

## The Importance of Teacher's Personality in the Process of Establishing Proper Relations with Students – Experiences of Adult Pupils

Znaczenie osobowości nauczyciela w procesie budowania relacji z uczniami – doświadczenia dorosłych wychowanków

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**Abstract:** The predominant goal of this article is to elaborate on the importance of teacher's personality in the process of establishing proper relations with students. The theoretical part of this paper incorporates definitions pertaining to the very profession of a teacher, its specificity, a brief description of competences of a proficient tutor, as well as the explanation of stages of establishing relations with a specific group/class. The examined issue has allowed the author to draw a conclusion that one of individuals having a remarkable impact on the upbringing of young people is a teacher, with whom a lot of time is spent on daily basis in a school-specific environment. The research problem has been approached by formulating the following questions: How do teachers establish relationships with their students? What personality traits should a modern teacher possess? The starting point for the analysis have been outcomes of empirical examinations pertaining to the examined issue. To gather the required empirical material, the author has opted for the case study method and problem-focused narrative interview technique. The examination has been carried out among students from the Warmian-Masurian Province and Masovian Voivodeship.

**Keywords:** personality, teacher, student, relationships

**Abstrakt:** Celem artykułu jest ukazanie znaczenia osobowości nauczycieli w procesie budowania relacji z uczniami, a także ukazanie szkicu pożądanych cech współczesnego nauczyciela, które ujawniają się w doświadczeniach uczestników badania. Teoretyczny namysł obejmuje definicyjne ujęcia zawodu nauczyciela i jego charakterystykę, krótki opis kompetencji nauczycielskich oraz opis etapów budowania relacji z grupą/klasą. Refleksja nad podjętą problematyką wskazuje, że jedną z osób mających znaczący wpływ na wychowanie młodego człowieka jest nauczyciel, z którym uczeń spędza w szkole dużą ilość czasu. W związku z tym powinien on posiadać odpowiednie kompetencje, aby właściwie kształtować swoich podopiecznych. Problematyka badawcza została ujęta w postaci następujących pytań: W jaki sposób nauczyciele budują relacje ze swoimi uczniami? Jakie cechy osobowości powinien posiadać współczesny nauczyciel? Punktem wyjścia do podjętych analiz były wyniki badań empirycznych dotyczące wskazanego problemu. Na potrzeby zgromadzenia materiału empirycznego wykorzystano metodę studium przypadków oraz technikę wywiadu narracyjnego skoncentrowanego na problemie. Badania zostały przeprowadzone wśród studentów pochodzących z województwa warmińsko-mazurskiego oraz województwa mazowieckiego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** osobowość, nauczyciel, uczeń, relacje



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## INTRODUCTION

It can be stated without a doubt that the profession of a teacher is currently perceived in a variety of ways. In some cases, such a person is seen as a respectable intellectual equipped with extensive knowledge, whereas in some others – as an individual who is characterized by well-developed caretaking capabilities and practical mind (Nosek-Kozłowska 2021). The profession of a teacher is highly specific, as it requires certain personal predispositions. It is a job requiring ambivalence, uniqueness, and communicative character (Wyszyńska 2008). A modern teacher is a person having a proper, field-specific education, as well as equipped with highly varying competences (interpersonal, intrapersonal, communication-specific, technology-oriented, etc.). He or she is a person constantly pursuing knowledge and improving his or her skills. It is caused by varying expectations towards him or her pertaining to upbringing, taking care of, and educating both children and teenagers. Such an individual strictly connects the education of a new generation with his or her hopes for a better future. What is more, working with young people is his or her passion. A teacher should feel the calling, be a reflective yet practical person, know how to spot talents in young individuals, as well as identify a myriad of positive traits in them. It should also be a person, for whom his or her work is the art of literally and figuratively shaping another individual (Nosek-Kozłowska 2021). Wenacjusz Panek (2001) states that „A modern teacher we want to create and be able to take advantage of his or her creative capabilities must be characterized by the following traits: openness when it comes to discovering the world, originality of thinking, and tolerance for cognitive discrepancies, which optimally satisfies the motivation of curiosity” (Panek 2002, 233).

