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# The Teacher in the Paradigm of Personal Formation

## ABSTRACT

The article deals with one of the fundamental and most important issues relating to the person and profession of a teacher. It is a personality formation. This issue was presented from the perspective of the historiosophy of pedagogy, thanks to which the issue was given a paradigmatic dimension, which allows its horizontal and vertical approach. The aim of the article is to present in a synthetic way what are the most important conditions that influence the quality of the work of the teachers. They are at least three dimensions: intellectual, professional and ethical. They determine the entire formation of personality of a teacher who, due to his mission in society, belongs to an important professional group. One must be aware that in the history of humanity it was the teacher who played and still plays a decisive role in the development of individuals, nations and societies. The final part of the article shows suggestions for improving the process of personality formation of the teachers.

## KEYWORDS

teacher, paradigm, personality formation, intellectual, professional and ethical dimensions

## Introduction

Pedeutology, separated in the structure of pedagogical sciences as one of sub-disciplines, has gathered an incredible number of works dedicated to reflective-theoretical, empirical and historical research on people dealing with teaching/educating and bringing

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up young people. All the contemporary pedagogues have probably dedicated at least one text to those we call teachers, supervisors/guardians and, today, also educators. It is claimed that the first professional teachers were sophists whose master was Protagoras (481–411 BC). He proclaimed the view that “Man is the measure of all things.” Sophists believed that teaching children should start as early as possible and that it should be continued as long as possible. They claimed that, through education, we can shape the perfect individuality of a person whose life will be compliant with the requirements of the law and ethics. Education was to warrant a person’s thinking and stability of will, and shape their personality. Sophists’ views include the beginnings of knowledge that contained pre-scientific pedagogy before the latter was considered to be a separate science in modern times. At first, teaching children and youth was carried out at home, and, in time, it moved to educational institutions with various degrees in organization in changing segments.

People have always been interested in those who teach. This is because civilization-cultural development, which changed consecutive social-political and economic systems, has been giving new objectives and tasks to the education of young generations. Along with the increasing expectations established for schools, the demand for a greater number of teachers appeared.

The person and profession of a teacher have been perceived in different ways and from different points of view. Each period of time ascribed teachers different tasks, roles and social missions, depending on the expectations of rulers and traditions, as well as on the level of developing pedagogical awareness and culture. Also, expectations of teachers have been changing, especially in terms of their personality formation important for the quality of altering didactic-upbringing systems. The above-mentioned issue can be discussed from the perspective of the *historiosophy*<sup>1</sup> of pedagogy, which, due to a paradigmatic approach, makes it possible to analyse the essence of the teaching profession and its changes. The *historiosophical* research strategy in *pedeutology* facilitates modern thought on the continuity

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<sup>1</sup> The term “*historiosophy*” was introduced into Polish science by August Cieszkowski (1814–1894). This term is to be understood as considerations on the course of the historical process that includes upbringing and education.

of giving the meaning to a teaching profession despite approaches oriented at modifications as well as radical changes that have occurred within this area throughout history. From the methodological point of view, the research on a teacher's personality formation has two dimensions: the vertical one, which refers to the past, and the horizontal one, which makes it possible to analyse a subject of cognition in modern times. The selection of this strategy leads to a paradigmatic approach towards detailed issues important for the researcher. In this case, a paradigm<sup>2</sup> is to be perceived as a basis for a certain idea needed to build a theoretical construct being a collection of adopted assumptions aimed at describing and explaining their subject. A paradigm perceived in this manner should be ascribed certain features (cf. Smołalski 2009: 8–11), i.e.: (1) cumulateness, which means the principle of connecting what is the leading thought and the common idea that influences maintaining continuity in the history of this profession; (2) transhistoricity, i.e. capturing certain elements of the profession that are useful irrespective of the times; (3) content-related fragmentariness, due to which we can present a particular important property of a teaching profession in a specific aspect. It is worth emphasizing that the cognitive analysis was referred to the person and profession of a teacher with the limitation to one, yet important issue, i.e. to the personality formation of a teacher, which has already been mentioned. The very term: "personality formation" is not fully reflected in the books on pedagogical disciplines, or, to put it in more general terms, in disciplines concerning education.<sup>3</sup> However, it should be emphasized that the formation process

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<sup>2</sup> The term "paradigm" was introduced into language by Thomas S. Kuhn (*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago 1962). A paradigm is an analytic and explanatory thinking method through which, in the case of this research, I perceive the teaching reality that refers to a professional situation, reformist activity and a teacher's existential condition. The advantage of this method consists in the fact that its starting point includes specific views and events rooted in historiography. The paradigmatic method indicates the need to constantly analyse the theories that make particular events the subject of cognition. Also, it requires presenting the contexts of the analysed phenomena, because they are not fully presented within the paradigm that only shows a part of the meaning.

<sup>3</sup> "Personality formation" is not a synonym of "spiritual formation" which is generally perceived as a specific set of means and ways used to direct a person's inner life, and related to various techniques of ascetic-mystical influence

is particularly important in case of all professions that require public trust, including the profession of teachers whose professional activity, irrespective of the specialization they represent, is not and cannot be free from the sense of serving another man. The condition for such a service is constant work on oneself. A teacher's person and profession can be approached from different perspectives: from the point of view of his/her role and didactic assumptions; of the function they are to play in local communities; and of the mission they are to carry out for the development of the nation and its citizens. If a teacher is to become important in these dimensions, he/she must have proper preparation and attitude towards them. Such an approach is to be worked out within the process of personality formation, which takes place in three main areas: intellectual, professional and ethical.

