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# Ethical Dimensions of Teaching: Insights from Andrzej Michał de Tchorzewski's Pedeutological Work (1943–2024)

## ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the ethical dimensions of the teaching profession as explored in the scholarly works of Professor Andrzej Michał de Tchorzewski. His publications notably examine values, obligations, and the moral competencies integral to the role of a teacher. These ethical principles can be considered rudimentary in discussions surrounding teacher ethics, as they significantly shape the nature of professional engagement and influence the efficacy of pedagogical practices across various educational contexts.

The aim of this article is to elucidate the axiological, deontological, and aretological dimensions of the teaching profession as conceptualized in Tchorzewski's pedeutological contributions.

An analysis of his work reveals a profound commitment to the ethical underpinnings of teaching, which is of vital importance in an ever-evolving and unpredictable educational landscape. Considering the breadth of Tchorzewski's scholarship on ethics and pedeutology, this discussion serves as a modest prolegomenon to his extensive body of work.

## KEYWORDS

Andrzej  
M. de Tchorzewski,  
pedeutology, teaching  
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## Introduction

Professor Andrzej Michał de Tchorzewski, PhD, was born on 22 September 1943 in Chełmno (Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship) into a family of teachers. He completed his secondary education in 1962 at the Pedagogical Secondary School in Chełmno. Between 1964 and 1969, he pursued his studies at the Higher School of Pedagogy in Gdańsk where he earned a Master of Arts in pedagogy.

In 1974, the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Gdańsk awarded him the degree of Doctor of Humanities in pedagogy. Later, in 1986, he achieved the degree of Doctor of Humanities with distinction from the same faculty. In 1990, he was appointed as an associate professor, and in 1996, he was conferred the title of Professor of Humanities by the President of the Republic of Poland (Kwaśniewska, Rak 1994: 193; Jakubiak 2018: 27).

Professor Tchorzewski's extensive academic output encompasses a wide range of roles, including author, co-author, editor, and co-editor, as well as numerous articles in scientific journals, chapters in multi-author monographs, and encyclopedic entries (Kwaśniewska, Rak 1994: 193; Milerski, Śliwerski 2000: 240; Jakubiak 2018: 30; Leguerinel 2018: 43–59). His body of work can be categorized into five primary research areas: (1) the theory of upbringing, (2) family pedagogy, (3) the ethical and deontological dimensions of the teaching profession, (4) pedagogical axiology, and (5) the education and personality development of future teachers (Jakubiak 2018: 29–30).

The recognition and high regard for Professor Tchorzewski's contributions are exemplified by a laudation delivered by Prof. Irena Jundziłł on the occasion of his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his academic career. She remarked: "I think that he [Tchorzewski—note D.Z.] has greatly contributed to the development of the theory of upbringing, as well as related areas of pedagogy, especially pedeutology and teacher deontology, pedagogical axiology, and family pedagogy" (Jundziłł 2018: 25).

In 2023, shortly before his death, Professor Tchorzewski published yet another book, *Wprowadzenie do pedagogicznej teorii wychowania moralnego* [Introduction to the Pedagogical Theory of Moral Upbringing] (Krakow 2023) with Ignatianum University Press. Despite his illness, the Professor remained unwavering in his dedication to scholarly

activity. Professor Tchorzewski died on January 2, 2024, in Kraków and was buried in the Salwator Cemetery.

The aim of this article is to reflect on Professor Tchorzewski's scientific contributions within the context of the ethics of the teaching profession. This reflection draws upon the structure of ethics—axiological, deontological, and aretological dimensions (Tchorzewski 1994a: 7; Szewczyk 1998: 111–112)—to provide a thematic overview of his body of work.

It should be noted that the scientific legacy Professor Tchorzewski left concerning the ethics of the teaching profession cannot be thoroughly presented within the scope of a single article. This text is, at best, an introduction to a deeper exploration of the ethical dimensions of the teaching profession as developed in his pedeutological work.

## Axiological structure of the ethics of the teaching profession

The realm of moral values is central to Tchorzewski's study of the ethical dimensions of the teaching profession. It can even be said that, for him, pedeutological axiology forms the foundation for conceptualizing the teacher's role in ethical terms.

