

THE PERSONAL MODEL OF TEACHER IN THE INTERPRETATION OF BOGDAN NAWROCZYŃSKI AND ITS EMPIRICAL VERIFICATION

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*You need to know your flaws to deliberately try to overcome them,
you need to know your merits to know what you can lean on.*

Bogdan Nawroczyński

1. INTRODUCTION

Pedagogy devotes much attention to the person of the student and the pupil, but the teacher-educator deserves no less consideration since this person is a secondary but important causative factor of the entirety of educational processes.

Being a teacher is a profession of special historical and cultural significance. Qualifications, competences and personal traits of teachers exert impact which is hard to assess but definitely considerable on both didactic and educational achievements of pupils, the effectiveness of school involvement and the quality of the educational system. The assumed personal influence of the teacher on the development, attitudes and views of her students has led many educators to undertake research seeking a model of the ideal teacher and to identify the salient qualities determining the beneficial contribution teachers make to the process of formation of a student.

The article presents a personal model of the teacher emerging from deliberations of Bogdan Nawroczyński. The empirical theme pervading the considerations presented here includes statements of contemporary

students of Pedagogy concerning the personal qualities of the teacher, which were shown in the light of Nawroczyński's views. Our analysis seeks to find the answer to the question: What values and personal qualities make it easier for the teacher to achieve success in teaching and educational work with children, adolescents and adults?

2. THE IDEAL TEACHER AS ENVISAGED BY BOGDAN NAWROCZYŃSKI

The outstanding pedagogue Bogdan Nawroczyński, dubbed «the teacher of teachers» by Wincenty Okoń (Okoń, 2000, p. 334), addresses the question of the personal ideal of teacher. He draws his inspiration from psychology and philosophy, juxtaposing them with the notion of spiritual life, which he understands to be «a living, healthy and creative culture seen in terms of human goals» (Nawroczyński, 1947, p. 23).

According to Nawroczyński, the ideal teacher should combine various cultural goods with their continuous and creative enrichment. In order to act as a guide for her pupils, an educator must have extensive knowledge and a great deal of culture as well as constantly improving her professional skills, she must be a champion in her field. Drawing his inspiration from Kazimierz Twardowski's philosophical views and Franz Brentano's empirical philosophy (Mońka-Stanikowa, Mieszalski, & Kotusiewicz, 1996), Nawroczyński proves that culture has a functional character and is a space in which various creative processes take place. In his opinion, deliberately targeted cultural activities are not present in all people with the same intensity. Some are guided by their desire to satisfy their own needs, while others, having achieved one goal, try to meet further challenges. The scientist calls the pursuit of more and more important goals transcendence, and all actions undertaken to attain them belong to the world of values (Nawroczyński, 1968).

Spiritual structures focused on the world of values comprise character and personality. Nawroczyński distinguishes between ideal structures, which are norms formulated by conscience, and their approximations in human persons, which belong to the world of facts and are also evaluated in the light of norms. In his conception of personality, it is the supreme and fullest spiritual structure of Man. On the other hand, character is forged by constancy, independence, entrepreneurship

and practicality in action. The formation of character is a continuous process allowing us to direct our willpower towards goals which are valuable and in conformity with moral norms (Nawroczyński, 1947).

Inspired by Twardowski, Nawroczyński claims that one of the important roles of the teacher is to foster in students the skills of thorough analysis of each case and to produce thoughtful and reasonable judgments about events and people (Nawroczyński, 1931). In her views, the teacher is a person who promotes not only scientific beliefs but principally moral rules among the pupils. Education is to be not only a way of gaining a profession, but first of all a personal asset, a factor enriching personality, the process of growing and the process of gaining new experiences, knowledge about the world and a way to develop one's passions (Jaroszuk, 2012).

Bogdan Nawroczyński particularly strongly stigmatises the «sin of hypocrisy» in the teacher's conduct. He argues that you cannot be a good teacher if you do not shun lies, untruth and hypocrisy. The knowledge of evil progresses gradually and intertwines with the experience of goodness, but yielding to evil and concealing its effects leads to moral distortion, therefore morality is a key element shaping the model of the «real» teacher. One cannot teach others truth, responsibility, sensitivity or nobleness without manifesting such values and attitudes (Nawroczyński, 1968).

Knowing the truth, sometimes unpleasant and hard to accept, is associated with the need to be open to the fellow human being and to be tolerant of their limitations, defects and differences. For Nawroczyński, intolerance is tantamount to rejection of culture. A good teacher should not only be distinguished by independent character, but also intellectual independence, which helps one become aware of the truth about oneself, the world and life. According to this author, this independence makes its possessor a preacher, fighter and defender of truth (Nawroczyński, 1961).

