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Pedeutology and hermeneutic pedagogy: Encounter between teacher and student in light of the concept of vocational fit

Pedeutologia a hermeneutyka pedagogiczna: spotkanie nauczyciela i ucznia w świetle koncepcji dopasowania zawodowego

Abstract: The starting point, and at the same time the axis of the reflections presented in this article, is the presentation of the teacher-student relationship. These reflections were inspired by the tenets of pedagogical hermeneutics, or, more specifically, a branch of pedagogical hermeneutics which focuses on the process of understanding the senses and meanings of what happens between a student and an educator and which I apply to this key relationship of the school microcosm. Then, referring to the category of teacher-student “encounter”, the article discusses the problem of vocational fit and presents it from the point of view of the psychological (personalistic) approach in pedeutology, taking into account a specific catalogue of obligations of the older participant of this dyad in relation to the younger one. It emphasizes that only a teacher optimally suited to their profession will be able to create such conditions for the students that will enable them to self-discover and form a cultural personality in terms of hermeneutic (humanistic) pedagogy. In the next part of the article, the vocational fit of teachers is presented with reference to John L. Holland’s theory of professional personality and the five-factor theory of personality by Paul T. Costa and Robert R. McCrae. The author presents results of empirical analyses relating to these problems and, referring to the tenets of pedagogical hermeneutics,

makes an attempt to interpret them in a different way than hitherto, taking into account a new perspective on the problem.

Keywords: teacher, teacher-student relationship, personality, professional personality, vocational fit, hermeneutic pedagogy, humanistic pedagogy.

Introduction

”Who should a teacher be?” is arguably one of the most frequently asked and at the same time eternal questions of pedagogy. One that over the past centuries has regularly been raised in deliberations of education scholars wishing to explore and understand the essence of this profession entrusted with a special mission. Of course, this fundamental question is not exclusive to pedagogy - it can also be found in psychological and philosophical discourse, which is why an interdisciplinary approach seems particularly interesting.

An impulse to engage in this type of reflection, transcending traditional disciplinary boundaries, may come with the adoption of the perspective of **pedagogical hermeneutics**. Having its roots, among others, in the theological and philosophical thought of the 19th and 20th centuries¹ (Milerski, 2011, pp. 24-30, 103-111) and referring at the same time to such traditional areas of interest in psychology as human personality (cf. Milerski, 2021, pp. 359-361), it can serve as an ideal starting point for looking at the teacher and asking who they are or who they should be, and what consequences this entails both for them and for their charges, from a slightly different perspective than they one usually assumed, i.e. in a way that attempts to combine what would be an opposition in the hermeneutic approach, i.e. pedagogical scientism and the ontology of human being (cf. Sawicki, 1996, pp. 33-36).

In the area under consideration, it is crucial to refer to the basic theses of **humanistic pedagogy (hermeneutic pedagogy)**; cf. Milerski, 2021, pp. 350), which, according to the approach proposed by Wincenty Okoń (2001, pp. 287), considers as worthy of realization such qualities of education that result, among other things, from the adoption of the following assumptions: “education (and thus learning) is a process in which the student him or herself becomes the subject”, “self-education and self-learning play no less a role in education than the activities of educational institutions”, or, finally, “education is a process of human self-actualisation”. The fundamental aim

¹ It should be emphasized that the origins of hermeneutics seen as a theory of interpretation are inextricably linked to the antiquity (Milerski, 2011, pp. 31-33).

of humanistic education is therefore - in addition to providing students with a cultural canon - to create conditions for self-discovery and to shape their **cultural personality**, i.e. “a structure of meanings and values that will enable [them - note STK] to understand and value their own lives independently” (Milerski, 2021, pp. 359). What is extremely important is that the process of forming a personality understood in this way is not technical in nature, does not rely on memorising or mechanically transmitting information and, moreover, does not involve “external moulding” - instead, it requires “an understanding, hermeneutic and existential encounter with products of culture” (ibid; cf. Milerski, 2016, pp. 97-98). This approach draws attention to the following problem, related to the opening question of this article: What role should a teacher play in relation to his or her students in order to assist them in carrying out the aforementioned task independently? A task whose successful completion, it should be emphasised, on the one hand indicates the maturity of the individual and, on the other, conditions his or her successful participation in the wider community. If there is no room here for the teacher to exert a direct influence (“moulding”) on the development of the student’s cultural personality, which is the central construct of the humanist approach, then what exactly is the role of the teacher as educator? And furthermore, what qualities should a teacher have in order to meet the resulting challenges? The concept of vocational fit, described later in this article, seems to meet the problem posed in this way.

Teacher and student from a hermeneutic perspective - meeting in a situation of vagueness

According to the definition proposed by Bogusław Milerski, which is the central axis of the deliberations presented later in this article, hermeneutic pedagogy (theory of **understanding² and interpretation**) in general terms takes into account “the importance of understanding and interpretation in education and pedagogical inquiry, as well as the influence of pedagogical experience on understanding and interpretation”, and furthermore “can be seen as a methodological orientation whose object is to define the method, characteristics and conditions of studying educational reality” (2011, pp. 12). Krystyna Ablewicz (1998, pp. 33) identified educational reality and related

² Understanding is defined here as “the process of deciphering or attributing meaning to some reality”, while hermeneutic understanding “is the process of identifying the meanings and values through which the reality that is the object of understanding becomes a meaningful whole for us” (Milerski, 2021, pp. 356-357).

phenomena as the object of hermeneutics understood in this way, and furthermore assumed that one of the fundamental areas to understanding which it should lead is “interpretation in empirical research” (which is not without significance from the point of view of the further reflections in this article). Mieczysław Sawicki, also referring to the widely understood educational reality, identifies pedagogical hermeneutics, which is “a project of a scientific theory understanding and describing what transpires in the school community” and which has its origins in the critique of pedagogical modernism and postmodernism of the 20th century, with the project of *paideia* (or *paedeia*), which grows out of the questions: “Who is a human being?” and “Who is a child?” (cf. Śliwerski, 2007). It seems that extending this set of questions to include the one that opens this article and is reflected in the problem outlined in the introduction is highly justified, because not only does it provide a more detailed explanation of the first one (the teacher seen as a person with a special mission), embedded in educational realities, but the answer we give to it is inextricably linked to the answer to the question concerning the child (student) - not only who they are, but also who they may become in the future, with the teacher’s involvement.

