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ANCIENT AND MODERN CIVILIZATION AS THE CHOSEN CONTEXT FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The considerations undertaken in this text embrace selected issues connected with the beginning of the profession of a teacher, its history and the context of current problems. The divagations in this area have concerned different planes of investigation. They emphasise the uniqueness of the educational process and the individuals conducting it, guaranteeing development of the society and civilisation. Despite the knowledge being gained in this field, analyses of source materials showing not only the beginnings of the oldest profession, but also its further transformations are still carried out. A cursory overview of the significant set of pedeutological literature points to the differences and similarities in the form of the development of this profession (Plewka, 2015) over the given period.

Reports offering a chance to learn about one's own roots appear more and more frequently. They inspire to renew the once gathered teaching qualifications and professional experience context. Seniority and the influence of the external environment cause the teacher's activity to become automatic and routine, bringing development to an end (see Kabat, 2013). Each teacher's opening to exceeding the limits of their own capabilities determines the direction of changes in the internal potential. Unfortunately, teachers rarely come back to the sources when looking for ways of leaving the every-day dullness of the educational practice. Breaking the commonly accepted rules may arouse

interest in the unknown teaching world. It will stimulate a different look at “the reality of human involvement as an area of creative activity and a development tool” (Suchodolski, 1967, p. 148). For many teachers, B. Suchodolski’s words quoted above may become an inspiration for finding hints and solutions encouraging modification of their mentality and development of a new style of functioning. The teacher may treat the new behaviour models as an alternative to his/her thinking strategy, counteracting the monotony of every-day actions.

The repair of the teaching profession may be started by familiarising oneself with the proposals of ancient sages, who were striving for creation of the most perfect and universal solutions possible. This familiarity will allow a moment of reflection on the way the ancient achieved the honours and respect in the profession of a teacher. It will also persuade to search for an answer to the question: to what extent do we, modern educators, try to use their experience occurring in a given context? These questions initiate others, concerning the working conditions of a teacher, his/her development in these circumstances, the tasks undertaken, the behaviour style, the qualifications being gained, etc. The problems specified, together with the correlations lying between them, were already noticed by A. Mickiewicz during one of his Lausanne lectures. The author stated that “we should look for new points of contact between the ancient civilisation and the needs of the modern times, and when we do so, we may see that the former are not as old as they seem” (see Nawrocki, Mytych-Forajter, 2006). The poet’s thought clearly illustrates the disproportions between the civilisation paradigms, giving an individual a desire to search for something universal and useful in the complex world, constituting, at the same time, a chance and an illusion of development for the society, as well as the teacher himself/herself. The human being, so the teacher, too, as M. Hirszowicz (1998) writes, is the creator of changes, crises, evolutionary transformations, lasting long or happening quickly. The presence of the human being, characterised by the ability to create reality in different contexts, shows in every conditions and their transformations. It is this extraordinariness of the homo sapiens that the society should strive for, offering the best possible use of the individual capital serving civilisation development.

Theoretical disputes in terminological explanations

The peregrination of the teaching problems enables to find an answer to the complex question asked above. It should be noted that various issues

experienced individually and as a group by the teaching community lie behind the question. Over the centuries this community has created a specific world which undergoes permanent changes. The current conditions show such far-reaching transformations of the environment and development of the profession of a teacher that more and more often the sources are being referred to in order to understand the processes taking place and become aware of the directions in which the modifications are going. Some concepts of the civilisation and the teacher are described below for better exploration of the selected area of investigation with their contexts.

The concept of civilisation comes from Latin **civilis** and means the level of development achieved by a society in a given historical epoch, especially taking into account the level of the material culture (knowledge of exact sciences and technology), which is an indicator of the extent to which people have brought the natural environment under control and used its resources (*Encyklopedia PWN*, 2007). As M. Golka thinks, emergence of civilisation is the existence of appropriate media, out of which the medium of communication, i.e. writing, is most important, followed by the city, so the society, then the authority and religion.