### Structural elements of a teacher's personality formation

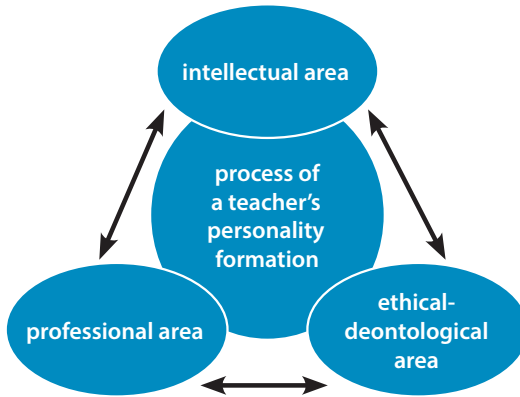
In this article, personality formation shall be perceived as the co-existence of at least three processes: (1) maturation, (2) learning and (3) identification (cf. Siek 1986: 9–11). Various constituents of these processes aim at fulfilling the model of a person in a relatively durable and strong manner. This model includes/describes typical features ascribed to (resulting from) the role to be played by a unit/individual in the group/social-cultural community to which the unit/individual belongs. In case of teachers, we mean three important components of their personality which refer to the intellectual level, professional abilities and skills, as well as ethical-deontological attitudes. It is them which, in the process of personality formation, are subject to the process of maturation, learning and identification. Maturation is related to making a decision to become a teacher, i.e. to recognizing one's motivation and will; learning is a process of acquiring professional knowledge and skills; and identification is a process of gaining properties that makes it possible for a teacher to function in his/her work despite dynamic changes and different conditions of pedagogical work. The process of personality formation is not limited

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(to which the following elements belong: prayer, liturgy, meditation, contemplation, retreat, sacraments, etc.).

by time, it starts at the moment of choosing this profession, and it lasts until a teacher stops doing the job for various reasons.

**Scheme 1:** The basic areas of the process of a teacher's personality formation



**Source:** the author's own work.

Each of the above-mentioned areas of personality formation is included in integrated processes which, as we have already mentioned, include maturation, learning and identification.

The process of teaching children and youth have always referred to people with the proper intellectual level, which was to warrant the proper quality of education. Already in ancient times, teachers included magi whose knowledge was higher than average. This made them different from other members of the society in which they lived. It also happened in ancient times that slaves were employed as teachers, as sometimes they were much more educated and knowledgeable than their masters. Such a practice was popular in the Hellenistic period characterized by a dynamic development of many philosophical trends, as well as science and art which, to a greater or lesser degree, influenced the quality of teaching children and youth (cf. Kurdybacha 1948).

The choice of people for educational and upbringing activity, based on the intellectual criterion, was—almost in all times in history—considered to be one of the most important tasks, because it was to provide children, youth and students (since universities appeared) with knowledge necessary to understand the surrounding reality and the world in which they lived. However, it does not mean that this very

important factor: the selection of teachers according to the intellectual criterion depending on the education of consecutive generations of teachers, has not been the subject of disputes and debates, especially since the times in which teaching started to be perceived as a socially important issue, and teachers—as a separate professional group.

An important element of a teacher's personality formation includes the professional area which, apart from the general education and the level of manners, includes the candidate's psycho-social maturity and readiness to receive tasks related to teaching. In the past centuries, this problem was perceived and solved in different ways. Strictly pedagogical education of teachers has not always been emphasized, as such education has not necessarily been associated with general knowledge and specialist knowledge within the represented field of science or art. At first, it was assumed that general and scientific knowledge is the most important source due to which a teacher may shape his/her students' ability to perceive and interpret the world. Since pedagogical knowledge has become quite an autonomic scientific discipline, it was deemed necessary to give it to teachers. This moment has become the beginning of teachers' professional preparation, which was reflected in opening special educational institutions at different levels for them.<sup>4</sup> Because of those institutions, a teacher's profession evolved within the history of mankind: from the role of a tribal magus, through the role of a pedagogue-slave, a teacher-philosopher, a priest from lower ranks of the Church hierarchy, a teacher-craftsman or merchant, up to a professional teacher who belonged to a separate social-professional group.

The third element of a teacher's personality formation is the ethical-moral area based on moral norms and principles valid in a particular environment and society. Such norms and principles are important for the process of teaching and upbringing, including for those who participate in these processes, because, thanks to these

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<sup>4</sup> An example includes the famous "Seminarium praeceptorum" established in 1707 by August H. Francke (1663–1727) in Halle, from which later university teacher seminars were developed in Göttingen, Jena, Berlin, Vilnius, Krakow and other academic centres. Apart from them, teachers started to be educated in teacher-training college, institutes, pedagogical secondary schools, and at higher teacher/pedagogical academies, which is the practice valid until now.

norms the valid axiological system is being reinforced. As a rule, this system is to facilitate the process of teachers' adjustment to the specific society, including the professional society, in which behaviours and attitudes that are morally unacceptable will/have to be definitely condemned and rejected.

