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ASSESSING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS’ KNOWLEDGE IN GENERAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN UKRAINE AND POLAND

The article highlights peculiarities of assessing English language learners’ knowledge in general secondary schools in Ukraine and Poland in comparative aspect in order to find positive conceptual ideas of Polish experience that can be extrapolated in Ukraine. It is found out that Ukraine and Poland have common goals and principles of national assessments; in both countries the form of assessment is testing. The main difference is in character of exam – compulsory (Poland) and optional (Ukraine) and test scores that testify to the quality of English language teaching.

Key words: *knowledge assessment, English language learners, English language learners’ knowledge assessment, general secondary schools, Ukraine, Poland.*

Introduction. English as a universal international language is an important element of the modern world that is used in many countries. Therefore, in order to meet global trends, in the vast majority of universities around the world, English is one of the compulsory subjects to study. Often an important, even decisive factor in applying for a particular position, university or membership in an institution is the level of the person’s use of this language.

Knowledge of foreign languages is the key to success in the modern world, where communication in foreign languages and the processing of enormous amounts of information are becoming increasingly important. More recently, scientists from the University of London, through extensive statistical and scientific studies, have come to the conclusion that people who learn foreign languages have a more flexible and original thinking. This conclusion is based on the fact that researchers scientifically confirmed the direct relationship between the activity of brain and the knowledge of several languages.

Knowing English is no longer an amazing skill, but a necessity. It is currently taught at kindergartens, schools, colleges and at numerous courses.

And in some countries even mathematics and some other subjects of curriculum are taught in English.

Unfortunately, little attention is paid to the study of foreign languages in our schools. There are some schools specializing in studying foreign languages in Ukraine. Students in these schools have a daily language lesson. But their number is rather small. Most schools have a foreign language lesson only twice a week. It is impossible to master any foreign language under such conditions. That is why those who want to improve their knowledge, have to take private lessons or to attend additional courses.

In comparison, Poland, the nearest neighbor of Ukraine, has succeeded in modernizing foreign language teaching and achieved positive results in national assessments, in particular in English. In this context we consider it expedient to study the experience of Poland in order to extrapolate positive conceptual ideas of this experience in our country.

Analysis of relevant research. Different aspects of teaching foreign languages in EU countries have become the issue of special interest of such native researchers as H. Hryniuk, O. Ivachko, T. Korshuk, L. Kotliarova, N. Lohutina, O. Maksymenko, L. Morska, O. Mysechko, S. Nikolaieva, O. Pershukova, O. Petrashchuk, T. Vakaliuk, L. Sakun and others. At the same time, the problem of assessing English language learners' knowledge in general secondary schools in Poland in comparison with Ukraine hasn't been studied enough.

The aim of the article is to highlight peculiarities of assessing English language learners' knowledge in general secondary schools in Ukraine and Poland in comparative aspect in order to find positive conceptual ideas of Polish experience that can be extrapolated in Ukraine.

Research methods. In order to achieve the aim of the article the following methods have been used: general research methods – analysis, synthesis, comparison, classification and generalization, which are necessary for studying the works of native and foreign scientists, official and normative documents; terminological analysis which helped reveal the essence of investigated pedagogical phenomena by detection and clarification of fundamental concepts; structural-logical method that has been used for determining the current state and prospects for further development of quality assurance of ESL teaching, comparative analysis that help find common features and differences in assessing English language learners' knowledge in general secondary schools in Ukraine and Poland.

Research results. In Ukraine, pupils begin to study English in the first grade of primary school. Children get acquainted with the alphabet and learn the basic vocabulary on the topics "I, my family and friends", "Leisure", "Nature", "Holidays and traditions", "School". The main purpose of teaching a foreign language in primary school is formation of communicative competence

of students, which is provided by linguistic and socio-cultural experience, consistent with the age-old possibilities of junior pupils.

At the end of the fourth form, students of comprehensive schools reach the level of A1, pupils of specialized schools with in-depth study of foreign languages reach level A2, which corresponds to the European Linguistic Recommendations [2].