The modern civilisation has treated the enlisted properties ironically, combining urban life with villa estates, shopping centres and places of poverty in which numerous churches are built, showing the society's religiousness, with simultaneous development of sects communicating directly and via text messages and internet blogs. The metaphor perfectly illustrates the diversity of the civilisation media forms, in which a common point is noticed; namely, education and the teacher using the communication system to bring closer the community models, education needed to get the natural forces under control, and to undertake the challenges of "educating for the future" (Melosik 1988, p. 127–141; Toffler, 1974, 1985).

It should be noticed that the idea of civilisation analysed here was popularised in the European culture in the second half of the 18th century. French Enlightenment writers gave it social publicity and meaning, connecting its content with scientific and technical progress in human activity and creation of rational forms of social life (Drozdowicz, 2007). Emphasising the importance of the human being in world transformations makes us realise that without an individual, so also a teacher, entering a social group there are no chances to build a civilisation. Hence, every teacher, as Cz. Mojsiewicz states, is an entity in a country and has deciding influence on all matters connected

with undertakings in the surrounding reality (Mojsiewicz, 1992). A competent teacher can ensure realisation of tasks, relaying norms and ideas typical for a given society to others, but is also able to encourage to get involved in innovative, reform activities bringing benefits to education and the environment, being a significant element of civilisation creation at the same time.

The second concept, in turn, refers to the teacher. At the beginning he was a Master and did his job according to the accepted social model. The external conditions motivated to strive for perfection and wisdom. The Master, who passed knowledge on and practiced thinking abilities, strengthened goals determined ambitiously in the pupil. He enjoyed considerable respect and high social esteem, which was lost over time (Krasuski, 1985).

Nowadays the teacher is judged by their education, requirements, tasks and functions, which has caused the profession to be formalised. The abovementioned properties can be noticed in the definition given by *Encyklopedia pedagogiczna* and W. Okoń's works. The teacher is "a person with verified personal predispositions and competences confirmed by appropriate specialist higher education and pedagogical and professional preparation for formal teaching within the educational system" (Milerski, Śliwerski, 2000; Okoń, 2004). An analogous understanding is found in article 9.1 of Karta Nauczyciela (art. 1–9). K. Konarzewski's term ensures reference to the tradition of the teaching profession. The author writes that "the teacher is a person of unshakeable principles and wide horizons [...] continuing the master's mission, knowing their wards well, planning their activities carefully" (Konarzewski, 1995, p. 148). R. Muszkieta lays stress on the importance of the teacher's individual properties, quoting Z. Żukowska's explanation (Muszkieta, 2001, p. 7). The emphasis on the teacher's personality features, knowledge, goodness and satisfaction experienced by him/her, regardless of the obstacles and constraints, can be found in H. Kwiatkowska (2005) and A. Siemak-Tylikowska's (2004) works. M. Śnieżyński's definition contains a combination of the professional social and personal life in the person of the teacher (Śnieżyński, 1995). M. Taraszkiewicz, in turn, specifies the concept of the modern teacher not as a subject expert, but as a pupil's active guide, educational adviser using the ward's potential for realisation of his/her educational career, accepting individual assets completely (Taraszkiewicz, 1998). An interesting explication of the term of the teacher is found in G. J. Koźmiński and D.K. Kitowska's work. The authors' explanations show the teacher as a person open to their pupil who develops him/her comprehensively, maintaining awareness of

their own activity (see Koźmiński, Kitowska, 2000). A. Nalaskowski is critical about the teacher and this profession. He states that it is a community,

[...] mentally incapable of creatively accepting intellectual challenges facing education. [...] It is the matter and antimatter of education. [...] They teach, not knowing much themselves. Undoubtedly, it is a group still not very recognizable, peculiar, and sometimes even mysterious. Within the community there are circles of individuals having a vested interest in their own professional development. And right next to them (with the same status and with the same salary) function burnt out people [...]. (Nalaskowski, 1999, p. 62)

The selected positive and negative explanations are well-summarised by R. Kwaśnica. The author states that “the teacher’s professional development consists in simultaneous evolution of practical, moral and technical competences. It proceeds from the stage of adopting the role, through full adaptation in the role, to the phase of overstepping it creatively and replacing it with professional identity” (Kwaśnica, 1998, p. 17). Therefore, what matters are the teacher’s abilities, pedagogical skills and good preparation and qualifications used in educational contexts.