A teacher's personality formation, which is carried out in the intellectual, professional and ethical aspect, is always related to the processes of maturation, learning and identification—to various degrees and with different results—with the teaching profession. Throughout history, these processes were fulfilled in various ways; they adopted different forms and methods, and facilitated the search for and the reinforcement of certain expectations from a teacher, specifying the meaning and essence of this profession. It seems that a teacher's intellectual maturation, mastering professional skills and shaping moral attitudes are, or at least should be, the pillars of this profession, and that they have not lost their validity. The knowledge of the teaching profession, especially of the process of a teacher's personality formation, should be the subject of particular attention and care of those who, just like in the oldest times, consciously and responsibly organize the process of educating, instructing and improving teachers whom the society entrusts with the education and upbringing of generations of young people.

### Intellectual aspect of a teacher's personality formation

The quality of upbringing and the value of education, at each stage of their historical development, depended on the preparation of people for activities related to teaching and educating. It has always been expected that a teacher would be an erudite serving others with his/her knowledge which he/she gained while preparing for the job and working. A teacher's wisdom is expressed in showing the student the difference between good and evil, truth and falsehood. The intellectual dimension of a teacher's personality formation constitutes the foundation of the quality of pedagogical processes.

While analysing the history and development of the teaching profession, it is easy to notice that the intellectual aspect of a teacher's personality formation, reflected in his/her knowledge, erudition or wisdom, has not always been perceived in the same manner.

Knowledge includes the contents of cognition gathered and reinforced in the mind due to experience and the process of studying. Since teachers appeared, it was expected that they would have proper knowledge and transmit it to their students. A teacher's knowledge has always been associated with his/her personal understanding of the transmitted contents included in the concepts and formulas that reflect the natural and social reality made available to consecutive generations. Knowledge, irrespective of its scope, has always been the subjective-substantial dimension of a teacher's education. In time, people realized that teachers, because of the uniqueness of the subject they teach, have to answer questions, explain various issues and encourage the students to search for their own questions, dilemmas, and sometimes complex problems that are difficult to solve in an unequivocal manner and not necessarily related only to the subject in question. This is facilitated by a teacher's erudition and wisdom which he/she starts shaping already during the preparation for pedagogical work, and develops while teaching in practice. Also, a teacher's wisdom is expressed in showing students the difference between what is true and what is false. Proclaiming the truth is the essence of teaching. Thus, throughout history, in most teacher training institutions it was very important to shape a teacher's cognitive curiosity which became a constitutive feature of the formation process. A teacher's wisdom, erudition and knowledge, as well as his/her attachment to the adopted values and ideals, and the sense of fulfilling the social mission, contributed to the fact that this professional group has been classified as a part of intelligentsia. People realized that teachers have an important role to play in the social and political life of each nation and country (Lewowicki 2018: 87–100).

It should be mentioned that, for decades, teachers mainly included young people from lower social classes for whom the choice of this profession was a path to career and a way to change the vision of the world in which they lived. Contemporary candidates for teachers, as well as teachers themselves, mostly come from intelligentsia. The increasing number of them come from small and big cities. This was influenced by the dynamically developing educational sector which made secondary school education very popular. That is why the intellectual level of modern teachers is different than that of those who started working even 50 years ago.



The intellectual aspect of a teacher's personality formation is actually more important than the remaining two aspects. It is the intellectual aspect which influences the quality of the other areas of formation. Modern pedeutology emphasizes the meaning of a teacher's intellectual traits which include logical thinking and using language in a correct and understandable manner. These traits are the basis for communicative skills, educational dialogue, understanding others and oneself.

### Professional aspect of a teacher's personality formation

Professional aspect of a teacher's personality formation is placed within the context of his/her socio-psychological properties. The following components may be distinguished in this aspect: qualifications, competences, as well as predispositions and predilections. These four elements should not be separated, as they complement one another. A teacher's qualifications and competences constitute a system of purposefully shaped features: intellectual, social and psychophysical ones, which determine his/her efficient professional actions. It seems that, contrary to the past, contemporary academies that educate teachers mainly focus on qualifications and competences, considering them sufficient to prepare for didactic and upbringing work. At present, teachers' competences are divided into (1) formal ones, which are specified by the rank of the diploma (BA, MA) and the position in the teachers' professional group, (2) actual ones, which are reflected in a teacher's specific action within school and after-school didactic and educational-upbringing activities. Professional competences, in turn, include the cognitive structure that consists of particular skills and possible abilities and that is rooted in the knowledge gained during the studies, and upgraded during professional work and constantly developed experience.

In case of teachers, we can separate some types/kinds of competences. The most important of them include: (1) psychological competences, i.e. personality traits, such as language used, gestures, facial expressions and other elements that improve communication between the teacher and the student, (2) praxeological competences that make a teacher's actions efficient and effective; they include skills related to didactics and methodology of teaching a given subject, as

well as those that refer to diagnosing, predicting, planning, fulfilling, controlling and evaluating the school didactic-educational process, (3) creative competences, i.e. skills aimed at the development of teachers' individuality which is facilitated by their knowledge of themselves as the educating subjects, their ability to improve their own pedagogical tools, and self-evaluation of their own professional activities.

