

Władysław Szulakiewicz  
ORCID: 0000-0001-8614-2955  
Ignatianum University in Cracow

# “A Good Teacher”: Outline of the Concept of Pedeutological Research by Jadwiga Zaleska (1900–1993)

## ABSTRACT

This article contributes to the field of historical pedeutology. Its purpose is to reconstruct the concept of *A good teacher* as presented through the statements of school youth collected by Jadwiga Zaleska. This project was initiated within Kazimierz Sośnicki's pedagogical seminar. The main subject of the research is the question of what defines a good teacher, what are their qualities and conditions necessary for effective pedagogical practice. The main research method involved historical and pedagogical analysis of archival and published sources related to this topic.

The first part of the article outlines a brief biography of Jadwiga Zaleska, detailing her educational path and pedagogical studies at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, along with information on her educational activities. The second part discusses the methodological foundations of Zaleska's research on the theme of “a good teacher,” and presents findings that helped shape the profile of an ideal educator. This analysis revealed a vision of a teacher primarily viewed through a normative lens. Finally, the concluding remarks indicate the enduring relevance of Zaleska's project dedicated to defining the characteristics of a good teacher, as well as the soundness of the methodological approach she employed.

## KEYWORDS

Jadwiga Zaleska,  
pedeutology, research  
concept, good teacher,  
teacher's profile,  
pedagogical activity

SPI Vol. 27, 2024/2  
e-ISSN 2450-5366

DOI: 10.12775/SPI.2024.2.003en  
Submitted: 31.07.2023  
Accepted: 14.12.2023

A truly good teacher, endowed with pedagogical and instructional skills, deeply passionate about young people, wholeheartedly dedicated to the school, continuously improving themselves, and aware of their significant responsibility—even within a flawed school system—can fulfill their noble calling almost entirely. If we had only good teachers, exemplary both as educators and citizens, the matter of the school system would likely take on a secondary role.

(Twardowski 1912: 13)

## Introductory remarks

The question of what constitutes a good teacher remains both relevant and open-ended. Efforts to define the qualities of a good teacher can be seen in the work of numerous twentieth-century pedagogical theorists, including Jadwiga Zaleska, who began her career in the 1920s.

Jadwiga Leontyna Zaleska was part of the generation of Polish intelligentsia who survived the First and Second World Wars. She was a secondary school and university teacher, a scout leader, a participant in clandestine education during World War II, an active member of the Home Army, and a prominent social and educational activist. Her life and career were associated with various university cities, namely Lviv, Toruń, Warsaw, and Gdańsk. Despite her significant contributions, historiography has thus far paid limited attention to her. Only a few biographical accounts devoted to her work in secondary education and scouting have been published, mainly in the form of anniversary and memoir pieces (Zaleska Jadwiga Leontyna 2006: 773–774; Sołtys 1993: 10; Sroczyńska-Wyczańska 1989: 391; Tarnawska 1995: 187–195; Zając 1997: 5).

This article is primarily concerned with Zaleska's time in Toruń, particularly her academic studies and teaching at Nicolaus Copernicus University (Polish abbreviation: UMK), with a focus on her development of a concept for pedeutological research. It should be noted that Zaleska played an essential role in the early days of the University of Toruń and the establishment of university-level pedagogical studies

in the city.<sup>1</sup> Her concept of pedeutological research was encapsulated in her master's thesis, completed under the mentorship of Kazimierz Sośnicki, an outstanding pedagogue and founder of Toruń's academic pedagogy (Nalaskowski, Szulakiewicz 2009; Pólturzycki 2003: 19–27; Wołoszyn 1989: 295–301). The article is based mainly on archival sources housed in the Archives of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, including materials concerning Zaleska's studies, her professional biography, including certificates of her work as a teacher and, finally, her master's thesis.

## Jadwiga Leontyna Zaleska: Educational and professional biography

Jadwiga Zaleska was born in 1900 in Sanok, into the distinguished Zaleski noble family, bearing the Jelita coat of arms and known for its rich patriotic traditions. Her father was a doctor, and her mother was a teacher. Zaleska's educational and professional journey spanned several cities, including Sanok, Lviv, Gdańsk, Warsaw, and Toruń. Her educational and professional life can be divided into three main periods: before the Second World War, during the war and occupation, and after the war.

### *Stages of Jadwiga Zaleska's education*

Zaleska completed primary school and an eight-grade secondary school in Sanok, where she also passed her final exams. Between 1921 and 1924, during the interwar period, she pursued studies at Jan Kazimierz University (UJK) in Lviv. Her main field of study was Polish philology, with French philology as a secondary subject and philosophy as a required subject obligatory for students of Polish and French (WH UMK, sygn. 107. Zaświadczenie o odbytych studiach na UJK). During her time at UJK, she attended lectures, classes, and seminars conducted by such eminent professors as

---

1 The beginnings of the formation of the UMK structures, including Toruń's pedagogy, are mentioned in the following publications: Bandura 1965; Duczowska-Moraczewska 1995; Nadolski 1957; Pleśniarski 1957; Tomczak 1995.

Kazimierz Twardowski,<sup>2</sup> Henryk Ułaszyn, Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński, Wilhelm Bruchnalski, Juliusz Kleiner, and Zygmunt Czerny. Records also indicate that she studied under Mścisław Wartenberg, Jan Kasprowicz, Konstanty Wojciechowski, Eugeniusz Kucharski, Edward Porębowicz, and Fr. Władysław Żyła.<sup>3</sup> It is notable that her examinations with these professors were consistently graded as excellent or very good.

