

ESTONIAN TEACHERS' DAY – OCTOBER 5. FROM 1960S TO NOWADAYS

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*School time and spring
are still beautiful.*

*Spring will come again,
school time never will.*

(lines of poetry in the album under the picture)

40 years since graduation of the eighth grade at Elva Secondary School.

Class teacher Helga Hinno

11 June 1981

Abstract: Teachers' Day is celebrated globally on various days of the year. The official celebration began either in 1965 or earlier. UNESCO established World Teachers' Day in 1994 to focus on the work and achievements of

teachers. Teachers' Day has been celebrated at schools in Estonia since the 1960s. At that time, the best students became teachers, and lessons were given primarily to younger classes and at basic school. The newer rules in the 1990s became much more exciting, according to which teachers really changed roles with students (embodied as students), disguised themselves, and chose a certain style. Behavioural patterns and norms also become free. Teachers live out by teasing: scattering paper planes, disturbing lessons, talking and being naughty, and not bothering to answer. But students may also be shown what their teachers are like outside school: talented musicians, performers, experimenters, and so on. At the end of the day, they can return to the original rules: a coffee table made by students and flowers for teachers; a visit from the rural municipality, city government, or education department; and congratulations. In addition, and above all, this is a day when teachers are excited because they are just great. We see many rapid role changes, changes in norms, parody and ridicule, black humor along with the implementation of various scripts.

Keywords: celebrations, Estonia, role play, student calendar, Teachers' Day

Introduction

The photo caption commemorates an elementary school teacher about whom her students spoke during their studies at Elva Secondary School in the 1970s and even afterwards. Relationships between teachers and students are an intriguing question. It is known that the teacher's role in supporting and encouraging students is important.

This article examines Estonian data, with comparisons made only in certain cases. In 2020, the population of Estonia was estimated at 1,326,535 million people, with 68% of the population living in urban areas. The Estonian language is spoken by roughly 70% of the population, with approximately 28% of the population being Russian speakers. Historically, most of the Russian-speaking population has been settled in the capital, Tallinn, or the north-eastern region of the country (Ida-Viru County) (Population Census 2021). In Estonia, most children study at publicly funded free schools. A minority of students attends private schools, some of which have a distinct pedagogical orientation, such as Waldorf schools¹ and some schools that follow the heritage of Johannes Käis.² There are also a few Catholic, Lutheran, and other religious schools, the traditions of which began in the 1990s or which have been established in the last

few years. Public schools often provide specialised instruction in a particular field (natural sciences, mathematics or physics, language study, music). Depending on the school, intensive study may begin in the first grade, but very frequently, this starts at the beginning of high school; this tradition dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century.

The majority of schools operate fully in Estonian, although in Ida-Viru County and Tallinn, including the areas of former military industries, there are also so-called language immersion schools (where the majority of instruction is in Estonian and the minority in Russian), as well as Russian-language elementary schools and secondary schools. Different school types and language environments have been highlighted since, after the Second World War, Estonian and Russian schools studied according to different educational programmes, and the school programme has not been harmonised to this day. In connection with the Russo-Ukrainian War (2022) and the large number of refugees, the first Ukrainian-language schools have been established.

In conclusion, we have different models for communication between teachers and students: open and democratic and schools that follow a more conservative distribution of roles. Many holidays have been introduced into schools by the media and the teaching staff. We investigate what kind of structure Teachers' Day has and how customs have changed over time. How are the carnivalesque and folkloresque effects integrated into Teachers' Day? The tradition of using robust and angry theatrical techniques has become widespread in schools. Is it typical on Teachers' Day?

Data and methodology

Our data was gathered in the context of a multi-method ethnography. The goal of establishing a grand collection of children's lore, attempted in 1992, was to get as diverse an overview of children's lore and customs as possible at that time and to find the causes, directions, and areas of the rapid change (about the results, see Kõiva 1995; Hiimäe 2002; Kalmre 1995). It implied interviewing students. In order to get a longitudinal overview, the survey was repeated in 2007 (cf. the survey by Voolaid 2007; Babič & Voolaid 2022) and later in 2018, encompassing students from the fourth to twelfth grades.³ In 2018, the process of collecting the school and children's lore took place mostly by using

online forms, and only a few schools and a few students sent written answers on paper. The selection of schools also changed to a certain extent: extensive urbanisation was considered, and therefore more schools in Tallinn and Tartu were included in the pool; some rural schools had been closed down or converted from secondary to basic schools.