According to the main idea that constitutes the cognitive foundation of this article, it is the way in which pedagogical hermeneutics captures the teacher-student relationship (of which the school is the external manifestation) that is crucial. This relationship, referred to as a “community”, constitutes the metaphorical place where the child-student “emerges, is revealed, happens in the relations that occur between a child and an adult called teacher” (Sawicki, 1996, pp. 11). This implies that the teacher is not so much a person tasked with helping the child to gradually realise their potential, but a person on whom the success of this process and its course are almost entirely dependent. Indeed, according to the approach discussed, “the child as a student is an event that may or may not be born. It may but does not have to” (ibid., pp. 11-12) - the teacher therefore plays a primary role in this symbolic birth - their mission is to provide the student with all the support they need and to create in the classroom conditions conducive to their comprehensive growth and gradual becoming a student, an individual ready for further development and flourishing in the subsequent years of life (cf. Kwiatkowski, S. T., 2018, pp. 133-138, 145-149).

According to pedagogical hermeneutics³, the prerequisite for the realization of the above-mentioned objectives is a real **encounter** between the teacher and the student (seen as an event), which means that a bond is born between them that can lead to the formation of a **spiritual community** and which is linked to a profound transformation of both of them (Sawicki, 1996, pp. 12). As B. Milerski emphasised, referring to the philosophical and pedagogical reflection of Wilhelm Dilthey, one of the pioneers of pedagogical hermeneutics, “the essence of education is therefore not primarily about skills, abilities or competences, but something more fundamental - the spiritual life of the individual”⁴ - its development and shaping being “the result of spiritual development based on self-reflection” (1934 as cited in: Milerski, 2011, pp. 78-79). This above-mentioned encounter, and this must be strongly emphasised, should lead to the creation of a dialogical space/relationship between teacher and student (the space of their interactions and I-Thou relationship; cf. Buber, 1992, pp. 226; Milerski, 2008; Gara, 2018), which realizes one of the main propositions of humanistic psychology and pedagogy (cf. Kwiatkowska, 2008, pp. 52-53), in which, through a natural, open and authentic dialogue involving asking questions, attentive listening and giving thoughtful answers, they participate together, continuously deepening their relationship and getting to know each other.

³ This article adopts the viewpoint proposed by M. Sawicki in his monograph entitled “Hermeneutyka pedagogiczna” (1996), in which - as emphasized in his summary concerning this position by B. Milerski (2011, pp. 122-123), he presented “an analysis of the educational relationship and the process of education from the perspective of dialogical reflection”, and furthermore “described the phenomenon of education with a particular focus on the process of understanding the meanings and senses of what happens between the educator and the educated”, making an attempt to determine “the meanings of the categories of pedagogical hermeneutics, which included: opening up, dialogue, speech, encounter and understanding”. Due to the fact that the axis of this article is the teacher-student relationship as well as, further, the issue of career matching of teachers, closely related to the nature of this relationship, and therefore the processes/phenomena that are the central point of interest of peudeutology, the author found the approach proposed by M. Sawicki to be appropriate from the point as if offers a vivid presentation of the reflection characteristic of the above-mentioned pedagogical sub-discipline against the background of the issues addressed in the area of pedagogical hermeneutics.

⁴ The fundamental importance of spiritual life according to W. Dilthey is reflected, among other things, in his proposed definition of education, according to which this term, crucial from a pedagogical perspective, should be understood as “the planned activity through which adults aim to shape the spiritual life of adolescents” (Dilthey, 1934, as cited in: Milerski, 2011, pp. 77-78).

As M. Sawicki emphasised, “it is impossible to have a real school without the child meeting the teacher” (1996, pp. 114), and this relationship, this encounter, is of fundamental importance, as it enables the older of the participants in the dyad to become a teacher (cf. Kwiatkowska, 2008, pp. 26), and the younger to gradually emerge as a student. However, the progression of this process is by its very nature unpredictable, thus placing it in opposition to scientific pedagogy, which, not accepting such unpredictability, seeks to capture all phenomena and processes occurring in the field of education into a concrete framework that allows their progression to be predicted, objectified and measured (cf. Milerski, 2021, pp. 354). Interestingly, this position is reminiscent of one of the key assumptions inherent in *pedeutology*, according to which the everyday work of a teacher is characterised by **multiple vagueness**, which means that it can be described as a **deeply problematic** activity, due to the fact that those who perform it are forced to make constant decisions and engage in various activities without having full data at their disposal (Kwiatkowska, 2008, pp. 11). As Henryka Kwiatkowska (2008, pp. 11) emphasised, the theoretical knowledge constituting the cognitive basis for teachers’ actions is “by its very nature incomplete (it cannot be expected to illuminate every situation of action) and uncertain (based on it we cannot decide that one should act in this way for sure)”. So here, too, we are faced with a far-reaching unpredictability - this time in a version specific to the everyday functioning of a school teacher. At the same time, it should be emphasised how much the changeability of the main subjects of the educational process, i.e. the already mentioned teacher-student dyad, contributes to it. After all, the teacher has to deal not only with him or herself - not being, after all, *constans* - but also with the human element in the form of the student (students who differ from each other, if only due to subjective pre-understanding that influences their perception of the world; cf. Milerski, 2021, pp. 359), which makes it impossible to reduce their work to a simple technical exercise. Wherever almost daily interpersonal relations are involved, it is simply unrealistic and unattainable to predict how things will unfold, even for highly competent teachers. In his take on the matter Robert Kwaśnica stated that “despite many constant elements and despite the appearance of stability they produce, educational situations are unique, because in each of them the teacher is dealing not with things, but with people” (2010, p. 294). This is why Christopher Day referred to teaching as a complex process and concluded that “although the complexity can be reduced, for example by appropriate preparation of the environment, effective teaching will always require both intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, as well as personal and

