

Sebastian Wacięga

PhD, Consultant and facilitator of the process of strategic planning for non-profit organizations in Małopolska Institute of Culture in Krakow (MIK)

PRACTICAL USE OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HISTORY FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING. THE SKETCH OF THE METHOD

Keywords:

entrepreneurship, learning, history, method, tools, game, simulation, facilitator, teacher, trainer, heritage, knowledge management, competence, heritage interpretation, history interpretation, key competences, lifelong learning

Summary

The article presents the sketch of the method of economic education with use of knowledge about history. History based entrepreneurial learning is a method for facilitators of learning process that could be described in three steps.

The first step is connected with knowledge about history (*know-what* knowledge and *know-why* knowledge) and means gaining knowledge about selected historical period or phenomenon.

The second step reveals that this knowledge can be utilized for the purpose of entrepreneurial learning by interpretation of that knowledge into a story (*know-how knowledge*) for participants of the entrepreneurial learning process (selection of content and aspects to develop, thematisation in accordance with educational purpose selected by facilitator). In the third step facilitator of learning process utilizes interpreted knowledge about history as source for constructing learning tools (*know-how knowledge*) that are capable to initiate entrepreneurial learning activities for individuals or groups (questions, workshops scenarios, games, cooperative projects, etc.).

Introduction

The knowledge management embraces the issue of historic knowledge as a source for entrepreneurial learning. The knowledge about history can be utilized as a source of inspirations for teachers and adult trainers providing entrepreneurship education. It has potential for catalyzing the process of

history based entrepreneurial learning. This process is a practice of knowledge management that transforms and develops knowledge about history into learning tools and actions inspired by selected and interpreted history.

The preparation of that learning actions could be described in three steps. The first step, the starting point for educator (facilitator of the learning process) is gaining objective knowledge about selected period or phenomenon in history. In the second step the knowledge needs to be interpreted – thematised and described in language available for participants of the entrepreneurial learning process. The third step of the preparing the process of history based entrepreneurial learning is selecting or constructing learning tools for individuals or groups (questions, workshops scenarios, cooperative projects, games, *etc.*). These steps will be illustrated by the example of educational initiative conducted in Poland by the Malopolska Institute of Culture from 2007 called “Chłopska Szkoła Biznesu” (*Peasant Business School*) which became the national winner in the contest of European Commission called European Enterprise Promotion Awards 2014 in the category of “Promoting the entrepreneurial spirit”.

Step number one – history as a source of economic education

History according to Bill Nasson is “the study of the past in order to understand the meaning and dynamics of the relationship between cause and effect in the overall development of human societies. (...) The claim of history is (...) to interpret, to handle a rich variety of sources in order to draw out their general relevance or to reveal their general significance for human understanding of why and how change occurs”. That means that it involves critical thinking ability which is also needed to understand interrelations and influences in contemporary society and economy. History has not only autotelic value but also has utilitarian dimension. The knowledge about history “equips” learner with the ability of critical thinking. “The usefulness of history, therefore, is not only that it constantly offers new ways of viewing and understanding the grip of the past: it is also a means of generating the confidence about, and absorption of, critical knowledge, to produce a changing consciousness”¹. History allows to analyze interrelations between facts, figures, persons and recognizes causal relations between the reasons and results. It also engages the creativity to think about different possible scenarios of the actions. The history can be perceived as a system of thinking with “interpretative nature” which collects, orders and analyzes data as evidence of the passed facts and “create historical narratives”².

¹ B. Nasson, *History. The meaning and the role of history in human development*, [in:] *Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS)*, UNESCO-EOLSS, Paris 2001, www.eolss.net/sample-chapters/c04/e6-22-00-00.pdf, [21.06.2015].

² *Introduction to Standards in Historical Thinking*, University of California-Los Angeles. National Center for History in the Schools, <http://www.nchs.ucla.edu/history-standards/historical-thinking-standards>, [28.06.2015].

Especially, the historical analysis and interpretation of the history³:

- develops the skills of analyze cause-and-effect relationships which embraces “multiple causation including:
 - the importance of the individual in history;
 - the influence of ideas, human interests, and beliefs; and
 - the role of chance, the accidental and the irrational”;
- develops the attitude that allow to “hold interpretations of history as tentative, subject to changes as new information is uncovered, new voices heard, and new interpretations broached”.

