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# Wita Szulc (1941–2021): The Outline of a Scientific Biography

Wita Szulc (1941–2021). Zarys biografii naukowej

## ABSTRACT

This article includes the reconstruction of a scientific biography of Professor Wita Szulc, which is intended to make contemporary researchers familiar with the modern history of education. Also, it can inform teachers—both theoreticians and practitioners (especially those who practice therapeutic forms that employ art, i.e. those who wish to use art as a therapeutic tool)—about the achievements of a unique scholar who was one of the pioneers of art therapy in Poland and who created the scientific foundations and paved the way for the institutionalized development of the subdiscipline and the specialisation of studies. In her life's work, we can easily distinguish a continuous development of her knowledge and qualifications, and a patient scholarly reflection on culture and art in the areas of health promotion, education and upbringing. Not only did Professor Szulc carry out numerous studies on the history and methodology of art therapy, but she was also involved in the scientific promotion of the new generations of researchers and in the preparation of educational standards for future art therapists. Other important activities of her life include working for the integration and consolidation of Polish art therapy circles and bringing art therapy to the wider international scientific arena. Thus, the story of her life enables us to perceive Wita Szulc as a person who was truly and unconditionally committed to her mission of a pedagogue, scientist, organizer and

## KEYWORDS

Wita Szulc, scientific biography, culture therapy, art therapy, music therapy, scientific activity, didactic activity

## SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

Wita Szulc, biografia naukowa, kulturoterapia, arteterapia, muzykoterapia, twórczość naukowa, działalność dydaktyczna

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manager of scientific life. The sources used to write this article mainly include the professor's published texts and autobiographical materials, as well as the sparse discussions and essays concerning her activity that are available in the books on the subject.

## ABSTRAKT

Podjęta w niniejszym artykule rekonstrukcja biografii naukowej Profesor Wity Szulc pragnie przybliżyć badaczom współczesnych dziejów wychowania, a także pedagogom – teoretykom i praktykom – szczególnie tym zorientowanym na przyswojenie form terapeutycznych wykorzystujących sztukę, czyli na stosowanie sztuki w charakterze narzędzia terapeutycznego, sylwetkę i dokonania uczonej oryginalnej i wyjątkowej, należącej do grona prekursorów arteterapii w Polsce, tworzącej naukowe fundamenty i przecierającą szlaki instytucjonalnego rozwoju subdyscypliny i kierunku studiów. Opisane w tekście koleje życia, związane z nieustannym pogłębianiem wiedzy i zdobywaniem nowych kwalifikacji, z wytrwałą naukowo-badawczą refleksją nad kulturą i sztuką w obszarze promocji zdrowia, oświaty i wychowania, z prowadzonymi badaniami nad historią i metodologią arteterapii, z zaangażowaniem w promocję naukową nowych pokoleń badaczy i z wypracowaniem standardów kształcenia przyszłych arteterapeutów, z działalnością na rzecz integracji i konsolidacji polskiego środowiska arteterapeutycznego i jego obecności na międzynarodowej arenie naukowej, pozwalają dostrzec w profesor Wicie Szulc osobę z oddaniem i bezwarunkowo realizującą życiową misję pedagoga – uczonej – organizatorki – animatorki życia naukowego. Podstawą źródłową opracowania są przede wszystkim opublikowane teksty i materiały o charakterze autobiograficznym, jakie znalazły się dorobku uczonej, jak również nieliczne jeszcze omówienia i szkice poświęcone jej działalności, dostępne w literaturze przedmiotu.

## Childhood and education in the long shadow of war

The story of Wita Szulc's life began in dramatic circumstances in the eastern borderlands of the Second Polish Republic, eighty years ago. She was born in Śniatyn (in the former Stanisławów Voivodeship) on 3 July 1941, i.e. during the second week of the Germans' invasion of the USSR. According to her family's memories, she was born on a wagon while her parents were crossing the rough waters of the Prut River. Both of her parents were graduates of the John Casimir University in

Lviv, and the atmosphere of their home was full of respect for tradition, historical truth (her mother was a historian) and scientific knowledge (her father was a chemist). The family were patriots and they all loved books (Szulc 2013: 19, 47, 50; Chatzipentidis 2018: 78).