In his scholarly investigations, Professor Tchorzewski searches for the essence of moral values and their connection to the goals of upbringing. He seeks to demonstrate the obligatory nature of values, linking them to the value-creating role of the teacher (Molesztak, Tchorzewski, Wołoszyn 1996: 59–80). His emphasis on values—particularly moral values—within the ethics of the teaching profession stems from his conviction that these values underpin teachers' moral obligations (Tchorzewski 1997a: 74). In fact, it can be argued that, in Tchorzewski's reflections, a multifaceted and intricate pedagogical axiology serves as the basis for teacher deontology. Within the teacher's axiological framework, dignity holds a prominent position. Tchorzewski views dignity as “a unique value, momentousness, and even grandeur” (Tchorzewski 2020a: 162). To him, human dignity in the axiological

means being faithful to values that guide one's life. By discovering these values and engaging thought, will, and action, individuals uncover what they should devote themselves to in life. Respecting these values in daily tasks reinforces the meaning of life itself. (Tchorzewski 2016c: 23–24)

The Professor underscores the special place and role of dignity in educational processes, seeing it as the cornerstone of mutual respect and recognition between teacher and student, as well as a foundation for the pursuit of truth, moral goodness, tolerance, and kindness (Tchorzewski 1997a: 72). One can risk stating that dignity understood in this way, becomes a prerequisite for the existence and acceptance of other values, as well as their realization in teachers' pedagogical practices.

Another key value in the teaching profession, according to Tchorzewski, is responsibility, which he identifies as a hallmark of a teacher's moral attitude (Tchorzewski 1997b: 45–50), a defining element of this attitude (Tchorzewski 2000a: 101–103), and a measure of professional maturity (Tchorzewski 1998a: 98–99) and professionalism (Tchorzewski 2020a: 170–174). The Professor argues that responsibility, due to its complexity, must be viewed from multiple perspectives, including situational and personal dimensions (Tchorzewski 1998a: 95–98). The multifaceted nature of professional activities, particularly the interpersonal relationships inherent in teaching, imposes on teachers a unique kind of responsibility. without which it is difficult to speak of the proper conduct of both the didactic and educational processes.

In addition to responsibility, integrity holds a significant position in the teacher's axiological framework. Professor Tchorzewski defines integrity as moral honesty, ethical decency, and an attitude characterized by sincerity, openness, straightforwardness, and unwavering commitment to moral values (Tchorzewski 1998a: 91). Like responsibility, integrity is a key determinant of a teacher's moral attitude.

A righteous teacher, writes the Professor, is one who, in his lifelong personal and professional conduct, is guided by a certain moral good and the freedom of choice. ... The teacher's attitude of integrity is based on moral values, which, in turn, form the foundation of any ethical stance towards others, including students, and towards oneself. (Tchorzewski 2000a: 99)

Tchorzewski closely associates integrity with truth, which, like responsibility and righteousness, is another cornerstone of a teacher's moral attitude (Tchorzewski 2000a: 100). He elaborates:

The foundation of the teacher's integrity is determined by truth, which is a core element that shapes the personal and social dimensions of an individual's life. Truth facilitates the achievement of our goals that contribute to our full development. ... The teacher establishes their relationship with students based on truth, on seeking it in the didactic process, and on being guided by it in the educational process. (Tchorzewski 2000a: 100)

The Professor attributes a special role to truth, freedom, goodness, and responsibility in the professional conduct of academic teachers. Reflecting on the erosion of the traditional academic ethos and the crises and conflicts within academic circles, he points to the need for these spaces to become more morally sensitive to fundamental moral values. An academic teacher, he argues, should seek and revisit such values as truth in science and freedom and tolerance in intellectual inquiry. Goodness, manifested in scientific achievements, should serve humanity, while responsibility involves accepting the consequences of one's actions (Tchorzewski 2001: 72). Responsibility, in particular, is linked to the dignity and integrity of the academic teacher (Tchorzewski 2006a: 343–344).

In analyzing axiological issues within the ethics of the academic teaching profession, Tchorzewski identifies truth, dignity, responsibility, and freedom as the foundational pillars for constructing ethical attitudes among academic employees (Tchorzewski 2006b: 342). He asserts that the ethics of an academic teacher is, first and foremost, centered on serving the truth, which cannot be separated from such values as freedom, responsibility, and tolerance. These values are essential attributes for representatives of this socio-professional group (Tchorzewski 1999b: 75). Freedom, in particular, is accorded a special role in Tchorzewski's academic explorations (Tchorzewski 1999c: 5–8). Linking freedom to the work of an academic, he writes as follows:

Freedom as a moral value is made present in the actions and conduct of academics and, by its very nature, encompasses both "freedom to" and "freedom from." This dual nature allows freedom to be understood as the ability to make independent decisions, express views freely, engage in dialogue and cooperation, solve problems autonomously, and pursue unrestricted intellectual growth. Conversely, it also encompasses freedom from manipulation, despotism, indoctrination, subjectivity, autocracy, imposed patterns of thought, and interference by incompetent individuals. (Tchorzewski 1999b: 76)

Defined in this way, freedom as a moral value assumes particular importance within the academic environment, especially in relation to scientific inquiry, which inherently demands intellectual autonomy and openness.