The analytical aspect of history is not only one that makes it helpful in facilitating entrepreneurial learning process. The second aspect is narrative aspect of history which involves analytical skills as well as creativity and attitude of openness to different possibilities. This open-mindedness for different options is close to entrepreneurial sensitivity for opportunities which are points of reference for thinking and acting according to J.A. Timmons definition of entrepreneurship⁴.

The additional value that makes the history attractive and convenient source of inspirations for economic education is its narrative potential. In brief: **history is a story**. It means that:

- it can be constructed as a story in accordance with classical Aristotle’s principles – with its aim and plot, composed episodes and characters,
- a teller of the story (facilitator of entrepreneurial learning process) can select the figures and aspects of the history that would be presented,
- a story itself triggers imagination, empathy and curiosity.

This last feature of history reveals the connection between the past and the contemporaneity:

- it allows to see the present as a consequence of the past events and actions,
- it allows to reflect upon the present with the use of the knowledge about the past as an inspiration for better understanding of contemporary phenomena.

Step two – interpretation of the history for the purposes of entrepreneurial learning

The history based on entrepreneurial learning process uses triple: analytical, narrative and creative potential of history. These three aspects make the historical knowledge a particularly attractive source of teaching economics. The

³ *Historical Analysis and Interpretation*, University of California-Los Angeles. National Center for History in the Schools, <http://www.nchs.ucla.edu/history-standards/historical-thinking-standards/3.-historical-analysis-and-interpretation>, [28.06.2015].

⁴ A. Kurczewska, *Przedsiębiorczość*, PWE, Warszawa 2013, p. 87.

problem of interpretation is connected with fundamental choice of facilitator: what or which aspects should be selected from history to illustrate or to reflect upon. For example in order to explain the phenomenon of speculative bulbs excellent exemplary would be Dutch Tulip Bulb Market Bubble – historical case of “tulip madness” (Dutch. *Tulpenwoede*) in XVII century when people in Holland began to perceive tulip bulbs as the best investment location. During several months of 1637 the price of some tulip skyrocketed about 20 times. The prices of some of bulbs were comparable to the values of luxury houses in Amsterdam like famous “Semper Augustus”, which cost merely 1.000 guilders in 1620’s and 5.500 guilders per bulb in 1637 just before the market collapse. Many of people sold their houses or land to acquire rare tulip bulbs which became not only investment but also signs of social status. The story of *Tulpenwoede* finished with catastrophic fall of the prices and stores overloaded with goods whose prices become equal to onion bulbs. Many investors were hit by the wave of bankruptcies which were not held back by “the state honor contracts at 10% of the face value”⁵.

This history could be used to reflect upon the speculation crisis, its mechanisms, reasons and possible consequences. The history of *Tulpenwoede* can be thematised with a stress on different aspects, for example:

- the changes in supply and demand during speculation crises,
- the psychology of the speculation market (were the investors rational or irrational?),
- the role of a state in the free market – possibilities, tools and conditions of a possible intervention of the state and its consequences.

The choice of perspective and historical details to develop and expose for the facilitating learning process are related to the educational purpose of the facilitator (school teacher or adult trainer). After selection of the content, next important step is the chosen way of interpreting the knowledge. According to Freeman Tilden, pioneer of interpretation, interpreting heritage is telling the story. It is an art of choosing the topic, developing it and presenting it to the receiver. It makes the data “alive”, sharing the knowledge, but first of all catching the interest of audience and giving them inspirations and personal involvement into the story. One of the principles of successful interpretation is “provoking” – inspiring to self-reliant critical thinking and its opposite: to “instructing” (teaching or transmitting the information)⁶.

⁵ A. Beattie, *Market Crashes: The Tulip and Bulb Craze*, [in:] *Investopedia*, www.investopedia.com/features/crashes/crashes2.asp, [21.06.2015].