The traumatic experience of war in little Wita's life worsened after the tragic events of 1943 in Volhynia and Pokuttia. The war and its political consequences were a dark cloud over the little girl's childhood and education. Just like thousands of other eastern borderlands inhabitants, in August 1945 Wita was deprived of her "little homeland" and forced to move to another place. Due to several relocations of the military unit in which her father served, she spent her childhood in Lublin, Zgierz and Łódź. Her difficult experiences of that period included being separated from her parents during her long stays in sanatoriums in Otwock, Łagiewniki and Rabka. Wita Szulc could read and write when she was six years old. In Łódź, she attended a kindergarten for a year, and then she became a first grader in a primary school. After moving to Poznań in the autumn of 1949, she studied in Primary School No. 33 and, from 1954 to 1959, in the very good II Secondary School for girls. At that time, the Szulc family suffered a lot from communist repressions which, at the beginning of 1953, resulted in her father being removed from the army and making it impossible for him to find a job (Szulc 2013: 19–21, 50, 74–77, 94–96, 98–103; 2016b: 351; Chatzipentidis 2018: 78–79).

Apart from providing Wita with an education, her parents ensured that the girl had contact with art. In the afternoons, she attended the Cultural Centre in Łódź, visited galleries and museums with her parents and went to concerts in the philharmonic hall and to performances in the opera, which was a true upbringing through art. This "art therapy" provided to Wita by her family soothed the feelings of threat, darkness and poverty in her childhood. Also, it enabled her to participate in after-school music lessons (she was learning to play the piano in the Community Music Centre), in the classes of a folk group of song and dance for children and in various concerts. The fact that her parents introduced her to the world of art resulted in her conscious interest in and fascination with art by the end of secondary school, which was later expressed by her participation in the students' movement "Pro Musica" or in the Society of Opera Friends (Szulc 2013: 13, 91, 95, 98–99, 112–113).

## Difficult paths of an academic career

After finishing secondary school, she started classical philology studies at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (UAM). However, after obtaining a university degree, Wita Szulc, MA could not find a job that would match her education. Ultimately, she decided to accept the post of a manager of a factory common room in the “FAT” factory in Poznań, which was later transformed into the “Lechia” Factory of Cosmetics. At the same time, she developed competences useful in her professional work. She took up postgraduate studies in the College of Adult Education and Culture conducted by the Society for the Popularisation of Culture and Science in Warsaw. In 1965 she completed a correspondence librarian course organized by the Society of Polish Librarians in Warsaw. At the same time, she enrolled on a two-year cultural and educational study programme which was newly opened at the University of Wrocław. Under the influence of her father, she engaged in social activity in the Troops for Air Defence of the Territory (TOPL) and she obtained the licence of a Common Self-Defence Instructor (Szulc 2013: 50–51, 105–107, 114–115; Chatzipentidis 2018: 70).

At the beginning of the 1970s, Wita Szulc was employed at the Karol Marcinkowski Medical Academy (AM) in Poznań, where she worked as a manager of the Dentistry Institute Library and as a freelance teacher of Latin. The environment of the AM inspired her personal scientific development. Thus, referring to her own experience in promoting culture in the factory, she started to analyse the social demand for art and the country’s cultural policy in the post-war period. The effect of her long-term, intensive work within the individual doctoral seminar of Prof. Stanisław Pietraszko was a dissertation entitled “The model of cultural demands in the social policy of the Polish People’s Republic, 1944–1956.” The defence of her doctoral thesis finished on 12 December 1978 with Wita Szulc being granted the title of a doctor of philosophy by the Council of the Faculty of Philology of Wrocław University. The text of the dissertation, without any changes, was not published until 30 years after its defence. It was entitled *Kultura dla mas Polski Ludowej. Wizje ideologów, publicystów i twórców z lat 1944–1956* [Culture for the masses of the Polish People’s Republic: Visions of ideologists, publicists and

authors from 1944–1956]. Szulc’s problem structure, which arranged the forms of cultural activity according to the distinguished areas of art, was also used in further works that referred to art therapy (Szulc 2013: 117–119; 2016b: 352–353; Chatzipentidis 2018: 79).

A year and a half after obtaining her doctoral degree, Wita Szulc, PhD passed the exam in front of the State Examination Commission in Kielce to earn the title of a certified librarian—the highest scientific/professional degree in Polish library science. She admitted that “it was the most difficult exam in her life” (Szulc 2016b: 353).