A teacher's predispositions and predilections constitute another professional area which requires separate discussion. Professional predispositions include a set of skills necessary to carry out strictly pedagogical (i.e. didactic and educational) work, but also upbringing work. They are certainly reflected in a teacher's individual intellectual potential, his/her moral attitude, as well as health conditions, organizational skills, etc. A teacher's professional predilections, in turn, include a kind of readiness for taking on and continuing professional activities the source of which are personal interests and hobbies. Such activities are characterized by full devotion, generosity and dedication to the subject of a teacher's work. Already in the past it was postulated that a teacher should be friendly for students; he/she should be wise, morally perfect, good, reliable and modest; so that he/she can be a model and a paragon of virtues for others.<sup>5</sup> To fulfil these requirements, before making the decision to be a teacher, he/she has to make sure whether his/her choice is right. Only such an approach warrants personal professional development. This requires full knowledge of oneself and one's own intellectual, psychological and social abilities. Specifying them is carried out within one's inner freedom which is expressed in gaining distance to particular alternatives while making the decision. A teacher's inner freedom will influence his/her career path. The way of making the decision is also important. It has to be accompanied by a deep belief in its correctness. Finally, it is worth considering a teacher's psychological condition that includes his/her resistance to stress, patience, tolerance, kindness, and empathy. Also, a teacher's health, physical fitness and sense of financial safety are significant. Unfortunately, teachers do not always feel safe in terms

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<sup>5</sup> These traits were emphasized by great pedagogues, such as Stanisław Konarski (1700–1773), Grzegorz Piramowicz (1735–1801), Jan Władysław Dawid (1859–1914), Aniela Szycówna (1869–1921) and many others, also contemporary, pedagogues and pedeutologists.

of finances, which is why the profession is associated with poverty. There is no doubt that the reason for such associations is the negative selection of candidates for the job. For many centuries, reaching back to ancient times, a teacher was considered to be a simple person who is to work as a volunteer without asking for a good salary. Such an approach was valid until modern times, i.e. up to the 18th and 19th centuries when purposeful education of teachers in special institutions started. At first, they were taught on the post-primary level, then—incomplete secondary level (preparatory courses for teachers), and finally—on the secondary level (teacher seminars and pedagogical secondary schools) and on the university level. It was then when people started to notice the necessity for making teachers' work professional by extending the range of educational segments and facilitating the process of a teacher's personality formation.

### Ethical-deontological area of a teacher's personality formation

Another area of a teacher's personality formation refers to his/her ethical-deontological attitudes which indicate the need to shape his/her approach towards moral norms, professional obligations and duties, as well as the rational observance of ethical principles in the relationships: teacher-student, teacher-student's parents, teacher-other teachers, teacher-supervisors. Within this area of formation, we have to pay attention to ethical sensitivity, moral competences, a sense of responsibility and conscience as a subjective norm of ethical action which, in the time of commercialization and increasing negative phenomena in almost all aspects of life, are causative factors in the process of fulfilling the most important ideas that result from their principal message. A teacher's ethical sensitivity is clearly reflected in his/her moral abilities and conscience which, as the judgment of reason, determines moral action. Moral abilities, in turn, include a teacher's readiness to carry out infallible actions that are directly or indirectly related to fulfilling moral duties and obligations. Unfortunately, this area has been the most neglected aspect in the process of teachers' professionalization. Both a candidate for the job and a teacher himself/herself, apart from the continuous development of the intellectual aspect and pedagogical knowledge, should be characterized by a flawless ethical attitude, which is rare, especially in

the times of axionormative chaos. A teacher's ethical sensitivity and moral abilities are important elements of the process of personality formation, because, to a large extent, they determine the quality of his/her sense of responsibility. The very sense of responsibility is to be perceived as the indicator of adult personality. There is no doubt that each teacher should not only be responsible for the quality of the didactic process fulfilled within a given school subject, but also for supporting students in their individual intellectual, psychological and social development, which is a special kind of responsibility. Also, a teacher must care about broadly understood safety of students who are threatened with various forms of aggression, violence, mobbing by peers and other people from their environment, as well as abuse related to mass communication devices which do not always facilitate the development of children and adults. The ethical-deontological area requires a lot of work from each teacher who has to improve and shape himself/herself as an individual and a separate subject. This has nothing to do with the old and common belief in the special nature of a teacher's authority. A teacher with a shaped moral attitude is able to monitor his/her current actions and their compliance with the school's mission and objectives aimed at supporting a young person in multifaceted individual and collective development. The world, which is changing very rapidly, more than ever wants a teacher to have not so much of leading skills as perfectionism that refers to lasting moral values. Moreover, a teacher has to be able to evaluate his/her own professional situation and make decisive actions to improve and modify it.

In the past, but also in modern times, people tried to construct ethical codes that were to be followed by teachers and confirm their moral qualifications. Usually, they were rooted in the philosophical orientations adopted by their authors, which is why we can find them in the views of philosophers, but also pedagogues of ancient, medieval, as well as modern times.<sup>6</sup> Professional ethics, which is to be

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<sup>6</sup> They include, e.g.: Plato (428–348 BC), Aristotle (384–322 BC), Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), Roger Bacon (1214–1292), Erasmus Roterodamus (1469–1536), François Rabelais (1494–1553), Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592), René Descartes (1596–1650), Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski (1503–1572), John Amos Comenius (1592–1670), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), Claude Adrien Helvétius (1715–1771), Stanisław Staszic

respected by each teacher, speaks about his/her moral qualifications necessary to perform pedagogical work. These qualifications take the form of principles, norms, obligations and duties in a teacher's actions and interpersonal relationships with the people who participate in the processes of teaching and upbringing with him/her.