The profession of a teacher is a form of public service. Teachers are required to not only have high professional qualifications, but also – to showcase certain stances and behavioral or moral patterns. The efficiency of educating young generations is to a notable extent dependent on the attitude and personality of teachers. Guidelines pertaining to teacher-specific education are predominantly oriented towards pointing to certain professional qualifications, considering them to be hallmarks of good or even above-average educator. As argued by Krystyna Mihułka (2018), while delving into pedagogical considerations on teachers, one has to above all else take into account opinions voiced by children and teenagers. They are the active participants of the didactic process, who have a lot to say about key features of a

remarkable or even ideal teacher or educator. The predominant aim of this article is to elaborate on the importance of the personality of teachers in the process of establishing relations with both children and teenagers. The creation of the aforementioned bonds is not an easy task in the modern world characterized by the ever-growing number of issues young people have to face and deal with. Yet another key goal of this paper is to elaborate on most desired traits a modern teacher should possess that have been discussed by the examined individuals.

### 1. MODERN TEACHERS – THEIR IMAGE, COMPETENCES, AND DESIRED PERSONALITY TRAITS

It is a general consensus that a teacher is a person working in a school. Wincenty Okoń (2004) points out that a tutor is: „One of the most basic elements of the educational process, a professionally qualified pedagogical employee, who is also co-responsible for the preparation, management, organization, and results of the education-oriented process” (Okoń 2004, 266). Teachers are representatives of a socio-professional group that is exceptionally varied. As a result, numerous teacher-specific typologies are being developed. The most commonly known is the one dividing teachers basing on the type of school they work in and the level of education they offer. The so-called initial teacher training is the preparation of a teacher to educate others on the basis of graduate or postgraduate course resulting in obtaining teaching-specific qualifications by a particular person. It has to be mentioned at this point that the manner and level of such preparation highly impact the quality of work of a teacher. Teaching is a profession that cannot be taught comprehensively or learned. Teaching goes far beyond the preparatory course. As specified by Robert Kwaśnica (2014, 300): „Studies, or more precisely, education obtained by a teacher-to-be, as well as courses that a professionally active teacher can take part in and that are organized by institutions aiming to further educate and develop the competences of educational staff can at best initiate or support the already started process of becoming a teacher. Said process covers the teacher’s entire personality and continues – in the form of personal development – even when a given tutor already has formal qualifications. A tutor becomes a teacher by practicing his or her profession. He or she becomes a teacher primarily thanks to his or her own effort to understand and change himself or herself, mainly by self-reflection and personality changes.”

The perception of a teacher as a central figure in all institutional undertakings carried out by educational units has not resulted in the specification of most vital aspects of such a person that would be widely accepted (Nosek-Kozłowska 2021). Basing on the words of Maria Grzegorzewska (2021), it can be assumed that key factors that have to be taken into account are: the morality of a teacher, the level of development of his or her personality, the extent to which he or she is truly interested in his or her pupils, a proper stance, a clear goal, and a highly specific mode of operation. Other important aspects that cannot be neglected are selflessness and willingness to support young people in their self-development. Those are all features that can be ascribed to a true teacher who bases his or her actions on love, care, as well as on willingness to help, and who creates the mood of positivity, order, and kindness.

It is worth pointing out that philosophy, psychology, and pedagogical studies have been dealing with the topic of human personality for many years. Therefore, said considerations can be perceived as interdisciplinary in character (Lasota and Pisarzowska 2016). The personality of a tutor and a pedagogue has been touched upon in numerous works published by estimated experts of pedagogical studies. Typically, such texts tackle the notion of an ideal teacher, describing the most desired features and traits that may be remarkably useful in said profession (Lasota and Pisarzowska 2016). When it comes to a pedagogical approach, personality is a term that is utilized in various contexts. Quite often, it refers to a set of qualities and psychophysical processes making a given individual stand out from the crowd of others. It may additionally impact to a notable extent one's behavioral patterns, ability to obtain and then classify experiences, messages, or skills, as well as the capability of reacting emotionally to others and being determined when it comes to the selection of goals and key values (Okoń 1987, 215). According to Czesław and Małgorzata Kupisiewicz (2009, 128), a particular personality is a set of features typical for a given individual, making it possible to distinguish him or her from others. The pedagogy-oriented approach assumes that the initial years of the life of a given person are most vital when it comes to shaping his or her personality. It is of paramount importance with regard to the profession of a teacher. Wincenty Okoń (1959) additionally points out that personality affects the system of values and life-specific goals. Furthermore, it shapes the willingness to establish valuable and satisfying relations with others. Jan

Żebrowski (2007) states that the personality of a teacher is subject to changes as a result of the impact of societal, environmental, cultural, intentional, educational, and self-realization factors.