Zaleska enrolled in pedagogy studies in Toruń on January 5, 1946. In her questionnaire, she reported that during the occupation she organized and conducted secret teaching for junior high and secondary school students. From 1939 to 1944, she led the Secret Examination Boards in Sanok. In addition, she taught Polish language and literature, business correspondence, and physical exercises at the non-secret Polish Trading School. During the 1944/45 school year, she taught Polish, Latin, and physical exercises at the Queen Jadwiga State Secondary and Junior High School in Sanok (A UMK, WH, Akta studenckie, sygn. 107. Ankieta).

When she submitted her certificate of studies from Lviv (1921–1924) to the authorities of the Faculty of Humanities at Nicolaus Copernicus University (UMK), she requested that the Faculty Council consider these studies as part of her master's exam, with Polish philology as a secondary subject and pedagogy as the main subject (WH UMK, Akta studenckie, sygn. 107). The Examination Board at the Faculty of Humanities at UMK in Toruń approved her request, and noted in the verification protocol that her studies and examinations in Polish philology at UJK were recognized as equivalent to an examination in Polish philology within the field of pedagogy, with a result of "very good" (WH UMK, Akta studenckie, sygn. 107. Protokół weryfikacyjny).<sup>4</sup>

2 For a more extensive discussion of Kazimierz Twardowski's pedeutological views, see Szulakiewicz 2014: 5–19.

3 Many of her documents were lost during the war, which is why the truthfulness of the information about the course of her studies was confirmed by, among others: Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński, Zygmunt Czerny, Juliusz Kleiner, Henryk Ułaszyn (WH UMK, Akta studenckie, sygn. 107. Zaświadczenie o odbytych studiach na UJK w latach 1921–1924).

4 The UMK Examination Commission, which gave its opinion on Zaleska's request, included the following Professors: Bronisław Włodarski, Konrad Górski, Eugeniusz Śluszkiewicz, and Stefan Srebrny.

Her time at Toruń marked the second stage of her university education. This time she pursued pedagogical studies at Nicolaus Copernicus University.<sup>5</sup> She enrolled at the age of 46 (A UMK, Akta studenckie, sygn. 107). By then, she was already an experienced teacher who had completed excellent studies at Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv. During her pedagogical studies at UMK, her instructors and examiners included Henryk Elzenberg (History of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, History of Modern Philosophy), Tadeusz Czeżowski (Logic with Methodology and Theory of Cognition), and Andrzej Lewicki (General Psychology).<sup>6</sup> Kazimierz Sośnicki served as an examiner for a subject titled "Pedagogy and Didactics with a Review of Contemporary Trends in and Special Reference to the Views of One Contemporary Pedagogical Author, School Legislation, and Organization of Schooling." Moreover, Sośnicki, alongside Jadwiga Lechicka, examined Zaleska in "History of Upbringing, Including the History of Upbringing in Poland Against the Background of Social Development and Ethical Currents," and, with Andrzej Lewicki, examined her in "Upbringing Psychology and Experimental Pedagogy."

Apart from the previously mentioned examinations in the curriculum, Zaleska took both written and oral exams in educational psychology and pedagogy on August 29, 1949, with Sośnicki and Lewicki as examiners. For the written exam, she chose from three proposed topics: Educational Realism in Soviet Pedagogy, Analysis of the Feeling of Disappointment and Its Pedagogical Meaning, and Within What Limits Must Upbringing Consider the Developmental Phases? She selected the second topic. Her written response consisted of 12 pages and was assessed as very good by both Lewicki and Sośnicki, with their opinions documented in the examination protocol.

---

5 Jadwiga Zaleska's field of study was both psychology and pedagogy. Writing an opinion in relation to her employment, Andrzej Lewicki stated: "student of the fourth year of psychology and pedagogy (upbringing psychology)". See: A UMK, Akta osobowe, sygn. K-1/344. Opinia z 1949 r.

6 In the examination questionnaire, Andrzej Lewicki added (apart from a very good mark): "The candidate demonstrated a very good level of knowledge, diligence and accuracy in the use of scientific terms, and a high degree of composure" (A UMK, WH, Akta studenckie, sygn. 107).

Sośnicki's assessment was as follows:

The study on the topic focuses on the analysis of the feeling of disappointment, while the second part of the topic—its pedagogical significance—has not been discussed thoroughly enough. It is noteworthy that the entire content presented in the study was constructed by the author almost independently and creatively; she could not rely on reproducing pre-learned knowledge, as the topic in its entirety lacks monographic studies in the scientific literature, and relevant materials are rare. Thus, the study is more of a sketch compiling various issues related to the feeling of disappointment than a comprehensive treatment of the topic. Given the considerable independence in approaching the subject and considering that the sketch presented can be regarded as fully successful, the work should be rated as very good. August 30, 1949. (WH UMK, Akta studenckie, sygn. 107)

Lewicki, in his assessment, wrote:

The candidate has provided an insightful and generally accurate psychological analysis of the experience of 'disappointment', and has put forward a series of plausible hypotheses regarding its physiological symptoms. While the analysis is based on Adler's theory of individual psychology, it is perhaps too one-sided for the author to portray the experience of disappointment as a relatively negative and inhibiting moment in psychological development. It should be noted that such experiences can also sober a person up and correct their unrealistic views of knowledge and reality. (WH UMK, Akta studenckie, sygn. 107)

Zaleska's oral examination in upbringing psychology was highly rated by both professors.