Antiquity: foundations of the profession of a teacher and pedagogical thought

Antiquity is the age that arouses incredible interest in the contemporaries. Its characteristic feature was the ideal of a broadly developed human being. The individual desired to achieve the qualities of physical and mental perfection accepted by the society, obeying moral principles. This was called *kalokagathia* and was promoted in the educational process. Education was oriented towards developing wisdom and rousing to action. The teacher, who experienced underestimation at the stage of elementary education, strengthened this activity together with models of social behaviour. The abovementioned marginalisation resulted from the fact that everyone, even a Greek slave who obtained an appropriate level of knowledge, could follow this profession. Gaining knowledge was connected with extremely difficult many-year-long three-stage education including learning principles of morality, history of native literature, political basics, reading and writing complicated signs. The teacher’s effort put into his own education bore fruit in the form of paving the way for the greatest honours and social respect. Therefore, the ancient civilisation can boast Masters in the profession of a teacher, eminent

thinkers, artists, who created the foundations of science, technology and architecture, built cities, contributing to development of culture, theatre, art, literature and education.

The prevalent style and model of ancient life was popularised not only in the education system, but also in philosophical schools¹. They promoted values supporting unity with the civilisation. At present, however, the old universal values have gained a new and ambiguous form that is loosely connected with the modern civilisation. Currently diverse skills, knowledge and an ability to profit from the charms of everyday life matter and their context (see Cisikszentmihalyi, 1998) matter. The person who brings them closer to the pupil is the teacher, so that s/he does not only gasp at the civilisation speed, but also cares for the humanistic and axiological (Denek, 1999) dimension of his/her identity.

Crystallisation of individuality, as ancient Greeks noticed, takes place through education and upbringing which is similar to the process of building. It first appeared in Plato's, Socrates' student's, works as a vivid description of educational procedures. They were used towards pre-school children, and constituted an initial stage of preparation for further responsibilities in the country. Education in Plato's terms was connected with an individual's education according to the ideal of humanity, consistent with the real essence of upbringing understood today. Plato's far-reaching vision embraced freedom in learning and choosing literature oriented towards healthy content, popularisation of music and plastic arts, which were supposed to ennoble youngsters. He realised his pedagogical thinking through collective, not individual, upbringing, which experiences ups and downs these days, too (see Szuman, 1969).

An advocate of state education was a great thinker and teacher, Aristotle. In his opinion, an individual's nature, habits and mind constitute the person's character. Aristotle's view resulted from the fact that the soul had a rational and an irrational element. They are useful during the process of teaching and learning, which proceeds from sensual to spiritual cognition. The researcher believed that the first stage of the teacher's didactic actions should be showing the pupil letters, things, and only in the second stage does inculcating them into the memory happen, in order for the pupil to be able to practice efficient

¹ Philosophical schools; the Epicurean school promoting the search for pleasure, happiness and avoidance of pain, the hedonistic school preaching carnal pleasures as the greatest good, the stoic school emphasising the need to keep the mind in equilibrium without any sudden experiences of joy or sadness as happiness was associated with peace of mind.

use of the material in the third stage. He developed the basics of didactics and theory of upbringing which present educators fully use and try to improve (Jaczynowska, Musiał, Stępień, 1999; Okoń, 2003; Pólturzycki, 2014; Szadzińska, 2013).

However, Socrates was an unsurpassed teacher. He avoided the accepted didactic form in his activity, and proposed a dialogue with the pupil, asking questions, exchanging thoughts, which he managed skillfully. He carried this method out in different contexts. Socrates adopted the sophists' method that taught an ability to think logically, which is now used in group, research work, creativity training (Szmidt, 2008; Nęcka, 2012). It contributes to optimal use of one's abilities, increasing individual resources. He exhorted to avoid idle considerations. He recommended to take care of health, paid attention to food, beverages, work, effort, so that they helped to maintain the best possible physical and mental state (see Kot, 1995). The great sage's indications are now re-discovered and implemented into young and older educators' practice.