The purpose of primary school is development and socialization of the personality of the students, formation of their national identity, general culture, ideological landmarks, ecological style of thinking and behavior, creative abilities, research and life-affirming skills, the ability to self-development and self-education in the conditions of global changes and challenges. A graduate of a primary school is a patriot of Ukraine, who knows its history; a bearer of Ukrainian culture that respects the culture of other peoples; a competent speaker fluent in the state language, also knows a native and one or more foreign languages; has a desire and ability to self-education; shows activity and responsibility in public and private life; capable of entrepreneurship and initiative; has an idea of the universe; careful about nature; safely and expediently uses the achievements of science and technology; adheres to a healthy lifestyle [3].

At the end of the 9th grade students of the general education institutions studying the first foreign language reach A2+ level, students of specialized schools with in-depth study of a foreign language reach level B1, and those who acquire a second foreign language reach level A2. These levels characterize the results of learning achievements in each type of speech activity and are consistent with the European Linguistic Recommendations.

The school program defines that the task of school is to build such skills:

- communicate within the spheres, topics and situations defined by the current curriculum;
- understand the content of authentic texts while listening;
- read and understand the authentic texts of different genres and types with different levels of understanding of the content;
- communicate in writing in accordance with the tasks set;
- adequately use the experience gained in the study of the mother tongue and other subjects, considering it as a means of conscious acquisition of a foreign language;
- use non-verbal means of communication if there is a shortage of available linguistic means;
- critically evaluate information and use it for different needs;
- express their thoughts, feelings and attitudes;
- interact effectively with others orally, in writing and by means of electronic communication;

- select and apply appropriate communication strategies according to different needs;
- use learning strategies for independent study of foreign languages effectively [3].

At the end of the 11th grade, students of comprehensive schools reach the level B1; pupils of specialized schools with in-depth study of foreign languages reach level B2, which corresponds to the European Linguistic Recommendations [4].

In 2005, the President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko gave a decree to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine to transfer to entrance examinations for admission to higher educational establishments by completing the external independent testing (ZNO) during 2005–2006. On December 31, 2005, the Cabinet of Ministers created the Ukrainian Center for Educational Quality Assessment and officially allowed to enter the university by the results of testing.

In 2006, the ZNO was introduced at the official level. The state budget of Ukraine provided finances for its introduction and monitoring of education quality for the first time. The Ukrainian Center for Educational Quality Assessment began its activities, 9 of its regional centers were being set up. 41,818 graduates were tested, with 6,300 instructors, 700 examiners involved.

In 2007, all education institutions, subordinated to the Ministry of Education of Ukraine, enrolled entrants on the certificates of ZNO. Testing was conducted only in the Ukrainian language, mathematics and history (Ukrainian and world).

On November 1, 2008, the list of certificates of ZNO required for admission to separate specialties was announced. The number of subjects was reduced to eight. First, tests of foreign languages were introduced: English, German, Spanish and French [5].

Table 1

Participation of Ukrainian high school students in ZNO in English

| Year | Number of participants | The highest score |
|------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 2009 | 56,701 | 50 |
| 2010 | 86,678 | 78 |
| 2011 | 62,601 | 69 |
| 2012 | 82,428 | 62 |
| 2013 | 83,704 | 56 |
| 2014 | 69,405 | 56 |
| 2015 | 71,345 | 56 |
| 2016 | 77,983 | 56 |
| 2017 | 78,763 | 56 |
| 2018 | 89,312 | 72 |

Hence, ZNO in English was introduced for the first time in 2009. Testing took place on June 2, 2009. 120 minutes were spent on the test tasks. Tests have been compiled on the basis of the Foreign Independent Evaluation Program 2009 in foreign languages, approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine dated 18.09.2008 No. 865) [6]. There were two kinds of activities only: reading and writing. Students had to do the choice tasks with one correct answer, the tasks of establishing conformity, the task for choosing true or false statements, the task to fill the blanks, the task with the detailed answer.

However, in 2010, ZNO turned into an acute political event and triggered a wave of public protests by school graduates throughout the country. Even the best students, whose English language proficiency has been proved by international Cambridge certificates and studying abroad, said that the test exceeds the requirements of the school curriculum and demanded that the tests were too difficult. Students demanded to reduce the minimum acceptable English grade in universities. In response, the Director of the Ukrainian Center for Educational Quality Assessment Ihor Likarchuk said that an English text is not too complicated and unreliable, but Ukrainian students have poor English language skills, and their teachers provide poor quality of training [13].