After successfully completing her exams, on June 26, 1949, Jadwiga Zaleska submitted a request to the Commission of Master's Examinations at UMK to recognize her thesis, *Dobry nauczyciel w świetle wypowiedzi młodzieży szkolnej* [*A Good Teacher in the Light of the Statements Made by School Youth*], as fulfilling the requirements for a Master's thesis in pedagogy ("Upbringing psychology and experimental pedagogy in a detailed study" [A UMK, WH UMK, sygn. 107]). On August 30, 1949, she was awarded the degree of Master of Philosophy, marking the completion of her higher education in pedagogy. During her time at UMK, both as a student and faculty member, she collaborated mainly with Sośnicki and Lewicki (Kulikowska

1986: 187–193; Zaleska Jadwiga Leontyna 2006: 410–411; Rzepa, Dobroczyński 2019: 138, 216, 256; Stachowski 1992: 134–135).<sup>7</sup>

After completing her master's degree, Zaleska began work on her doctoral dissertation titled *Attitude of Children and Youth towards the Laws of Motor and Mental Game*.<sup>8</sup> However, she did not complete the dissertation due to her return to Sanok.

In addition to her university studies, Zaleska completed various other educational programs during the interwar period. These included the State Course of Physical Education in Lviv (1923–1924), the Course of Physical Education for Foreigners in Lund, Sweden, and the Course of Gymnastics using the Björkstén method in Ryslinge, Denmark—both of which she completed in 1930. Her trip to Scandinavia was made upon the recommendation of the Ministry of Education. In 1928, she earned a secondary school teaching diploma in physical education in Lviv (A UMK, WH, Akta studenckie, sygn. 107; A UMK, Akta osobowe H-3/103. Przebieg studiów).

#### *Professional work: Jadwiga Zaleska as a teacher*

Jadwiga Zaleska worked as a teacher in various educational institutions in several cities, including Sanok, Lviv, Gdańsk, Toruń, and Warsaw. She began her teaching career in 1919 in her hometown of Sanok (A UMK, Akta osobowe, sygn. H-3/103. Życiorys, Przebieg pracy zawodowej).<sup>9</sup> That year, she participated in educational work by teaching an elementary education course for illiterate women (housemaids). After obtaining her teaching certificate in 1928, she started regular pedagogical work, i.e. she taught Polish language and literature as well as physical education at secondary schools in Sanok and Lviv.

7 Andrzej Lewicki (1910–1972), student of Mieczysław Kreutz and Juliusz Kleiner, head of the first Department of Clinical Psychology in Poland (Poznań).

8 The subject of the doctoral dissertation is given after: A UMK, Akta osobowe, sygn. K-1/344. Information in Lewicki's opinion. The topic is given incorrectly by Edward Zając who claims that it was on the Commission on National Education (Zając 1997: 5).

9 I provide all the details of her career and education in accordance with the documents contained in the archival sources, i.e. Personal Files, which include relevant copies of diplomas, certificates, as well as CVs and opinions.

From 1930 to 1932, she worked at the Central Institute of Physical Education in Warsaw, where she taught the history and methodology of physical education and served as an instructor and supervisor in the women's department. Additionally, in 1930 and during the years 1932–1937, she taught at the Polish Secondary School of the Gdańsk Educational Centre (Janik 1996: 208–209; Zaleska 1989: 225–226). From 1937 until the outbreak of World War II, Zaleska was a full-time teacher at the Queen Jadwiga State Secondary and Junior High School in Toruń, as well as an instructor in physical education, military preparation, and scouting, at the request of the Toruń District School Superintendent's Office (A UMK Akta osobowe, sygn. H-3/103).

She remained committed to her pedagogical mission during the war and German occupation. Zaleska took every available opportunity to teach in Sanok, where she had returned from Toruń at the outbreak of World War II. After the war ended, she returned to Toruń to teach at the Queen Jadwiga State Secondary and Junior High School starting on September 1, 1945. She also served as an instructor of physical education and military preparation at the request of the Pomeranian District School Superintendent's Office in Toruń, while simultaneously studying at Nicolaus Copernicus University (UMK).

Even before formally beginning her university studies, she was entrusted with teaching responsibilities at UMK (A UMK, Akta osobowe, K-1/344 i H-3/103<sup>10</sup>). Starting on December 1, 1945, she taught physical education and, in subsequent years, conducted courses and lectures in various subjects, including Physical Education for Women, Bodily Exercises from Physical Exercises for Women, Theory of Physical Education, Experimental Psychology, and Psychology. Additionally, before completing her degree, she applied for a position at the UMK Library, stating, "After 25 years of teaching in general secondary education, I would like—while simultaneously preparing for my master's degree in pedagogy—to work in the library." Her application received strong support from Sośnicki, who wrote: "Zaleska is in the process of completing her master's degree in pedagogy. She is one of the most diligent and talented students in the Department of

---

10 Among the sources (A UMK, Akta osobowe), there are letters and opinions connected with her subsequent employment: by the Rector Ludwik Kolankowski, Prof. Lewicki and Prof. Sośnicki. Some of the documents are repeated; they are both in collection K-3/103 and in collection K-1/344.



Pedagogy. I strongly support her request” (A UMK, Akta osobowe K-3/103. Pismo z 11 X 1947 r.).

