

## Preparation of Students for the Modern Labour Market in Polish Secondary Schools. The Example of Mechatronic Technical School in Warsaw

### Przygotowanie ucznia w polskiej szkole średniej do współczesnego rynku pracy. (Na przykładzie Technikum Mechatronicznego w Warszawie)

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**Abstract:** The article presents the findings of the author's own research conducted in Polish secondary schools with the aim of identifying preparation of young people to navigate the labour market – including professional competences. The research problem was the preparation of technical school students to enter the current labour market and the role of vocational teachers in this preparation in the opinion of students. A focus research method was used, in which the research technique was a focus interview. The participants were fourth-grade students at technical schools (N=33). The research was conducted in 2023. The article presents students' opinions about teachers of vocational subjects concerning their role in preparing them to follow a profession, as well as the students' level of knowledge of the current labour market and employer expectations.

**Keywords:** labour market, technical school student, vocational subjects teacher, Polish secondary school, Poland

**Abstrakt:** W artykule przedstawiono wyniki badań własnych przeprowadzonych w polskiej szkole średniej, których celem było rozpoznanie przygotowania młodzieży do poruszania się na rynku pracy – z uwzględnieniem kompetencji zawodowych. Problemem badawczym było przygotowanie ucznia technikum do zaistnienia i funkcjonowania na obecnym rynku pracy i jego związek z rolą nauczyciela przedmiotów zawodowych w opinii uczniów. Wykorzystano metodę badań fokusowych, gdzie techniką badawczą był wywiad fokusowy. Uczestnikami byli uczniowie klas czwartych technikum (N=33). Badania przeprowadzono w 2023 r. W artykule zaprezentowano opinię uczniów o nauczycielach przedmiotów zawodowych pod kątem przygotowania ich do wykonywania zawodu, a także poziom wiedzy uczniów na temat aktualnego rynku pracy i oczekiwań pracodawcy.

**Słowa kluczowe:** rynek pracy, uczeń technikum, nauczyciel przedmiotów zawodowych, polska szkoła średnia, Polska



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## INTRODUCTION

The labour market is one of many markets in the economy, which is defined as the entirety of purchase and sale transactions, as well as the conditions under which they take place (Gajdos and Lewandowska-Gwarda 2022, 11). The parties involved in these transactions are enterprises, institutions and individuals playing the roles of employers, employees, as well as intermediaries among them (Jakimiuk 2012, 2). In the labour market, we are dealing with an intangible exchange factor between the buyer of work, i.e., the employer, and the seller of work, i.e., the employee, and the price is the remuneration (Mizia and Latocha 2020). In an analysis of the labour market, two processes are considered, i.e., supply and demand (Sadowski 1997, 21). Labour supply is the sum of the number of employed and unemployed people, it is conditioned by the number of people of working age who want to undertake employment (Góra and Sztanderska 2006, 11). Demand for labour, on the other hand, is expressed by the total number of jobs offered, which consists of the realized demand – represented by the employed, and the unrealized demand - defined by vacancies (Gajdos and Lewandowska-Gwarda 2022, 11). Demand for labour can be presented quantitatively, then it refers to the number of employees needed on the labour market, and qualitatively, specifying the profile of employees sought for by employers. An increase in demand generates an increase in employment and salaries and is, therefore, considered a beneficial phenomenon (Góra and Sztanderska 2006, 13).

Children begin to identify with future professional roles at an early school age through establishing contacts with their peers, meeting the requirements of their environment, controlling their own behaviour, as well as by acquiring habits related to performing work and duties by accomplishing team and individual tasks (Stefańska-Klar 2008, 130-156). However, it is only young people studying at technical secondary schools and 1st degree sectoral vocational schools who are prepared to perform specific professions. Vocational education focuses on purposefully structured teaching and learning activities as well as a lesson and activity-based process leading to vocational preparation (Nowacki 2004, 111).

### 1. RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

The aim of the research was to identify the preparation of young people to navigate the labour market - taking into account professional competences. The specific objective was to assess the preparation of (selected) technical schools students to navigate the labour market. The main research problem was the preparation of technical school students to enter the current labour market and the role of vocational teachers in this preparation in the opinion of students. The following detailed research questions had been formulated to the main research problem:

1. What knowledge do technical secondary school students have about the modern labour market and how, in their opinion, are they prepared to work in their field?

2. What role does the teacher of vocational subjects play in preparing students for the modern labour market in the students' opinion?