The Greek heritage was used by the Romans building their ancient civilisation. As J. Krasuski writes, "the dependence of the content of the educating ideal on the level of organisation and social and political conditioning of the country was very clearly visible" (Krasuski, 1985, p. 9). The contemporary society set itself to educate an ideal citizen who combined physical, mental and moral development. They introduced a three-stage education system similar to the Greek one, i.e. "elementary" schools, in which reading and writing were only taught. They were usually situated in the suburbs, and their number grew all the time due to the country's demand for educated people. The teacher of this school was the literator. He was underestimated and was recruited from the Greek slavery class. He had lessons in the public school from early morning till late afternoon. During this time the teacher passed knowledge on, using the "farula" walking stick. It was supposed to teach the pupils «concentration» and «the pursuit of development», which was connected with the use of the memorisation method, aided by flogging. The experiences gained by the teacher were used to develop the curriculum including the seven liberal arts later taken over by medieval education (Kurdybacha, 1967, p. 64 et seq.).

Apart from the elementary schools, there were also secondary schools. They improved the ability to read and interpret the works of Greek and Latin literature, using Cicero's and Virgil's works. The pupil learnt about them thanks to the teacher known as a grammaticus. The teacher at this level of education

enjoyed great social respect, which present-day teachers would like to experience. At higher education schools, in turn, classes were conducted by rhetors who mainly taught oratory. Pupils gained skills extremely useful in public life. They owed this preparation to manage both in and outside the school to their teachers. Today, there are attempts at referring to these noble ideas through modernisations of the educational system and re-interpretation of the teaching profession promoting a holistic view at its past and present.

In the past, good educational practice was imitated, too. An example is the Greek education system, which was taken over by the Romans. Certain differences can, however, be noticed. The Romans argued for private upbringing and homeschooling. They opposed public education, about which we currently have lots of reservations, as well. There was quite a large group of antagonists of collective education at that time. Yet, a great orator and the first public teacher of rhetoric, Quintilian, started to promote its advantages. He noticed that depravity appearing at school caused less harm than a home teacher of inappropriate qualities. He thought that talented and ambitious teachers coped very well at public schools when they needed to bring themselves to more mental and didactic effort than when they were responsible for one person only. And “the teacher’s words must be like the sun which always gives the same amount of light and warmth to all pupils” (Kwintylian, ed. 2002).

Quintilian’s words from his work *The Orator’s Education* quoted above were known not only at his times, but gained fame in other epochs, too. The contemporary authorities appreciated his services. They realised that such a great teacher could educate young and robust specialists contributing to social development, civilisation progress, creating “new educating ideals” and new ways of working, which would be eagerly learnt and used in one’s activity. It should be noted, however, that in the ancient world the greatest dream was not the profession of a good farmer, citizen or soldier, but “an appropriately educated civil servant, fluently speaking Latin and Greek, having an ability to express their thoughts beautifully, knowing the law and history of the country well, with a good grasp of the current issues of the public life. He should be characterised by good manners, grace, knowledge of the human nature, good memory, fondness of practical things, and, most importantly, obey the moral code” (www.notatek.pl/wychowanie-w-starozytnym-rzymie-pedagogika). Often, it was a teacher who was a civil servant.

The educator realised his profession not only out of a sense of responsibility, but also mission. He encouraged youngsters to participate in curricular and

extracurricular education. The extracurricular organisations of various types that were created at that time were oriented towards forming physical brawn and mental fitness, realising their society's ideals in practice. They constituted a bridge to further development and use of the acquired knowledge and skills in public life. Currently, extracurricular classes have taken a different form. On the one hand, these are special interest groups and lessons of physical education, which a low percentage of pupils attend, neglecting axiological and health-promoting education in favour of sitting in front of computers. On the other hand, these are schools or sports clubs oriented towards encouraging activity among a small proportion of the young and the older yearning to develop their abilities, yet without identifying themselves with the ideals of the whole community. The above statement presents both the positive and pernicious influence of civilisation, which a wise and educated teacher notices. However, professionalism of a modern educator is not enough to effectively impact the pupil's decisions and development. Therefore, a teacher should be charismatic, kind and characterised by at least a little authority that the Master had, in order to stimulate the pupils, their world of senses, knowledge and gathered experience.