The fundamental condition for the teacher's work is pedagogical talent. A pedagogically talented educator is a creative person, imaginative and capable of establishing a friendly rapport with her pupil. In addition, pedagogical talent is inextricably linked to empathy, the ability to express one's own feelings and the ability to observe and draw conclusions about one's own actions. Nawroczyński claims that teachers who are truly pedagogically talented are very few. However, you can be

a good teacher despite having average pedagogical competences as long as you have gained knowledge about children, their development and needs in the field of educational psychology and theory of education. Education is intended not only to help one gain a profession, but it also to be a personal asset, a factor enriching the teacher's personality, the process of her development, gaining new experiences and knowledge about the world (Nawroczyński, 1961).

In his reflections, Nawroczyński devotes most attention to broadening experience and gaining pedagogical knowledge. According to him, the main rule of the teacher's work is: «never commence work with the youth unprepared» (Nawroczyński 1961, p. 208). The author emphasizes that the teacher is obliged not only to develop work plans, but above all to prepare carefully for all classes with students, be it a lesson or a school trip. He strongly emphasizes the need for continuous improvement of the educator's skills. He believes that an experienced teacher should not repeatedly present the same content of a particular topic or issue. Careful and conscientious preparation for school classes is one of the elements of pedagogical vocation, which is why Nawroczyński argues that: «Wanting to follow the progress of science, to have a fresh and full understanding of those cultural assets in which young people are to be educated, it is necessary to constantly rework lesson subjects. They become banal and hackneyed only for a teacher who does not do that. But also such a teacher becomes a hard-faced pedant very quickly, who instead of educating makes students bored, tired and discouraged» (Nawroczyński, 1961, p. 209).

Nawroczyński believes it is important that there always be an element of moral preparation for classes in the teacher's work. She should not weigh her students down with her concerns, sorrows, anxieties or life failures. When the personality of the students has been influenced by cultural goods, the main role of the teacher is to skilfully manage her students in the name of the harmony of their mutual cooperation. Nawroczyński very strongly emphasizes the role of guided teaching, i.e. the getting students into the habit of independent thinking through a system of precise instructions tailored to the individual needs of the students. This is particularly valuable in teaching children with learning difficulties (Nawroczyński, 1961).

For Nawroczyński, education is a process taking place at the interface between the spiritual culture of society and the student's inner life,

therefore a balance is needed between the activity of the teacher and that of the pupil. The teacher is an intermediary between cultural goods and students, so it is important to competently manage the process of teaching and educating for the sake of harmony of mutual cooperation (Jaroszuk, 2012, 2004).

The personal model of the teacher formulated by Nawroczyński belongs to the sphere of spiritual life. The author sets high ethical standards for teachers and schools. His view of the pedagogy is characterized by a broad and objective treatment of the issue. He manifests his independence of judgements and moderation in scientific assessment using these words: «Teacher brother! Be a man of a warm heart, steadfast character and independent mind!» (Nawroczyński, 1968, p. 34).

3. THE PERSONAL MODEL OF THE CONTEMPORARY TEACHER IN THE OPINION OF PEDAGOGY STUDENTS

The issues concerning the teacher, her role, functions, activities and educational tasks remain open, valid and important. Despite the passage of time, the question answered by Nawroczyński returns again and again: What values and personal qualities make it easier for the teacher to achieve success in teaching and educational work with children, adolescents and adults? Nowadays, in order to find answers to the question so asked, a survey was conducted in 2017 among third year students of the first cycle of Pedagogy of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. Out of 59 enrolled students (100%), 52 (i.e. 88%) took part in the survey. In anonymous written statements, the students presented the qualities of the teacher personal model, answering these questions: What should the contemporary teacher be and what is she like in reality? By writing both a wishful note and a description of the situation as is, the students showed not only the personal qualities that they believed the contemporary teacher should have, but also her real virtues and faults.

Among the personal characteristics of the teacher, the greatest number of respondents (62%) indicated that she should be **forgiving**, slightly fewer (52%) stated that she should also be **fair**. The next most desirable positive qualities are: competent (18%) and educated (12%),

«open and nice» (15%), «cheerful, smiling and born teacher» (13%), should make the student interested in the subject and apply new technologies (12%), cooperate with parents (11%), be helpful and honest (10%), caring and capable of transferring knowledge (8%), self-controlled (7%), patient, in rapport with students, with passion and reasonable (6%), friendly, communicative, demanding, should be an authority and role model (4%).

When working out his answer to the question about the attributes of the ideal teacher, Nawroczyński pointed to her personal virtues (morality, civil attitude, socialization), pedagogical flair, a thorough knowledge of the subject taught, experience and pedagogical knowledge, mastery and passion, as well as conscientious preparation for classes. The responses of the respondents included reflections on the qualities of teachers valued by students, which mostly correspond to the conditions indicated by Nawroczyński. Here are some of the longer statements:

The contemporary teacher should follow the spirit of the times. She should be available to the student and sensitive to his or her needs. It is important that she is prepared with respect to the subject matter and methodology. Classes should be run in an interesting way, she should be a specialist in her field, have time for pupils and students, as well as being able to approach pupils and students individually.