In 2010, the external independent testing of English was conducted on June 7. According to the results of 2010, about 85 % of applicants had a score of 124 to 180 points [7]. This year students had the tasks of open and closed forms. Closed form task were the task with the choice of one correct answer, the task of establishing conformity, the task for filling the blanks. And there are the closed form of tasks: the task for filling the blanks (with a short answer), the task with a detailed answer. In 2011, ZNO in English was conducted on June 6. From this year the English test consisted of closed and open test tasks. There were the tasks with the choice of one correct answer, to establish conformity, to fill the blanks. And one open form task with a detailed answer. Only three students got the highest score [8].

In 2012, ZNO in English was conducted on May 26. There were three parts in testing: reading, writing and use of English. Below is given one of the closed form tasks of use of English as an example. Such kind of task was used for the first time in the external independent testing in 2012 [9].

Read the text below. For questions (23–32) choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D). Write your answers on the separate answer sheet.

Harry Potter Film Takes \$168m to Break Ticket Records

The (23) _____ Harry Potter movie has shattered box office records in the US and Canada, taking \$168m over its opening weekend. Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2 had already made \$92.1m on its opening day, said the film's distributor, Warner Bros. The (24) _____ opening weekend record was held (25) _____ Batman film The Dark Knight, (26)

_____ took \$10m. The Potter film is the eighth movie in the hugely popular franchise. Fans around the world (27) _____ for hours to be among the first to see the film, which was based on the second part of JK Rowling’s seventh and final book in the series. Most cinemas were showing the film in 3D, which slightly increased the ticket (28) _____. The (29) _____ Potter film series has so far earned more than £4bn worldwide, not including the final film’s takings so far. Internationally, the film had taken \$157.5m by Friday. “A billion dollars is (30) _____ going to happen,” said Dan Fellman, head of domestic distribution at Warner Bros. It has been 10 years (31) _____ the first movie in the series, Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone, was (32) _____. It made stars of its young cast, Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson and Rupert Grint.

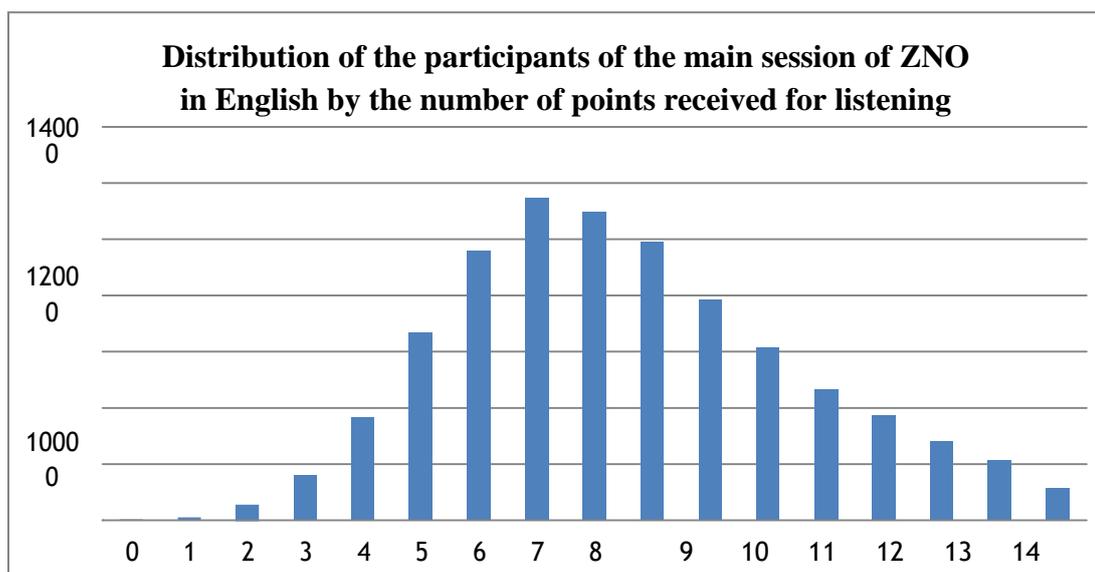
| | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|-----------|---|------------|---|----------|---|------------|
| 23 | A | past | B | definitive | C | final | D | Complete |
| 24 | A | initial | B | previous | C | first | D | eventual |
| 25 | A | by | B | on | C | with | D | over |
| 26 | A | when | B | which | C | what | D | who |
| 27 | A | hoped | B | imagined | C | held | D | queued |
| 28 | A | interest | B | need | C | price | D | importance |
| 29 | A | full | B | all | C | absolute | D | entire |
| 30 | A | extremely | B | definitely | C | strictly | D | strongly |
| 31 | A | since | B | of | C | as | D | from |
| 32 | A | released | B | done | C | prepared | D | Delivered |

From 2013 to 2017 the external independent testing of English was conducted without any changes. Every year students may get the highest score 56 points.