A teacher is an extremely important figure when it comes to the lives of his or her students, who attempt to describe and create an image of a given tutor, basing on his or her key features, personality, and behavioral patterns. He or she should also be equipped with proper competences, being the combination of professional skills, knowledge, values, and stances that each and every tutor should have in order to be able to perform his or her job in a proficient manner (Prucha 2006). In the literature of the subject, two groups of teaching-specific competences are touched upon, namely – personality-oriented and professional ones (ibidem).

According to the concept of two rationalities, human experiences are created in two spheres: in the practical and moral knowledge one, as well as in the technical knowledge one. To distinguish between knowledge types, two groups of competences can be identified: practical and moral (interpretative, moral, and communication-oriented), as well as technical ones (methodical and realization-specific). Robert Kwaśnica (1987) points to them as to competences being of vital importance for teachers. The life experience of every person constitutes of both practical and moral competences and those strictly technical ones. They are necessary in virtually every profession, but when it comes to teaching, it has to be stated that practical and moral competences take precedence (Kwaśnica 2014). It is caused by the specificity of the profession of a teacher. The aforementioned are more important than technical competences, as the latter cannot be utilized without their consent. As specified by R. Kwaśnica (2014, 302): „All the goals, methods, and approaches must obtain practical and moral acceptance before a teacher uses them. In order to take advantage of them, the teacher must first validate them by himself or herself. He or she must, basing on both practical and moral knowledge, answer the following questions: What should I do to prevent the goals, methods, and approaches I would like to opt for from becoming tools for manipulation and enslavement of other people? Can I use them in a specific educational situation? If so - how? The issue that precedes and allows technical competences to be taken advantage of is defining the educational situation. Furthermore, understanding said situation is possible thanks to the utilization of both practical and moral competences.”

Due to the specific duties they have to fulfill, teachers nowadays may support societal and emotional development of their students. Each day, they meet their pupils, have a remarkable knowledge when it comes to the development of children, and can identify challenges that young people have to face.

„Within the last thirty years, an increasingly greater focus is being put on upbringing on each stage of education. We have improved our understanding of the fact that many children have to face certain problems, which may result in issues regarding discipline and learning. We have become more aware of the needs of such students” (Hornby 2005, 9). Teachers are also required to cooperate with both parents and professionals, including psychologists, therapists, and social support workers.

Communication-oriented and therapeutic skills have become important in educational work, as teachers and educators have been identified as individuals having a remarkable impact on the upbringing of children and teenagers (Hornby 2005). A question can be formulated: What features and skills should a modern teacher possess? Personalities of various individuals working in said profession can be studied by taking advantage of two major methods, namely: deductive (a priori) and inductive (empirical) one. K. Miłułka (2018) states that the least error-prone pieces of research seem to be the ones in the case of which pupils or students describe a good or even an ideal teacher they would like to be educated by. Therefore, let us consider expectations students have of teachers, their most valued traits, and their proposals pertaining to possible changes that could be introduced.

## 2. CLASS AS A SOCIETAL AND EDUCATIONAL GROUP

In its initial phase, a class is made up of a group of people not knowing each other very well. As a result of both formal and informal relations between students, a cohesive societal group is created over time. It then incorporates pupils showcasing a similar level of physical, emotional, and mental development. Within individual classes, social structures start to be formed basing on positions certain students have in contrast to other ones. Pupils additionally create behavioral norms, based on preserving certain recurring societal phenomena. Nevertheless, for such processes to emerge, a teacher has to go through all the stages of group development, which may be a challenge for such a tutor, having to face highly varying behavioral patterns of students included in a particular class. One can identify certain



fundamental societal features of a class, which in turn shape the behavioral patterns of both teachers and students. They are as follows (Arends 1995, 123):

a) Multidimensionality – school class is a rather crowded space, within which individuals characterized by remarkably varying psychophysical capabilities attempt to achieve certain goals. There are numerous tasks that a given teacher has to accomplish in said space. He or she has to, among others, keep up with the schedule, supervise pupils, and assess their assignments.