In 2007, the respective figures were 2,800 students and 15,000 pages (Voolaid 2007). Of those students who responded in 2007, approximately 400 mentioned Teachers' Day. The students gave free form written responses to the thematic block of the calendar.

In 2018, approximately 3,700 students answered mostly online (Hiimäe 2018, cf. statistics and details in Kõiva & Muhi 2020), with 60 of them mentioning Teachers' Day. The majority of responses indicated that it was a fun experience, without going into detail.

In order to obtain an expert evaluation, we also asked grown-ups to recall how Teachers' Day was observed (diffused thematic random questioning), and we chose expert teacher Aili Kiin from Viljandi Gymnasium (an Estonian philologist and literature teacher). We also draw upon articles published in the media (mainly interviews with teachers; data was saved to EFITA).

Inclusion and ecological systems theory

Taking the paradigms of positive psychology and positive education as the point of departure (cf. Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, 1986), we have reason to examine Teachers' Day more closely, not in terms of official recognition ceremonies and campaigns to select the best colleague, but in terms of the concept of inclusion as an important marker of democracy in the school and the question of mutual trust.

Behavioural inclusion invites students to participate in activities during or after school, and emotional inclusion affects students' feelings about teachers and classmates, study, and the school in general. On this basis, Teachers' Day may play a socially significant role that helps the public understand other people and provide recognition; this is consistent with a democratic orientation.

School makes up a significant part of the day for children, teenagers, and young adults (aged 11–19). Apart from study, school encompasses broader areas in which skills are developed, accomplished through activities and workshops

after the school day is over. This means that the student is actively involved with the school through activities like, for example, a choir, an art club, or some other hobby. Those students who are connected to the process of education through these various activities feel emotionally and cognitively connected to their schools (Gorski & Parekh 2020).

It is this connection that imparts skills and attitudes deemed valuable by both students and teachers as they acquire the content of the school's curriculum. The theories of positive psychology reflect its relationship with humanists and philosophers alike, who shared a focus on positive experiences and a life well lived. The scientific study of well-being continues to progress and increasingly broadens its scope of attention to include not only individual character and well-being but also the welfare of others and communities (cf. Waters 2011; 2021; Løhre & Lydersen & Vatten 2010). In Estonian pedagogics, a series of studies on teachers' satisfaction with their work, students, and colleagues have been completed. The students' satisfaction and their ability to assess their own and their family's economic, social, and health situations has been studied over the last ten years. This is also the reason why it is easier to find parallel studies outside of Estonia and Europe. For example, approximately 26,000 students from fourth to twelfth grades in 114 schools participated in research on schools in the USA in 2015. According to the findings, a sense of emotional and physical connection to the school is an important factor in shaping a positive school atmosphere (NASP 2018; for earlier analyses, see Dupper 2010; O'Brien & Blue 2017).

Dagmar Kutsar, a social scientist and researcher on children's well-being and poverty, emphasises that "the 2015 World Happiness Report (Layard and Hagell 2015) included for the first time a separate chapter on children's well-being in its publication. It provides examples of implementing measures in the society that support child well-being. By focusing on children's well-being at school, the idea of schools for well-being is developed, which fits well with the paradigms of positive psychology and positive education (e.g. Noble & McGrath 2015; White 2016)" (Kutsar & Raid & Soo 2018: 21; cf. Soo & Kutsar 2022).

One of the most salient questions in pedagogical theory and practice is discipline, which has been seen as equally important as educational content. To a large extent, students' behaviour at school depends on many factors (cf. Bronfenbrenner 1986), including family, friends, group, media, social influences, and time.