Beginning from 2018, the tests had two levels of difficulty – B1 and B2, taking into account the study of English at the standard or academic level. The order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine is already in force. In particular, it shows the features of ZNO-2018 in English, Spanish, German and French.

In addition, tests in 2018 for the first time included the part of “Listening”: listening to sound tracks and doing tasks for them. This part of

testing may give the students 16 points. We can see the results of listening testing in picture 1.



Picture 1. Results of listening testing of ZNO-2018

Graduates, who scored the results of a foreign language test as an assessment for a state final attestation and who studied the language at the profile level, compiled B2 level test.

This year ZNO in English was conducted on June 1. 89,312 persons took part in it. This number is the biggest from 2009 year. 13 % of students did not pass the lowest threshold of 14 points [12].

We can conclude that the English exam in Ukraine is not compulsory for all the graduates. The largest number of test participants was in 2018, and the smallest number was in 2011. In our opinion, an increase in the participants of ZNO in English language testifies to a higher level of preparation of students and an awareness of the importance of the knowing of a foreign language in modern society.

In the Polish education system, the exam is officially called *egzamin maturalny*, but it is commonly known as *matura*. It is taken on completion of high school, in May (with additional dates in June, and retakes available in August). The exam is not compulsory, although Polish students must pass it in order to be able to apply for higher education courses in Poland and elsewhere.

A major reform of the exam (originally enacted in 1999, although its introduction was delayed) came into effect from 2005. Under the old system (popularly called *stara matura*) teachers from their own schools assessed candidates' performance. In the new system (*nowa matura*) independent examiners assess written work. This is considered to make the results more objective, and as a result Polish higher education institutions no longer run

entrance exams (as they did under the old system), but base their admissions primarily on *matura* results.

As of 2015, every student taking the *matura* takes three compulsory exams at “basic level” in:

- Polish language (including knowledge of Polish and European literature);
- A selected modern language (English, French, German, Italian, Spanish or Russian);
- Mathematics
- as well as at least one subject at “extended level”.

Exams in English language and other languages include both a written paper and an oral examination. Students have to do reading, writing, listening tasks and tasks for use of English.

Results are currently expressed as percentages. To pass the *matura* it is necessary to score at least 30 % in each of the three compulsory exams. The results of the additional exams do not affect whether a student passes, but are usually a factor when applying for higher education places. Since the year 2015, the results are expressed not only as percentages, but are also accompanied by percentiles on the *Matura* certificate. This aims to make comparisons between *Matura* scores from different years fairer.

The exams are conducted by the Central Examination Board, assisted by a number of Regional Examination Boards. The same bodies also conduct tests for pupils completing primary school, and examinations at the end of middle school [14].

Modern foreign language is one of the languages that are included in the compulsory examination. Most high school graduates choose English. At the basic level, the graduate must achieve 30 % to get a high school diploma, while a high score at the advanced level of the English test will allow him to get to most specialties, including neo-philology, social sciences, engineering or administrative research.

Preparing for the main exam in English is multifaceted. First, a high school graduate should study an elementary vocabulary from different areas of life:

- appearance and character of a person;
- description of the house, rooms, purchase and rent;
- school things and subjects, education;
- professions, working conditions and responsibilities;
- names of family members, holidays, periods of life, way of life, forms of spending time;
- food, meals, eating places, recipes;
- names of shops, goods, tourist sites, vocabulary related to travel and sightseeing;
- areas and creators of culture;

- names of sports disciplines, equipment, sporting events;
- vocabulary concerning diseases, personal hygiene;
- names of devices, technologies, inventions;
- names of plants, animals, determining the landscape, weather, environmental hazards, cataclysms;
- state institutions, offices, crime and law, conflicts and social problems [15].