According to Tchorzewski, the teacher's axiological framework cannot exist without tolerance, which serves as a medium through which truth, freedom, and responsibility are fully realized and through which they become more mature (Tchorzewski 2000b: 106). Tolerance manifests most clearly in attitudes of forbearance, compromise, and empathy (Tchorzewski 1999b: 78). These qualities render tolerance an invaluable virtue in today's pluralistic social and educational reality. However, the Professor is careful to underscore the necessity of acknowledging the boundaries of tolerance, a topic he emphasizes deeply in his research (Tchorzewski 1998a: 93; 1999b: 78).

In concluding his reflections on the axiological underpinnings of teacher ethics, Tchorzewski is fully aware of the contemporary crisis of values, which has also affected schools and thus teachers. He writes:

The collapse of the authority of the school as a social institution and of the teacher, who is one of the main agents of school education, is associated with a broader crisis occurring in the modern world, including a crisis of values. Schools are no longer the sole source of knowledge or the exclusive venue for acquiring essential skills for human existence. Likewise, the teacher has lost the primacy they once held in the educational process, as many educational functions are increasingly assumed by non-school institutions and individuals not professionally involved in teaching or traditional forms of upbringing. (Tchorzewski 1999a: 34)

Thus, it seems all the more justified to address axiological issues within the teaching profession, a theme that Tchorzewski consistently explores in his works written in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. His publications invite contemplation on the ethical and moral dimensions of contemporary teaching, especially in light of the socio-moral disruptions of our time. Franciszek Adamski aptly describes this moment as a breakdown in the axionormative order (Adamski 1999: 11–18).

The values delineated by Tchorzewski offer a foundational framework for constructing a model of teacher axiology, which serves as a crucial reference point for the design and implementation of

educational processes. Within these processes, the moral values upheld by teachers play a decisive role in shaping the quality of their professional activities across all levels.

## Deontological structure of the ethics of the teaching profession

In addition to axiological issues, Tchorzewski's pedeutological scholarship is preoccupied with the domain of teacher deontology, which he defines as "a scientific field concerned with moral principles and ethical duties" (Gr. *deon*, *deontos*—duty, what is necessary, obligatory, proper; *logos*—word, science). These principles and duties are expected to be observed and respected by both professional and non-professional pedagogues, a group that today generally includes teachers, tutors, instructors, moderators, inspirers, and others involved in upbringing, socialization, education, and interventions aimed at personal development, particularly among children and youth but also adults" (Tchorzewski 2003: 640).

In the mid-1980s, Tchorzewski points to the importance of incorporating teacher deontology into the academic preparation of pedagogy students, proposing its inclusion within a subject he referred to as pedeutology. He argued:

Universities training future teachers should incorporate issues of pedagogical deontology into their curricula. These topics could be integrated into the pedagogical-psychological course block. It seems reasonable to establish a dedicated course titled *Pedeutology with Elements of Teacher Deontology*. (Tchorzewski 1985: 153)

This early proposal for a deontology curriculum, suggested almost forty years ago, may provide a starting point for developing a contemporary approach to the discipline.

Tchorzewski's analysis of various sources and studies seeks to establish the position of teacher deontology within Polish pedagogical thought. His research brings attention to how the teaching profession has historically been framed within moral and ethical terms. While the specific duties of teachers evolve with the times, the essence of their ethical obligations remains anchored in the dual-subjectivity of pedagogical processes, which involve both an educating subject and an educated subject. This duality, according to Tchorzewski,

necessitates societal expectations of teachers akin to those placed on professions with significant social importance, such as doctors, lawyers, officers, politicians, and clergy. These professions demand exceptional personal qualities, reflecting their ethical responsibilities, which have both individual and societal implications (Tchorzewski 1993: 28–29).

The historical dimension of teaching ethics holds particular relevance, as it helps identify both enduring and mutable elements in this domain. Such an understanding is invaluable for constructing a robust and cohesive conceptualization of teaching ethics within modern pedeutology.