Moral principles have a certain dimension of general theoretical guidelines related to behaviour which is compliant with norms, obligations and ethical duties of teachers. Their contents include justified suggestions and constitute the foundation of the teaching ethos. It is because of these principles that a teacher learns what he/she can or cannot do; what is acceptable and what is unacceptable; what can be expected of him/her by students, their parents, supervisors, colleagues at school and in the environment in which he/she lives. Thus, they are not limited to the behaviours directly related to the professional activities of teachers, but—according to traditions and customs—they are ascribed to other people who deal with upbringing and education. Their objective also includes shaping a teacher's consciousness and ethical sensitivity.

Moral norms are rooted in the accepted axiological system. In the past, they were described in different manners, and their basis always included the philosophical concept of a person. Since ancient times, a moral norm has been perceived as a tool indicating which features should be ascribed to a teacher. Such features include, first of all, a teacher's proper attitude to pedagogical work, i.e. serving with knowledge and skills to shape young people; aiming at one's own perfection which gives the teacher not only formal authority (which results from his/her role), but also respect of students who voluntarily follow his guidance; harmonious coexistence with students which is based on the teacher's ability to compromise with others. These norms make it possible to order each didactic-educational process, and respecting them eliminates a teacher's despotism, irresponsibility and unwillingness to learn.<sup>7</sup>

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(1755–1826), Hugo Kollātaj (1750–1812), Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841), Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855), Émile Durkheim (1858–1917).

<sup>7</sup> The following authors paid attention to these norms in Antiquity: Protagoras of Abdera (480–410 BC), Quintilian (35–95); in the Middle Ages: Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274); in the Renaissance: Szymon Marycjusz of Pilzno

Separate categories that belong to the description of a teacher's morality include obligation and duty. They result directly from moral principles and norms. In other words, they are pragmatic guidelines related to a teacher's ethical behaviour. Moral obligation seems to be a necessity for such ethical behavior that has to be unconditionally met. Moral obligations take the form of a message which is made clear in verbally specified prohibitions and duties with which a teacher, in his pedagogical actions, has to comply.<sup>8</sup> Moral duties,<sup>9</sup> in turn, are connected with the inner sense of taking on such actions that confirm a teacher's high ethical sensitivity. They are not authoritative, but they result from a teacher's deep belief in their rightness. They make a teacher carry out actions that are not the consequence of obligations, and following those duties is not rooted in an inner compulsion, but in maturity that aims at harmonizing and optimizing pedagogical processes.<sup>10</sup>

Both categories (obligation and duty) have been functioning in the language of the study of a teacher from ancient times, through the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment, and they still belong to the basic terms of pedeutology. Sometimes they were treated as the same concepts, but now they can and must be treated as separate things. In some upbringing and education situations they may overlap or refer to the partially common scope. Hugo Kołłątaj had an interesting idea: he believed that a teacher's obligation is always related to his/her didactic work, and a teacher's duty should be referred to his/her work on their own development (cf. Kołłątaj 1967: 229). In compliance with this way of thinking, Aniela Szcówna specified the basic moral duties of a teacher, such as being a good person with a specific moral attitude and strong character, who constantly aims at increasing his/her knowledge, knows the art of teaching and education derived from psychology and pedagogy, and cares for his/her

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(1516–1574), Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski (1503–1572), John Amos Comenius (1592–1670); in the Enlightenment: Stanisław Konarski (1700–1773), Grzegorz Piramowicz (1735–1801) and many others.

<sup>8</sup> Some obligations take the nature of legal norms.

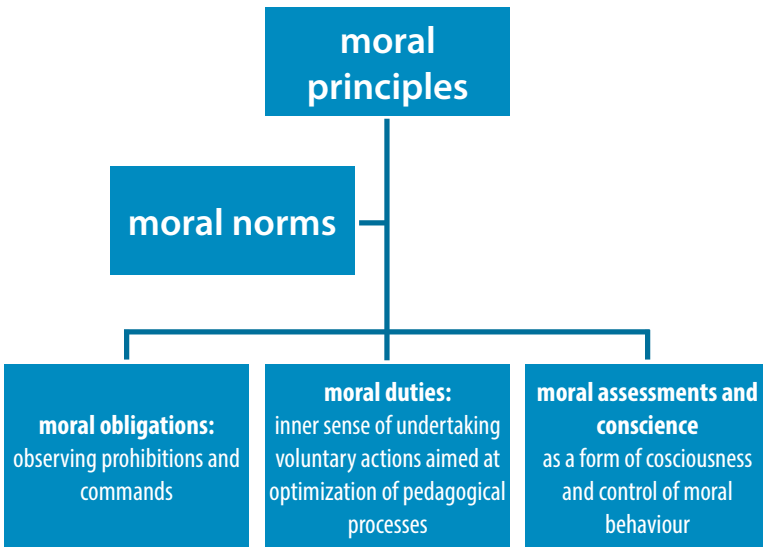
<sup>9</sup> Quintilian introduces the term "duty" into pedagogical language in the treaty: *Education of an Orator*.

<sup>10</sup> It refers to such actions that can be included in the categories: "I should, i.e. I can, but I do not have to."

own development compliant with the development of knowledge. She included the love of pedagogical actions into the basic teacher's duties (cf. Szycówna 1915: 4–23).