The managerial post in the main library of AM and the doctoral degree in cultural studies encouraged Szulc to study the cultural activation of the old and to organize cultural activities as a form of therapy for them. In 1984, she became an assistant professor at the Faculty of Nursing at AM. Until 2003 she worked in the structures of the faculty, which later changed names to the Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences and then to the Faculty of Health Sciences (WNOZ, n.d.). As a professor of that faculty, Szulc carried out scientific research on the concept of culture therapy and conducted courses based on her own programmes, which referred to her research. At first, she named the course “culture therapy,” for which she wrote and published a textbook for students in 1988 in the AM Scientific Publishing House in Poznań (Szulc 2001 pp. 210, 214–216; 2013: 10–12). In the textbook she included a unique classification of 13 areas of art therapy, combined with definitions and the etymology of their names. This was a pioneer solution in the world literature on the subject, and it is still used in the field today (Szulc 2011: 20–22; 2013: 8–9; 2018: 54). Szulc’s theoretical concept of therapy through culture was used in practice during classes with the patients of the AM hospitals, and with the participants of rehabilitation camps organized in the sanatoriums of Krynica Morska from 1986 to 1991 (Szulc 2011: 49–54; 2013: 119; Chatzipentidis 2018: 80). Her further two books: *Sztuka i terapia* [Art and Therapy] and (her habilitation thesis) *Kulturoterapia. Wykorzystanie sztuki i działalności kulturalno-oświatowej w leczeniu* [Culture Therapy. Using Art and Cultural-Educational Activity in Medical Treatment] were dedicated to the methodology and scientific foundations of art therapy, to the research on culture therapy carried out with the use of the “action research” method and to the results of such research (Szulc 2016b: 356).

Wita Szulc's scientific output and published dissertation made it possible for her to become habilitated at the Faculty of Educational Studies of UAM in Poznan, and her degree of a habilitated doctor of humanistic sciences in pedagogy was approved by the Central Commission for Scientific Titles and Degrees on 27 May 1996 (Szulc 2013: 117–118; 2016b: 356; Chatzipentidis 2018: 80; nauka-polska.pl, n.d.).

In the same year, Wita Szulc, PhD Hab., was awarded the position of a UAM professor and became the director of the newly created Department of Early School Education and Art Therapy in the Pedagogical and Artistic Institute of UAM in Kalisz. Starting from the 1996–1997 academic year, she initiated the first Polish BA pedagogical studies to combine early school education with art therapy. In this way, she initiated teaching art therapy at higher educational levels, although art therapy was not yet acknowledged as a separate scientific discipline. Another important stage in the development of the Kalisz Institute and of academic teaching of art therapists was Professor Szulc opening postgraduate art therapy studies in 2000. She was also elected a member of the UAM Senate for 2002–2005, which was another confirmation of the admiration for her work shown by the university (Szulc 2013: 135–137, 153; 2016b: 360–361; Chatzipentidis 2018: 80).

Despite taking up new obligations at UAM, Professor Szulc continued working with the AM. She continued to teach the subject “Culture therapy” in the Culture Therapy Office that she had created. Moreover, she taught “Ethno-nursing,” based on her own curricula, since 1996 at the Faculty of Health Sciences; since 1998 she conducted the course entitled “Art in Medicine” for the students of the First and Second Medical Faculties (Szulc 2001: 210–221; 2013: 118–119; 2016b: 356). This fruitful cooperation unexpectedly ended in September 2003, and six months later Prof. Szulc quit her job at UAM, too. The painful context of those decisions was the scholar's intolerance of inadmissible practices and bad manners in scientific work, such as publishing unauthorized articles in a medical journal without the necessary references, without the author's consent and with some co-authors added (Wroński 2004: 36; Szulc 2013: 115, 128–129; 2016b: 364–365; 2018: 54).

During the 2003–2004 academic year, Prof. Szulc started working at the University of Wrocław, where on 1 February 2004 she was

awarded the post of a professor, and since 2006 she served as director of the Department of Health Education and Art Therapy of the Institute of Pedagogy of the University of Wrocław (UWr). Her most important achievement of this period was preparing and implementing doctoral art therapy studies within the doctoral programme in pedagogy. Also, she was a lecturer in the postgraduate bibliotherapy programme conducted at University of Wrocław Institute of Psychology and a supervisor of numerous dissertations (Szulc et al. 2010: 10; Szulc 2013: 167; 2016b: 361; Chatzipentidis 2018: 80–81). From 2003 to 2008, she also worked with the Humanist and Managerial College of Gniezno, where, on the basis of her own programme, she taught a course called “Introduction to the world of culture and art” (Szulc 2013: 138).