The present day: heritage of centuries and effect on the profession of a teacher

The basis of the present-day civilisation started to form the moment modern thinking appeared. The representatives thereof were F. Bacon (see Kotarbiński, 1932), J.S. Mill (2006), K.J. Popper (2002), scientists (see Humięcka-Jakubowska, 2014), A. Comte. The enlisted researchers thought that science would help the human being bring the environment under control and resolve different issues in a useful way, improving living conditions (see Comte, 1961).

The different style of thinking formed over time caused an industrial, scientific, technical, social and educational revolution. Existence of every human being, including the teacher, started to move from the real level to one of virtual functioning which was not present before. Creation of moral principles, values was left in favour of paying homage to the mind, whose virtues were later denied, as Z. Bauman (1998) writes. It follows that external conditions and their context promoting modernity and technology began to affect education and its workers.

The transformations appearing in the 20th century revealed differences between what existed earlier and creating the new, which turned out to be the

information civilisation that T. Hejnicka-Bezwińska (2008) writes about. The author notices that a class of the so-called “white collars” – information technology engineers and managers – is starting to dominate in the modern world. A new group of employees, then, is emerging, which requires different organisation of work and activity. It is oriented towards utilization of an individual’s diverse abilities, their inventiveness, flexibility and creativity. The enumerated qualities are used to realise new needs, tasks, created models, living standards and the profession of a teacher, which C. Banach (2005) noticed. He points out that neither the emerging new social structure nor accumulating educational problems will be solved thanks to methodological improvements in the educator’s work, but a new model of the teacher should be proposed. It must result not only from the transformations of the surroundings, but also from the development of the pedagogical sciences. The above thesis is illustrated by the conceptions developed at the beginning of the 20th century which favoured, among others, slogans of paidocentrism. They viewed the teacher as a “gardener” caring for the child’s personality.

The next transformations of the conditions caused a shift from the role of the gardener or promotion of the personality conceptions in the development of the teaching profession in favour of popularisation of education and professional preparation to undertake tasks in the didactic process, which is touched upon by G. Piskorska (*Nauczyciel na przestrzeni dziejów*). Introduction of the slogans of anti-pedagogy into the educational process contributed to an increase in permissive parenting, without responsibility and rules. This led to a downfall of the authority of the teacher and educational institutions. Norms and principles of social coexistence were loosened, which was even further worsened by the information chaos. In this complex situation, the present-day teacher and school started to struggle with numerous pathological phenomena that did not exist earlier on a large scale. The educational system together with the teacher made efforts to develop simultaneous influence on the pupil and his/her family, in order not only to educate the mind, social attitude, but also aid the family’s educational actions, which is noticed by W. Brezinka (2007), as well as M. Łobocki (2003).

The context of the changeable conditions of the modern times have shaped a mosaic model of the teacher oriented towards multilateral and multidimensional development. According to it, the teacher is supposed to be aware of his/her humanity, self-reliance, creativity, responsibility for others. The enlisted personal virtues depend on one’s predispositions, working conditions,

undertaken tasks and challenges activating abilities needed not only in education, but also outside. The characteristics of the teacher enable him/her to strive for pedagogical mastery and becoming at least a certain role model. The attempts are difficult to achieve, as J. Kuźma emphasises. They become useless in this author's opinion at the moment of a crisis of the teaching profession. It results from a social crisis, repeating permanently in the globalised reality. In this sense, the crisis of the teaching profession is a civilisation crisis, confirmed, among others, by J. Delors' report (1998).