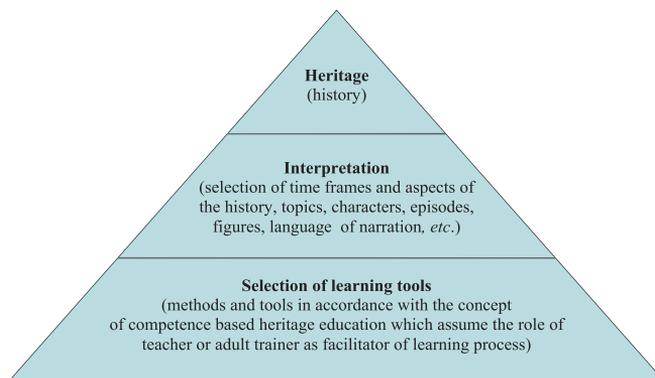
⁶ F. Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, The University of North Carolina 2008.

Step three – the creation of tools for entrepreneurial learning process

Teaching entrepreneurship means developing entrepreneurial competence of the learner. That is why tools of the history-based entrepreneurial learning should correspond with the concept of competence-based learning (embracing the component of knowledge, skills and attitude). The common feature of possible methods and tools of the history-based entrepreneurial learning is that the content they use stems from history which became interpreted for the purposes of learning process. There are many possible tools that meet this condition:

- Tools used in “approaches of competence driven heritage education” like storyline approach, action learning, problem-based learning, co-operative learning and guided discovery⁷;
- Case studies analysis with “actualization questions” (for example: *where can you see similar behaviors of investors like during “tulip madness” in XVII century?, how can you avoid the loss in your investment nowadays?*);
- Workshops with role-playing (getting into shoes of a historical figure and making decisions in this role; exemplary task: *if you had been Amsterdam inhabitant in XVII century how would you have located your money?*);
- Simulation games for individuals and groups.

Figure 1. History based entrepreneurial learning in three steps – tentative model



Source: own elaboration.

Among many systems of knowledge categorization there is one which divides knowledge into four categories⁸:

- *know-what* – knowledge about “facts” that are very close to information,

⁷ *Acquiring Key Competences through Heritage Education*, (eds.) J.V. Lakerveld, I. Gusen, A. Biesen 2011, http://the-aqueduct.eu/download/Aqueduct-Manual_EN.pdf, [21.06.2015].

⁸ *Zarządzanie wiedzą w społeczeństwie uczącym się*, Centre For Educational Research and Innovation, OECD, Warszawa 2000, p. 13-14.

- *know-why*, refers to the recognition of laws, principles of nature and causal relations,
- *know-how*, refers to ability, capacity of making something,
- *know-who* – knowledge about who disposes of indispensable knowledge.

In the sketched model the knowledge management proceeds from the *know-what* and *know-why* knowledge (knowledge about historical facts and causal relations between them) to the *know-how* knowledge (the knowledge how to interpret, how to apply it into the entrepreneurial learning process). The source of that knowledge (*know-who*) lies in works of historians and can be used (interpreted) by *know-how* operators – facilitators of history based on entrepreneurial learning.

The “peasant business school” (2007–2014) – history based entrepreneurial learning

What is “Peasant Business School” (Chłopska Szkoła Biznesu)?

Educational initiative composed of projects linking historical and economic education that was initiated in 2007 by the Malopolska Institute of Culture (MIK) in Kraków in cooperation with the local Friends of Andrychów Society (Towarzystwo Miłośników Andrychowa). In the years 2007–2014 ca. 30.000 participants took part in the projects financed by the Polish History Museum, National Bank of Poland and the Municipality of Andrychów, among them school teachers and pupils and about 100 institutional partners (state and regional centres for teachers development, labor market institutions, cultural institution and nongovernmental organizations). In 2014 the Peasant Business School became the national winner in the European Commission contest European Enterprise Promotion Awards 2014 in the category of “Promoting the entrepreneurial spirit”, as well as award of the Minister of Economy of the Republic of Poland in 2014⁹.

First step – gaining knowledge about local history

The first challenge in 2007 was collecting of data about the local history of Andrychów for the purpose of preparation of a new educational offer in the form of an attractive event in local museum (Izba Regionalna Ziemi Andrychowskiej)¹⁰. The source of knowledge were historians’ books, local

⁹ *The Peasant Business School Recommendations*, <http://pbs.mik.krakow.pl/recommendations/>, [28.06.2015].