A teacher's moral assessments and his/her conscience, which are a permanent element of the whole behavior system, constitute a separate issue in his/her personality formation process. Basically, they refer to respecting principles, norms, obligations and moral duties by a teacher. A moral assessment is related to the conscious control of the whole ethical procedure, but also to single actions included in the basic scope of professional, and even social, activity of a teacher. The task of such an assessment is specifying the possibilities or omitting actions resulting from the observance of a teacher's duties and obligations. Moral assessments are shaped by a teacher's conscience which is a form of his/her individual awareness reflecting his/her own actions through referring to ethical concepts of good and evil, and to the approved hierarchy of values (Gała 1992: 25).

**Scheme 2:** Moral principles and their derivatives



**SOURCE:** the author's own work.

Referring to teachers' principles, norms, obligations and duties, the supporters of creating ethical codes built them while proclaiming the need to prepare them and to respect them by this professional

group. They were rooted in professional ethics perceived in different ways.<sup>11</sup> Their leading thought boils down to the idea that non-ethical behaviour is that of a teacher who “does not teach although he should; teaches although he should not; teaches in a way he should not teach.”

## Personality formation and a teacher's professional attitudes

The personality formation process of candidates for teachers and teachers themselves always aims at shaping their professional attitudes. In the past this was emphasized by those pedagogues who cared about the quality of the educational process. Many of them underlined the influence of this process on the effects that were possible to obtain due to acquired skills of professional self-improvement (self-development). Those skills include: (1) self-understanding, (2) self-evaluation, (3) criticism, (4) rationality, (5) innovativeness, (6) openness, (7) honesty.<sup>12</sup> In all periods of time we dealt with various ideas and concepts related to teaching, which have been fulfilled in many different ways.<sup>13</sup> The fact that we have not got a uniform

<sup>11</sup> Within the last decades there were many attempts to build professional ethics on the basis of which teachers' ethical codes were constructed. In this respect, it is worth mentioning the activity of such scholars as: Jacek Woroniecki (2013), Jan Legowicz (1988), Janusz Homplewicz (1996), Mikołaj Kozakiewicz (1971), Heliodor Muszyński (1971), Tadeusz Pilch (1995), Artur Andrzejuk (1998), Henryk Jankowski (1973), Aleksander Kamiński (1971), Anna Radziwiłł (1991), Krzysztof Kaszyński and Ludmiła Żuk-Łapińska (1995), Halina Kowalewska and Lucjan Porembski (1971), and many others.

<sup>12</sup> The importance of these skills in a teacher's work was emphasized by the following pedagogues and philosophers: Socrates (470–399 BC), Augustine of Hippo (354–430), Erasmus Roterodamus (1466–1469), Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski (1503–1572), Grzegorz Piramowicz (1735–1801), Jan Władysław Dawid (1859–1914), Wilhelm August Lay (1862–1926), Ernst Meumann (1862–1915), Aniela Szcówna (1869–1921), Henryk Rowid (1877–1944), Stanisław Dobrowolski (1883–1978), Maria Grzegorzewska (1888–1967), Robert Dottrens (1893–1884), Robert Alt (1905–1978), Jan Kulpa (1908–1983), Maksymilian Maciaszek (1913–1997), Gaston Mialaret (1918–2016), Stanisław Krawcewicz (1930–1987), Joanna Rutkowiak (1935–), Henryka Kwiatkowska and others.

<sup>13</sup> It is worth mentioning different ways in which the visions of this profession developed. Various models of a teacher were found in the philosophical



and optimum model of school causes that we fail to create the vision of the best possible model of a teacher. Both in the past and now, different professional models of a teacher have been created. In the ancient times and in the Middle Ages, a teacher was to be a humble servant subject to the will of those who gave him didactic and educational tasks. In modern autocratic and totalitarian countries, a teacher is perceived as a clerk who executes the commands of the ruler. Where people's and socialist parties ruled, a teacher was treated as a social activist who was to improve culture in his/her place of work. At present, a teacher is often given the role of a scientist and a reflective practitioner who transmits his/her knowledge and experience to the next generations. Thus, nowadays we cannot unequivocally determine whether any of the suggested professional models of a teacher dominates or functions in the available educational system. In the countries of the European Union which are different in terms of culture and civilization, we witness the co-occurrence of various models of the teaching profession, and it is hard to specify one model that would be the best for everyone (cf. Lewowicki 1994).

Modern pedeutology supports three orientations of the professional education of teachers: technological, humanist and functional (Kwiatkowska 2008: 47–63). Technological orientation prefers shaping teachers' professional attitudes that refer to pragmatic qualifications which warrant their efficient action and are only verifiable in empirical studies. In humanist orientation, in turn, the central point are a teacher's positive personality traits which are difficult to specify and place within a hierarchical system subject to objective research. Functional orientation is oriented at such education of professional attitudes that facilitates the obtainment of the ability to use pedagogical and extra-pedagogical knowledge in the process of reaching the most optimum results of the student's subjective and, at the same time, individual, development. It should be mentioned that none of these orientations occurs in its pure form. In practice, in teaching candidates and educating professionally active teachers we can come across an eclectic approach in which, depending on the

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views of, e.g. Socrates (ca. 470–399 BC), Quintilian (35–95), Juan Luis Vives (1492–1540), Charles Rollin (1661–1741), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), Joseph Goullieux (1731–1797), Grzegorz Piramowicz (1735–1801), or Jan Władysław Dawid (1859–1914), and many others.

temporal trend of pedeutological views, one of the orientations dominates. However, each of the above-mentioned orientations should be characterized by the concern for the full process of the formation of a teacher's personality, and it should not be limited only to its own concepts related to objective and subjective education. The formation in question is closer to a subjective approach the objective of which is a holistic way of perceiving the teaching profession.