b) Simultaneity – when it comes to a class, numerous occurrences typically happen at once. While taking care of the needs of an individual student, a teacher also has to maintain order and supervise other pupils. He or she additionally has to moderate discussions taking place and plan further work.

c) Promptness – in a class, numerous actions and events may happen at once, so a teacher has no time to think, but rather has to act in an immediate manner.

d) Unpredictability – events in a class tend to unfold in an unexpected manner or steam from one another. Therefore, it is rather troublesome to predict how students may behave and work on a given day.

e) Transparency – class is a public place and students are witnesses of all events taking place within its framework.

f) Togetherness – students spend a remarkable amount of time with each other, which results in developing certain customs and norms, as well as obtaining mutual experiences.

A class is a group consisting of various young people. Quite often, there are strong bonds identifiable between its members. Students are capable of organizing, making decisions that are vital for them, and function within the scope of set rules. It is worth indicating that a school class is considered a public space, within which vital developmental processes take place that are simply impossible to reproduce in private spaces. Upon entering a classroom, a given person has to come to terms with the fact that his or her individual personality becomes less important than the one of the group (Zawada 2013, 82). A class is a part of a school that is close to students and that is co-created by them. Pupils are involved in both fortunes and misfortunes of a given educational unit, requiring a teacher or an educator to take a proper care of it (ibidem, 92).

When it comes to pedagogy, it is not about what current teachers are like, but about what they should be like. The common consensus seems to be that they should exert a strong educational influence on young people. Working in said profession, a teacher should try to expand the knowledge of his or her students, instill certain views in them, develop their abilities, passions and interests, focus on their distinctive traits and, as a result, positively change the personality of his or her students. If the intentions of such a teacher lead to positive results and if the intended changes occur in his or her students, one may claim that such a person is a remarkable teacher and has a strong educational influence (Kreutz 1947).

The personality of a teacher is to a certain degree a vital factor while working with students. What is more, carrying out examinations pertaining to the aforementioned matter seems to be especially valuable and necessary nowadays. Together with constant changes in social structure, school-specific organization, curriculum, and education standards, both management-oriented and educational role of a teacher are subject to constant modifications, requiring never-ending self-improvement.

„Both students and teachers bring their experiences to school: their mood and memories (both positive and negative). All of said individuals bring their worries, joys, feelings, needs, fears, expectations, statements, dreams, and wishes to the educational unit in question as well” (Góralczyk 2007, 35).

### 3. ESTABLISHING AND DEVELOPING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS BETWEEN A TEACHER AND PUPILS/A LECTURER AND STUDENTS

One has to note that interpersonal relations have always been perceived as one of the most basic elements of educational processes. School life is gradually becoming more and more devoid of closeness, factual bonds, as well as empathy between students and their teachers (Śnieżyński 2009).

The development of cognitive patterns pertaining to other people is based on the so-called priority effect. There is a reason why we do our best to make the most optimal impression possible on newly met individuals. Pieces of information gathered during initial contacts are very strong emotionally and can shape the opinion of a particular person. With time, the first impression may be to some extent corrected or amended, but it requires regular contacts and the willingness to truly understand the other person (Góralczyk 2007). A vital role when it comes to perception is played by attitudes, which follow the compatibility rule. Despite information received pertaining to a given individual being different from



his or her image created mentally beforehand, people try to maintain a more or less coherent perception of him or her. Therefore, people tend to ignore information that they consider uncomfortable. What is even more, the perception is also influenced by the hidden personality theory, which allows to draw conclusion about others basing on rather small chunks of data, utilized to then develop comprehensive and rich images of other people. In the course of education, socialization, and acquiring new experiences, students tend to also acquire certain behavioral stereotypes (Góralczyk 2007). The hidden personality theory may affect our behavior, being the cause of numerous mistakes and misunderstandings, including those in student-teacher relations. They result in the feeling of being hurt, improperly judged, and neglected, which may in turn lead to various conflicts. Conclusions drawn basing on acquired stereotypes may initiate hurtful behavioral patterns, which may in turn directly translate into the inability of a teacher to create a mood of trust and safety in a class. Without being aware of processes taking place within himself or herself, a tutor may not know why students in class are focused on defense rather than on cooperation. Attitudes, beliefs, reactions, and behavioral patterns of both teachers and students are the result of many factors and are more or less conscious (Góralczyk 2007). When one starts working with a given group, the phenomenon referred to as the group process occurs. The created group (class) starts developing and changing, going through consecutive stages of the process which is unavoidable and takes place in stages. Members of such a group are frequently unaware of its existence and are not familiar with the mode of its progression. Said process should, however, be carefully monitored and studied by the teacher, the goal of whom is to introduce the group (class) to the consecutive phases of the group process (Hornby 2005):