professional commitment, and therefore a combination of the right thoughts and feelings” (2004, pp. 18). Following on from this thought, it should be emphasised that wherever feelings are involved, any attempt to create an environment that is fully predictable and capable of being put into a set of even the most complex and well designed algorithms (cf. Koziellecki, 1995, pp. 109-118; Kwiatkowski, S. M., 1991, 2018) is doomed to failure from the start.

Vocational fit as a prerequisite of the teacher-child/student encounter - a hermeneutic and peudeutological perspective

The considerations presented so far allow us to draw an extremely important conclusion, which should be preceded by the following question, referring - not without reason - to the one asked at the very beginning of the article, namely: “Since the encounter between teacher and student is so vital, while at the same time being aware of the enormous complexity and unpredictability of school interpersonal relations, who (what) should a teacher be to measure up to the task, on the fulfilment of which the fate of the children entrusted to their care depends?”. No doubt, there may be as many answers to such a question as there are people taking up the challenge. It seems, however, that this underlying theme, which would be likely to emerge in the statements of many of those questioned, is the question whether a teacher is **well suited for the profession** (the professional role) (cf. Dawis, Lofquist and Weiss, 1968, pp. 12; Holland, 1985). After all, can we hope that such an important task - requiring not only a great deal of knowledge, but also the possession of a whole set of internal qualities at the right intensity (cf. Kwiatkowski, S. T., 2018) - could be performed successfully by an individual who has missed their calling, as a result of which he or she works in a profession that is unsuitable from the point of view of their predispositions? It seems that the answer to this question can only be in the negative.

The above conclusion must inevitably lead to the next question: “What kind of teacher can we consider to be **well suited** for the profession?” To answer this question - while taking into account the perspective of pedagogical hermeneutics - we should start by referring to concepts typical of the first stage of the development of peudeutology, which focused on a psychological (personalistic) view of the teacher as a structure of ideal qualities. As a measure of being a **good teacher**, these concepts would view a teacher’s personality including a range of traits necessary for him or her to perform effectively in his or her professional role (Kwiatkowska, 2008, pp. 29-34; Kwiatkowski, S. T., 2018, pp. 168-175; cf. Śliwerski, 2021, pp. 741-743). Before

moving on to a broader discussion of this issue, in order to emphasise the previously signalled similarity between the basic assumptions of pedagogical hermeneutics and the foundations of pedeutology, it is necessary to mention that this approach has, over time, become the object of criticism from those who advocate positivist scientism (cf. Kwiatkowska, 2008, pp. 33; Milerski, 2015, pp. 67-68).

Jan Władysław Dawid, considered to be the leading representative of the above-mentioned approach, assumed that it is the love of human souls that should play a primary role among the teacher's inner qualities (cf. Okoń, 1959, pp. 8-9). In his view, a teacher distinguished by this key quality is capable of selfless and profound concern for other human beings, with particular emphasis on children. According to J. W. Dawid, a model teacher is a man who is deeply committed to his students and who possesses, crucial in this context, "the ability to sympathise, to mutually permeate, to lend his spiritual states and participate in those of others, to strive for coherence, harmony and unity with the spiritual life of others", and who is also characterised by a striving for perfection, inner authenticity, moral courage and a sense of duty and responsibility (Dawid, 1946, pp. 6-9, 27; cf. Kwiatkowski, S. T., 2018, pp. 170-171). A similar position was presented by Mieczysław Kreutz, who assumed that the creative force behind the teacher's influence on their students was not so much the love of human souls, as J. W. Dawid claimed, but a much broader meaning of love "of people together with their body and soul, which are in fact an inseparable psychophysical whole" (Kreutz, 1959, pp. 133). It is worth noting at this point that similar conclusions were reached by the already cited W. Dilthey, who stated the following: "We understand a human being only when we feel with him, reproducing in ourselves his reflexes; we understand only through love" (1934, pp. 201 as cited in: Milerski, 2011, pp. 79).

Another proponent of the psychological approach, Zygmunt Mysłakowski, referred in his description of the ideal (model) teacher to the category of "talent" the key element of which is, in his opinion, the so-called contactability, which he defined as the disposition necessary to establish an authentic, personal and close relationship with another person. Contactability understood in this way, which according to Z. Mysłakowski is the basic determinant of success in teaching, is facilitated by the following characteristics: (a) vivid imagination (which can be equated with empathy, enabling one to understand and empathise with the mental state of the student), (b) parental instinct, enabling the teacher to participate optimally in sensing and experiencing the experiences of their students, (c) the ability to express feelings, whereby the teacher becomes a person close to the students and

is perceived by them as authentic and sincere, (d) the outward orientation of the psyche, which can be equated with altruism, since it predisposes the teacher to various pro-social behaviours (Mysłakowski, 1959, pp. 61-72).