At the same time, views on children, discipline, and children's role in the education process are quite different, not so free-minded and tolerant. According to the traditional view, to discipline children is necessary through adult control and influence, so that children develop self-control. According to the progressive view, children are good by nature, so no action should be taken to discipline them; they will learn self-control on their own, through their development and experience (Cvetkova Dimov & Atanasoska & Andonovska Trajkovska 2019). Indiscipline at school is mainly defined as action from the students' side.⁴

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory views child development as a complex system of relationships affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment, from the immediate settings of family and school to broad cultural values, laws, and customs (Guy-Evans 2020). He divides the person's environment into five different systems: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem, and the chronosystem (Fig. 1). The microsystem is the most influential level of ecological systems theory. This is the child's most immediate environmental setting, which includes family and school. Also, other levels are important. The macrosystem focuses on how cultural elements affect a child's development, such as socioeconomic status, wealth, poverty, and ethnicity. The final level – the chronosystem – consists of all of the environmental changes that occur over the lifetime that influence development, including major life transitions and historical events.

Teachers' Day (and other school calendar dates) is influenced by the micro- and macrosystems. It is an exercise for future roles in life. The previous theory shows many interactions that shape the child's worldview and behaviour. The question of whether these groups, which involve masking, mocking, satirical challenge to authority and the traditional social hierarchy, can be called carnivalesque, remains unanswered. There are only a few examples of satirical behaviour; most of the students reflect on the event as an ordinary ritual (cf. EFITA, F01-022-0003, p. 292).

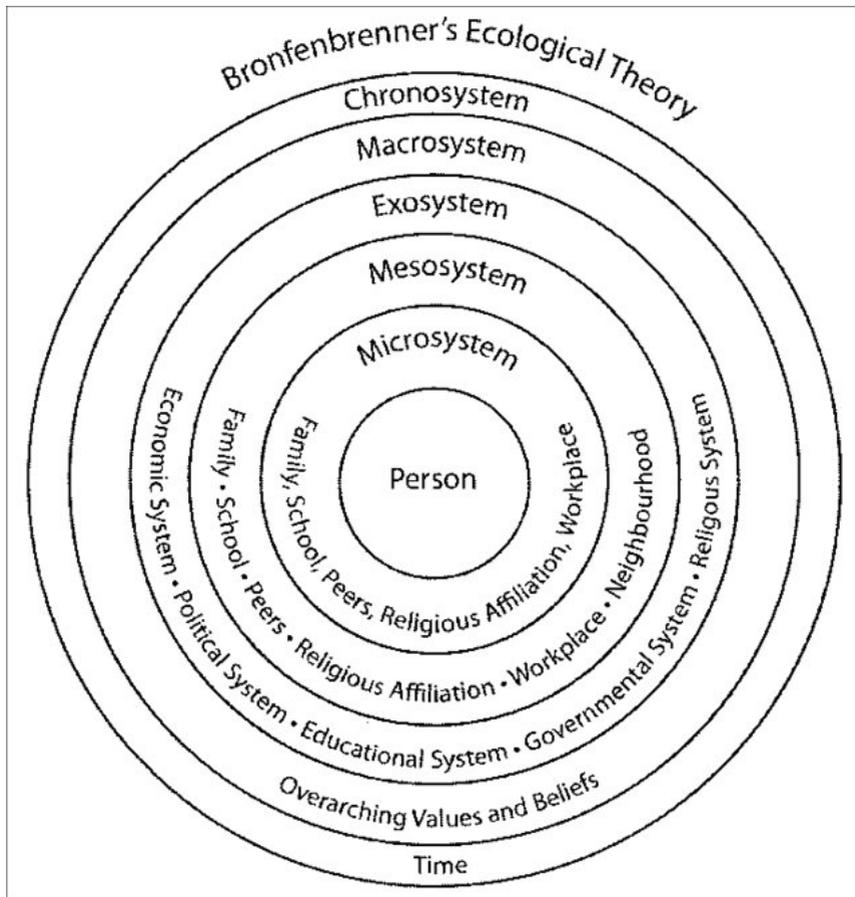


Figure 1. An adapted illustrated model of an Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Stanger 2011).