*Orientation (shaping, resonance) phase/Initial phase*

The orientation phase is the beginning of the group process and occurs at the very start of cooperation between a given teacher and a new class, in the case of which anxiety and the lack of specific goals being set can be identified. The students do not know what to expect from the teacher and are to a remarkable extent dependent on him or her. They attempt to test the limits of what they can and cannot do. They follow norms that have been acquired in the process of societal development. Their task-oriented activeness is dominated by orientation. Such people try to specify their goals, methods of achieving

them, specificity of a particular task, as well as requirements that are being set for them. They expect the teacher to provide them with proper explanations, calls to action, clearly set rules, as well as goals to be achieved (Sobek 2009). Working on in-class coherence is of utmost importance during the discussed stage. The teacher has to create an environment allowing class members to get to know one another better and search for similarities between them that would help consolidate the group. The teacher should also learn about students' expectations and goals, additionally informing them about their impact on lesson planning.

*Attrition (storm, conflict, differentiation) phase / Confrontation phase*

The attrition phase is characterized by conflicts, rebellions, and emotional tensions. The impulse that starts the entire crisis is frequently the sudden expression of emotions of a single person. After a short time, others join the conflict. Groups and coalitions are created. What is more, opinions tend to polarize then. There is a visible rebellion against the teacher and his or her attempts to teach or to maintain a relative order. He or she starts being assessed, criticized, and sometimes even humiliated. The attrition phase is typically identified during fourth-sixth meeting with a particular group (Sobek 2009). During the discussed period, the students tend to be bolder, more open, more expressive, and opt for more controversial views, while at the same time still seeking a place for themselves in the social structure of the class (Rozłucka 2022). In the phase in question, the task of the tutor is to find common denominators for different views and opinions, model active communication, express his or her feelings, and opt for constructive forms of solving conflicts. Some, especially less meaningful issues, should be left for students to solve among themselves. It will improve their self-reliance and will not cause the conflict to spread among the entire group (Rubaj 2015).

*Normalization (standard establishment) phase / Need meeting and compromise phase*

After the attrition phase, the class enters the so-called normalization period – bonds between its individual members become stronger, mutual support can be seen, as well as there is the constantly increasing sense of identity. Specific roles tend to clarify and behavioral patterns start to emerge. The task-oriented activeness is then characterized by planning and cooperation. Opinions and views are exchanged more frequently, leading to work efficiency increasing. A clear leader emerges. He or she

becomes treated by the group as a partner, who is co-dependent and co-reliant for the actions performed by the entire group (Rubaj 2015). It is undoubtedly the most advanced phase of the group process, during which the members of the group meet their needs by opting for task-oriented undertakings. During the normalization phase, the teacher limits imposing certain methods of solving problems to a great extent, focusing rather on proposals of the students. He or she focuses on improving cooperation within the team, models feedback provision, helps improve coherence and attractiveness of the group while juxtaposed with other ones, as well as identifies potential and creates opportunities for remarkable achievements (Rubaj 2015).

*Action (action proper, cooperation) phase / Realization phase*

The so-called action phase is characterized by self-reliance, high efficiency when it comes to learning, as well as productiveness with regard to in-class life. Interpersonal issues have been dealt with, mutual trust can be identified, together with trust in the success of undertakings being carried out. Students are open and willingly express their feelings or motivations. The teacher is treated as a partner worthy of cooperation, who checks whether tasks are realized in the most optimal manner (Sobek 2009). During the action phase, the teacher actively supports the class, but sometimes – he or she backs down and listens to the ideas of others, which improves active communication, feeling expression, as well as constructive forms of conflict solving (Rubaj 2015).

*Conclusion (change, separation) phase / Parting phase*

During the conclusion phase, the teacher shows students that the parting period is important. He or she should also allow for emotions to flow freely and sum up the achievements of the entire group, discuss the most vital moments of its existence, as well as provide each and every student with positive feedback (Rubaj 2015).