All preserved sources attest to her exceptional skills as a pedagogue, her dedication to Poland and its youth, and her commitment to the institutions where she worked. The following opinions from her superiors illustrate this dedication. Zaleska’s work certificate, issued by the Principal of the Secondary and Junior High School in Sanok on July 7, 1945, includes the following note:

J. Zaleska worked at this establishment as a teacher of Polish, Latin, and physical education during the academic year 1944/45. She regarded her work, for which she prepared very conscientiously, as a profound national and social duty, and brought with her to the school a great sense of responsibility, conscientiousness, and dedication. Her tact and kindness made her well-liked and respected by everyone. She supervised the development of scouting and sports and took an active part in all school events. In addition to her patriotism, her work was characterized by deep idealism. (A UMK, Akta osobowe K-1/344)

At UMK, Zaleska was highly regarded as an academic. When submitting applications for her continued employment, Lewicki consistently emphasized her thorough preparation and her conscientiousness in fulfilling her duties. In a 1947 opinion, he wrote: “Because of her conscientiousness and capacity for scientific work, she is highly suitable for the position of University assistant.” In a 1949 statement, he added: “Given her education and extensive pedagogical experience, she is an asset, marked by a high degree of accuracy and conscientiousness in her work, and demonstrates excellent command of psychological material.” Lewicki noted that she was simultaneously conducting a physical education seminar, a free physical education lecture for all students, and performing administrative duties, including library work. In addition, she was giving a series of lectures on physical education as part of the Training Course for Teachers Involved in Summer Holiday Programs for Children and Youth in Toruń (A UMK, Akta osobowe, sygn. K-3/103). She delivered these and other course lectures free of charge.<sup>11</sup> In another letter, Lewicki, in requesting that the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities nominate Zaleska as a senior assistant, stated: “The personal qualifications of J. Zaleska, MA, also speak in

---

11 She gave lectures to day care center managers.

favour of the nomination. She is a very reliable and conscientious worker, exhibits strong didactic abilities, and as a result, enjoys the trust and appreciation of students who seek her out for consultations, often even outside office hours” (Opinia z roku 1951).

It should be mentioned that Zaleska experienced some health problems during her time in Toruń, as evidenced by medical certificates and sick leaves. One certificate states: “I certify that Jadwiga Zaleska, examined today, suffers from general exhaustion and ... rest is recommended” (A UMK H-3/103, Medical Certificate from March 2, 1950). These health issues, along with family problems, led her to write a letter on April 25, 1951, to the head of the Department of Psychology, requesting not to be considered for permanent employment as an assistant.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, her work at UMK concluded on August 31, 1951 (Zaleska Jadwiga Leontyna 2006: 774), and she returned to Sanok, despite Lewicki, then head of the Department of Psychology, expressing plans to continue her employment, as evidenced by his correspondence.

Upon her return to Sanok, she became head of the library at the Automobile Industry Technical School. She retired in 1964 but remained actively engaged in social and cultural activities. She was a member of organizations such as the Polish Gymnastic Society “Sokół” [Falcon], the Catholic Intelligentsia Club, and the Polish Teachers’ Trade Union. Jadwiga Zaleska devoted her entire life to teaching and to social and cultural activities. She combined her teaching work with social and scholarly work. A notable chapter in her life was her involvement in scouting, which she chronicled in her publications (Zaleska 1989: 151–165, 261–266). She died in Sanok on January 25, 1993.

## Profile of a good teacher in the light of Jadwiga Zaleska’s research

The material for this analysis was drawn from Jadwiga Zaleska’s master’s thesis, *A Good Teacher in the Light of the Statements Made*

---

12 This refers to her sister’s illness.

by *School Youth*.<sup>13</sup> Zaleska's pedeutological project was conducted as part of her university studies at UMK (UMK, Akta studenckie, sygn. 107. Praca magisterska). Her research, which took place in 1947 and 1948, was carried out in public schools. The thesis was supervised by Sośnicki, the founder of academic pedagogy in Toruń, and it was one of several dissertations on this topic produced under his seminar guidance.<sup>14</sup> The completed thesis spanned 69 pages, with additional collected materials organized in a separate folder.

The structure of Zaleska's work, as outlined in the table of contents, consisted of an introduction in which she defined: (1) the subject of the research, (2) the relevance of the concept of an "excellent teacher," and (3) the state of existing research in this area. The main body of the thesis was divided into two primary sections. (1) the origins of the survey and a detailed description of the preliminary work involved in designing the survey text and establishing its methodology, and (2) the data obtained from the first and second surveys.

In Part B, Zaleska presented her findings, organized as follows: (1) the results of the first survey, including participant demographics (e.g., place of residence, school, grade level, gender, and age), (2) key themes raised by students regarding the characteristics of a good teacher, (3) a profile of a good teacher based on students' statements, including a register of qualities and their interpretation, and (4) a comparison of students' preferences for a teacher's qualities with the demands of educational psychology and pedagogy.

The results of the second survey were further detailed in Part B (Section II), where Zaleska presented the following information:

1. Overview of survey participants
  - a. by place of residence, school, and class
  - b. by age and sex
  - c. by age, gender and class as a percentage.
2. Summary of the results of survey two.

---

13 Further in the footnotes I use the abbreviation of the title of the work: *A Good Teacher*.

14 Zaleska's thesis was one of several research projects developed under Sośnicki's seminar. Studies devoted to the role of the teacher were conducted under the guidance of this supervisor by, among others: Ludwik Bandura, Maria Lipowska, Fr. Zygfryd Kowalski, and others.

3. Based on the statements of young people participating in the survey, the profiles include insights from students in individual classes, as well as comparisons between the 11–15 and 16-year-old age groups, broken down by gender.
4. Features added by young people in printed lists of features.
5. Final conclusions. Conclusion.

The structure of this work also includes the following sections: Bibliography, List of Tables, List of Charts, and List of Materials.