In the meantime, careful analysis of modern training and supplementary education of teachers makes us ask a few questions concerning its quality. Example questions are as follows:

Does the current process of educating teachers in various universities and at different stages facilitate teachers' personality formation and prepare them for fulfilling pedagogical tasks? Is substantial and pedagogical-psychological knowledge, derived from the university at which teachers study to obtain their professional qualifications and competences, a sufficient source of their reflection on teachers' everyday work in the social reality that is getting more and more complicated? Does this reflection inspire teachers, i.e. does it encourage them to creative acts; or does it dishearten and discourage them from work, which results in boredom, despondency and failure to work on one/s own development and professional attitudes?

It is hard to deny that there are no ready answers to the above-mentioned questions, which results from at least three problems:

1. we have not got any current empirical research results concerning these issues;
2. our knowledge and common observations are full of extremes;
3. teachers who already work do not constitute a monolith, i.e. a consistent whole which can be described with a high degree of certainty.

Following these reservations while searching for the answer to the above-mentioned questions, we can conclude that, since the number of teacher training institutions increased (universities, academies of different profiles, higher private schools educating teachers on the BA level, as well as teacher training colleges and other schools), one of the most important elements of teachers' professional preparation, i.e. personality formation, has been neglected. This element, which we can consider a causative factor of the optimum education of teachers, is often ignored although, while analysing various difficult

educational situations, personality formation always turns out to be crucial.

Personality formation, which is a process of shaping professional attitudes, consists in (as we have already mentioned) the coexistence of at least three processes:

1. Maturation for the job, which consists in recognizing personal motives and desire to undertake pedagogical work. No institution that educates teachers analyses candidates for this job in terms of their predispositions and predilections, as well as the intellectual level. Such institutions only take into account secondary education as sufficient to become a candidate. Psychological maturity, i.e. progressive elements important for the process of pedagogical training, are not taken into consideration.
2. Learning the profession during the university training and while working at school. Learning the profession cannot be limited to gaining pedagogical and psychological knowledge the scope of which is, more and more often, reduced to a certain curriculum minimum, especially due to the fact that such knowledge is in no way verified by apprenticeship that usually lasts for only a few weeks during the whole period of studies. The quality of methodological preparation is also doubtful, as it is usually taught by academic employees who have no practical experience. Learning the profession should not only be carried out in the course of obligatory didactic classes, but also through direct participation in pedagogical work under the supervision of properly selected mentors, i.e. experienced teachers-practitioners. A candidate for a teacher is employed at the position of an apprentice, but no one supervises and controls such teachers in a kind and caring manner. After the apprenticeship, they are not subject to a qualifying exam the result of which would be a factor that co-decides about professional promotion.
3. Identification with the profession is the process of constant identification with it; it is a process that never ends. Identification with the profession is a reflection of conscious selection of pedagogical actions, irrespective of circumstances and situations, that may result in the sense of success or failure with

which a teacher can cope and which reduces his/her sense of professional burnout or willingness to quit the job (not only because of financial conditions).

**Scheme 3:** Relationship between a teacher's personality formation and professional attitude



Source: the author's own work.

Maturation, learning and identification are inseparable elements of the process related to the general personality formation of a teacher which has to begin already at the introductory level of his/her education and has to be continued at all stages of professional work. Such an approach may warrant optimization of shaping teachers' professional attitudes. This process should be consistently fulfilled with the same dynamics in all institutions which provide teachers with education and additional training.

However, the question is whether and to which degree it is possible, especially taking into account varied forms (intramural, extramural) and periods of time for educating candidates for teachers

(3-year BA studies, 5-year MA studies, different forms of gaining formal qualifications). It is believed that the simplest thing is educating teachers in various academic (and other) institutions, because it is assumed that each of such institutions, undertaking this task, believes that training teachers is something obvious, simple, uncomplicated and clear. This opinion results from misunderstanding the essence of this profession. Moreover, it is explained by the common experience of a school which used to be attended by everyone. However, this is a very erroneous way of thinking. Those who—to various degrees—participate in the process of educating and providing additional training to teachers, often do not even have practical experience in working with children and youth.

The reduced number of students in recent years results in a lower demand for teachers. This is an opportunity to carry out the reform of professional education taking into account the process of personality formation of candidates for teachers. What we need is an all-Polish discussion in order to re-define the teaching profession. Within the discussion, we have to search for the answers to the questions about the contemporary teacher-educator: whom should a teacher be as one of the basic subjects of the didactic-upbringing process? What are the expectations concerning his/her role in the process of supporting the development of the generation that is growing up now? What are his/her tasks in the changing reality which does not only require being the source of knowledge for those who grow up, but also being someone who understands them better?