Although she was already 70 years old and retired, Prof. Szulc remained an active academic teacher. After finishing work at UWr, on 1 October 2011 she began working as an associate professor in the Department of Pedagogy of the Faculty of Social and Humanist Sciences in Witelon Higher Vocational School in Legnica, where she introduced elements of the knowledge of art therapy within the course entitled “Cultural education.” Also, numerous issues related to art therapy were included in the dissertations written by students under the supervision of Prof. Szulc. Another stage of advancing the educational offerings of the school in Legnica was opening the postgraduate studies in “Pedagogical therapy with art therapy” and the qualification course “Art therapy” (Szulc 2013: 168; 2016b: 362; Chatzipentidis 2018: 81; nauka-polska.pl, n.d.), both of which were organized by Prof. Szulc.

The last educational institution in which Prof. Wita Szulc was employed was the University of Zielona Góra, where starting in 2018 she directed the Art Therapy Laboratory in the Department of Social Rehabilitation of the Faculty of Social Sciences (pedagogika.wns.uz.zgora.pl, n.d.).

### Masters, guides and partners of Wita Szulc’s scientific adventure

Wita Szulc mentioned many important people in the context of her educational and scientific development, but those who were the most inspiring for her were the teachers of classical philology

in Poznań: Prof. Jan Sajdak, Prof. Wiktor Steffen and Prof. Andrzej Wójcik (Szulc 2013: 105–106). Prof. Heliodor Muszyński, one of the most recognisable Polish pedagogues in the 1970s and the main representative of the socialist pedagogy trend, was the supervisor of her thesis, entitled “Historia studenckiego ruchu Pro Musica” [The history of the Pro Musica Students’ Movement], written at the Warsaw College of Adult Education (Kowolik 2007; Szulc 2013: 103, 112–113; 2016b: 352, 357–358).

The above-mentioned Prof. Stanisław Pietraszko, the creator of cultural studies in Wrocław and a model of scientific reliability, wisdom, knowledge and faithfulness to one’s values (Bednarek 2012: 8), was the supervisor of the dissertation called “Propaganda and information activity of the common self-defence troops created in work places,” which was the crowning of the postgraduate Cultural and Educational programme at UWr. The lecturers included other important scholars, such as Prof. Dzierżymir Jankowski and Prof. Józef Kargul. The formula of the postgraduate study worked out by Prof. Pietraszko was—in the opinion of Wita Szulc—an unequalled model to which she consciously referred later in her life while preparing her own programmes of art therapy postgraduate studies. Szulc’s scientific collaboration with Prof. Pietraszko took the form of a seven-year individual doctoral seminar that resulted in the above-mentioned dissertation (Szulc 2013: 50, 113–114, 117–118).

The director of the main library of AM in Poznań, Bolesław Howorka, MA, directed Szulc’s attention to the problem of cultural activation of the sick and organizing it (Szulc 2013: 11). Also, as a young graduate and a new employee, Szulc was greatly supported by the following directors of various departments of AM: Joanna Krajnikowa, Laura Wołowicka and Bożena Galas-Zgorzalewicz. According to Wita Szulc, Galas-Zgorzalewicz exerted a huge influence on her in terms of acquiring good practices that are very important in scientific work, e.g. carefully referring to the status of research, expressing objections while formulating assessments and complying with the established time limits during lectures (Szulc 2013: 11–12, 118; 2016b: 354–355). In the context of the course of the scholar’s academic career, it is also worth mentioning Prof. Jerzy Rubiński, an artist/musician who contributed a lot to the development of the Kalisz UAM department. In 1996, he offered Wita Szulc the post

of director of the Department of Early School Education and Art Therapy, and he supported the initiatives that were instituted there (Szulc 2013: 135, 153; 2016b: 360).

One of the most important aspects of Wita Szulc's scientific work was her contact with people in Poland and abroad who were engaged in research on using various areas of art in healing, helping and developmentally supporting people. In this short article it is impossible to mention all those people. Szulc's active participation in numerous conferences, symposiums and workshops facilitated her professional and personal relationships with art therapy theoreticians and practitioners, gave her access to valid resources of knowledge, enabled her to trace changes and tendencies in research and made it possible for her to introduce foreign authors' achievements into the Polish scientific community. Also, participating in such events enabled Szulc to present her own ideas and solutions to other scholars, and to compare them with their concepts. In this manner, meetings and correspondence with other researchers became an occasion for an authentic and full scientific exchange.