The teacher should try out new teaching methods so that her pupils can learn better and more eagerly. She should work with every pupil, not only with the ablest ones, and be well prepared for a given school subject. It is important that the teacher show what is good in life and what things to pursue, give advice, explain difficult things, come to work with joy and smile. The contemporary teacher should activate pupils and students, combine theory with practice and her own experience because it is easier to remember particular learning content.

In addition to being demanding, the contemporary teacher-lecturer should convey knowledge in an engaging manner and with passion and should be able explain things well. She should be a master of what she presents, rather than just enter the classroom and say what she has to say and then — off she goes. She should present the lesson content in a clear and meaningful way, not provide content which only needs to be memorised.

Both the indications of specific characteristics and the free comments made by the students show how much importance they attach to the personal qualities of teachers. This description was dominated by

interpersonal skills, i.e. understanding and recognition of the student's subjectivity, and fairness of judgement and opinion. The respondents, just like Nawroczyński in the past, paid attention to personal relations between the teacher and the pupil, through which the teachers thorough knowledge, high culture, sensitivity, moral attitude and commitment to work are manifested, the latter being inherent in this specific vocation.

Also interesting in this context were the statements of the respondents concerning the actual personal image of the teacher, in which students stated that the teacher of today was unjust (18%), uneducated (16%), sought merely to realise the core curriculum (13%), professionally burnt out (8%), without a vocation (7%), lacking patience (5%), rigorous and unpleasant (4%). The longer remarks expressed by the respondents also deserve our attention since they provide a wealth of information about their strict and very critical attitude of the surveyed group of young people towards teachers. By way of example, see the following opinions:

The contemporary teacher is not involved in her work, she gets into the rut; more often than not she becomes a clerk who comes to work because she has to. Today's teachers do not want to establish a friendly atmosphere with students, they only feed them with the core knowledge, they do not develop their skills.

Nowadays, a good teacher is very rare; she often teaches «willy-nilly», being unable to be in good contact with her students; she is not able to convey her knowledge. Unfortunately, many teachers do not want to get involved in the pupils' lives so as not to have additional problems and obligations.

Currently, teachers ignore it whether students have mastered the material or not, lessons are of little interest, teachers are worried about their jobs and are often overworked. What counts is not that the student understands the subject, but that the teacher is on the schedule with the core curriculum.

Nowadays, academic teachers transfer theoretical knowledge without practice; they are too strict and do not try to understand the student. Some people read out lectures from a paper or a book, speak chaotically or monotonously, they are bored and they do not enhance their statements.

In addition to the critical appraisals, there were also statements confirming the positive experiences and relationship between students and teachers.

What I value the most about my lecturers is that I can always come for advice with any problem and receive support; they are very cordial and professional, open to dialogue with students. If students do not feel constant anxiety, they work more effectively and their performance is better. Without the cordiality of the lecturers this would be impossible or very difficult to achieve.

What I like about contemporary lecturers is that they are able to approach the student with empathy. They do not write him or her off at the start for absences or merely for their appearance. I value the fact that some teachers speak with passion, and not only because they have to; I like that they are knowledgeable about various issues. The most valuable are curious bits and examples of practical activities. I like it when they treat me as an adult and a good person.

The presented outcomes of the survey confirmed the importance which young people attach to the way the teacher transmits her knowledge and how critical they are about their teachers and lecturers in this regard. The research showed that above all students value the professional skills and novelty of the teaching methods their teachers employ, as well as their passion and commitment. To sum up, it should be argued that contemporary young people undoubtedly crave knowledge and specialist competences based on it, but they lay more stress on the need for empathy on the part of the teacher.

4. SUMMARY

Bogdan Nawroczyński is an outstanding figure who has made a name for himself in Polish pedagogy. According to Bogusław Śliwerski, considered a classic of this discipline, Nawroczyński is placed by comparatists within pedagogy of culture but also within humanistic and holistic pedagogy, examining and contributing to the contemporary pedagogical thought in the field of general, school, comparative or synthetic pedagogy [Śliwerski, Walancik, 2017]. Using these perspectives, we can trace pedeutological aspects in Nawroczyński's work. His personal ideal of the teacher, despite the passage of time, remains valid today. It is impossible to be a good teacher-educator without being an enlightened and upright person. It is not enough just to have a diploma. You need to be independent and creative to be able to teach this creativity and cognitive independence to others. Both Nawroczyński's position

and the observations made by students of today related to the attempt to establish the personal model of a pedagogue permit the conclusion that the teacher should be distinguished by such personal traits as activity, extensive knowledge and skills, but above all by an ethical and moral attitude. Nawroczyński's disciples argue that their master instilled deep rationalism and honesty in their minds (Mońka-Stanikowa, 1987).

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