Focus group interviews were conducted in 2023 among students at Warsaw technical schools preparing for the professions of mechatronics technicians, electrical technicians, rail transport power engineering technicians, rail transport technicians, renewable energy equipment and systems technicians. These professions are of particular significance for the development of the state (Obwieszczenie Ministra Edukacji i Nauki z dnia 20 stycznia 2023 r. w sprawie zapotrzebowania na pracowników w zawodach szkolnictwa branżowego na krajowym i wojewódzkim rynku pracy, Dz.U 2023, poz. 145, 5, 8).

The focus group interviews were conducted with fourth grade students, in view of the fact that in a year they were to graduate from technical schools and face a choice regarding their further educational and professional careers. Interviews with students of particular classes were conducted separately and continued until the students decided that they had nothing more to add on the topic. The research sample consisted of N=33 and was purposive. The average duration of the interview with each class was 1.5 hours. A focus research method was used, in which the research technique was a focus interview. Participation in the research was voluntary and anonymous. Participants could decide to withdraw from the research at any time without incurring any consequences.

## 2. RESEARCH FINDINGS – INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

### 2.1. Students' level of knowledge about the current labour market

Based on the research of the Regional Labour Market Monitoring (Regionalne Obserwatorium Rynku Pracy w Łodzi 2013, 5), it can be concluded that secondary school students have knowledge about the demand for professions sought by employers according to occupational categories. In the opinion of students, the greatest demand will be related to strict specialization, namely, specialists (79.5% of responses), craftsmen (63.9%) and medical professions (30.4%) will be the most sought after on the labour market. Young people aged 18-24 feel that they will find a job; as many as 63% of Poles express no concern in this respect, and only 28% feel anxious as regards their future job opportunities (*Rynek pracy* 2023, 14). Current forecasts for the years up to 2040 on the European continent regarding polarization of employment indicate that the demand for highly qualified employees will increase, the demand for medium-skilled employees will decrease, while the demand for low-skilled employees will remain constant. Employers, due to labour costs, will be more willing to hire medium-skilled employees whose

work will be supported by artificial intelligence and ML (*Kompetencje, jakich nie było* 2019, 40-41). The demand for representatives of the electric power industry, despite the fact that it is already in the group of shortage professions, may still increase. The main reason for the deficit is the fact that candidates do not meet employers' requirements, namely they do not have valid qualifications, e.g., SEP qualifications obtained on the basis of trainings organized by the Association of Polish Electrical Engineers (SEP), aerial work platform qualifications, as well as HDS operator qualifications (*Barometr zawodów* 2023, 43-44; conf. *Barometr zawodów* 2022, 19-23). The state labour market will lack mechatronics technicians qualified as specialists in electronics, automation and robotics, as well as railway and metro drivers (*Barometr zawodów* 2022, 27-28).

Fourth-graders, when asked about the demand on the modern labour market for employees performing the profession they learn at school, state that:

- there is a demand for employees performing the profession they are learning: “More and more people will need us”, “Employees are in demand”, “Each year there are fewer and fewer connections, because there are no train drivers”, “After the political transformation, railway lines were closed, they saved money this way”, “There’s a gap, people are retiring and there are a lot of job openings now”;

- the profession they learn is prestigious, unique and it offers them many opportunities to develop their own professional careers: “Some people, when they hear the word - mechatronics, wonder what kind of profession it is, and it is a combination of electronics, computer science, programming and mechanics”, “In the future, I will be able to choose from many specialties on the labour market”, “It is quite difficult to find employees to assemble photovoltaic cells”;

- there is high competition on the labour market: “You have to know how to find a job, because there are more and more mechatronics technicians on the labour market”, “Employees are in demand, but you never know”;

- will receive high remuneration: “We will make lots of money”, “We can assemble sockets on the construction site, as they pay a lot of money for it”, “It doesn’t make sense to work in one company for a fixed salary until retirement, it is better to take a risk and start your own business, then you will make a lot of money.”

The interviewed students are unanimous and claim that there is a demand for employees performing the professions they learn at school (33 respondents), and they will receive high remuneration for their work (28). Significantly fewer students admitted that they learn shortage professions and perceive high competition on the labour market (10 answers each). They were the least likely to indicate the possibility of professional development after graduating from a technical school (5).