### From cultural education to art therapy: Areas of research

Professor Szulc's interests and scientific research led her from reflections on the phenomenon of culture and its meaning for social life as well as on models for popularizing culture and introducing people to culture, through a psychological and social definition and analysis of the notion of "cultural needs," to the formulation of her own concept of cultural activation of the sick in order to support their healing process, i.e. culture therapy. One of the most popular forms of culture therapy in the 1970s and 1980s was therapy through education that included organizing cultural and educational classes in various closed facilities. Although the term "culture therapy" was not very popular in the Polish scientific literature and, over time, it has been replaced with the term "art therapy" in a series of publications from the 1980s and 1990s, Szulc, in many of her texts, emphasized the similarities between the two concepts that are based on using cultural means as therapeutic tools (Szulc 2011: 23–25, 57–60; 2013: 7–10).

As a certified librarian with a doctorate in cultural studies, at the beginning of the 1980s Wita Szulc became familiar with a scientific

approach to therapy using literature and music that was being applied in Wrocław academic circles. This encouraged her to recognize the ability to use art in the broader context of medicine. Her scientific background made it possible for her to deal with the theory of using art in therapy and to later develop and order her knowledge of art therapy. As she learnt the forms and methods of bibliotherapy addressed to hospital patients and the philosophy and technique of music therapy applied to the sick and others who wished to optimize the quality of their lives, Szulc also started to use art in hospital practice (Szulc 2016b: 352, 354).

The research on the way hospital patients use books and the organization of hospital libraries helped Szulc to describe the theoretical foundations and practical applications of bibliotherapy. An important area of her research was studying the sources and development of this therapeutic form in Poland and abroad. Through her own, unpublished translation of a book by Rhea Joyce Rubin (*Bibliotherapy Sourcebook*) and selected American monographs, Szulc enriched Polish scientific literature with ordered knowledge of bibliotherapy and its American model, paying special attention to the methods and evaluation tools used in bibliotherapy. Another important effect of her studies on the use of literature in therapy was the suggestion to move from the traditional formula of book therapy (counselling in the selection of proper books) to narrative therapy, which included the suggestion to introduce adequate changes in educating future bibliotherapists (Szulc 2011: 129–130, 147, 150–151; 2013: 10; Chatzipentidis 2018: 79–80).

Another important field of her scientific exploration was using music in the processes of healing and recovery. Wita Szulc perceived music as the best form of art therapy due to the versatility of music as a medium (Szulc 2011: 88). In her publications she dealt with issues such as the paradigms and methods of scientific research used in music therapy, discussing in detail theoretical foundations and premises that make it possible to treat music therapy as a scientific discipline. Referring to the rich output of Polish music therapy—e.g. to the work of Prof. Tadeusz Natanson, the author of a preventive and educational specialization—Szulc analysed new concepts of classification, as well as theoretical suggestions and methods that appeared in the world literature. One of her important contributions

was introducing and promoting in the Polish scientific discourse the methodological distinction between “musical medicine” and “music therapy,” according to Cheryl Dileo Maranto. Wita Szulc’s writings on the development and prospects of music therapy was characterized by the versatility of her approach, which took into account both cognitive-research and task-purpose perspectives. She paid much attention to new scopes of using music therapy in healing people with deep psychological trauma and victims of war or disasters, as well as in supporting people during childbirth. While analysing the role of music in easing pain, she indicated its important consolatory function in reminiscence art therapy. Also, the scholar’s scientific research focussed on the issue of educating music therapists and on the models and standards of vocational education in use (Szulc 2001: 111–115; 2011: 88–128; 2013: 72; 2016b: 362–366).

While bibliotherapy and music therapy were the basic areas of Szulc’s research, she also published many texts on other subjects or combined forms of art therapy. Apart from texts on the above-mentioned narrative and reminiscence therapy (Szulc 2011: 83, 150–151; 2013: 154), she wrote about poetry therapy and its methodology (Szulc 2011: 152–165) and about photography therapy (Szulc 2011: 166–173; 2013: 58–59). The researcher was also interested in horticultural therapy, i.e. garden therapy. She claimed that a garden, as a product of culture that performs utilitarian functions for satisfying a person’s needs, such as beauty, relaxation or prestige, has a permanent place and application in culture therapy. Referring to the output of Diane Relf, Szulc provided her readers with recommendations and guidelines encouraging people to create garden therapy programmes in therapeutic, educational and recreation centres. Such programmes were meant to help people develop their personality by being among plants and working with them (Szulc 2005: 17–21; 2011: 174–189).