Children's inclusion in the perpetuation and celebration of school events

The 1960s and beyond

Teachers try to apply discipline in a dignified manner and to direct students' behaviour. The Estonian-style Teachers' Day is placed in a special light in this

framework. One of the central features of this day, besides honouring teachers, has been a reversal of roles. Indeed, switching roles presumes relationships based on equality and mutual trust between the parties. In our view, the core of the day is the forging of contacts that are valued reciprocally and the preservation of friendly ties. We begin with the concept of inclusion – meaning that students are behaviourally and emotionally included in Teachers' Day and that this is accompanied by reciprocal recognition.

In Estonia, the celebration of Teachers' Day began in 1965 (or earlier), when it was formally added to the list of professional days.⁵ Teachers' Day is observed in the majority of the world's regions with the message that the teaching profession should be valued in society. The day is observed at different times, but the common thread is the official recognition of teachers by those in power. Since 1994, at the request of UNESCO, Teachers' Day has been observed on the 5th of October.

In the twentieth century, many schools (the Lender Secondary School for Girls, the Tartu Girls' Secondary School, etc.) created models that were followed throughout the twentieth century, some of which were re-established in the 1990s. This kind of approach helps explain the position of the day in young people's school calendars.

Initially, the special feature of Teachers' Day was that students replaced teachers, gave lessons, and determined grades. The relationship between students and teachers has changed more than these traditions: student councils have a bigger role than before, students' opinions are gathered, and relations are generally more democratic than they were before. However, teachers still have a leadership role in most schools: events to make everyone at school feel more united, such as hikes and meetings with famous people and alumni, depend on their engagement. Although there are very active students who can organise many events and lift everyone's spirit, the overall pattern of dynamics has not changed over the years.

Mare Kõiva describes how she suddenly had the opportunity to stand in front of the class as a teacher when in 1967 she was instructed to substitute for the teacher in one of the lower grades. The order probably came from the Young Pioneers leader. The extraordinary student substitute teacher then had the chance to teach a new section of the lesson and invite younger students to answer; she even wrote grades with her own hand in the class diary. The latter was a completely unusual privilege, because usually teachers only showed students' grades to parents for a moment at parents' meetings. Showing par-

ents the class diary confirmed that things were either going especially well, moderately, or poorly.

Giving the lesson went well: I don't recall that the students in the lower grades exhibited particular disobedience; they came to the front of the class to answer or answered from their desk. We progressed in the subject, which probably meant that I had prepared at home. The assignment was unexpected for me ... Apparently many sixth-grade students were sent to join the younger ones, and older students arrived to teach us, the 12-year-olds. The decisions about all of this were most likely made by the activists of the Young Pioneers' organisation, since it was the 1960s. Perhaps students were chosen along with teachers, for it was unlikely that anyone wanted there to be a lack of discipline, quarrels between the school and the parents, messed up school diaries, etc. (EFITA, F01-022-0003)

Aili Kiin (Viljandi) recalls her experiences:

Every school developed the observance of Teachers' Day from its own standpoint. I was the director of perhaps the first and only LITTLE CHILDREN's school in the Estonian SSR, in Viljandi Valuoja 8 grade school. I must have been in the fifth grade, with the pioneer leader as the initiator. It was wonderful that I taught Estonian language and our lesson summaries were strictly controlled. In the lesson, I was just like a real teacher, and once I asked for riddles. At that time, children knew them by heart. I don't remember what I asked myself; perhaps it was about the ONION: variegated in the middle... Suddenly a boy, one of the twins, jumped up and shouted in a loud voice: "A wolf growling between two hills – what is it?" Fortunately, I had heard this one myself, I recalled that it meant FARTING! Fortunately, no one knew it, and I was so clever that I asked the one who asked the riddle not to give the answer, let everyone mull over it at home. So that was the beginning of my career in Grade 5, in elementary school, where they knew nothing about Teachers' Day.

I graduated from Viljandi High School No. 1 in 1969, where they observed Teachers' Day and had the students in charge. Me, too, and I taught one lesson of literature; it was the specialised literature class. I was in our first specialised literature class.