According to the statements made by the fourth-graders (on whether they will cope on the modern labour market), it is easy to find a job, but the difficulty may lie in keeping it, in presenting one’s strengths to the employer. Staying on the labour market requires further education. Students also recognize the difference between a vertical and a horizontal career. They consider moving up in the company as

a much more difficult challenge than developing only a horizontal career. Students have many ideas about where they can find employment, what to do in the future, and they emphasize the need to be skilful and quick when carrying out professional tasks. This opinion is shared by all respondents (33): “The weak will drop out and those who will continue their education will stay”, “It is not difficult to find a job, but to stand out in this job can be harder”, “It cannot be that I have completed a given field of study and that’s it; but that I can do something related to this field of study and that they want to keep me, it can be a bit hard. Harder than just getting the job”, “And another hard question, do we want to join a company and climb the career ladder or, knowing that mechatronics is slowly absorbing various other professions in its scope, are we able to earn money doing smaller jobs. Or a job posting on olx and the question is, the better you are, the faster you will do it. Then you earn 200 zloty a day here, 200 zloty a day there, and here you are. It’s a matter of which path you want to take”, “You can always start your own company, for example, dealing with gates or alarm systems”. “We can go to giants like IPM or to lots of other corporations, as, for example, programmers; or design new vacuum cleaners for iRobot”, “There are on-the-job trainings”, “There are so many branches that we will surely find something for ourselves”.

Approximately 75% of companies on the Polish market have reported recruitment difficulties in recent months. It was pointed out that the main issue was insufficient number of suitable candidates for jobs. Almost 33% of employers pointed to discrepancies between the skills required for a given position and candidates’ skills, 25% of candidates had excessive financial expectations towards employers. On the European labour market, employment forecasts for the second quarter of 2023 remain high. 41% of employers post new job offers, 17% plan to reduce employment, 39% expect to maintain the level of employment at the current level, while 3% have not specified the planned changes (*Rynek pracy* 2023, 12). Candidates most desired by employers were those who demonstrated IT and data analysis skills (27% of companies), sales and marketing skills (24% of companies), technical skills (23%), as well as customer service (22%). Employers are most willing to hire candidates who have soft skills, i.e., those resistant to stress and easily adaptable (34% of companies), able to think critically and analytically (33%), with an insightful approach and willing to learn (27%) (*Rynek pracy* 2023, 17). According to NACE data (2022), it is estimated that over 70% of employers require young employees to possess analytical skills, along with teamwork, communication (written), initiative and work ethics skills. However, problem solving skills occupy the leading position (almost 86% of employers).

Young people, on the other hand, point to opportunities to gain professional experience, high earnings, friendly atmosphere, job satisfaction, and a job in line with their interests as the most important aspects of work. In turn, it would be difficult for them to accept lack of development opportunities, earnings not matching their expectations, high levels of stress, conflict in the team and lack

of promotion opportunities (*Młodzi Polacy na rynku pracy 2021*, 13). Research conducted among secondary school students regarding the awareness of choosing a profession proves that they believe that professional experience (66.3%), knowledge of foreign languages (59.4%), willingness to work, learn and develop professionally are most important for employers (55%) (Regionalne Obserwatorium Rynku Pracy w Łodzi 2013, 98).

In the opinion of fourth-graders, professional tasks performed by them are complicated and not every employer is able to verify the correctness of the task implementation process, but only its effect, the final result. Therefore, the employer will expect them to be able to explain how the final result has been obtained. Their cooperation will therefore have to be based on mutual trust and efficient communication. Employers expect their employees to be reliable, conscientious, resourceful, creative, and dedicated to constant learning; they should develop professionally, be able to deal with problem situations, be able to work in a team, have technical skills, work planning skills. Employers expect also availability, discipline, responsibility, resistance to stress, good health, punctuality, work ethic, knowledge of a foreign language, thinking, work experience. Students made, among others, the following statements: "The employer will expect us to tell what we have done when only the final effect is visible", "The employer will require us to be the best, to do the work carefully", "That we are trustworthy", "Resourceful and creative to tell him that it can be done better and cheaper", "Problem solving skills", "Conscientiousness", "That we should know a foreign language, in case there is a foreign contractor", "That I can plan my work, know what to do", "Practice", "That we keep order".

Students attributed the greatest importance to communication skills and technical skills (33 respondents), the other skills appeared sporadically in their statements (1 answer each). The obtained data show that the majority of respondents are aware of employers' expectations, as they coincide with employers' requirements.