The subject literature used in this study is critical to the topic and warrants particular attention. Zaleska draws upon works on the psychological and pedagogical foundations of pedeutology. Among the authors cited in her work are Stefan Baley, Jan Władysław Dawid, Wanda Dzierzbicka, Georg Kerschensteiner, Franciszek Kieffer, Mieczysław Kreutz, Zygmunt Mysłakowski, Bogdan Nawroczyński, Kazimierz Sośnicki, Stefan Szuman, and Zdzisław Żerebecki.

Two of these authors, Kieffer<sup>15</sup> and Żerebecki, who may be less familiar to Polish readers, deserve special attention. Kieffer is the author of the book *Autorytet w wychowaniu domowym i szkolnym* [*Authority in Home and School Upbringing*], in which Zaleska cites his directives for good conduct: 1) Control yourself; 2) Understand the child, 3) Respect the child, 4) Love the child, 5) Be firm, 6) Treat punishment as a last resort, 7) Praise and reprimand in a timely and precise manner (*Dobry nauczyciel...*, p. 7).<sup>16</sup> Żerebecki's publication<sup>17</sup> titled *Nauczyciel – szkice o zawodzie nauczycielskim* [*Teacher: Sketches on the Teaching Profession*], outlines the views of John Adams (1857–1934),<sup>18</sup> a professor of pedagogy. It categorizes the roles of a teacher into three groups: public roles, professional roles, and personal roles.

Zaleska uses these works not only to present a theoretical perspective on the subject in the first part of her thesis, but also to interpret the collected research results. This includes analyses of developmental

---

15 Kieffer Francis (1864–1940) – a canon priest; superior general of the Society of Mary.

16 These issues were extensively discussed in Kieffer's publication, see Kieffer 1934: 31–150.

17 Zdzisław Żerebecki (1896–1968), Polish teacher and consular officer, graduate of the UJK.

18 John Adams (1857–1934), professor of pedagogy at the University of London. Author of many publications on education.

characteristics, the specific features of school classrooms, the roles of teachers in their professional work, and the psychological and pedagogical aspects of the teaching profession.

Zaleska uses these works not only to present a theoretical perspective on the subject in the first part of her thesis, but also to interpret the collected research results. This includes analyses of developmental characteristics, the specific features of school classrooms, the roles of teachers in their professional work, and the psychological and pedagogical aspects of the teaching profession.

As Zaleska wrote in the Introduction, the purpose of this work is “to compile and evaluate the results of a survey conducted among young people in mainstream schools to gather material to sketch the profile of a good teacher—the kind of teacher that schoolchildren wish to have” (*Dobry nauczyciel...*, p. 2). In justifying the validity of her study, she cited various authors who identified various teacher characteristics. The study includes an impressive 34 tables, 40 charts, and questionnaires. In her research, Zaleska employed two questionnaires and written essays by young people addressing the following topics: 1. What do I like about a teacher and why? 2. What kind of teacher would I like to have and why? 3. Am I a teacher? When designing the questionnaires, she took into account criteria such as age, school, place of residence, and gender, and provided appropriate justifications for each. The research was conducted in schools located in Toruń, Inowrocław, Bydgoszcz, and Chełmża, with participants ranging in age from 11 to 16.

Particularly noteworthy is the detailed process that Zaleska followed in formulating the content of the questionnaires. According to her work, this process required significant time and effort, both during their creation and in the final evaluation of the research findings. Her reflections included considerations of methodological and stylistic principles, as well as the importance of clearly formulating the research problem. A substantial portion of her analysis was devoted to the strengths and limitations of the questionnaires she employed, referencing relevant literature (*Dobry nauczyciel...*, pp. 35–37). She also pointed out the differences between psychological and pedagogical approaches to the research process.

Zaleska paid considerable attention to the conditions under which the survey was conducted, and the instructions provided to

ensure proper administration. She raised “the issue of styling the survey text” so that it is understandable and encourages frank responses from participants. In her opinion, the topic or questions must be clearly formulated, as they guide respondents thinking. She also emphasized the significance of detailed survey instructions, as well as the importance of the time and location of the survey for the overall research process.

No less important, in Zaleska’s opinion, is the necessity of maintaining respondents’ anonymity and ensuring that the survey was administered by individuals who were not directly involved in teaching the young people surveyed. To conclude her remarks on the role of surveys in research, she discussed the process of analyzing the material contained in the collected questionnaires. She provided a register of the most important principles for designing and implementing surveys, adherence to which is essential for obtaining objective research results.

The results of the surveys were thoroughly discussed. She collected 731 responses from the first survey and 697 from the second. The surveys were carried out in 1947 and 1948. The second survey included a register of the qualities of a good teacher, ranked in order of importance and significance. In her interpretation and evaluation of the material, she wrote:

The survey contains many interesting, sometimes unsettling qualities of young people. It also has a touch of humor. The young people raised a vast range of topics, which can be grouped as follows: I. What kind of teacher would I strive to be?; II. Why did I choose the teaching profession?; III. The importance and hardship of the teaching profession; IV. Young people’s opinions on a. punishments used at school, b. student evaluation, c. didactic methods that enhance student performance, d. educational practices that have a beneficial influence on individuals and their peers e. the role of the school, f. the hierarchy of authorities, g. organizational structures; h. Young people’s interests, ambitions, ideals, and characteristics representative of the post-war era. (*Dobry nauczyciel...*, pp. 21–22)

Through her research, Zaleska created profiles of a good teacher, listing the qualities of successful educators and presenting them in charts and tables. She ensured that previously established criteria (age, gender, place of residence) were considered and referenced these criteria in her final conclusions (*Dobry nauczyciel...*, pp. 62–64). The

34 tables that organize the collected data are particularly commendable. The most noteworthy aspect of Zaleska's analysis is that she not only presented young people's opinions on the predefined criteria but also offered an in-depth interpretation of their perspectives on what makes a good teacher. Thus, it can be said that both the survey and its results were meticulously prepared. Her extensive knowledge and teaching experience undoubtedly contributed to the outstanding interpretation of the findings.