The role of the group process, as well as its importance for both the teacher and involved students, cannot be underestimated. The group process allows not only for pupils to change, but also – for the class as a whole to transform. Knowledge about perception principles and mistakes that can be made as their result may be of exceptional importance for individuals who would like to analyze their process of

perceiving both the world and other people, in result developing the ability to make well-thought-out decisions. When it comes to teachers, such knowledge may turn out to be simply invaluable.

#### 4. RESEARCH METHOD AND SAMPLE SPECIFICITY

For the purpose of gathering empirical material, the case study method has been taken advantage of (Stake 2010), together with the interview technique. It has been a problem-oriented narrative interview (Chase 2009). At the beginning of each and every meeting, an interviewed person has been presented with both the goal and key matters pertaining to the examination: „The goal of the examination is to understand methods of establishing and developing teacher-student relations, as well as obtaining knowledge about vital personality traits characterizing modern teachers. I would like to learn more about your personal experiences and thoughts related to the subject. Your participation in the examination is more than valuable and will make it possible for me to understand the importance of said relations in an educational environment better.” The research problem has been approached by formulating the following questions: How do teachers establish relationships with their students? What personality traits should a modern teacher possess? The above questions have been asked during the course of the interview. Examinations on the importance of the personality of teachers with regard to establishing relations with students were conducted from July to September 2023 among students from the Warmian-Masurian and Masovian Provinces. They have been BA students studying at the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn and at the University of Warsaw. They have been on second and third year of their pedagogy oriented BA courses. The starting point of the examination have been the results of empirical analyses pertaining to the discussed problem. The selection of individuals for the sample has been determined by cognitive aspects. The purposeful selection of candidates has been opted for, oriented towards the examined issue. Students have been invited to take part in the study during classes at their universities. After expressing their consent, they have participated in the empirical interview. The achieved results are presented within the scope of this article in a selective manner and have the form of a concise narration. By utilizing such an approach, the author would like to attempt to recreate the interpretation of reality by the examined individuals basing on their statements (by comparing them) and by utilizing descriptive method of text interpretation (Nosek 2018). In total, 15 students have taken part in the examination.

Some of their statements are included within the scope of this paper. The selection of the statements to be included in the paper has been well-thought-out in nature. It has been based on principles of selectivity and coherence, allowing to gain valuable and diverse insights into the examined issue. Statements that, according to the author, have been most in line with the research problem and provided some new pieces of information or conclusions pertaining to research question and goal have been chosen. The sample has included 12 women and 3 men, aged 20 to 23. The number of women and men included in the study has varied as pedagogical courses have been exceedingly popular among women. The respondents' statements quoted in the empirical part have been coded. Their opinions have been coded with labels ranging from S1 to S15 (student 1, student 2, etc.). The code also includes the K or M letter, pointing to the gender of surveyed individuals (K – female, M – male).

#### 5. METHODS OF ESTABLISHING TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONS – EDUCATION-ORIENTED EXPERIENCES OF THE EXAMINED INDIVIDUALS

Personality traits and attitudes towards other people are closely related to behavioral and cognitive skills. When a mood of trust and mutual care is created in the classroom, young people experience many opportunities to develop their widely-understood interpersonal skills (Everts 2005). Teacher-student relationship plays an important role when it comes to education. There are numerous ways allowing for building establishing and maintaining positive relations between tutors and pupils that have been mentioned by the examined individuals. It turns out that the vital role when it comes to establishing contact with young people is played by the communicativeness of the teacher, his or her openness to others, as well as his or her availability when the pupils feel the need to talk or when they seek advice.

*It is important for a teacher to be available and open to communication. (S1,K)*

Listening to the opinions and views of the students makes them feel understood and respected. While referring to their educational experiences, the students have mentioned that the authentic attitude of the teacher has been of importance to them. It has been vital for them whether or not a given tutor has been honest, reliable, and his or her actions have been in line with his or her words. Such people have been perceived as more preferable to establish relations with.

*In my opinion, it is crucial to build trust through consistency of behavior and honesty. Fulfilling promises, providing honest assessments, and ensuring clear communication help establish a solid foundation of trust between young people and a given teacher. (S3,M)*

The basis for trust has turned out to be fair assessment. Students have stated that they had always wanted to be treated equally, without distinguishing some people and diminishing the achievements of others. Each and every one of them has stated that they had wanted to obtain a fair grade basing on comprehensible and sensible assessment criteria.