Which conclusions regarding the preceding considerations can be drawn from the above-mentioned tenets inherent to the psychological view of the teacher? First and foremost, that not every teacher will be able to establish with the students a bond corresponding to the aforementioned spiritual community. This, of course, refers to a teacher whose predispositions do not make them suited to the profession, making it impossible to consider them a true teacher, as expressed by M. Sawicki when he stated: "How often children do not recognise a person as their teacher, even though externally he is their teacher (has been employed, has formal qualifications, etc.). (...) How many teachers there are who are not teachers!" (1996, pp. 12). The next conclusion, which in a way builds on the previous one, is as follows: It is the teachers described by J. W. Dawid, M. Kreutz, Z. Mysłakowski that should be considered suited for the profession in terms of expectations and requirements formulated in relation to the teacher within the framework of looking at the teacher-student relationship from the perspective of pedagogical hermeneutics in its specific area focused on the description of the phenomenon of education "with particular emphasis on the process of understanding the meanings and senses of what transpires between the educator and the educated" (Milerski, 2011, pp. 123). As Carl Rogers (1983 as cited in: Danilewska, 2004, pp. 203) emphasised, the purpose of education is to support and facilitate change and learning, and the only form of learning that has a significant impact on an individual's behaviour is the individual's self-discovery, which means that the teacher, paradoxically, should not be teaching their students, but facilitating their self-discovery, for it is precisely teaching them to discover and realise themselves that is the most valuable gift they can offer (Kwiatkowska, 2008, pp. 53). Thus, the teacher's task is not so much to be a guide for their students (cf. Kwiatkowska, 2008, pp. 27), but rather an interpreter of the surrounding reality, their companion and facilitator (Rogers, 2002, pp. 57), whose role is to support their development. Importantly, this facilitation does not depend on the teacher's knowledge or intellect - it is possible only when the teacher reveals certain attitudes and feelings towards their students, among which the most important are those characteristic of the above-mentioned personalistic approach: personal authenticity, sensitivity, warmth, empathic understanding of the student's feelings and their meaning, or, finally, unconditional acceptance of who the student is and appreciation of their her value (cf. Danilewska, 2004, pp. 204).

Therefore, we should conclude that only those teachers who possess qualities that bring them closer to the above-described personality model, and thus are capable of an authentic encounter with the student and of establishing a relationship with him or her showing all the signs of a spiritual community, will be able to meet (or at least attempt to meet) the expectations formulated towards them, which include above all (Sawicki, 1996):

- creating in the classroom an environment and establishing a close relationship with the student, based on mutual understanding and respect, as well as a sense of security and belonging, which will enable him or her to learn about themselves and to become a student,
- the capacity for reflection (in action and about action, cf. Schön, 1983), for continuous and ongoing exploration of what transpires between them and the students, leading, among other things, to the creation of a space of encounter at school characterised by the intensity of mutual contacts,
- building in the relationship with the student an agatological space that both parties can experience - here we can notice the convergence of the previously mentioned views of J. W. Dawid or M. Kreutz, with the perspective of pedagogical hermeneutics, which stresses that the behaviour of “the teacher in the agatological space is love (...). A teacher who does not love his child-students will never know the agatological space in which they live”. (Sawicki, 1996, pp. 15; cf. Śliwerski, 2021, pp. 738-744),
- bringing about an encounter leading to a profound transformation both of oneself and of the student, in whom a kind of awakening occurs as a result (manifestation of acts of self-awareness), expressed, among other things, by inspiring them to ask themselves the question: “Who am I?” and a whole series of related existential questions, such as, for example, “What is the meaning of my life?”,
- giving the student the necessary assistance to discover their personality (including cultural), calling, destiny and mission in life.

In summary, it should be emphasised that only the best of teachers suited to their profession will be able to successfully fulfil the noble mission whose key outcomes, chosen for their hermeneutical connotations, have been highlighted above. Therefore, bearing in mind that those teachers, whose inner qualities, in a broad sense, correspond to the model created by the personalist approach, may not be able to meet the expectations placed

upon them, it is easy to understand how teachers who are not so well suited to the profession have little chance of meeting those expectations.

Vocational fit in the context of personality theory - in search of new directions of interpreting research results

Nowadays, the question whether a teacher is suited for their profession, and consequently whether they meet the aforementioned requirements formulated in relation to this professional group by reference to the hermeneutic approach, should be considered from the point of view of personality theories. Personality can be seen in terms of the key determinant of a harmonious relationship between a teacher and their professional environment, with particular reference to their relationship with the student/students. From the point of view of the previous considerations, we should refer to two concepts - the theory of vocational personality by John L. Holland and the five-factor theory of personality by Paul T. Costa and Robert R. McCrae, which will make it possible to synthetically present the essence of vocational fit in the context of the analysed profession.

J. L. Holland's (1985) theory of vocational personality, embedded in the trait and factor theory current initiated in the early twentieth century by Frank Parsons (1909; cf. Kwiatkowski, S. T., 2013, pp. 102-103), states that each individual can be described by their similarity to one or more of the six occupational personality types distinguished within the theory. These are (Holland, 1985; Paszkowska-Rogacz, 2013, pp. 16-17):