The process of a teacher's personality formation is always carried out in two dimensions: in the objective, i.e. substantial-instrumental dimension, and in the subjective, i.e. personality-deontological dimension. Modern pedeutology clearly indicates that both of these dimensions are equally important and complementary in the process of preparation for doing the job and constant professional improvement. The substantial-instrumental dimension refers to intellectual abilities (metacognition), the knowledge of the subject which is being taught, as well as gaining and developing pedagogical skills (learning the strategies and methods of teaching and upbringing). The personality-deontological dimension, in turn, refers to the potential of self-reflective skills, possibilities and abilities, psychological conditions and properties, as well as the moral attitude of a teacher.

It should be remembered that teacher training institutions, irrespective of their types, have always paid attention to equipping candidates for teachers with certain features, attitudes and ways of behaving that were to make the essence of this job clear. Pedagogical books present various examples of visions of a teacher who should always aim at one's own perfection, especially inner one, due to which his/her work will become more efficient. According to many pedagogues-pedutologists, the result of a teacher's pedagogical actions should include the optimum preparation of the young generation for living in the world, but—let us emphasize this—in the world which the teacher does not know himself/herself. The modern world is not stable. It is changing very rapidly under the influence of unpredictable breakdowns, crises, and intensive transformation and globalization processes. This is no longer the world which accompanies several generations along with some changes that are hard to notice by them. Today, the world changes in many different aspects during the time in which only one generation lives. That is why, the extensive catalogues of a teacher's features become invalid or even doubtful today. The thesis according to which a teacher has to love others with selfless and one-sided love (which is usually unrequited) is useless and unconvincing now. A contemporary teacher is often helpless in front of the brutality and hostility of his/her students who do not hide their aggression directed also at him/her. The above reflection makes us adopt the following theses concerning authentic personality formation of a teacher. They are oriented at adopting the paradigm that makes us realize that a teacher's personality formation:

- is a dynamic and constant process of the personal development of his/her own individuality;
- aims at acquiring the ability to notice one's own uniqueness as a person, both during the preparation for the job and doing the job;
- is the process of acquiring necessary features characteristic to a person who performs a profession of public trust.

A teacher's personality formation, as a continuous, dynamic and long-lasting process, occurs in particular phases among which we can enumerate:

1. the initiatory phase (gaining propaedeutic knowledge of the profession and its properties);

2. the progressive phase (intensified continuation of the developmental process, identification with the profession, reinforcing one's own professional identity);
3. the phase of intensification (self-learning and self-fulfillment while doing the job).

Such a process of personality formation of candidates for teachers and teachers themselves determines the process of shaping their professional attitudes that aim at deeper reflection on their own mission, tasks and professional duties.

The above remarks, due to reduced possibility of carrying out a more detailed analysis of the issue, lead to the conviction that a teacher's personality formation includes his/her inner concentration on consciously adopted and voluntarily motivated tasks that he/she should undertake to achieve a stable and systematic professional development.

## Conclusion

The analysis of the history of teaching indicates that since ancient times people have recognized the need to prepare candidates for teachers within three aspects: intellectual, professional and ethical. In particular periods of time, the meanings of those aspects were defined in different ways, or some aspects were valued more than others. Sometimes a teacher's knowledge, erudition or wisdom were emphasized; at other times, his/her formal qualifications, competences and psychological traits, expressed in predispositions and predilections, were considered crucial. Some people believed that a teacher's moral attitude was the most important. Teachers expressed such an attitude in observing certain ethical principles and respecting obligations and duties that were ascribed to the teaching profession.

All these three aspects should be taken into account within the process of forming candidates for teachers, which is not an easy thing to do. The time of teachers' education should be spent productively to facilitate the process. Such a time requires preparatory actions, i.e. maturation, learning and identification with the profession. Particular links of a teacher's personality formation have to be reasonably and carefully fulfilled in the process of training a teacher and his/her doing the job. Then, this formation becomes multifaceted, which is

accompanied by rational thinking and honest recognition of a teacher's own potential that is very important in the times of modern axionormative chaos rooted in the dynamically changing social, environmental and global reality.

The task of personality formation includes the achievement of professional mastery by a teacher. Such a mastery is difficult to obtain, but a teacher cannot give it up. Mastery itself becomes authentic and noticeable when a teacher has a real influence on the optimum support of students in the process of education and upbringing which he/she directs. The intention of those processes is showing students their future role in co-creating cultural and civilization conditions—the whole social, economic and political reality in which they are going to live. And, although those conditions are difficult to predict, students—in their adult life—will be searching for and giving their own meaning to such reality in the individual and social dimension.

The correct personality formation of a teacher leads to shaping his/her adequate professional attitudes. Teacher training institutions, taking into account the dynamic changes occurring in the contemporary world, are going to face the necessity for reforming teacher education. And this is not just about changing the scope of substantial and methodological preparation of candidates for teachers. These institutions must work out a vision of progressive education, supplementary education and professional improvement that accompanies a teacher from the time of their academic didactic process, i.e. from the moment of their professional start, up to retiring or quitting the job. The effectiveness of such education depends on the quality of the complex process of a teacher's personality formation. This education is also to result in existential benefits that include the intellectual, social, spiritual and existential dimension. Personality formation is to prevent teachers' helplessness which can also be noticed in modern times. In pedagogological literature we can hardly ever come across the term: "an independent teacher." Unfortunately, administrative and political authorities usually promote a teacher who is incapacitated and "of a humble heart."



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