Ability to build trust, maintain contacts, and encourage cooperation is also essential in the work of a modern teacher. Tutors should develop awareness of their own mental processes, learn to control emotions, as well as practice their mind, intelligence, and interpersonal contacts. It is also of remarkable importance to recognize students' individual skills and successes, as it can in turn encourage them to continue their efforts and develop their talents. One should also not forget to support students with learning issues.

*Capability of creating a proper mood in the classroom also plays a vital role when it comes to relations established between a tutor and his or her pupils. (S5,K)*

A given teacher should strive for cooperation, respecting differences, and promoting mutual respect. For young people, it has been noteworthy if a tutor has shown interest not only in education, but also – in their everyday life, problems, and successes.

*I would love if there were more teachers simply showing interest in the lives of their students and in their everyday affairs. More teachers should learn about our fields of interest and try to understand them. (S8,K)*

A teacher should be an authentic person. Showing pupils his or her personality, passion towards learning, and true engagement may result in establishing a more valuable and inspiring relation with them. It additionally seems important to engage in talks about difficulties faced by a particular teacher while working with children and teenagers on everyday basis, as it may help students notice a real person in the tutor and to see that he or she has his or her own successes, as well as failures.



*A teacher is a human being just like us and sometimes he or she may ask his or her students for assistance. It has to be noted that each and every relation is unique in character, so it is worth being flexible and adapting the approach to individual needs of students. (S2,K)*

Students have on many occasions specified that pupils on various levels of education expect teachers to be flexible, as well as to adjust to the needs, capabilities, and possible limitations of young people. Aside from that, they have wanted to perceive teachers as normal human beings, facing difficulties, issues, and other problems requiring them to seek assistance of their students.

#### 6. DESIRABLE PERSONALITY TRAITS OF A MODERN TEACHER – AS PERCEIVED BY THE EXAMINED INDIVIDUALS

A teacher is often perceived by students as a guide showing them the vast world of knowledge. He or she should be patient, flexible, as well as always willing to explore or learn something new. Other important aspects, as perceived by the examined pupils, have been just approach to issues and a sense of humor.

*It is great if a teacher has some sense of humor and is fair towards his or her students. (S4,K)*

A modern tutor should be just like a hero when it comes to education – flexible, open to innovations, and ready to learn throughout all his or her life. He or she should also be a person that is optimistic, positive towards others, and willing to take up various challenges. He or she should additionally be equipped with knowledge pertaining to various styles, methods, and techniques of learning in order to support his or her students in their educational endeavors. Young people also value opting for stimulating teaching techniques, as then they can learn analyzing problems and searching for their most optimal solutions.

*A teacher should be capable of adjusting to various styles of learning of his or her students and inspire them to think for themselves. (S6,M)*

It cannot be overstated that a modern tutor should have knowledge on innovative educational techniques and abilities of using them in practice. Lessons based on the utilization of newest technological achievements are typically more interesting in the perception of students taking part in such classes.

What is more, a teacher using them seems to be knowledgeable when it comes to the world of modern technologies used nowadays.

*Patience is a quality that is required in teachers. Sometimes, they may have to repeat certain things and explain the presented material in different ways for each student to be able to understand it. (S7,K)*

*Young people are a very diverse group and may often struggle with certain problems. I think that a teacher should be patient and grant such individuals some time not only to learn, but also - to get to know each other a bit better. (S10, M)*

A teacher should be a person characterized by personal strength, resilience to stress, as well as understanding of others. There are also situations when there is a lot of chatter in the class and students are not willing to focus entirely on the education-oriented prices. Pupils tend to be preoccupied with solving group-specific problems, organizing important events, and social life-related issues. Patience and understanding of the teacher may be of immense help in such situations, making his or her work remarkably easier and less stressful.

The examined students have also pointed out that understanding the pupil's specific situation is an important skill that a teacher should possess. It should apply to both school-specific and life-related situations. It is important for a given teacher to be able to show empathy and to understand what is important for students at a given moment. „We assign a teacher the role of an active creator of the student's personality. It is not only about professional activities and transfer of knowledge, but also – about spiritual support, ability to communicate, and the willingness to show empathy” (Lasota and Piszczowska 2016, 80).