In the co-authored monograph *W kręgu powinności moralnych nauczyciela* [*Within the Circle of a Teacher's Moral Duties*] (Bydgoszcz 1994), Professor Tchorzewski devotes one of the chapters to teacher deontology, in particular topics such as the duties and obligations of teachers, the subject of deontology, the evolution of views on the norms of teacher deontology and their distinctiveness, and the fundamental deontological requirements of the teacher-pedagogue (Molesztak, Tchorzewski, Wołoszyn 1994: 49–108). The discussion of these basic duties and moral obligations serves as a foundation for broader debates about the ethical dimensions of the teaching profession, in particular its deontological aspects.

In his writings, Professor Tchorzewski attributes a special role to teachers' moral duties, particularly in the context of the student-teacher relationship. He states:

The teacher's moral duties are a distinct expression of their interaction with students. In the multifaceted educational process, the teacher-pedagogue must not forget that within every "ought" lies an imperative to transcend what is inhuman, worthless, or obstructive—barriers that hinder both the teacher and the student from becoming authentic human beings filled with personal dignity and a shared responsibility for themselves and the world they shape together. (Tchorzewski 1997a: 75)

Tchorzewski associates the moral duties of teachers with the moral values inherent in their profession. These include integrity (Tchorzewski 1994b: 72–73; Tchorzewski 2005: 63), dignity (Tchorzewski 1997a: 72), responsibility (Tchorzewski 1998a: 94–98; 2000a: 101–103), justice (Tchorzewski 1998a: 93), and tolerance (Tchorzewski



1999b: 77–78; 2000b: 106). Recognizing the duty-bound nature of these values, he conceptualizes teaching ethics as:

a set of principles, justified by truth and goodness, of individual action in the educational space, having a duty-like character, internally urging the teacher to be guided in his professional work by such values, with the help of which he derives goals indicating to the student the path of his/her development as a person. (Tchorzewski 1998b: 34)

Professor Tchorzewski's interest in the deontology of teaching also extends to his inquiries into the personality development of educators. He defines this process as:

A dynamic and continuous process of a pedagogue's internal development occurs not only during professional preparation, which includes extremely important—elements that shape the qualitative aspects of their professional activity—but also outside the confines of the profession. (Tchorzewski 2008: 9)

In Tchorzewski's framework, the process of teacher formation is categorized into three key areas: intellectual, professional, and ethical/deontological. The ethical/deontological dimension pertains to the moral aspects of a pedagogue's actions, which are connected with both the mandates and prohibitions that shape professional conduct, as well as the objectives educators are expected to serve. When analyzing this aspect of teacher development, Tchorzewski puts forward its relevance to teachers' attitudes toward moral norms, duties, and ethical principles in various relational contexts: teacher-student, teacher-parent, teacher-colleagues, and teacher-supervisors. Within this domain, the Professor assigns particular importance to ethical sensitivity, moral competencies, a sense of responsibility, and conscience as a subjective norm of ethical behavior (Tchorzewski 2008: 8; 2016a: 42–43; 2016b: 233–234; 2020b: 30–35).

Tchorzewski further links these elements of personality formation to the professional identity of teachers. He posits that this identity is not only reflected in teachers' knowledge, erudition, wisdom, cognitive curiosity, and natural predispositions but also through their ethical sensitivity, sense of duty, moral proficiency, and personal responsibility. Collectively, these attributes constitute the ethical-deontological dimension of teachers' identity (Tchorzewski 2022: 119). In conclusion, it is evident that teacher deontology occupies

an important place in Tchorzewski's pedeutological scholarship. The ethical requirements he associates with the teaching profession testify to the distinctive nature of educators' responsibilities,

## Aretological structure of the ethics of the teaching profession

Considering the ethical aspects of Tchorzewski's pedeutological work, it is impossible to ignore aretological issues. Aretological ethics concerns itself with moral virtues (from the Greek *arete* = virtue + *logos* = study) (Klimowicz 1994: 17). In scholarly discourse, moral virtues are often equated with moral skills, which Tchorzewski identifies as the practical manifestation of virtues (Tchorzewski 2017: 27–30). Throughout his extensive scholarship, the Professor devotes a great deal of attention to moral skills, and to their prominent importance in the educational activities of teachers. Tchorzewski defines moral skills as “a set of enduring attitudes and a model of behavior of individuals, certain groups of people, or social environments, characterized by the recognition of a specific value system and adherence to the norms derived from it” (Tchorzewski 2013a: 88). He further elaborates that moral skills include:

Reliability in conduct is an outward-directed relationship stemming from the acting subject. It represents a constant inclination and acquired readiness to pursue the good, provided that one can distinguish between good and evil. This reliability embodies the ethical dimension of everyone's behavior. The content of moral skills lies in moral goodness. (Tchorzewski 2017: 29)

Referring moral skills to the teaching profession, Tchorzewski treats them as integral to pedagogical professionalism. These skills, he asserts, are essential for meeting the ethical demands associated with teaching and educational activities (Tchorzewski 2010: 211). He describes this form of teacher proficiency as:

the acquired ability to act reliably in the teacher's didactic-educational and caring behavior, directly or indirectly related to the fulfillment of duties and obligations of a moral nature. (Tchorzewski 2016a: 44)

An analysis of Tchorzewski's writings reveals the depth and diversity of the moral skills expected of contemporary teachers, which largely influence the quality of their professional undertakings.

Among these skills, Tchorzewski assigns particular importance to the teacher's moral skill of hope, which, together with faith and love, forms the basis of pedagogical action and provides personal meaning to the teacher's work. Hope, according to Tchorzewski, prompts reflection and is a motivating force for authentic pedagogical engagement, which involves imparting something meaningful to the student (Tchorzewski 2014: 17–18). In one of his writings, he examines hope as a virtue that improves the quality of life in contemporary society, identifying its two core pillars: confidence and encouragement (Tchorzewski 2018: 31–54). These reflections offer valuable insights into the role of hope within the ethics of the teaching profession, and inspire further study of its place and impact in teachers' moral frameworks. Among the moral skills affirmed by Professor Tchorzewski, love occupies a central place. Together with prudence and patience, love serves as an embodiment of wisdom, including what the Professor terms "educational wisdom" (Tchorzewski 2013b: 25). He considers love the foundational cause of upbringing, as it provides the essential condition for establishing a meaningful relationship between the educator and the one being educated (Tchorzewski 2012: 57–58).

Another virtue highlighted by Tchorzewski is fortitude, which he views as both a reflection of human nobility and an expression of an individual's appreciation for moral beauty. As a cardinal virtue, fortitude, in the Professor's view, must also manifest as a moral skill (Tchorzewski 2015: 64). Recognizing the complexities of modern educational contexts, he writes:

The rapidly evolving modern world requires a particular attitude of fortitude from teachers and educators. However, in the case of the teaching profession, this fortitude that would require him to make a sacrifice of his own life. And yet, when all pedagogical processes (the quality of which is determined by many different crises) occur amidst the complexity of social realities, a specific attitude is expected of the teacher-educator. This attitude is shaped by what can now be described as a nearly global axionormative chaos. (Tchorzewski 2015: 67)

Fortitude, as part of a teacher's set of moral skills, can mean both courage and, in some cases, heroism in taking difficult moral decisions and taking actions that are important for the well-being of the individuals with whom teachers engage in interpersonal educational relationships.

In addition to these foundational skills, Tchorzewski points to other moral proficiencies, such as self-creativity, self-discipline, conscientiousness, and diligence (Tchorzewski 1999b: 79–81). These qualities, like the aforementioned virtues, are integral to the ethical maturity and fulfillment of the teaching profession. Tchorzewski posits that these moral skills should form part of the essential professional toolkit of every teacher, regardless of the educational level at which they work or the specific nature of their teaching, educational, or caregiving responsibilities. According to Tchorzewski, a teacher's professional due to its unique nature, is not merely a task but a platform for exhibiting and perfecting the ethical virtues necessary for the proper fulfillment of their responsibilities.

## Conclusion

The analysis of Professor Tchorzewski's scholarly contributions, presented here in a necessarily concise form, brings to light his meticulous and erudite approach to examining the ethical dimensions of the teaching profession. With a focus on moral values, duties, and the competencies of educators, the Professor's works convey his vision of teaching as an ethically grounded profession. Given its nuanced and multifaceted nature, this vision calls for ongoing scientific inquiry, particularly within the framework of contemporary pedeutology.

Tchorzewski's thought-provoking reflections can be a motivating force for those who engage with ethical and pedagogical concerns. and seek answers to the rudimentary questions: How can one be an ethical teacher in today's world? Which values and moral obligations should guide a teacher's professional practice? Among the array of suggested moral skills, which are most important to a teacher's educational activities?

Answering these questions is neither simple nor definitive, and requires a broader contemplation of the actions and responsibilities undertaken by educators. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that Professor Tchorzewski's body of work holds both theoretical and practical significance. As such, it merits consideration as a resource for reflecting on the ethical dimensions of the teaching profession, whether in its ideal or current state.

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