess tournaments and events
- running an informational and promotional website: www.szachywszkole.pl
Advantages of using teachers in the Project

- Teacher knows best how to work with a large group of young children (age 6-7)
- A small child who has just come to school needs a patient and creative teacher more than a professional sport trainer
- Teachers already have developed professional and individual pedagogical skills, competence and experience
- Teachers know how to work with children of diversified abilities, levels of progress, speed of work, problems and difficulties
- Main goal of our Project is education rather than sport
Actions' sequence

Meeting with local government and it's educational authorities (presentation of the Project)
→ close cooperation with local teachers' training center (preparing informational meeting and training)
  → joint meeting with headmasters, school principals and teachers
    → schools applying
      → actual training at the teachers' training centers
        → providing schools with equipment and materials
          → constant contact with teachers and schools (workshops, conferences, methodical consultations etc)

» evaluation
Teachers' Training Program

- The training is especially designed for teachers
- It consists of 3 levels
- Some teachers are being trained also in evaluation
- It's financed mostly by the local government
- The same program is implemented throughout the country
- It's organized in close cooperation with local teachers' training centers
- Constant improvement of teachers' skills and implementation of new methods
- Experimental chess course at Pedagogical Institute in Bialystok University
Three levels of Teachers' Training Program

1<sup>st</sup> level → Basic Teachers' Training Program (72 hours)

2<sup>nd</sup> level → Complementary Workshops for teachers after the Basic Training (8 hours once per semester)
   → annual Conference on Chess in School

3<sup>rd</sup> level → possibility of obtaining the title of Scholastic Chess Instructor for teachers (3 conditions: pedagogical qualifications + Basic Training + min 3<sup>rd</sup> Polish chess category)

*Polish Chess Federation's Annual Prize 'Chess Teacher of the Year'*

**Active teachers are collecting points exchangeable for prizes and extra materials**

*** We're preparing special training program for teachers working with students of special educational needs in cooperation with special education specialists
Three parts of Basic Teachers' Training Program

1. basic and intermediate chess training
   • With a very practical demonstration of methods and methodics used, allowing teachers to built their teachers' work system right away
   • Teachers are getting the students experience
Three parts of Basic Teachers' Training Program

2. methodologies – reflections on the methods they've experienced

• How to teach chess in full school class
• What methods & exercises to use
• How to work with able students and how to support the weaker or disabled ones*
• How to use the tools we give them: school teaching programs, textbooks, computer programs etc.
Three parts of Basic Teachers' Training Program

3. organizational aspects of introducing chess to school:
   • How to organize a school chess tournament
   • How to set up a youth chess club
   • How to work with kids' parents
   • How to promote the idea of 'chess in school'
   • A tournament for teachers
*the disabled ones...

- we don't leave any child behind

- 'Promotion of a Pawn' → special program of teaching mentally disabled, retarded kids chess as a therapeutical feature

- autistic kids, children with FAS and other difficulties and special educational needs in general
Chess for schools (not the other way around...)

- we emphasize the playful side of chess and learning chess
- we encourage teachers to involve as many senses as possible during class, by different kinds of activities
- we are convincing teachers to use chess as an educational tool on other subjects too (as a parallel, as a medium, as an introduction to math, history, culture etc.)
- we put special effort to adapt chess teaching program and methods to the national system of education and to the reality of Polish school
- we pay attention to both the theory (researchers) and the practice (teachers) of Polish education
The Polish Chess Federation prepared special textbooks for the youngest students.
About 600 teachers have been trained so far and they've already been teaching (with good results!). 160 are currently in training, more to follow.
Capital City of Warsaw is a very special place in the Project:
- support of Departament of Education of Warsaw
- 72 of Warsaw schools already participating, next 16 joining soon (88/150)
- 146 teachers trained so far, 100 in training
Capital City of Warsaw is a very special place in the Project:
- support of Departament of Education of Warsaw
- 72 of Warsaw schools already participating, next 16 joining soon (88/150)
- 146 teachers trained so far, 100 in training
In September 2014 the Project has encompassed 12 of Poland's 16 provinces, with almost 300 schools, 600 teachers and about 9000 children.
In June 2014 about 500 children (age 6, 7, 8) took part in the first Final Tournament of the Project.
Children on Chess

• Chess is such a cool game and fun. (Mikołaj, age 6)
• You can learn a lot while playing chess: how to think well, how to concentrate and how to plan things. (Mati, age 10)
• Chess teach us how to win and how to lose. (Zosia, age 8)
• Playing chess stimulates imagination, teaches patience and dealing with stress. (Oskar, age 11)
• Chess is not only learning, it’s great fun too!!! (Zuzia, age 7)
• Game of chess is a real art because it’s not easy to play it. But it’s a good hobby. (Magda, age 9)
• You have to think during chess game. Thinking like that inspires you a lot. (Tosia, age 8)
• Chess teach us to think what can happen later. (Ala, age 6)
• Every game is different, like a new adventure. You have to be careful, so you train your concentration. (Grześ, age 7)
• Chess taught me to respect other kids. Because even when I play with someone weak, I will lose if I make a mistake. (Krzyś, age 6)
• Since I’ve started playing chess I’m calmer and I don’t get so many reprimands. (Maks, age 8)
• I tend to give up when something goes wrong. But in chess we have to fight to the end, so I also try to do that. (Julka, age 7)
• I don’t have to become a grandmaster to love chess. (Anna, age 9)
Magdalena Zielińska

- Coordinator of the Project 'Education through Chess in School' of the Polish Chess Federation responsible for the Methodics
- chess teacher in a Warsaw elementary school
- chess instructor (certificate of the Polish Ministry of Sport)
- trainer of chess teachers and instructors
- author of the school textbooks published by the Polish Chess Federation 'Grajmy w szachy' ('Let's play chess')

Contact:
magdazielinska777@gmail.com
m.zielinska@pzszach.org.pl
+48 784 113 301
www.szachywszkole.pl