One of Szulc’s greatest contributions to the development of Polish art therapy was her pioneer research, taken up with Andrzej Twardowski, PhD on the use of combined forms of art therapy in supporting dyslectic children. In the method they worked out, they mainly included artistic and musical techniques, but they also applied drama and visualization. The effects of a year’s work with a dyslectic child confirmed the effectiveness of such therapy and its attractiveness for the patient (Szulc 2001: 136–143, 223–239; 2013: 70, 155).

While indicating the most important areas of research carried out by Professor Szulc, which included the history, methodology, theory and practice of art therapy, it is worth emphasizing that her published scientific output includes more than a dozen monographs and more than 250 articles, conference lectures and chapters in collective works (Chatzipentidis 2018: 83–99). Thus, she certainly deserves a separate book that includes a thorough analysis of her scientific achievements.

### Participation in scientific life

An important part of Professor Szulc's professional work was her active participation in scientific life. Starting from September 1980, when the Medical Academy in Katowice organized a conference entitled "Non-pharmacological treatment methods" (Szulc 2013: 9; 2016b: 352), she often participated in scientific symposiums and meetings organized by medical or musical communities in Poland, e.g. in the sessions in Radziejowice (near Warsaw) and in Jagniątkowo (near Jelenia Góra), which were fundamental for Polish art therapy (Szulc 2013: 138; 2016b: 355). In April 1992, a European Music Therapy Conference was organized in Cambridge under the title "Music therapy for health and education in the European Community" (Szulc 2013: 123–126; 2016b: 362). Starting from that event, Szulc regularly participated in foreign conferences organized by renowned international associations which gathered together people or institutions dealing with various areas of art therapy. According to the initial analysis of her published memoirs (Szulc 2013: 123–165; 2016b: 362–367, 371), the scholar took part in more than 50 foreign events, e.g. the World Congresses of Music Therapy in Hamburg (1996), Washington (1999) and Oxford (2002); the European Conferences of Music Therapy in Leuven (1998), Naples (2001), Jyväskylä (2004) and Cádiz (2010); European art therapy conferences in Ferrara (1994), London (1997 and 2009), Luxembourg (2001), Rethymno (2005), Tallinn (2007) and Helsinki (2010); and many other sessions and symposiums, in Rome (1997), Bari (1999), Riga (2007), Bratislava (2011) and Krems (2012).

During the congress in Hamburg in 1996, Wita Szulc was invited to participate in the works of the European Music Therapy Committee, an association working for the exchange, agreement and

cooperation of music therapists. As a representative of Poland, she took part in annual meetings of the committee in the Commission of Education, and then in the Commission of Scientific Research. Due to this participation, she contributed to the legal establishment of music therapy and the profession of music therapist and to the creation of educational standards in music therapy (Szulc et al. 2010: 10, 75–84; Szulc 2013: 129; 2016b: 360).

Since the conference in Ferrara, Szulc cooperated with the European Consortium for Arts Therapies Education (ECArTE)—an organization for European high schools that offer studies in various areas of art therapy. The basic objective of this consortium is to care for the academic standards of teaching art therapists in the European Union, which is why the schools which want to be a part of it must comply with specific criteria and curricula minimums that warrant the proper level of studies. Professor Szulc prepared a curriculum of doctoral studies that included an “Art therapy” module, which she taught within the doctoral studies in pedagogy. This made it possible for UWŕ to become the first Polish member of ECArTE on 1 May 2004. At the same time, Prof. Szulc was entrusted with the function of a representative of the consortium in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Szulc et al. 2010: 11–17 87; Szulc 2013: 133; 2013: 361, 370).

Caring about the quality of educating art therapists, apart from preparing the above-mentioned curricula of studies for academic institutions in Poznań, Wrocław and Legnica, in 2006–2007 Prof. Szulc created a two-level programme of BA and MA studies named “Music therapy” for the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice (Szulc et al. 2010: 89–92; Szulc 2013: 10, 138; 2016b: 352).