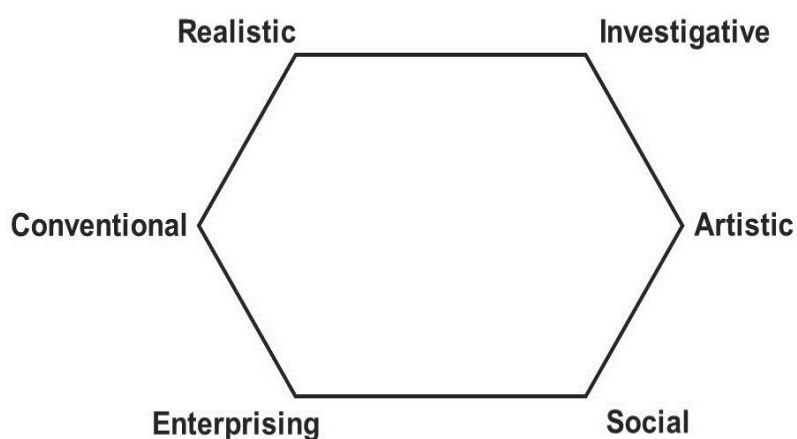
1. The realistic type, primarily distinguished by an above-average level of motor skills and manual abilities predisposing people of this type to work with machines and tools, as well as with animals and plants, valuing power, status and money. Their weakness is social competence, reflected in a low ability to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationships.
2. The investigative type, characterised by a love of learning in the broad sense, operating with abstract concepts or creating new theories to facilitate solving problems faced by people. They are curious about the world, rational, independent and think analytically. Social skills are not their strong suit - they tend to avoid the company of other people.
3. The artistic type, marked by an aesthetic sensitivity, a preference for creative and non-standard behaviour that enables them to express themselves. People of this type have artistic skills (writing,

visual arts, music, etc.) and can be described as creative and having a well-developed imagination.

4. The social type, oriented towards other people, characterised by a willingness to cooperate with and help others, as well as a love of teaching. They possess well-developed social and emotional competences (with particular emphasis on empathy), thanks to which they are able to relate to other people in a way that exceeds the capabilities of representatives of other types.
5. The enterprising type, characterised by their orientation towards acquiring material rewards or achieving political goals, self-confidence and possession of leadership and communication skills. They also pursue social goals which they achieve through their developed interpersonal skills, among other things, by using means of persuasion.
6. The conventional type, characterised by a preference for working with data and acting in accordance with rules, instructions, procedures, etc., and having accounting and clerical skills. People of this type generally avoid ambiguous situations and problems requiring involvement in interpersonal relationships.

The different professional personality types form a hexagonal arrangement (the so-called “hexagonal model”) (Figure 1). It should also be noted that adjacent types that share some similarities (e.g. the social type and the enterprising type and the artistic type).

Figure 1. John L. Holland’s hexagonal model



Source: Paszkowska-Rogacz, 2003, pp. 40.

According to the theory discussed, each of the professional personality types is the resultant of a specific interaction occurring between an individual's hereditary traits and social environment (including, *inter alia*, their parents, peers, social and cultural background and physical environment). This interaction, in combination with personal experiences, leads the individual to develop a specific set of competences, life goals, skills, preferred values, as well as coping strategies to deal with interpersonal problems and environmental pressures, *i.e.* the broader problems of everyday life. Thus, each professional personality type is a complex set of characteristics from which the preference for a specific class of occupations and related aspirations is derived (Kwiatkowski, S. T., 2013, pp. 105-106). It should be noted that in addition to the six types of professional personality, there are six corresponding types of work environment - each with a name corresponding to one of the personality types, which naturally indicates where a person should work in order to make their overall predispositions as compatible as possible with the characteristics of their workplace. The interaction between a person's personality and their work environment is responsible for their professional behaviour in a broad sense. The more successful it is, the greater the vocational fit we can speak of (the hexagonal model is helpful here; *e.g.* a realistic environment is optimal for people with a realistic professional personality type, an investigative environment for investigative people, etc.) (*ibid*, pp. 106).

Therefore, determining which of the professional personality types is predominant in an individual is only the first of the steps on the path towards determining their vocational fit. The second, necessary step consists in comparing their characteristics with the conditions (requirements and reinforcements) prevailing in their working environment (*cf.* Paszkowska-Rogacz, 2013, pp. 18). J. L. Holland (1985) distinguished four degrees of compatibility: the highest degree (*e.g.* social type in a social environment), the second degree (*e.g.* social type in an artistic environment), the third degree (*e.g.* social type in a research environment) and finally the fourth degree, *i.e.* complete incompatibility (*e.g.* social type in a realist environment).

Combining the views characteristic of the personalistic approach with the descriptions of personality types according to J. L. Holland allows us to draw a fully justified conclusion that the only one of the above presented types that meets the requirements facing the teacher and optimally corresponds to this professional environment is, of course, the social type - only in this case can we talk about a complete fit to the teaching profession and to working in an almost perfectly social school environment. Thus, if we

hope to find among teachers those who will be able to optimally (or almost optimally) fulfil the above-mentioned requirements on a daily basis, we will undoubtedly find them precisely in the group where the social professional personality type dominates. Their complete set of predispositions, headed by a high level of socio-emotional competence, makes them the best candidates to establish with their students a relationship that can be described as based on love understood in the sense proposed by pedagogical hermeneutics and pedeutology, a relationship that can (even if this is not always possible for teachers in this group)⁵ lead to the creation of the spiritual community mentioned above, enabling the teacher, on the one hand, to fully uncover the potential of the child entrusted to his or her care and, on the other hand, to give themselves a chance of taking the next steps towards becoming a teacher.

While J. L. Holland's approach addresses the issue of vocational fit in a way that refers directly to the individual's professional work, the five-factor theory of personality (FFTP) of P. T. Costa and R. R. McCrae (1987, pp. 81-89; cf. McCrae and Costa, 1997, pp. 509-515) only touches on this issue indirectly, but it does not change the fact that it also allows specific conclusions to be drawn about the relationship between the intensity of an individual's personality traits and the work for which they are predisposed and the environment in which this work should be carried out on a daily basis.