Without going into a detailed analysis of Zaleska's findings, it is worth citing some of the results she obtained from her research over 70 years ago. For example, it is worth recalling the responses students provided when asked, "Why did I choose the teaching profession?" Here are some of their responses: 1. *Poland lost many teachers during the war, imprisoned in camps.* 2. *Many children in villages do not attend school because there is no teacher.* 3. *I teach because I want Poland to be strong, as it was during King Sobieski's reign.* 4. *I have had a passion for teaching since I was young. I enjoy being with children.* 5. *I teach the subjects that interest me.* 6. *I was an excellent student as a child.* 7. *I am a university student and need to earn a living, so I teach.*

In interpreting these responses, Zaleska emphasized a range of motives for choosing the teaching profession, including: a. Inborn talents and passions; b. The belief that a teacher must be talented and knowledgeable; c. An awareness of the importance of schooling; d. Patriotism and an awareness of the country's needs; f. A desire to help—an active, service-oriented attitude; g. Utilitarianism—viewing the teaching profession as a source of income.

Regarding the question about the importance and hardships of the teaching profession, she cited the following opinions:

- The teacher raises boys to be good citizens.
- The teacher raises boys to be good Poles.

Regarding the question of why the teaching profession is difficult, she cited the following opinions:

- You have to work nights and on Sundays, and you have to forget about leisure activities.
- You have to talk a lot (straining your voice), and endure stress.

- You must tolerate poverty because the profession is poorly paid, which requires additional sources of income.<sup>19</sup>

Zaleska also devoted a lot of space in her analysis to the opinions of young people regarding school punishments and their evaluation of such practices. As an example, here are some of the opinions expressed by students on this topic: 1. Criticizing students for bad behavior is ineffective. It is better to address the root causes, such as separating those who misbehave; 2. Writing notes in the diary for being late was considered ineffective, and the methods used were seen as inappropriate; 3. Calling parents; 4. Corporal punishment (flogging); 5. Imposing financial fines for being late; 6. Detention at school after lessons; 6. Standing in the corner; 7. Assigning extra reading as punishment; 8. Lowering behavior grades and others. For each opinion regarding the use of punishment, Zaleska provided commentary. In general, students were opposed to punitive measures; they were rather inclined to seek other remedies to deal with the underlying causes of misconduct (*Dobry nauczyciel...*, pp. 22–24). Notably, students' statements regarding assessment revealed that most believed gifted and less gifted students should be assessed in different ways. According to the students, grades should reflect diligence rather than innate ability. Among their comments were, "Don't give bad grades at all," and "Asking questions that are graded is a form of terror."

The profiles of a good teacher, as shown in the tables and charts, varied depending on criteria such as age (*Dobry nauczyciel...*, p. 44). For example, 11-, 13-, and 15-year-olds prioritized teaching abilities and skills, which they expressed in statements like, "a good teacher is an expert in didactics." They ranked religiousness second, justice third, and "good organizer" fourth. Meanwhile, 12-year-olds placed "expert in didactics" first, justice second, and religiousness and being a good organizer jointly third. The opinions of 16-year-olds were noteworthy, as they listed teacher qualities in the following order: 1) religious, 2) energetic, and 3) expert in didactics and good organizer.

A review of the detailed data allows for general conclusions to be drawn: a good teacher is an excellent instructor, fair, a good organizer and applies disciplinary methods (both punishments and

---

19 Zaleska also cites unconventional responses from students, including one that compares a teacher's work to training a dog (*Dobry nauczyciel...*, p. 22).



rewards) appropriately. Religiousness was ranked highly by students, even though it appeared only ninth among the traits listed in their questionnaire. Overall, Zaleska's vision of a teacher was framed within a normative perspective (Smołalski 2006). The evaluation of the qualities of a good teacher varied slightly across individual classes, and differed between male and female students. In explaining these results, Zaleska cites sociological and psychological factors and references Stefan Baley's work, *Psychologia wychowawcza w zarysie* [*Outline of Upbringing Psychology*].

Three qualities of a good teacher were most frequently mentioned by students: teaching skills, religiousness, and fairness. Moreover, female students mentioned traits such as a caring instinct, patience, and education, whereas male students emphasized qualities such as attentiveness, punctuality, conscientiousness, and understanding; they also expressed disapproval of corporal punishment. The distinct characteristics of each class were reflected in student comments added on separate pieces of paper. Zaleska summarized these observations: "It is typical that the postulates within the individual classes concentrate around a specific virtue or vice of the teacher, as if that virtue or vice held particular importance for that class" (*Dobry nauczyciel...*, p. 48, 50).