I spent much effort and even wrote down a list of recommended readings. The students were excited, and afterwards they praised me by calling me You (the formal 'you'). The teachers even used the formal 'you' with students. I wanted to be greeted in an informal way. (EFITA, F01-022-0003)

What did the teachers do on Teachers' Day? Opinions were divided about this. Generally, it was thought that "teachers enjoyed long coffee breaks in the staff room... probably" (female, northern Estonia, 60).

Of course, the students also brought flowers for the teachers – every school had its own traditions... Unfortunately, during my time as a student, our family moved often, so after every three years there was a new school. (Maire Karindi, northern Estonia, EFITA, F01-022-0003)

Aili Kiin remembers:

Things must have changed during my university years, because when I was working as a young teacher at the Viljandi Rural Secondary School in 1977, the students in the highest grade were also teachers. First, the children had to report to me whether they had contacted the real teacher and asked about the topic, etc. We managed, and it was a nice convocation; unfortunately, however, one thing that the children had made up interfered. We discussed how each class could submit the name of one of their favourite teachers, and then we would declare who was the favourite teacher for that year. At any rate, the convocation rang with joy when students read some of their teachers' wittiest sentences out loud. They asked, "Who talks like this?" The whole auditorium was in ecstasy. (EFITA, F01-022-0003)

Indeed, there are more reports, beginning in the 1970s and 1980s, of students' parodying teachers' clothing, behaviours, and ways of speaking. A current teacher, age 45, describes the situation, saying that no one exceeded the limits, and often students would ask the teachers' permission before they parodied them, but there was lots of fun. What happened was also referred to as a costume drama, meaning that students would dress in the manner of a particular teacher, using wigs and high-heeled shoes.

Structure of the day

In general, an anniversary with a simple structure reflects what is happening in society: customs are discrete, intermittent, and non-linear and reflect both

current and more general, longer-term, social change. Structurally, three main stages are distinguished in the celebration:

- 1) students replace teachers in class;
- 2) teachers participate in the celebration in the role of students and in parodies;
- 3) then recognition follows and festive table.

As was mentioned above, Aili Kiin's recollection of 1977 indicates that even then parodies of teachers took place, with imitations of their language and skills. One would think that this was allowed by the fact that in the 1960s and 1970s, schoolchildren grew up in a more casual atmosphere.

In the 1980s, students in the graduating class (ninth or twelfth grade, less often eighth or eleventh grade) replaced teachers. However, if it was a small rural school, then the custom was adapted so that younger fifth or sixth grade students could also have a go at being teachers (Fig. 2 and 3).



Figure 2. Teachers' Day, Järve Gymnasium photo gallery, 2019, EFITA, F01-022-0003.



Figure 3. Teachers' Day, new director, Järve Gymnasium photo gallery, 2019. EFITA, F01-022-0004.

In secondary schools, this task falls on the shoulders of senior students, giving them a chance to prove themselves as teachers with real authority. One student will also get to be the principal for a day, taking over in the morning and relinquishing their power at the end of the day. Sometimes, this temporary administration is solemn and serious, while at other times the students are a playful pack. This is not just about cognitive involvement. It also means strong students mainly taught and teach the younger ones, and the position of director is attributed to a person with leadership qualities. Even with improvisational and superficial teaching, nothing bad happens to the students' overall education in one day. Students' answers in 2007 and 2018 showed that the day itself is enjoyable and easier than usual.

I have not been a teacher on Teachers' Day since I am too young, but I love Teachers' Days because it is always easier, and you can laugh a lot, and sometimes you can have a little argument with substitute teachers.
(Student response 3495: Rõuge Primary School, sixth grade, 2018, EFITA, KP 2018-3495)

The custom has remained that students contact teachers and discuss the way the lesson will be carried out, but the students who are going to act as teachers

decide among themselves as to who will teach where. Students who are very strong in a particular subject mainly teach that subject, although some students try to get by on their own, or the younger students in the class get out of control and play fast and loose during the lesson.

The recognition part of the day is also enjoyable. The student director reads out a proclamation and highlights certain things: some teachers are praised, and the quirks of others are mentioned.