A meticulous analysis of the descriptions of each of the big five personality traits (Siuta, 2009), which form the core of the FFTP, allows us to conclude that we can speak of a teacher with the best chance of a full vocational fit, and thus of establishing the aforementioned spiritual community with students in hermeneutic terms, when he or she is characterised by (Kwiatkowski, S. T., 2018, pp. 211-212)⁶:

⁵ In fact, it is important to remember that in the teacher-student relationship, as in any other relationship, the ultimate success in establishing the bond which, in this case, should lead to a spiritual community, depends not only on the older member of this dyad, but also on the younger one. Therefore, in order for the encounter between the couple to be successful, there must be a kind of mutual alignment which, due to human nature, will not always be possible - even with the best intentions of both parties involved.

⁶ A broader description of each of the personality traits included in the FFTP framework (the Big Five), written from the point of view of their importance for the successful fulfilment of the professional role of a teacher, can be found, among others, in the book entitled „Uwarunkowania skuteczności zawodowej kandydatów na nauczycieli wczesnej edukacji. Studium teoretyczno-empiryczne” [“Determinants of professional efficacy of early childhood education teacher candidates. A theoretical-empirical study”] (Kwiatkowski, S. T., 2018). Because it is very extensive, it is not fully cited in this article, which only presents

1. the lowest possible degree of neuroticism (low or very low intensity of this trait is equivalent to emotional adjustment [emotional stability/emotional equilibrium]).
2. the highest possible degree of extroversion.
3. the highest possible degree of openness to experience.
4. the highest possible degree of agreeableness.
5. the highest possible degree of conscientiousness.

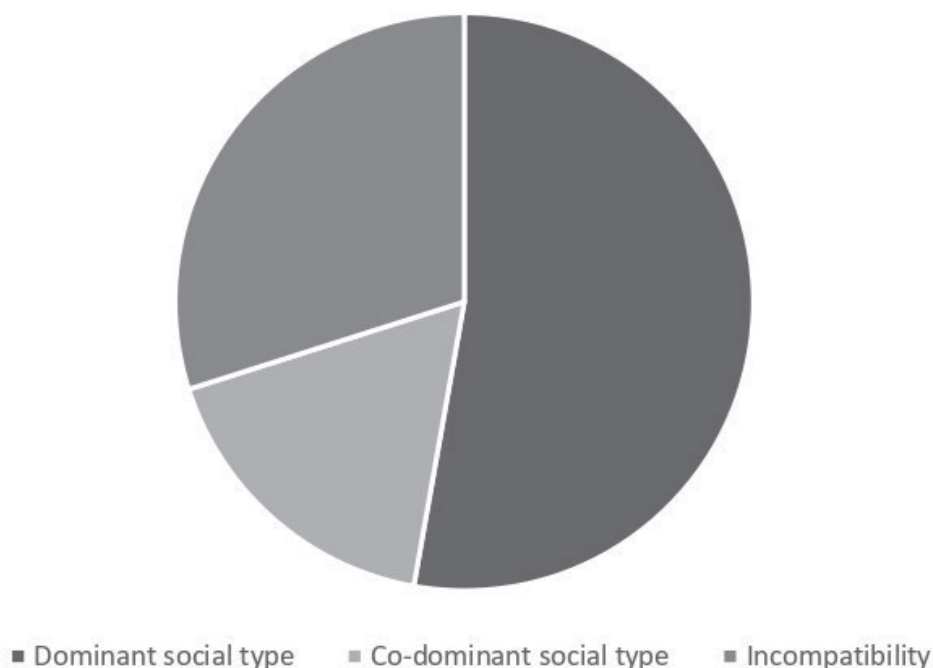
Based on the review of our knowledge to date, we may conclude that it is those teachers who display the above configuration of the Big Five characteristics who can be expected both to meet the requirements of school as a work environment and - narrowing down the problem to the main subject of this study - to create in their classrooms conditions for establishing and then maintaining close bonds with their students based on a feeling of community. (cf. Kwiatkowski, S. T., 2019).

The author's empirical analyses aimed at diagnosing the personality of active teachers or those aspiring to enter the profession, carried out using the FFTP and/or professional personality model of J. L. Holland (cf. Kwiatkowski, S. T., 2013, 2014, 2015, 2018), have provided results according to which some future/current teachers certainly cannot be said to be optimally suited to kindergarten and school work.

One study (Analysis 1) (Kwiatkowski, S. T., 2013) found that the social professional personality type dominated (or co-dominated - as one of the equally strong, highest intensity types) in 70.1% of teacher candidates (Graph 1).

the main conclusions of the considerations carried out in this area, i.e. indicates the desired intensity of each trait (from the perspective of a teacher's vocational fit).

Graph 1. Professional personality of teacher candidates surveyed in the light of Analysis 1

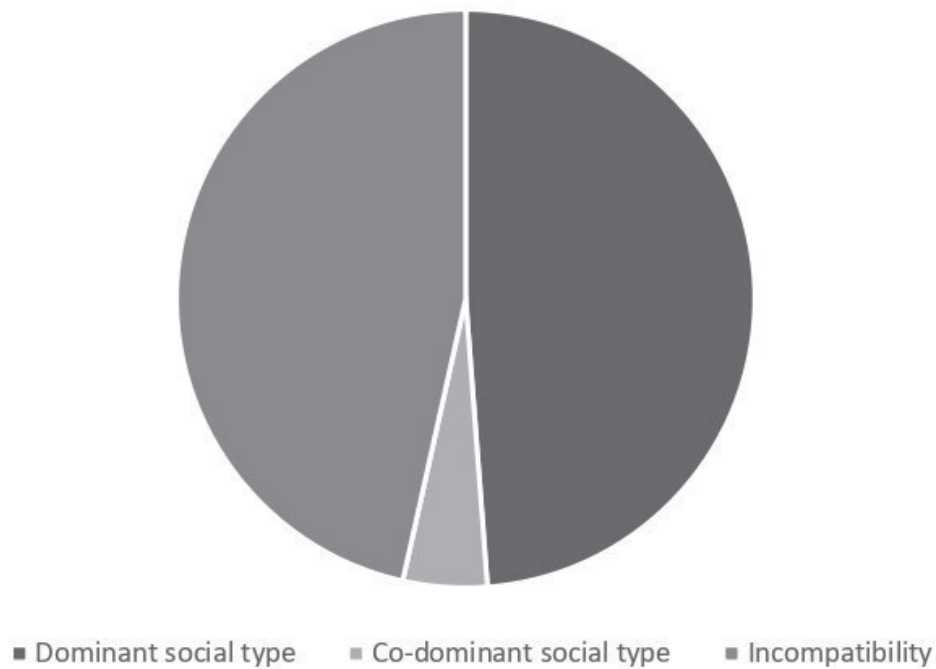


Source: own research.

