

The presented thesis is focused on oral discussion in small groups with supervisory leadership.

There have been many researches in social psychology made during last 50 years concerning discussion in groups of various sizes and under various conditions. Several studies have reported the use of the group discussion situation as an aid to select candidates for positions involving leadership, but just a few, if any of them were situated in school environment.

As a main tool of our research we used an educational computer game Europe 2045 where each student represents a leader of member state of the European Union (EU) and the class therefore represents the EU as a whole. During the game, students were able to present drafts for policy changes to the EU for which they needed to find enough support among other players. This was to be achieved by the diplomatic discussions where each student could present his or her opinion on the subject and try to persuade others to join his or her cause.

Thanks to this we managed to observe groups of 16 to 22 secondary school students in the age of 16-19 years discussing a wide variety of political subjects. Some of the problems discussed were controversial (e.g. legalization of prostitution, smoking prohibition etc.), some quite abstract (e.g. the president of EU, the jurisdiction of EU etc.) but each and every one of them offered many points of view with no objective solution.

We were observing both teachers in the role of discussion moderators and students and made some interesting findings.

During the research, we could describe many specific verbal acts made by teachers to maintain the discussion, concerning both behaviour of participating students and fluency of the discussion itself. We also witnessed numerous ways they used to find the best place to oversee the whole class.