Teachers in the role of students, parodies and free performance

There are opportunities for improvisation when teachers find themselves in the role of students. It is up to the teachers whether the new role is taken seriously, or whether a comical or teasing tone is adopted. Quite often, teachers really get into their role and experiment with boundaries in every way: throwing paper planes, acting up in class, chatting, cheating, fiddling with their mobile phones, kidding around, and not bothering to answer questions. However, in addition to lessons, the Student Council can also give the teachers specific tasks, ask them to stage a play, practice choral singing, or parody other teachers.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, some schools started staging carnivalesque-like Teachers' Day celebrations (teachers made fun of students with rude and careless behaviour and turned everything upside down). It is difficult to understand if the main purpose of such celebrations was to send any messages using parody. Was there a need for such a collective festivity for the teachers themselves? These were known to occur in only a few of the schools, as most wanted to resume their normal role and authority the following school day.

A completely different message is being sent by teachers' concerts and productions, where they show their human abilities (many teachers are already known in the local community as singers, dancers, amateur actors, etc.). At the same time, the answers indicate that the teachers' self-parody is to the liking of students in every way. Such shows can be seen on ETV, but a completely new view is given by the shows of our teachers, one of which could be: we play the game by certain rules, but I do understand that I can be a fool sometimes.

As always, performing these tasks is an opportunity to earn additional social capital. This kind of improvisational dialogue requires more than improvisational skill and theatrical ability. To some extent, this is an opportunity to exchange messages through role changes.

A bit of special flavour is added to the day by the fact that teachers in turn could be school children and also have their own lessons. Teachers have studied fine arts, music, participated in physical education classes, military education, and gathered wisdom in family studies, psychology, and European economic dynamics. They have also imitated first graders, representatives of different nationalities, militaristic home guards, the so-called Black Berets, and characters of the 1960s, both in their clothing and behaviour. This year, they played book characters. Senior students will also prepare a coffee table for the teachers and put on amusing performances. (Põlva Secondary School 2001, EFITA, F01-022-0003)

Those teachers who, as students, break the rules in every way are made to stand in a corner or are given summer homework as a symbolic punishment.

The lessons included intense teaching and learning, during which the senior students became teachers and checked the knowledge of their new student-teachers. As in any ordinary school, results varied: some were told to attend additional classes during the summer; some were only deemed "acceptable" on their report card; some had good grades, and some had poor ones. The bulletin board also featured orders from the principal on punishing misbehaviour and coming to class with cigarettes; only his quick feet saved Sulev Loopalu, who usually teaches art at Kärddla Secondary School, from being put into a corner to repent. (Teachers' Day in Kärddla 2003, EFITA, F01-022-0003)

In 2021, in his opening remarks, the real principal, Ivo Eesmaa, made it quite clear that, "If secondary school students acted as nonsensically as those that were in our class today, we might as well close down the school", which was actually a compliment to the senior students and the day they had organised.



Figure 4. Masquerades. 1–3 – Teachers playing pioneers (Teachers’ Day, Märjamaa Gymnasium, 2002, photograph by Inge Jalakas (Kõiva 2004)) and 4 – Students in disguise (Teachers’ Day, Pärnu Koidula Gymnasium, 2019, source: <https://www.koidulag.edu.ee/et/galeriid/opetajate-paev-2019>).

Some schools create even further room for improvisation by declaring Teachers’ Day to be also Style Day. Strong and cohesive teaching staff do not always fully hand over their power. For example, teachers can still suggest certain activities themselves: an improvisational rock or rap concert, performing sketches to the whole student body, or sometimes performing a living history lesson. For example, it will always be remembered how the students and teachers of Märjamaa Secondary School dressed up as pioneers (Fig. 4), lined up, marched around the stadium with a flag, gave oaths, and so on. This programme was funny but also gave some food for thought as to the way young people lived decades ago. Märjamaa and Pioneers is a nostalgic parody event, such as covering pioneer life, in which characteristic features of the era come to the fore. Can efforts of this nature be called a revitalised and inclusive history lesson? Perhaps. In Estonia, too, we find some schools where there are many bright people, but these are not the usual forms of celebration. In essence, they are closer to student fandoms, i.e., style parties and parodies. At the same school

in Märjamaa, for example, teachers have performed Eurovision, which can sometimes provide brilliant opportunities for parody, mimicry, etc. Märjamaa is famous for its nostalgia and style parties, which are also organised for adult locals. In 2022, the racing of old Soviet-era cars and other events reminiscent of the past were banned due to the war in Ukraine.