Professor Wita Szulc also prepared two important scientific meetings. In 1999, in Kalisz, she organized an all-Poland conference entitled “From cultural education to art therapy,” in which the most prominent Polish music and art therapists took part (Szulc 2013: 137–138). Then, in 2008, she organized the General Conference of the ECArTE and an accompanying scientific meeting in Wrocław (Szulc et al. 2010: 11–12, 45). Also, she was connected with two esteemed scientific journals dedicated to art therapy. She was a member of the Editorial Contact of the *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*, published in the Norwegian School of Special Pedagogy and Music

Therapy in Bergen, and since 2011 she was the president of the Scientific Council of the yearly *Bibliotherapeutic Review*, published by the Institute of Psychology at UW (Szulc 2013: 65, 125; Chatzipentidis 2018: 81).

In 2003 she created the first Association of Polish Art Therapists, which she named “Kajros.” The Association’s co-founders were employees of the Early School Education and Art Therapy Department of the Faculty of Pedagogy and Art at UAM in Kalisz and the first graduates of the studies conducted at that faculty. Wita Szulc was the first, and then—an honorary—president of the Association, and she played a very important role in integrating the community and in establishing art therapy quality standards and conditions for granting certificates (Szulc et al. 2010: 25; Szulc 2013: 15–16, 109, 138; Chatzipentidis 2018: 80; kajros.pl, n.d.). Another of Szulc’s important contributions to building the scientific community of art therapy in Poland was involving other researchers in scientific development, i.e. carrying out reviews in three doctoral and one habilitation proceedings, as well as promoting four doctors in the field of pedagogy from 2005 to 2010. Their dissertations were related to theatre therapy in people with limited intellectual ability (Anita Stefańska), music therapy for aggressive children (Diana Gulińska–Grzeluska), art therapy for shy children (Joanna Gładyszewska-Cylulko) and art therapy in inclusion classes (Michał Gutowski) (Szulc et al. 2010: 12, 201–206; Szulc 2013: 167–168; 2016b: 361; <http://kajros.pl>, n.d.; [nauka-polska.pl](http://nauka-polska.pl), n.d.).

As an expert in art therapy, Prof. Szulc took part in the evaluation of the international “Muza” Project carried out from 2014 to 2016 and dedicated to unconventional recreational therapies for hospitalized children and to the professional competences of therapists using such methods. During the last conference of the event, which was held in Ancona, Szulc gave a plenary lecture and participated in a public summarizing discussion (Szulc 2016a; Chatzipentidis 2018: 81).

Professor Szulc truly appreciated contact with students and academic didactic work. Apart from the above-mentioned classes conducted at her “home” universities, she shared her knowledge and experience in other domestic and foreign schools. She was also a lecturer at UMCS in Lublin, where she taught students of postgraduate studies in music therapy with elements of art therapy (Szulc 2013: 7).

She also gave occasional lectures at various schools in Boston, Oslo, Lviv and Zhytomyr (Szulc 2013: 125, 149, 165). Within the “Erasmus” project, from 2012 to 2018 she conducted classes at the Turkish Çukurova University in Adana, and classes for Turkish and Italian students in Legnica (Szulc 2013: 168; Chatzipentidis 2018: 81). Her last online lecture was given for students of art therapy at the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow.

Prof. Szulc died on 11 October 2021 in Poznań. After the Mass in the Church of the Assumption of St Mary in Poznań, the funeral ceremony was held on 19 October in Junikowo cemetery in Poznań (milenium.edu.pl, n.d.; nekrologi.net, n.d.).

## Summary

The above outline of Wita Szulc’s scientific career shows her as a creative, open and curious person dedicated to her scientific work aimed at ordering, developing and providing others with reliable knowledge of art therapy. In the course of her long-term research and didactic work, she paid much attention to both the historical roots of art therapy and the different theoretical concepts for using various areas of art in supporting an individual in the development of their potential. Her studies on the methodology of selected forms of art therapy, as well her as organizational and programme activities for the professional education of art therapists, were also very important for the development of art therapy in Poland. Her active participation in international scholarly events facilitated the critical reception of the current theories and research tendencies that are present in different art therapy centres and circles around the world. Also, it enabled her to share the experience and models which had been worked out in our country. We hope that her intellectual output will be thoroughly analysed and that it will inspire further generations of researchers.

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