¹⁰ Izba Regionalna Ziemi Andrychowskiej, <http://tma-andrychow.blogspot.com/p/izba-regionalna.html>, [28.06.2015].

documents, museum collection and the knowledge of the museum's staff. The following questions were the key to this inquiry:

- which period of the history of the town was the most attractive and inspiring for the purpose of learning process (and chosen tool of that process: workshops for school groups in the local museum)?
- which topics taken from the local history would be told to the visitors and participants of the workshops?
- which characters and important episodes from the history should be used?

The synthetic answer based on the collected materials was that the most inspiring history for the event and educational activities would be the story of the bloom of entrepreneurship in the poor village of Andrychów and its neighboring villages (Roczyny, Inwałd, Sułkowiec, Targanice, Wieprz, and Zagórnik) in the 18th century. Their success was based on producing and exporting flax linens which were sold by specialized traders called Itinerant Drapers (Drelicharze). The entrepreneurial villagers set up trade partnerships and exported 80% of their production abroad, to distant cities like Barcelona, Hamburg, Marseilles, Istanbul and Moscow. After several decades of economic growth Andrychów received town privileges from the Polish king Stanisław August Poniatowski in 1767¹¹.

Figure 2. Male and female itinerant drapers from Andrychow painted by Kajetan W. Kielisiński



Source: archive of the Society of Andrychow Enthusiasts: A. Błachowski, *Ubiór i krajobraz kulturowy Polski i Ukrainy Zachodniej w ikonografii J. Głogowskiego i K.W. Kielisińskiego*, Toruń 2011.

¹¹ A. Zwoliński, *Miasto Ankwiczków. Z dziejów Andrychowa*, Aneks nr 1 Królewski przywilej lokacyjny, Kraków 1993, p. 164.

The analysis based on historical literature revealed how this growth was possible and what caused the economic fall in the 19th century.

Second step – interpretation of the local socio-economic history

The interpretation of the history was focused on the local entrepreneurs who participated in production or trading processes in the period of a flourishing linen trade. The story embraced details about linen production and knowledge about organization and management of local village industry before the Industrial Revolution. The story was presented in the form of thematic paths in the local museum: “Peasant Business School” that explained the source of success and fall of local economy between XVIII and XIX century. Second path was called “The strength in cluster. What did the cooperation of craftsmen look like in Andrychów?”¹². The interpretation of that history embraced also the suggestions what are the common sources of the successful entrepreneurship in presented history and nowadays (unique idea, freedom, know-how, quality, cooperation, investment, trust – social capital)¹³.

Third step – constructing of learning tools

Peasant Business School – workshops for schools in museum (2007–2009)

The first tool constructed on the need of learning process were workshops for school groups which linked historical and economic education. The pupils got familiar with the story of business success of XVIII-century entrepreneurs from Andrychów. Their purpose during workshop was to construct business plan of a ancient weavers and tradesmen. The pupils received only part of needed knowledge about business organization and were supposed to construct their own simple business plans. The staff of the museum (Maria Pytel-Skrzypiec, Maria Przybyłowicz) in cooperation with MIK trainers (Piotr Idziak, Sebastian Wacięga) in project called “Muzeobranie” (2007–2009) acted as facilitators helping to implement business thinking inspired by local history. The workshops, which were experimental at first, became a constant element of the educational activities in local museum.

¹² *Strength in unity. What did the cooperation of craftsmen look like in Andrychow*, <http://csb.mik.krakow.pl/files/tablice-w-gronie-2013.pdf>, [28.06.2015].

¹³ *Peasant Business School. Andrychów, or to understand the contemporary*, http://pbs.mik.krakow.pl/files/Peasant_Business_School_ANG_A4.pdf, [25.06.2014].

Peasant Business School – activities with historical-economic game (2010–2014)

On the basis of experiences gained in the Andrychow museum the trainers from Małopolska Institute of Culture designed the game – a simple simulation of the free market operation, inspired by the history of XVIII-century entrepreneurship¹⁴. Players take on the roles of bakers, blacksmiths or weavers who trade with each other at local fairs and organize expeditions to cities of Europe. During 45 minutes of play, the participants develop trade skills and learn how to plan and cooperate in business. The game has been also used as a tool for group integration or for simulation to demonstrate in practice the economic phenomena:

- microeconomic (operations of a company, revenue, cost, profit, risk),
- macroeconomic (supply, demand, inflation, monopoly, duopoly).