Conclusion

To sum up, it can be noticed that the considerations conducted within the selected area provide an answer to the question asked at the beginning. They show the history of the profession of a teacher, as well as the formalisation of the groundwork for the pedagogical activity. The foundations of the theoretical and practical activity of the teacher were initiated by sages and great Greek and Roman scholars. They developed the guidelines for the educational system and popularised the ideals of a broadly developed personality of the human being – citizen, which were sculpted in the three-stage educational system preparing for life in the ancient democratic civilisation. The present-day teacher should search for sources of vitality in the ancient past, in order to give perspicuity to their civilisation. The maxims and recommendations developed at that time constitute an invaluable basis for the formation of ideals, moral virtues and knowledge perfection, allowing to change the environment without losing humanity. Strengthening the human identity and education thereof was and still is an important issue. The teacher, regardless of the surrounding context conditions realised his/her style and strategy of pedagogical activity. S/He carried out the professional duties, influencing others with his/her predispositions and gained qualifications. S/He interfered in the pupil's world and his/her social reality, which resulted in gathering knowledge, experience, development of competences useful in building the material and immaterial world. Therefore, the profession of a teacher means being a Master, as well as striving for pedagogical mastery; it is development combining professionalism and vocation, necessary to pass values and models on, thus making it possible to educate the mind, body and spirit of the pupils, in such a way that they are not charmed by the universalism of global actions. Completion of these tasks requires

from the teacher specific predispositions that A. Smołalski (2009) gave in the form of the following pieces of advice:

- Try to be the creator of your own pedagogical talent;
- Know your weaknesses and drawbacks;
- Create your own constitution of values;
- Consciously control your own speech;
- Make the pupil your partner;
- Mind yourself so that you do not become a freak already in your youth;
- Try to be an effective teacher;
- Perfect yourself as evenly as possible;
- for You are a carrier of values.

These recommendations can aid the development of the oldest profession, which adjusts to the conditions, contexts, models, values, institutions, social order passed on to pupils, whose qualifications serve to build the society and civilisation.

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STAROŻYTNA I NOWOCZESNA CYWILIZACJA JAKO WYBRANY KONTEKST ROZWOJU NAUCZYCIELA

Streszczenie: Artykuł nawiązuje do początków tworzenia nauczycielskiej profesji, jej konstituowania się i rozwoju w danych warunkach i ich kontekstach. Zwrócono w nim uwagę na źródła powstania najstarszego zawodu, przyczyniającego się do rozkwitu starożytnej cywilizacji. Zainteresowanie współczesnych swymi korzeniami łączy się z odnalezieniem wskazówek przeciwdziałających rutynie i monotonii codziennych nauczycielskich czynności. Być może dawne maksymy pozwolą zrozumieć zewnętrzne transformacje, ich kontekst oraz umożliwią wkroczenie nauczającemu na ścieżkę zmian swej mentalności i obranego stylu pracy. Przeprowadzone teoretyczne dywagacje oddają istotę poruszanych obecnie wybranych problemów nauczycielskiego zawodu, wynikającego z modelu i koncepcji pedagogicznego myślenia, oddziałującego na proces kształcenia młodych i ich przygotowanie do projektowania i budowania swojej cywilizacji.

Słowa kluczowe: nauczyciel, cywilizacja, starożytność, współczesność, kontekst, rozwój, myślenie pedagogiczne

ANCIENT AND MODERN CIVILIZATION AS THE CHOSEN CONTEXT FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Summary: The article refers to the beginnings of the creation of the teaching profession, formation and development thereof in the given conditions and their contexts. Attention has been paid to the sources of the emergence of the oldest profession, contributing to the prosperity of the ancient civilisation. The interest of the contemporaries in their roots is connected with finding guidelines counteracting the routine and monotony of the every-day teaching actions. Maybe the old maxims will allow the teacher to understand the external transformations, their context and step on the path of changing his/her mentality and the once-chosen working style. The theoretical divagations conducted here reflect the essence of the currently raised problems of the teaching profession resulting from the model and conception of pedagogical thinking, influencing the process of educating the youth and their preparation to design and build their civilisation.

Keywords: teacher, civilisation, antiquity, modernity, context, development, pedagogical thinking