In the Conclusion of the paper, Zaleska summarized the results of her research as follows:

In the questionnaire, young people provide material for studying the teacher's personality in both empirical and normative terms, shaped by their worldview. Such a survey becomes a reflection of the prevailing trends among the youth of the time. The judgments and beliefs expressed in this survey acquire, in a sense, a historical dimension. If the ideal of the teacher can be inferred from the goal of education, then the ideal outlined by the youth makes it possible to identify, to a certain extent, educational goals as perceived by the youth of that era. As a starting point for researching the personality of the teacher-pedagogue, we may consider: 1. (following David and Kreutz) the presumed essential qualities of pedagogical talent, or 2. (following Szuman) the specific effective activities of exemplary, outstanding, talented teachers. No matter which approach we choose, the voices of the youth will supplement and enrich the research material, becoming particularly valuable as they come directly from the lived experience of school life rather than from purely theoretical considerations. The educational influence of a diverse team of teachers can be clearly seen where the child's personality is shaped—at school. (*Dobry nauczyciel...*, p. 65)

The value of Zaleska's dissertation is confirmed by the opinions of the dissertation's supervisor and reviewer at the time of its acceptance for a master's degree. These opinions were authored by Sośnicki and Lewicki. Both scholars gave high praise to the dissertation although Lewicki also included some critical remarks.<sup>20</sup> In contrast, Sośnicki noted in his review:

The paper discusses the results of a survey carried out among 11–16-year-olds in primary schools during 1947/48. It comprises a 69-page discussion on the origins of the survey and an analysis of the results obtained, complemented by 34 tables and 40 charts appended to the main text. For the theoretical interpretation of the survey results, the author has used well-established scientific literature on the issue of teacher personality. The study is highly thorough and meticulous as it characterizes the responses of the surveyed students from many angles, with the author aiming to derive general insights into students' perceptions of an ideal teacher. The author demonstrates a keen understanding of adolescent psychology and the ability to interpret the sometimes seemingly cryptic statements of teenagers. Although the material cannot be considered sufficient due to its somewhat limited scope (restricted age range of respondents), the author has applied a rigorous research method to this material, which merits attention. The overall outcome is very good. (A UMK, Akta studenckie, sygn. 107. Opinia z 28 sierpnia 1949 roku)

Lewicki, in a relatively lengthy review, noted that Zaleska's work sought to address the question of how young people envision an ideal teacher. He commended the comprehensive data she gathered, stating:

the author drew on rich empirical material collected through two surveys—the first involving 731 participants and the second comprising 697 participants. The topic, along with the design and administration of the survey, was developed during meetings of the UMK Pedagogical Seminar. The results of the research, meticulously analyzed and compiled with a great deal of effort, indicate that young people attach most importance to the teacher's teaching skills and abilities. However, there is notable variation in the responses, influenced by gender, age, and, most significantly, the living conditions of different groups of young people. (A UMK, Akta studenckie, sygn. 107)

In summary, Zaleska's question regarding how young people perceive the qualities of a good teacher remains relevant—not from

---

<sup>20</sup> The comment referred to the lack of a detailed explanation to the tables and charts, and the schematic nature of the presentation of the conclusions.

a purely theoretical point of view, but from the perspective of pedagogical practice. I believe this is a research question that continues to merit investigation today. Furthermore, it would be interesting to compare contemporary findings with those of Zaleska's era to assess how students' perceptions of an ideal teacher have changed over time.

## Concluding remarks

In her pursuit of defining a model for a good teacher, Jadwiga Zaleska positioned herself among the notable 20<sup>th</sup>-century theorists and practitioners dealing with the teaching profession. The significance of a good teacher in the education and development of the Polish intelligentsia was repeatedly underscored by Kazimierz Twardowski, Zaleska's mentor, who asserted that effective education hinges on the quality of the teacher, not merely the educational system. Zaleska followed in his footsteps, as well as those of other scholars referenced in her thesis, in her quest for the ideal educator. Equipped with a comprehensive understanding of various pedeutological theories, she shifted her inquiry on the essence of a good teacher to the students—the true subjects of educational interactions. Her well-structured research, combined with her theoretical expertise and practical teaching experience, allowed her to interpret and present the vast data she collected with exceptional clarity. This body of work reaffirms the enduring truth that what truly matters in teaching is the individual—their personal qualities and professional qualifications. These fundamental criteria for being a good teacher remain as relevant today as ever. However, in my opinion, the pedeutological study analyzed here warrants attention also for another reason: Zaleska's meticulous research design, her thoughtful analysis of results, and her adept integration of theoretical frameworks with empirical inquiry. She honed all these research skills during Kazimierz Sośnicki's seminar, which contributed to the high standard of her work. As such, her depiction of pedagogical education serves as a valuable testament to the history of educational training in post-war Poland.

In conclusion, it must be acknowledged that Jadwiga Zaleska left a significant part of her "teaching soul" in various Polish cities. She embodied, as evidenced by numerous sources, the qualities of a good teacher across different educational institutions. This legacy should

not be overlooked or forgotten in the annals of Polish pedagogy and education. Indeed, a more comprehensive study of Jadwiga Zaleska is both warranted and deserved.

## Bibliography

### Archival materials

Archiwum Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika (A UMK)

- Akta studenckie Jadwigi Zaleskiej: WH UMK, sygn. 107 (przebieg studiów, życiorysy, praca magisterska)
- Akta osobowe Jadwigi Zaleskiej: A UMK, sygn. K-1/344 i H-3/103 (życiorysy, opinie o pracy naukowej, zaświadczenia)

### Printed sources

Duczowska-Moraczewska H. (ed.). (1995). *Powstanie i pierwsze dziesięć lat UMK 1945–1956. Wybór źródeł*, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika.

Twardowski K. (1912). *Mowy i rozprawy z okresu jego działalności w Towarzystwie Nauczycieli Szkół Wyższych. Księga Pamiątkowa wydana przez TNSW*, ed. K. Zagajewski, Lwów: Nakładem Towarzystwa Nauczycieli Szkół Wyższych.

### Memoir literature

Tomczak A. (ed.). (1995). *Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika. Wspomnienia pracowników 1945–1995*, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika.