Obviously, this result can be welcomed as it proves that the overwhelming majority of respondents had made the right academic and professional choices, however, at the same time, it means that just under a third of the respondents, i.e. undoubtedly a very significant proportion of them, were more or less mismatched to their future work.

On the other hand, the results obtained in another study (Analysis 2) (Kwiatkowski, S. T., 2015, pp. 55-56) no longer allow for such optimism, since the percentage of participating teacher candidates whose professional personality type was social (dominance or co-dominance of this type) was as low as 53.5%, while the remaining 46.5% were diagnosed with a greater or lesser mismatch to work in a school environment (Graph 2).

Graph 2. Professional personality of teacher candidates surveyed in the light of Analysis 2



Source: own research

Analyses based on the measurement of the degree of the Big Five traits (Kwiatkowski, S. T., 2014, 2018) showed that a considerable proportion of respondents were characterised by levels of neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness or conscientiousness that did not fit the above-mentioned model. One study found, among other things, that relatively many of the teacher candidates surveyed had undesirable scores: 19.5% scored high on neuroticism, 13% scored low on extroversion, 14.7% scored low on openness, 7.7% scored low on agreeableness and 4% scored low on conscientiousness (Kwiatkowski, S. T., 2014, pp. 77-85). Another of the aforementioned studies showed that almost 14% of the participating teacher candidates had both undesirable scores on neuroticism (high or very high scores) and on extroversion (low or very low scores) (Kwiatkowski, S. T., 2018, pp. 600). Assuming that the early childhood education teacher candidates who took part in this study have decided, after receiving their diploma, to work in a kindergarten or school, it is highly probable that none or almost none of the individuals comprising the aforementioned group, which comprises almost 1/7 of the entire research sample, have so far (if they are still working in the profession) established such a bond with their student(s) that could be said to enable them to achieve the goals included in the aforementioned set of the teacher's obligations towards the student. Referring to

the aforementioned key dimension of the teacher-student relationship, it should be emphasised that “a full encounter between a student and a teacher occurs when the teacher opens dialogically to the child, when he accepts him unconditionally, when he recognises his spiritual autonomy, when he helps him in his inner self-actualisation” (Sawicki, 1996, pp. 115). Thus, it must be assumed that, in the case of maladjusted teachers, the broadly understood ability to facilitate such an encounter is hardly possible.

In the light of the above, and with reference to the definition of pedagogical hermeneutics, we should take a look at the issue of interpreting the results of empirical research results (Ablewicz, 1998, pp. 33). Indeed, it seems natural that in the vast majority of cases the diagnosis of teachers’ professional mismatch leads first to considerations and conclusions related to the negative impact of such a state of affairs on the students under their care (cf. Kwiatkowski, S. T., 2018, pp. 157) - to mention, for example, the low probability of these teachers fulfilling the tasks mentioned in the course of the reflections conducted earlier. Given the many functions ascribed to the teaching profession, as well as its responsibility - first and foremost towards students (and, more broadly, towards society as a whole), such a line of thinking seems to be justified. However, adopting an approach characteristic of pedagogical hermeneutics, which, after all, encourages the search for new ways of understanding and interpreting educational reality (Milerski, 2011, pp. 12-13), and thus, in a way, compels the researcher to continuously (as he/she matures - gaining more experiences and developing the ability to adopt qualitatively different perspectives and read/assign new meanings to the surrounding reality) engage in cognitive processes and accompanying activities that enable them to learn about the school environment and the phenomena and processes occurring in it in a way that makes it possible to avoid “the danger of a one-sided explanation of pedagogical events” (Adamska-Staroń and Łukasik, 2012, pp. 129), we should ask ourselves who - apart from the students themselves, whose entire future lives are at stake in this peculiar “educational game” - bears the far-reaching consequences of the mismatch between teachers and their profession.

It seems only natural that - apart from the students themselves - it is the mismatched teachers, in whom the root cause of the problems described here lies, who are harmed by such developments. It is worth noting, however, that research findings indicating the professional mismatch of a smaller or larger proportion of the participating teachers (or possibly candidates) tend to be interpreted in a way that focuses on the negative sides of this fact, with a particular focus on the exposure of this group to high levels of professional

stress, high frustration, professional burnout, reduced sense of job satisfaction, low self-efficacy, low levels of self-esteem and self-worth or, finally, no sense of purpose and an external locus of control (cf. Kwiatkowski, S. T, 2018, pp. 329-350; 410-415). In other words, whereas earlier we referred to what maladjusted teachers are unable to provide for their students, here we are referring to what they will not be able to provide for themselves (it is above all their well-being in all its forms). This interpretation is undoubtedly a valid one, accurately reflecting reality and firmly grounded in pedagogical and psychological theory. However, it is nevertheless worth asking whether this is the only interpretation, and if not, is it possible, paradoxically, to adopt an alternative interpretation of the research findings on teachers' professional maladjustment that is at least partly positive?

