

**Kinga Sekerdej**

Institute of Sociology, Jagiellonian University, Krakow

### **Report on the Teaching Workshops**

I held two teaching workshops in a more formal setting. Otherwise I had many opportunities to meet and discuss with my colleagues our problems and doubts regarding teaching classes.

Together with Maciek Sekerdej we organized a meeting with PhD students of sociology and psychology. We discussed the differences and similarities regarding the courses in both fields. Although we were not familiar with any specific teaching techniques and we did not conclude with coming up with such techniques, nonetheless the encounter of the two perspectives was fruitful.

During the winter semester, I had several occasions to discuss with other PhD students from our department about the problems and challenges we encounter, while leading classes. Most of us are not yet very experienced in that matter. We are usually expected to hold seminars. Therefore, we agree that the most common difficulty for us is effectively encouraging active student participation, which would not be restricted to several individuals, but the whole class. The second major problem, obviously intertwined with the first one, is the question, what to do in order to compel the students to read the required texts. Although our conversations were by no means conclusive, we raised some ideas that might be helpful in meeting these challenges. Firstly, we decided that from time to time we can prepare short texts or their fragments for the students to read during the class, in a complimentary manner, i.e. each group gets a piece to read, but in order to get the complex information, they must cooperate among themselves. Secondly, we thought of preparing the reading material in such a way that the scheme of lecturer-opponent could be implemented, either between persons, or groups.

We analysed the influence of group dynamics (i.e. number of students, their major subject of studies, gender percentage, age etc.) on the class performance, possibilities of inspiring critical thinking or engaging the whole group in the topic of the class. The issues of those discussions were spurred from our direct experience, usually when we met after our classes. Furthermore, the ReSET research trip was very instructive, as, spending several days with the

students, I got to know in an informal settings their expectations, complaints, comments and suggestions regarding the academic training they receive at our university.