Zaleska J. (1989). “Moje wspomnienia z lat pracy w Wolnym Mieście Gdańsku (1930–1937). Fragmenty,” [in:] *Gimnazjum Polskiej Macierzy Szkolnej w Gdańsku 1922–1939. Księga Pamiątkowa w pięćdziesięciolecie założenia Gimnazjum*, part 2, ed. K. Sroczyńska-Wycańska, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, pp. 225–226.

### Studies

Bandura L. (1965). “Katedra Pedagogiki,” [in:] *Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika 1956–1965*, ed. R. Galon, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, pp. 41–42.

- Janik B. (1976). "Życiorysy pracowników gimnazjum polskiego w Gdańsku. Jadwiga Zaleska," [in:] *Gimnazjum Polskiej macierzy Szkolnej w Gdańsku 1922–1939. Księga Pamiątkowa w pięćdziesięciolecie założenia Gimnazjum*, part 1, ed. B. Janik, Gdańsk: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Oddział w Gdańsku, pp. 208–209.
- Kieffer F. (1934). *Autorytet w wychowaniu domowym i szkolnym*, trans. K. Bobrowska, Poznań: Księgarnia św. Wojciecha.
- Kulikowska A. (1986). "Andrzej Lewicki (1910–1972) – psycholog, profesor UMK," [in:] *Toruńscy twórcy nauki i kultury (1945–1985)*, eds. M. Biskup, A. Giziński, Warszawa–Poznań–Toruń: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, pp. 187–193.
- Nadolski B. (1957). "Wydział Humanistyczny. Organizacja Wydziału," [in:] *Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika 1945–1955*, ed. R. Galon, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, pp. 38–44.
- Nalaskowski S., Szulakiewicz W. (2009). *Pedagogika toruńska. Od katedry do wydziału*, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika.
- Pleśniarski B. (1957). "Z działalności Katedry Pedagogiki UMK," *Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny*, pp. 189–194.
- Półturzycki J. (2003). "Kazimierz Sośnicki – człowiek i dzieło," [in:] *Kazimierz Sośnicki – twórca dydaktyki polskiej*, eds. R. Góralska, J. Półturzycki, E.A. Wesołowska, W. Wojdyła, Toruń–Płock: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Novum, pp. 19–27.
- Rzepa T., Dobroczyński B. (2019). *Historia polskiej myśli psychologicznej*. New edition, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Sroczyńska-Wycańska K. (1989). "Nauczyciele Gimnazjum," [in:] *Gimnazjum Polskiej Macierzy Szkolnej w Gdańsku 1922–1939. Księga Pamiątkowa w sześćdziesięciolecie założenia Gimnazjum*, part 2, ed. K. Sroczyńska-Wycańska, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, p. 319.
- Smolański A. (2006). *Pedeutologia historyczna*, Wrocław: MarMar Marian Kaczorowski.
- Sośnicki K. (1957). "Katedra Pedagogiki," [in:] *Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika 1945–1955*, ed. R. Galon, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, pp. 71–73.
- Sołtys W. (1993). "Kochała swój Sanok. Podzwonne Jadwidze Zaleskiej," *Tygodnik Sanocki*, no. 1, p. 10.
- Stachowski R. (1992). "Lewicki Andrzej," [in:] *Słownik psychologów polskich*, eds. E. Kosnarewicz, T. Rzepa, R. Stachowski, Poznań: Poznańska Drukarnia Naukowa, pp. 134–135.
- Szulakiewicz W. (2014). "Nauczyciel w twórczości i działalności pedagogicznej Kazimierza Twardowskiego," *Przegląd Historyczno-Oświatowy*, no. 1–2, pp. 5–19.
- Tarnawska M. (1995). "Z dziejów Miejskiego Prywatnego Seminarium Nauczycielskiego Żeńskiego w Sanoku w latach 1923–1934," *Rocznik Sanocki*, no. 7, pp. 187–195.

- Wołoszyn S. (1989). "Kazimierz Sośnicki (1883–1976)," [in:] *Toruńscy twórcy nauki i kultury (1945–1985)*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, pp. 295–301.
- Zajac E. (1997). "Jadwiga Leontyna Zaleska (1900–1993)," *Tygodnik Sanocki*, no. 18, p. 5.
- Zaleska Jadwiga Leontyna (2006). [in:] *Pracownicy nauki i dydaktyki Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika 1945–1994. Materiały do biografii*, ed. S. Kalemka, second edition, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, pp. 773–774.
- Zaleska J. (1989). "Harcerstwo żeńskie," [in:] *Gimnazjum Polskiej Macierzy Szkolnej w Gdańsku 1922–1939. Księga Pamiątkowa w sześćdziesięciolecie założenia Gimnazjum*, part 2, ed. K. Sroczyńska-Wyczańska, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, pp. 151–165.
- Zaleska J. (1989). "Wojenne losy harcerek," [in:] *Gimnazjum Polskiej Macierzy Szkolnej w Gdańsku 1922–1939. Księga Pamiątkowa w sześćdziesięciolecie założenia Gimnazjum*, part 2, ed. K. Sroczyńska-Wyczańska, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, pp. 261–266.
- Żerebecki Z. (1947). *Nauczyciel – szkice o zawodzie nauczycielskim*. Based on the book *The Teacher's Many Parts* by John Adams, professor of pedagogy at the University of London. Edited by Zdzisław Żerebecki, Valivade (India): Drukarnia Szkolna w Osiedlu Polskim.

## ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

Władysława Szulakiewicz  
 Ignatianum University in Cracow  
 Institute of Educational Sciences  
 e-mail: [wladyslawa.szulakiewicz@ignatianum.edu.pl](mailto:wladyslawa.szulakiewicz@ignatianum.edu.pl)