*Understanding that each and every student has his or her own style and pace of learning is a key to success when it comes to teachers. (S9,K)*

A teacher should adjust his or her approach to the varying level of his or her students, supporting their individual needs. Such cases make the profession of a teacher truly exciting, as each and every day is a new challenge, as well a new opportunity to discover how to help students in their educational endeavors.

To sum up the statements of the examined students, certain traits and abilities that are of importance when it comes to teachers can be identified:

- 1) True passion that a given teacher has and is willing to share with his or her students.
- 2) Empathy, thanks to which the teacher understands both feelings and the perspective of a given student, allowing for establishing positive relations.
- 3) Patience towards students, their behavioral patterns, learning styles, and issues.
- 4) Factual interest in students and their everyday problems.
- 5) Creativity, allowing to make the educational process more varying and create interesting lesson plans.
- 6) Fairness while assessing students, their capabilities, and achievements.
- 7) Openness to developing his or her skills and obtaining new knowledge throughout his or her life.
- 8) Remarkable oratory skills allowing to clearly share knowledge with others, as well as the ability to listen.
- 9) Motivation to work, inspiring students to achieve the peak of their capabilities.
- 10) Knowledge when it comes to technology – ability to utilize innovative educational tools.

The personality of a teacher, regardless of the degree and extent of its understanding, has a notable impact on students/pupils affected by it. Personality is nothing more and nothing less than a set of specific features of a given individual. A kind, patient, devoted, and constantly developing teacher is an ideal one in the eyes of students. The pedagogical role of universities cannot be neglected or underestimated as well. The age of a pupil/student does not release a given teacher from his or her educational responsibilities (Żywucka-Kozłowska 2014).

## CONCLUSION

The major cognitive aim of the research carried out has been to gain insight into principles governing the establishment of teacher-student relationships and personality traits that a good teacher should have, at least according to the interviewed students. A modern teacher should be able to deal with a number of tasks at once. He or she should be able to manage his or her time like a true professional, be

flexible, as well as have a knack for detective work to be able to identify individual needs of his or her students. He or she should also be well-versed when it comes to new technologies, as there are many tools that may make education process easier, especially when taken advantage of in a proper manner.

Children and teenagers frequently have to face various challenges, either educational or emotional ones. A modern teacher should be able to help his or her pupils deal with such obstacles. Some of most common problems young people face are peer pressure, learning difficulties, family-related issues, as well as problems strictly connected with mental health. It is important for a teacher to be empathetic, open, and willing to support his or her students not only in education, but with regard to personal growth as well.

A modern teacher should be characterized by empathy, allowing him or her to understand and identify feelings of the students, which will surely be of use while establishing strong relations with them and improving the overall mood in the classroom. A contemporary teacher should be an open person, ready to implement new ideas and accept diversity. Such an attitude can be inspiring for students and at the same time make them feel accepted. A tutor should be an authentic person establishing factual, deep relationships with his or her students, based on positive energy, enthusiasm, and motivation for teaching. The aforementioned approach can inspire students to actively participate in the educational process. When establishing relations with pupils, consistency in applying rules and fairness are also important. Consistency in teacher's behavior contributes to the establishment of deep relationships with young people.

A teacher – „A pedagogue has to showcase traits of a great advisor, so take care of others, respect them, be honest, utilize proper intervention methods encouraging students to open up, understand himself or herself, be able to take advantage of his or her knowledge on daily basis, be open, understand others, accept their differences, and be able to make use of such identified differences” (Everts 2005, 126).

Ludwik Bandura (1972, 186) points out that: „Among teachers [...], there are those who have made a long-lasting impression on us and whose words and wisdom are still with us. We can feel that they have directed us on our path and have taught us a lot. We do not forget such teachers, but rather remember them fondly, because their words have the power and still lead us in our lives.”

Examination results may turn out to be of use when it comes to ensuring a more accurate perception of endeavors of teachers. They may also inspire such individuals to undertake self-development and supportive actions, positively affecting their professional growth. The teacher's personality can create a kind of bridge, allowing him or her to connect with his or her students. If a teacher is able to demonstrate understanding, authenticity, and has a positive attitude towards young people, his or her relations with students can be positive, as well as based on mutual respect and trust. Said relations are the very cornerstone of the education and upbringing process.

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