## 2.2. The role of vocational subjects teachers in preparing students for the modern labour market

Teachers are obliged to perform tasks related to didactic, educational and care activities conscientiously, they should be guided by students' welfare, care for their health, as well as moral and civic attitude, and show respect for students' personal dignity. In addition, teachers should strive for their own personal development, including professional improvement, in accordance with the needs of the school (Prawo oświatowe z dnia 14 grudnia 2016 r. Dz.U. z 2023 r. poz. 900, art. 5; Karta Nauczyciela z dnia 26 stycznia 1982 r. Dz.U. z 2023 r. poz. 641, art. 6).

Teachers of vocational subjects face a difficult challenge because they must make every effort to prepare technical school students not only to pass exams confirming the acquisition of qualifications in a given profession, but also to equip them with competences that will help them to enter and stay on the dynamically

changing labour market, to operate in a rapidly developing civilization and the constantly transforming everyday life.

In pedagogical literature, the problem of the role of vocational subjects teachers in preparing students for their future professions was addressed by F. Szloska (1987, 106-126, 160), who noted the relationship between professional preparation of theoretical vocational subjects teachers and students' assimilation of professional content included in the curriculum. Appropriate professional preparation of teachers contributes to increasing the effectiveness of the work of a vocational school. Moreover, there is a correlation between the pedagogical preparation of teachers of theoretical vocational subjects and the preparation of students for the profession. A significant element of professional qualifications of theoretical vocational subjects teachers is practical experience gained at a workplace, in a position consistent with the professional content taught at school. Szloska postulated that such teachers should have professional and pedagogical preparation as well as appropriate ideological and moral qualifications. They should also have professional qualifications as well as general preparation necessary to understand the surrounding reality, participate in cultural life, comprehensively develop their own and the student's personality. T. Wiatrowski (1993, 243) developed a characteristics of vocational subjects teachers' qualifications. Such pedagogues should be demanding and understanding, firm, kind and fair in their contact with students. They should respect the dignity of the teaching process participants and continue their self-education and professional development. R. Gerlach (1997, 232-236), in turn, emphasized the need for teaching staff with high professional and pedagogical qualifications in extracurricular education.

In the literature, attention was also paid to other aspects affecting the future professional activity of young people, namely, research was conducted on students' opinions regarding preferred teachers, the relationship between their successes and the teacher's attitude and actions, and proposals for changes that would have a positive impact on improving education. The presented standpoints will serve as an introduction to the presentation of my own research findings.

M. Karwatowska (2012, 103-170) conducted research among students at various levels of education (primary school, lower and upper secondary school). On the basis of letters written by young people about the teacher who made a special impact on their lives, she distinguished two key areas related to the teacher, i.e., the domain of teaching and upbringing, and three secondary areas, i.e., the domain of personality, the domain of appearance and the domain of assessment. In the domain of personality, positive features prevailed over negative ones, however, the way of describing the teacher varied depending on education levels. Among teachers' most desirable qualities, primary and lower secondary school students mentioned kindness, willingness to help, gentleness and cordiality, while among the undesirable qualities, partiality, injustice, and nervousness manifested by overactive behaviour such as screaming and shouting. Young people from upper

secondary schools appreciated the following teachers' qualities: kindness, justice, tolerance, goodness and a sense of humour. They emphasized that teachers should maintain a balance between being too demanding and strict and being too lenient, as well as a balance between being diligent, thorough, systematic and workaholic, pedantic and meticulous.

In the opinion of students, their optimal functioning at school and their success depends on the attitude and actions of the teacher. Research by P. Guess and S. Bowling (2014, 201-206) proves that students achieve high academic performance when teachers care about their well-being since it affects students' life satisfaction and the socio-economic functioning, which additionally translates into the functioning of the school. According to US students, important components of professional qualifications are pedagogical skills, commitment to the teaching process, substantive knowledge, and verbal skills (Okpala and Ellis 2005, 374-383). Research conducted among Portuguese students indicates that learning effectiveness is influenced by student responses, attitudes and concepts of assessment that support self-regulation of learning (Brown 2011, 731-748). There is a belief among them that the assessment mainly focuses on pointing out the mistakes they make, as this will allow them to correct their actions. Successful, self-regulating students try to use the feedback they receive to improve their performance (Flores et al. 2020, 377-394). Flores (Flores et al. 2015, 1523-1534; Pereira, Flores and Barros 2017, 442-463) indicated that the most effective are student-centred assessment methods, which include e.g., portfolio, project-based assessments, as well as "activities such as multiple essay drafts that provide progressive feedback, oral presentations, student work assessments, and group and team projects that require interaction" (Webber 2012, 201).