In high school in English, a large amount of grammar is used: all times of Present, Past and Future groups, passive voice and imperative mood.

Below is given an example of basic level exam of 2017 year of reading task. *Zadanie 5. (0–3)*

Przeczytaj trzy teksty związane z pracą. Z podanych odpowiedzi wybierz właściwą, zgodną z treścią tekstu. Zakreśl literę A, B albo C.

Tekst 1

MY FIRST JOB

After a week at Mrs Chapman's store, I felt I belonged there. I did everything Mrs Chapman expected me to do and even more. She was grateful for anything I did, especially things she hadn't asked me to do, for example cleaning the windows. Once my mum asked me jokingly, "Couldn't you do the same in your bedroom, Jane?" I didn't tell her that Mrs Chapman gave me a few pounds more whenever I did something on my own initiative. I was afraid my mum was going to think she should also give me money for doing the housework. This certainly wasn't what I wanted. The truth was that I needed the money to buy her a surprise gift.

(adapted from Red Sky in the Morning by Elizabeth Laird)

5.1. From the text, we learn that Jane

- A. was afraid to tell Mrs Chapman she needed more money.
- B. was paid more when she did some extra work.
- C. received gifts for doing the housework.

There are some schools in Poland such as The General Education School in Śrem that teach students using two languages: Polish and English. This school graduates can pass the exam at bilingual level in English.

From the 2014/2015 school year to the exam of a modern foreign language at the level bilingual as an additional subject can join each graduate, regardless on the type of school he attended and on whether or not to learn a particular language at school. The matriculation examination with a modern foreign language at the bilingual level checks general communication competence of graduates in the scope of a selected foreign language at a highly advanced level. For this purpose, the mastery of the message is checked and skills in the field of a modern foreign language defined in general requirements and detailed in the core curriculum of general education at IV.2 level.

In addition, graduates of schools or bilingual branches are also entitled to terminate additional exam tasks in mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, history and geography, prepared in a language that is the second language of instruction, according to the rules specified in the Regulation of the Ministry of National Education of 25 April 2013 (Journal of Laws of 2013, Pos. 520) [16].

Below is given a comparative table with the results of the exams from 2015 to 2018 years.

Table 2

Results of the exams from 2015 to 2018 years in Poland

| Year | Level | Number of participants | Middle result (%) |
|------|----------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 2015 | Standart | 160,000 | 77 |
| | Extended | 89,000 | 78 |
| 2016 | Standart | 234,000 | 71 |
| | Extended | 125,000 | 55 |
| 2017 | Standart | 237,000 | 71 |
| | Extended | 132,000 | 62 |
| 2018 | Standart | 231,843 | 73 |
| | Extended | 146,000 | 57 |

It should be stressed that the foreign language exam in Poland is compulsory for all graduates. The largest number of test participants choose English. And each year the number of participants is growing because graduates wish to enter famous European universities. In our opinion, the compulsory English exam can improve the quality of teaching and learning of the language.

Conclusions and prospects for further research. On the basis of comparative analysis of peculiarities of English language learners' knowledge assessment in general secondary schools in Ukraine and Poland we have come to the conclusion that in spite of the common goals and principles of national assessments there are a lot of differences. The main difference is that in Poland English exam is compulsory, while in Ukraine it is not. At the same time Ukrainian educational policy-makers also try to make English exam compulsory. The next difference is that in Poland testing includes both a written paper and an oral examination, while in Ukraine exam is taken only in written form. Besides, Polish high school students can take exams in other subjects in English, while in our country students haven't got such an opportunity. It should also be emphasized, that the test scores of Polish students are much higher than Ukrainian. And in this context the issue of quality of teaching English as a second language in Poland is relevant and will become the subject of our further research.

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РЕЗЮМЕ

Бойченко Марина, Коханова Наталія, Сбруева Алина. Оцінювання качества знань по англійському мові учеників общеобразовательних шкіл України и Польши.

В статті розглядаються особливості оцінювання знань учасників по англійському мові в общеобразовательних школах України и Польши в сравнительном аспекте с целью виявлення положительных концептуальних ідей польського опыта, которые можно екстраполіровать в Україні. В результате сравнительного анализа выяснено, что Украина и Польша имеют общие цели и принципы национального оцінювання; в обеих странах оцінювання проводится в форме тестирования. Основное различие в характере экзамена – обязательный (Польша) и необязательный (Украина) и в результатах тестирования, которые свидетельствуют о качестве обучения англійському мові.