Teachers may be given quizzes (Voolaid 2012), are asked to give concerts or sing. The conclusion reached above – they probably drink coffee – came out of quiz answers.

P. Voolaid describes how folklorists took part in the Teachers' Day celebration organised by the twelfth grade, which they photographed and filmed with the kind permission of the teachers. While the high school students held school lessons for the teachers, the teachers were in the role of students in the hall watching the 1995 film *Dangerous Minds* starring Michelle Pfeiffer as a teacher. After a short discussion, the young men of the twelfth grade organised a memory game for the teachers in the format of the ETV programme "Eesti mäng" (Estonian Game), which caused the teachers a lot of excitement and was also a good example of the influence of media and television today on school traditions (Voolaid 2012).

Regarding a small rural school in eastern Estonia, teachers report how aspiring students behave:

Senior students give lessons, while teachers eat cake and drink coffee. Students also organise a variety of amusing games for us; they also sing in the hallway. They prepare carefully for this day, and even the naughtiest children act with great dignity. (Helge Arro, Principal of Tudu Primary School, EFITA, F01-022-0003)

Showing respect for teachers

Recent studies have shown that teachers are motivated to stay in their profession by routine-free, varied work (Ratas 2014: 31), with good relationships with students being one of the most important foundations of teachers' work. This means above all, for the interviewed teachers, that the cooperation between teachers and students in the classroom is smooth (ibid.: 21). The study does talk about a normal study day, but it is all the more important to have free communication and cooperation within the framework of Teachers' Day and to change roles.

There is also the possibility that teachers will instead adopt an extracurricular approach and spend time with each other, experiment with creative activities, visit spas, etc. In addition, the cooperation between the student committee and the local government is quite an important element, although even then, reversal remains a part of Teachers' Day. So-called awards events are quite common, and often these activities are combined with an official reception.

First, there is a festive meeting at school, then the senior students begin to give lessons. Teachers, however, will go to the Sagadi Learning Centre where we will study the wonders of nature. We eat lunch at Altja Tavern and travel back to town shortly afterwards, because at 5 pm the celebration of Teachers' Day begins in Rakvere, where the best teachers will receive awards. (Kadi Kruusmaa, Head Teacher at Rakvere Secondary School, EFITA, F01-022-0003)

Other interesting options, such as a visit to a sculptor's studio where everyone can try their hand at ceramics or sculptures, are mentioned in the responses. Tauno Kangro's Atelier is known for teaching and for experimental events. The sculptor himself represents a vigorous national direction, the monuments of which often have a small spark of humour or a caricatured addition.

First, ninth graders give lessons, making a completely serious effort to teach their subjects, having prepared thoroughly. Teachers also join classes as students. Afterwards, the teachers and I go to the Tauno Kangro sculpture studio in Laitse to try our hands at some pottery. Our teachers have already dabbled a bit with ceramics, for example, making clay mugs for themselves. (Matti Martinson, Principal of Rahumäe Primary School in Tallinn, EFITA, F01-022-0003)

A representative of the city or municipal government can also come to a small school in person to greet and reward teachers. At the Russian school in Tallinn, the celebration takes place over two days, and the director himself gives the awards.

We celebrate for two days. On the day of the 5th of October, students give lessons and also hold a meeting of the Board of Education. But as early as Friday, I will hold a festive reception for teachers at the school, where

our best teachers are thanked and rewarded. (Pae Secondary School in Tallinn, EFITA, F01-022-0003)



Figure 5. Teachers' Day at Jõõpre School, 2019. Source: <https://www.jooprepk.ee/index.php/2066-opetajate-paeev-joopre-koolis>.