On further reflection, this question can be answered in the affirmative. But in order to reach and articulate such a conclusion, we need to first disregard the traditional and fatalistic interpretative scheme outlined above, the application of which seems to be an unwritten norm in the analysis of data collected within the framework of research conducted in the area under discussion - a scheme which tends to describe the existing educational reality starting from the students' perspective and then moving on to the teachers' perspective - importantly, without going beyond the framework defined by the losses incurred by each of these groups resulting from the mismatch of the latter group and the environment in which they function. So what interpretation is being referred to here?

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to go back to the source of the problem, namely the professional mismatch of teachers. When researching members of this group, we are, in a way, confronted with a *fait accompli* - each of them is already an active teacher and some of them simply are not suited to this profession. But what causes this type of situation? There may be many reasons, but the lack of self-knowledge required to make the right life choices seems to come to the fore. Many people who choose to study to become teachers and then, after graduating, enter the profession simply do not realise that this is not the job they were created for and that the tasks involved and the working environment in which they will be working are not compatible with their abilities, needs and expectations. This is largely due to the shortcomings of the career guidance and counselling system, under which all primary and secondary school students should - on the basis of interviews and aptitude tests - be provided with accurate information about their strengths and weaknesses, which should be communicated to them within the framework of guidelines relating to the career counsellor's proposed paths

for further academic and professional development, as optimal as possible from the point of view of their potential diagnosed in the counselling process (cf. Kwiatkowski, S. T., 2019, pp. 174-176; Kwiatkowski, S. T., 2018, pp. 466-475). However, if they did not receive this type of information at the most opportune time and are now suffering the negative consequences of this, as are their students, who are absolutely blameless, would it not be beneficial for them to receive this information now? In other words, the results of empirical research could form the basis of a message to mismatched teachers, enabling them to see the roots of the stress or lack of job satisfaction they experience on a daily basis. Of course, this kind of information could initially cause a great deal of cognitive dissonance, but one can assume that, at least in some cases, it would actually result in deep reflection, which - by filling in the missing elements of self-knowledge - would lead to a decision to make necessary life changes, including a change of profession. Adopting such an interpretation of the empirical findings could therefore be seen as an opportunity to provide teachers with much-needed support - support they could not previously count on. It is worth noting that the biggest “winners” in this case could be the most mismatched teachers, because it seems reasonable to assume that in their case the intensity of the aforementioned negative consequences could already be so high (even in the case of short work experience), that they would even welcome the message with a sense of relief and - most likely - with the joy of a person who suddenly experiences an insight (enlightenment) that allows them to understand their situation and to change their life, a kind of escape from the torment of a job that does not offer the chance of personal fulfilment.

We may conclude that the above outlined scenario would be by all means beneficial⁷ and, if it were implemented, members of both interested groups would benefit from empirical analyses in the discussed area - both the mismatched teachers, who, having attributed appropriate meaning to the received diagnosis, would receive a chance for a new (this time fully conscious) life “opening”, as well as their students, who, as a result, would finally find themselves under the wings of educators compatible in terms of personality with the school work environment and its characteristic requirements and

⁷ Except for the fact that some of the teachers, even having become aware of their professional mismatch, might stay at the school - e.g. for fear of potential difficulties they might encounter when looking for another job. It is conceivable that, for this group, the mismatch message could prove much more loaded with potentially negative consequences, as it would create a very strong cognitive dissonance that would be difficult to reduce.

reinforcement systems. In addition, the departure of mismatched teachers from the profession would most likely result in vacancies that could be filled by teachers who are better suited but did not find employment (which may have forced them to work in an occupation incompatible with their dominant, social type of professional personality or the Big Five traits, causing them to function in a working environment that was not conducive to their development). This can be seen as yet another argument in favour of implementing solutions resulting from breaking the previous pattern of interpreting the results of empirical research.

Summary

To answer the question posed in the Introduction “Who should a teacher be?”, it is necessary to state that a teacher should be, first of all, a person who is suited to their profession - only then will they be able to satisfactorily fulfil the many requirements of their professional role. Only a well-suited teacher will be able to bring about an encounter with the student that creates the conditions for the emergence of a spiritual communion between the two parties, which is a prerequisite for the educator to have a beneficial influence on the student, leading to his or her *awakening*. This is fundamental and, as such, provides a kind of basis - a starting point for the teacher to carry out further interventions aimed at the broadly understood good of the student, which was outlined earlier with reference to the assumptions of humanistic pedagogy. Importantly, in order to achieve this goal, the teacher him or herself must be an awakened individual, and this can be tied precisely to their professional fit, since this awakening is tantamount to the fact that they accept their profession, are characterised by a balanced and stable self-esteem (related to the work environment), as well as a high level of self-acceptance and identification with their professional function (Sawicki, 1996, pp. 118). Given the preceding considerations, it therefore seems justified to conclude that the professional fit of the teacher is a necessary condition for their awakening in this sense, which in turn conditions their broadly understood ability to create in the classroom such conditions that enable the students to self-discover, self-actualise and develop a cultural personality. If, therefore, we refer to the saying that “Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school”, then it is perfectly legitimate to assume that it is the teacher with a social type of professional personality and an appropriate structure of qualities in terms of the Big Five who will be able to provide this type of education to his or her students.

On the other hand - as indicated by the analysis of empirical data going beyond the usual scheme - the diagnosis of a professional mismatch of teachers should be interpreted not only as evidence of a serious threat to both members of the teacher-student dyad, but also - by giving a new meaning to this fact - as an ideal opportunity to give the former a chance to decide once again, this time in a much more considered and well-founded manner, on the choice of such a career path that will be optimal from the point of view of their broadly understood predispositions.

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