Ключевые слова: оцінювання знань, учасники, которые изучают англійський мові, оцінювання знань учасників по англійському мові, общеобразовательные школы, Украина, Польша.

АНОТАЦІЯ

Бойченко Марина, Коханова Наталія, Сбруева Аліна. Оцінювання якості знань з англійської мови учнів загальноосвітніх шкіл України та Польщі.

У статті розглядаються особливості оцінювання знань учнів з англійської мови в загальноосвітніх школах України та Польщі в порівняльному аспекті з метою виявлення позитивних концептуальних ідей польського досвіду, які можна екстраполювати в Україні. Для досягнення мети дослідження було використано низку методів: загальнонаукові методи дослідження – аналіз, синтез, порівняння, класифікація та узагальнення, необхідні для вивчення робіт вітчизняних та зарубіжних учених, офіційних і нормативних документів, що регламентують проведення зовнішнього незалежного оцінювання в досліджуваних країнах; термінологічний аналіз, який допоміг розкрити сутність досліджуваних педагогічних явищ шляхом виявлення й уточнення основних понять; структурно-логічний метод, який використовувався для визначення поточного стану та перспектив подальшого розвитку системи забезпечення якості викладання англійської мови як іноземної, порівняльний аналіз, за допомогою якого було визначено спільні риси й відмінності в оцінюванні знань учнів з англійської мови в загальноосвітніх школах України та Польщі.

У результаті порівняльного аналізу виявлено, що Україна та Польша мають спільні цілі та принципи національного оцінювання; в обох країнах оцінювання проводиться у формі тестування. Основна відмінність полягає в характері екзамену – обов'язковий (Польша) та необов'язковий (Україна) і в результатах тестування, які свідчать про якість викладання та мотивацію учнів до вивчення англійської мови, рівень якої в досліджуваних нами країнах значно відрізняється. Інші відмінності полягають у наданні можливості й

забезпеченні необхідних умов для польських школярів для складання інших іспитів англійською мовою, у той час як в Україні такі можливості відсутні.

Ключові слова: оцінювання знань, учні, які вивчають англійську мову, оцінювання знань учнів з англійської мови, загальноосвітні школи, Україна, Польща.

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FORMS OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNESHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF STUDYING ORGANIZATIONAL AND PEDAGOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN SCHOOL, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

The article focuses on the forms of American school and community partnership as since the adoption of the Education Act "Goals 2000: Educate Act America" (1994) a partnership of school, family and community has been recognized as one of the principal objectives for all schools in the country at the legislative level. Moreover, the vast majority of American scholars, educators, practitioners and parents are aware that effective cooperation with families of school students and local communities can be an effective means of reforming schools and improving the quality of student education.

The aim of the study is to analyze forms of school and community collaboration which are given by American researchers, as success of partnership of school, family and community much depends on their activities and results.

In the article a complex of interrelated and complementary research methods have been used. In particular: general scientific – analysis, synthesis, comparison and generalization; component-structural, system-structural, system-functional, which give the opportunity to study and identify the main trends in developing school and community partnership and define efficient forms of community involvement.

As the majority of school administrators and teachers realize that intensive involvement of communities into school activities is an essential condition for effective management of the educational process, they have started their work to build stronger partnership relations believing that these strategies will help to increase academic skills, create safer school environment and improve the well-being of families and communities.

American researchers claim that the school and community partnership (SCP) takes a variety of forms and they give a classification of potential partners of schools, namely: 1) business structures; 2) universities and education institutions; 3) institutions of public health and child protection; 4) government and military institutions; 5) national services and volunteer organizations; 6) religious institutions; 7) senior citizens organizations; 8) cultural and recreational institutions; 9) other community organizations; 10) community individuals.

Summarizing American experience, it should be emphasized that collaboration of school and community as a component of partnership of American school, family and community has a long history, but it becomes especially significant at the end of the XX – the beginning of the XXI centuries, when more complex conditions for the work of the school and the need for workers, whose professional competence is higher than the basic level appeared in the country.