All these elements are introduced in practice – the players learn in action and after the game they can reflect upon the changing market conditions and their decisions made during the game. The board game designed for groups of 12–30 people is conducted by a moderator (school teacher, museum educator, adult trainer, coach). This person can facilitate the process of entrepreneurial learning – aid to recognize and understand market phenomena¹⁵. The rules of the game are flexible and a facilitator can modify them depending on the educational purpose (for example to evoke inflation on the market). The players act as independent entrepreneurs or as two-member partnerships (microeconomic dimension) in real time (the player acts simultaneously – there are no rounds in the game), and the sum of their decisions affects the macroeconomic situation in the market, for example the prices of bread, wagons and linen. The game was used at least in three ways:

- as an entrepreneurial learning tool for lessons for teenagers or workshops for adults (educators, career advisors, history and entrepreneurship teachers),
- as a learning tool during interschool tournaments which involved thousands of pupils and hundreds of teachers in several regions of Poland who took part in competitions (Andrychów, Ropczyce, Goleniów, Toruń)¹⁶,

¹⁴ *Chłopska Szkoła Biznesu*, [in:] „Board Game Geek”, <https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/85216/chlopska-szkola-biznesu>, [25.06.2015].

¹⁵ The prototype of the Peasant Business School was created in 2009 and it was honored with the patronage of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009, *The Peasant Business School*, www.create2009.europa.eu/projects/participating_countries/polska_poland.html, [30.06.2014].

¹⁶ Tournaments of the Peasant Business School for the Cup of the Itinerant Draper from Andrychów organized by the Society of Andrychow Enthusiasts, Podkarpacie Tournaments of the Peasant Business School named after Rev. Jan Zwierz from Ropczyce, as well as tournaments organized by 3rd Secondary School in Toruń, Local Action Group in Goleniów and social economy tournaments conducted periodically by The Regional Centre of Social Policy in Krakow, <http://pbs.mik.krakow.pl/category/turnieje/>, [25.06.2015].

- as a tool for local integration and inspiration for grassroots initiatives for nearly 100 local agents in Poland (local cultural institutions, schools, NGOs) which organized different events in cooperation with local partners¹⁷. This form of activity turned out unexpectedly to be the tool for catalyzing local social capital and strengthening “the spirit of entrepreneurship”.

Conclusions

The key issue for successful entrepreneurial learning is preparation of the facilitator (school teacher or adult trainer). The preparation embraces interpretation of the selected history for the educational purpose and in accordance with learner’s specificity (absorptivity, concentrations ability, self-reliance, *etc.*) as well as with competence based education concept which treats entrepreneurship as one of the key competences for lifelong learning. According to recommendation of European Parliament and the Council of the European Union from 2006, key competence called “sense of initiative and entrepreneurship refers to an individual’s ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. (...) An entrepreneurial attitude is characterized by initiative, pro-activity, independence and innovation in personal and social life, as much as at work. It also includes motivation and determination to meet objectives, whether personal goals, or aims held in common with others, including at work”¹⁸.

Another challenge for the entrepreneurship facilitator is also awareness of his or her role in the process of entrepreneurial learning. This is the role of facilitator which helps learners to discover and to construct their own knowledge on the basis of experience, questions and interpreted history given by facilitator.

“History based entrepreneurial learning” is a practice and process of knowledge management understood as “the concept under which information is turned into actionable knowledge and made available effortlessly in a usable form to the people who can apply it”¹⁹. It can be divided into three steps. The first step is connected with **knowledge about history** (*know-what* knowledge and *know-why* knowledge). The second step reveals that this knowledge can be utilized for the purpose of entrepreneurial learning by **interpretation of the history into a story** (*know-how* knowledge). The effective interpretation of the history works in the third step as a source for **constructing learning tools** that are capable to initiate entrepreneurial learning activities.

¹⁷ Peasant Business School. Cooperation, <http://pbs.mik.krakow.pl/cooperation/>, [25.05.2015].

¹⁸ Recommendation of European Parliament And Of The Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC), <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32006H0962>, [25.05.2015].

¹⁹ K. Dalkir, *Knowledge management in the theory and practice*, McGill University, Burlington-Oxford 2005, p. 5.