Another factor that may have an impact on the effectiveness of learning is the age of the teacher. Research conducted by C.G. Pennington, M. Curtner-Smith, S. Wind (2020, 110-129) demonstrate that the above-mentioned criterion affects the learning efficiency of lower secondary school students. Students were assigned a task to watch one of two practically identical films, take an exam on its content and complete a questionnaire regarding the perception of the teacher. In the first video, the PE teacher giving a swimming lesson looked young, just according to his age. In the second film, the same teacher was made up as an older man. The results of the study proved that lower secondary school students were more willing to learn from a young teacher and had a more positive attitude to him.

Students at Warsaw technical schools that provide education in the professions of mechatronics technician, electrical technician, rail transport power engineering technician, rail transport technician, renewable energy equipment and systems technician, show the highest interest in learning the profession during lessons conducted by teachers who:

– are characterized by the right attitude and demonstrate personality traits best qualifying them to pursue the profession of teacher: "He has a passion for teaching

and is always prepared for classes”, “During the lesson he encourages students to talk, and he is very demanding”. “He has solid knowledge that he willingly shares”, “Ambitious”, “Has a good approach to people and is not burnt out”, “Committed”;

– have experience in the profession they teach and refer to situations occurring in the natural work environment: “He had some real-life story to tell about every piece of information he shared with us,” “He took us on a trip to his workplace to show everything in real life”, “He has dealt with all the things he talks about, he shows us how to use certain tools”, “He knows his job”;

– have communication skills, know how to interest students in the topics discussed in the lessons and explain professional issues in an understandable way: “He speaks in an interesting way”, “I actively listen to him, he talks in such an interesting way”, “He has the ability to pass on his knowledge”;

– adapt the teaching methods and didactic aids to students’ needs, e.g., the teacher offers students problem solving tasks and conducts interesting experiments: “She tried to smuggle practice in theory. For example, she took out a resistor and showed how it works, she told what it was for, how to read the parameters”, “During the lessons we are supposed to invent circuits and tell what they can be used for and make a report on it. The previous teacher was very strict and told you to copy diagrams. She gives us problems to solve”, “He gave us work in groups of five, not just tests. He sat down, gave us some prompts, explained what he was going to assess”;

– showing sincere concern for students’ education and professional careers: “He was very demanding, but he had a lot to demand”, “He wanted us to be able to do it”, “In what he teaches, he goes beyond the curriculum”, “If something was not in the textbook and he thought it was important, he added it”, “He gives a lot of additional materials and prepares outlines, other teachers don’t care”.

The interviewed students attached most importance to teachers’ right attitude and personality traits (30), to teachers’ experience in the taught profession (28) and to teachers’ communication skills (26). Slightly fewer students pointed to selection of the teaching methods and didactic aids (17) or sincere concern for students’ education, encouraging them to deepen their knowledge and broaden their skills beyond the curriculum (17).

However, as regards the teaching staff, students identify areas that require improvement and that may negatively affect their preparation for the profession. Students expect teachers to cooperate in sharing information about the covered material. This would help to avoid doing again the already covered material or gaps in the studied material that students must cover themselves – “Our teachers changed because either there were no specialists, or if there were, they taught poorly or did not teach at all, and they were replaced (new teachers were employed)”, “There was rarely any cooperation among the teachers. They didn’t pass on the material that had been done with us and the next teacher (who was taking over the class) didn’t know what we had done, where to start; there should be a continuation, so that we could complete everything.”

Any changes of vocational subject teachers - especially during the school year - are not beneficial for students, although sometimes they issue from a necessary decision of the school director (e.g., lack a professional approach to teaching). Selection of candidates for teachers of vocational subjects would improve the quality of education, however, currently there is a shortage of specialists in a given profession with appropriate pedagogical qualifications and willing to teach the profession at school. This is confirmed by research conducted by Urszula Szanderska and Wiktor Wojciechowski (2008, 33, 38). According to the researchers, graduates of vocational schools assess their preparation for the profession as low (3.3 general knowledge and knowledge of foreign languages, 3.5 knowledge and professional skills), and there are too few vocational teachers working in a given profession who at the same time would have pedagogical qualifications and would want to work at school.

