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## Introduction

The need for perfection,  
the sense of responsibility and obligation,  
inner truthfulness,  
moral courage and [...]   
the love of human souls  
is the background and essence of  
what we called the “spirit of teaching.”<sup>10</sup>

Jan Władysław Dawid

Jan Władysław Dawid, when publishing his articles *On the Spirit of Teaching* in the first issues of the “Pedagogical Movement”, perhaps did not realise that his thoughts on the essence of teaching would still be valid in the next century. This great pedagogue was right about the fact that one should have a special calling in order to be a teacher. Only such a calling can make a person ready to perform a task which includes both the difficult art of education and that of generous service. As Władysława Szulakiewicz concludes, “the objective of education is shaping in people such principles of life that can make them wise and noble. And the virtue of wisdom, nobleness and humility would make their life meaningful”.<sup>11</sup> In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Stefan Sczaniecki convinced the young Jesuits who were taking their first steps in educational work of the exceptional significance and purposefulness of their efforts, quoting St. Thomas Aquinas who said that “the merit of teaching is greater than the merit of martyrdom.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> J.W. Dawid, *O duszy nauczycielstwa*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Warszawa 1946, p. 27. The first print in *Ruch Pedagogiczny* 1912, no. 3, pp. 49–55; no. 4, pp. 65–71.

<sup>11</sup> W. Szulakiewicz, *Nauczyciele i ich edukacja. W kręgu idei lwowskiej pedeutologii*, Toruń 2017, p. 194.

<sup>12</sup> J. Kochanowicz, *Podręcznik pedagogiki Stefana Sczanieckiego SJ z 1715 roku*, Kraków 2001, p. 33.

The teaching profession requires constant improvement, learning, as well as work on one's personal development. The teacher cannot remain in one place and, obviously, one has to admit that Robert Kwaśnica is correct in saying that the teacher must be supported in his or her development, as it is the teacher who influences the students with all his/her being.<sup>13</sup> Since teachers are people burdened with exceptional responsibility—educating young generations, i.e. shaping the future—the task should be fulfilled by the best of the best. As the texts collected in this issue confirm, we can often spot such people. However, the paradox is that practically everyone has access to the job, as “the university education is not a problem for many people, and the personality traits of future teachers are not identified in any way.”<sup>14</sup> What should be done in this situation? How can we change the system of educating teachers? What requirements should be placed before candidates for the job? How can we make sure that educational institutions are provided with teachers whose motto is the Ignatian principle of *magis*<sup>15</sup>—reaching for more?

There have been many great teachers in history and, hopefully, there will also be many teachers in the future who will be exceptional, outstanding and unique, as well as open for development, emphatic, authentic, and—as Jan Władysław Dawid said—possessing a higher spiritual element: “the love of human souls.”<sup>16</sup> Obvious examples of such people include Socrates, Ignatius of Loyola, Jan Amos Komeński, Stanisław Konarski, Maria Montessori, Janusz Korczak, Maria Grzegorzewska, Alexander S. Neill, and many others. Indubitably, those are personalities whose place in culture and education is recognised and appreciated, and whose life and activity is still inspiring. Apart from those teachers, there have been many others who not

<sup>13</sup> Cf. R. Kwaśnica, *Wprowadzenie do myślenia. O wspomaganianiu nauczycieli w rozwoju*, Wrocław 1994, p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> A. Królikowska, B. Topij-Stempińska, “Wizerunek nauczyciela we współczesnym społeczeństwie polskim,” *Edukacja Elementarna w Teorii i Praktyce* 2014, no. 4, p. 19.

<sup>15</sup> According to Ewa Dybowska, the notion of *magis*, which is characteristic of Ignatius of Loyola's approach, “is called the principle of aiming at perfectionism, the principle of maximalism, constant progress, incessant aiming at what is better, more fruitful, more perfect.” E. Dybowska, *Wychowawca w pedagogice ignacjańskiej*, Kraków 2013, p. 173.

<sup>16</sup> J.W. Dawid, *O duszy nauczycielstwa*, op. cit., pp. 9, 11, 27.

only taught and educated, but also became involved in social and cultural activity. They made their unique contribution to the promotion of ideas, transferring values, shaping traditions, etc. They constantly encouraged, motivated, inspired others. They left their traces, not only in the form of material things, but also in the non-material dimension, being kept in people's memory. However, it is not the very fact of remembering them that is important. The task of contemporary researchers is much more difficult—historical research is to “reinforce people's trust in the knowledge about scientists,”<sup>17</sup> pedagogues, teachers, and creators of art and culture. The contemporary society should ensure that historical research is not only a biography, a set of certain facts, but also a reliable, complex study on the life and activity of people whose task is the education of the younger generation. Such an approach stems from the assumption that all the facts that come from the past occurred due to individuality, so they are not objectively available and have to be interpreted. According to Krystyna Ablewicz, “understanding” the facts is necessary as “in history they are not isolated, but placed within the field of understanding oneself and other people.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> B. Śliwerski, “Pamięć społeczna a historyczna w naukach pedagogicznych,” in: *Umieszczeni w przeszłości. Pamięć w naukach pedagogicznych*, ed. W. Szulakiewicz, Toruń 2016, p. 45.

<sup>18</sup> K. Ablewicz, *Hermeneutyczno-fenomenologiczna perspektywa badań w pedagogice*, Kraków 1994, p. 46.