Literature:

1. *Acquiring Key Kompetences through Heritage Education*, (eds.) I. Gusen, J.V. Lakerveld, A. Biesen 2011, http://the-aqueduct.eu/download/Aqueduct-Manual_EN.pdf, [21.06.2015].
2. Beattie A., *Market Crashes: The Tulip and Bulb Craze*, [in:] *Investopedia*, www.investopedia.com/features/crashes/crashes2.asp, [21.06.2015].
3. Błachowski A., *Ubiór i krajobraz kulturowy Polski i Ukrainy Zachodniej w ikonografii J. Głogowskiego i K.W. Kielisińskiego*, Muzeum Etnograficzne w Toruniu, Toruń 2011.
4. Dalkir K., *Knowledge management in the theory and practice*, McGill University, Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, Burlington-Oxford 2005.
5. *Dutch Tulip Bulb Market Bubble*, [in:] *Investopedia* www.investopedia.com/terms/d/dutch_tulip_bulb_market_bubble.asp, [21.06.2015].
6. *Economic history. Was tulipmania irrational?* [in:] *The Economist*, London, Oct 4th 2013, www.economist.com/blogs/freeexchange/2013/10/economic-history, [21.06.2015].
7. *Historical Analysis and Interpretation*, University of California-Los Angeles, National Center for History in the Schools, <http://www.nchs.ucla.edu/history-standards/historical-thinking-standards/3.-historical-analysis-and-interpretation>, [28.06.2015].
8. Idziak P., Wacięga S., *Peasant Business School. Inspirations for Teachers*, MIK, Kraków 2014, http://pbs.mik.krakow.pl/files/PBS_Inspirations_2014.pdf, [25.06.2015].
9. *Introduction to Standards in Historical Thinking*, University of California-Los Angeles. National Center for History in the Schools, <http://www.nchs.ucla.edu/history-standards/historical-thinking-standards>, [28.06.2015].
10. Kurczewska A., *Przedsiębiorczość*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa 2013.
11. Nasson B., *History. The meaning and the role of history in human development*, [in:] *Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS)*, Paris 2001, www.eolss.net/sample-chapters/c04/e6-22-00-00.pdf, [21.06.2015].
12. Nodine T.R., Petrides L.A., *Knowledge Management in Education: Defining the landscape*, The Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education, Half Moon Bay, March 2003, <http://iskme.path.net/kmeducation.pdf>, [21.06.2015].
13. *Peasant Business School. Andrychów, or to understand the contemporary*, http://pbs.mik.krakow.pl/files/Peasant_Business_School_ANG_A4.pdf, [25.06.2014].
14. *Peasant Business School. Cooperation*, <http://pbs.mik.krakow.pl/cooperation/>, [25.05.2015].
15. *Peasant Business School. Tournaments*, <http://pbs.mik.krakow.pl/category/turnieje/>, [25.06.2015].
16. Recommendation of European Parliament And Of The Council of 18

- December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC), <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32006H0962>, [25.05.2015].
17. Rusin D., Wacęga S., *Edukacja ekonomiczna w oparciu o historię. Przypadek Andrychowa* (2007–2014), „Kwartalnik edukacyjny”, nr 4 (79)/2014, <http://pbs.mik.krakow.pl/downloadable-materials/>, [25.05.2015].
 18. *Strength in unity. What did the cooperation of craftsmen look like in Andrychow?*, <http://csb.mik.krakow.pl/files/tablice-w-gronie-2013.pdf>, [25.06.2014].
 19. *The patronage of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009, The Peasant Business School*, www.create2009.europa.eu/projects/participating_countries/polska_poland.html, [30.06.2014].
 20. *The Peasant Business School Recommendations*, <http://pbs.mik.krakow.pl/recommendations/>, [28.06.2015].
 21. Tilden F., *Interpreting Our Heritage*, The University of North Carolina 2008.
 22. *Zarządzanie wiedzą w społeczeństwie uczącym się*, Centre For Educational Research and Innovation, OECD, Warszawa 2000.
 23. Zwoliński A., *Miasto Ankwiczów. Z dziejów Andrychowa*, Aneks nr 1 Królewski przywilej lokacyjny, Kraków 1993.