The need for a relatively permanent teaching staff was noticed by few (10) students compared to the problem of teaching practical skills by vocational teachers (33) students: "Practice is a problem, theory is better, it is not what I have expected", "I do not feel prepared to work in my profession or to take the professional exam", "There is not enough practice", "We are thrown in at the deep end, because during theoretical lessons we copied a drill in a notebook, and during practice they make us use it, and no one has ever shown us how to use this tool".

Students do not feel sufficiently prepared for the profession either by teachers of theoretical vocational subjects or teachers of practical vocational training. They further admitted that:

- selection of teaching staff is inappropriate: "There are teachers who want to teach, but do not have knowledge, and there are teachers who have knowledge, but do not want to teach",

- teachers of theoretical vocational subjects do not sufficiently teach theory: "We don't get materials, we have to learn on our own, because they say they mentioned it in class", "We are the first class to learn in this field. We have to learn on our own. We use textbooks from the 1970s.", "We had entrepreneurship, but we discussed the textbook, we don't know how to pay taxes, how to file PIT, and yet many of us would like to run a business someday." The number of answers provided was comparable, i.e., 24 for the first category and 21 for the second.

The conducted research shows that the role of vocational subjects teachers is to prepare conscientiously and professionally for teaching theoretical subjects and practical vocational training. Teachers who demonstrate deep commitment in the way they conduct lessons are able to mobilize students to improve themselves, to delve into the profession they learn at school. Teachers must constantly update their knowledge in the field of the subject they teach. Ideally, they should have practical experience in the taught profession, e.g., combine work at school with work at a workplace. Teachers should make students familiar with any innovations appearing in the taught profession and go beyond the core curriculum. They should make lessons more interesting by giving examples from their own professional

practice and prepare additional materials to expand students' knowledge with up-to-date information in the field of the taught profession not included in the textbook. The role of the teacher is to bring students as closely as possible to the real-life conditions of the workplace, for example, by organizing trips to workplaces and talking about the observed facts, phenomena, tools, etc.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of the research, which was to identify the preparation of young people to navigate the labour market - taking into account professional competences, has been achieved. The research conducted among young people studying in technical schools providing education for the professions of mechatronics technician, electrical technician, rail transport power technician, rail transport technician, renewable energy equipment and systems technician, allows to conclude that the respondents have knowledge about the modern labour market and are ready to enter it. Based on my own research and study of literature, it can be concluded that:

- students learn shortage professions thanks to which they will not be exposed to unemployment (see *Barometr zawodów* 2022, 19-23);

- students are aware of finding employment as secondary school graduates, which coincides with the labour market predictions by 2040 that there will be a demand for medium-skilled employees (see *Rynek pracy* 2023, 14);

- they believe that they will receive fair remuneration for their work and will be able to develop professionally, just like young people from all over the country (see *Młodzi Polacy na rynku pracy* 2021, 13);

- although they notice high competition on the labour market (about 1/3 of respondents), all of them claim that they will be able to manage on the modern labour market provided that they continue their education;

- students believe that their employer will mainly expect communication and technical skills from them, which is consistent with the latest research results (see *Rynek pracy* 2023, 17; *NACE* 2022; *Kompetencje, jakich nie było* 2019, 51).

Teachers of vocational subjects prepare technical secondary school students to gain qualifications related to their future profession, care for them and make every effort to ensure that after graduation they manage in a real work environment, meet the expectations of potential employers and are ready to continue their self-improvement. Such an attitude is demonstrated by teachers who pursue their profession with passion. Only such teachers are able to teach students in a way that encourages them to learn the profession. Students would like their teachers to have professional experience in enterprises and workplaces, consistent with the profession they teach. Teachers having professional experience in the profession they teach, and who enjoy teaching this profession, contribute to a large extent to the good preparation of students for the profession, increase their chances of getting a job in the learned profession.

Fourth-graders attach the greatest importance to teachers' proper attitude towards students, their personality traits, experience in the profession they teach, as well as communication skills, which is confirmed by previous research (Okpala and Ellis 2005, 374-383; Karwatowska 2012, 103-170; Guess and Bowling 2014, 201-206), and slightly less to the method of conducting lessons, i.e. selection of teaching methods and didactic aids, or genuine concern for their education (cf. Webber 2012, 201). Students admitted that teachers had not prepared them fully to work in their profession. Among the areas related to the teaching staff, they notice a number of areas for improvement, i.e.: permanent employment (if possible) of the same teaching staff and conscientious teaching of theory and practice.

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