This and other data from Russian schools indicate that Teachers' Day is celebrated in the same way there. A good example dates back to 2003 at Keila Russian Secondary School:

On October 3rd, students wished teachers a lovely Teachers' Day. Each grade prepared gifts: poems, songs, dances, scenes, musical performances (piano, violin), posters, cards, hall decorations, bouquets of autumnal flowers. The teachers were happy that day and the children were content. Everyone was enthralled with Katya Stepanov's poem. (EFITA, F01-022-0003)

In general, flowers, cakes, and a festive atmosphere are part of the official congratulations, with retired teachers also remembered (Fig. 5). Many teachers state that they also celebrate the holiday at home because they have many teachers in the family and among relatives.

Conclusions

The pandemic left its mark on school traditions, as schools were open with intermittent success, mainly to younger grades and senior students. Sometimes events were simply postponed:

4th of June 2021: According to the calendar, Teachers' Day may have been several months ago, but we actually celebrated it today. Good things come to those who wait. Now that it is possible, our Primas demonstrated their wisdom in front of full classrooms, and teachers could let their hair down in various activities. Emotions... (EFITA, F01-022-0003)

Estonian Teachers' Day is characterised by the great freedom of schools to do whatever a particular school wants in how it celebrates this day. Active teachers and students determine how great and extraordinary the whole anniversary will be. The celebration is a mixture of performance, positive emotions, joy, competence, engagement, and even gratitude. When people are grateful, they notice and appreciate the good things that happen to them and express thanks to those who are responsible (Emmons 2007).

There are different types of roles. The students' part is easier, as they have experience with how teachers behave in their profession and they have time to prepare. Teachers are usually chosen from among talented students who are experts in their respective fields. Parodying and imitating teachers, preparing the whole day connects them with fellow students and the school and engages them cognitively and emotionally.

The role that teachers play is more complex. These are spontaneous performances where each participant chooses and performs a role within the limits of their skills. Teachers can earn attention, understanding, and popularity among students with their activities and performances.

We have received reports about the celebration of Teachers' Day in October from different regions of Russia, for example, from the Udmurt Republic. There, too, they celebrate in two ways:

- 1) students replace teachers in giving lessons; and
- 2) there are reports from many places that in different regions, in recent decades, the celebration of Teachers' Day has become more free-spirited, involving improvisations.

The use of the carnivalesque is also limited by the existence of similar events (the school leaving celebration, the fox party, and other style parties and carnivals), the extreme forms of which are prohibited in most schools. What remains is a celebration confirming mutual relations with minor changes. Folkloresque is used by recreational groups (fans of Japanese and Korean culture), but it requires longer preparation and has not found a wide area of application in schools.

Certainly, the example of Teachers' Day is the best example of inclusive communication that keeps the school climate benevolent and mutually accepting. Whether such lines will continue depends on reforms and, in fact, on fashion trends.

Acknowledgements

The article was supported by research grant of the Estonian Literary Museum EKM 8-2/20/3, and by the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies (TK 145) through the European Regional Development Fund.

Notes

¹ Waldorf pedagogy is based on the theoretical principles developed by Rudolf Steiner, according to which, schools should foster learning based on children's own experience.

² Johannes Käis (1885–1950) was a famous Estonian pedagogue, innovator of the methodology of primary education. He developed the educational system based on the national history of Estonia, fostered an individual learning and a do-it-yourself method, founded nature teaching methodology, and created the elementary school natural history program.

³ The first questionnaires regarding calendar holidays derive from the first decades of the twentieth century, when Matthias Johann Eisen questioned pupils about the observance of customs associated with major holidays (Christmas, Easter) at home, with the goal of getting a more precise sense of the preservation of older customs and identifying changes in them (Eisen 1931).

⁴ While pedagogy values discipline, indiscipline is perceived as a state of low standards and principles of controlled behaviour, or limited ability for self-control, a threat to educators' authority, dominance, and class work, or an impediment to learning, as well

as a cause of distress (based on the example of English-language learners, cf. Kuloheri 2016: 60).

⁵ According to the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR from 29 September 1965 “On the establishment of the annual holiday ‘Teachers’ Day’”, it was celebrated in the first Sunday of October.

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