

THE NATURE, TRANSFORMATIONS, AND FORMS OF THE POLISH TEACHER DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT: *The paper presents the nature, transformations and teacher professional development system forms in the years from 1944 to 1994. Emphasis has been put on the importance of teacher professional development in improving their professional competence and quality of work of educational institutions. The professional development of teachers is one of the most important objectives of the education system reform. Taking up this subject arises from searching for model solutions for the modern teacher professional development.*

KEY WORDS: *work, profession, competence, teacher professional development*

INTRODUCTION

An attribute of the present days is a dynamic development of science and technology, as well as fast changes in population, technology, economy and politics. We are living at a time of information technology development, the shaping up of information society and knowledge society, affecting the most important aspects of our lives. In the new system conditions it is necessary to view education and its tasks in a different way; I mean an education which can deal with the challenges of the modern world and civilisation changes in our country.

The purpose of my investigation, and at the same time of this study, is to show the nature, transformations and system forms of teacher professional development, alongside the role and importance of teacher development in raising their professional competence, along with improving the quality of operation of educational institutions.

THE NATURE, TRANSFORMATIONS AND SYSTEM FORMS OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The heart of the teaching profession is the necessity to permanently improve one's qualifications and managing self-development, starting from the core education until retirement. Such requirements are common in many knowledge-based professions, but in addition to the doctor and other medical professions, it is most marked in the teacher. Their efficient work depends on constantly updated and broadened factual and methodological knowledge in connection with teaching skills. According to H. Kwiatkowska, preparation for

the teaching profession should include education in the field that is to make people ready to undertake professional tasks¹. It is not only the teacher's professional work, but any work that is an activity charged with meaning and sense.

It is customarily understood as human activity aimed at manufacturing some specific good and constituting the basis and the condition for the existence of society. A prominent sociologist, J. Szczepański, considers it to be "a set of activities leading to the satisfaction of any given human needs, activities possessing social significance, assuring a specific social position to individuals and social groups that carry them out"².

The education sociologist, R. B. Woźniak, claims, in turn, that "work is a value to which some rank is attached making it possible for it to occupy an especially important place in the system of generally accepted values. The meaning of the value is significant, especially in the process of developing human personality"³.

H. Januszek and J. Sikora claim that "from the sociological perspective, work is any intentional and useful or socially significant activity, assuring a specific position in society"⁴. According to the aforementioned authors, sociologists analysing work pay attention to the following factors:

- work is a social activity, which means that preparing and performing it influence aspirations, attitudes, interests, and, consequently, the behaviour of individuals and groups;
- work is carried out in order to satisfy different kinds of needs (biological, economic, cultural), with the needs being defined by the structure and culture of the groups to which the individual belongs;
- the means of accomplishing work targets, as well as the methods of using them independently of the kinds of needs they are to satisfy, are defined by the structure and culture of the groups to which the individual belongs;
- for the work done by individuals to be performed, cooperation of many individuals and groups is necessary.

The authors mention the qualities of a good worker, too, such as "honesty, reliability, friendliness, involvement, assimilating the principles of good work, and hence efficient, effective and productive conduct"⁵, as well as explaining the notion of work morality. They say that "the basis of work morality is not rules and regulations, but the moral feeling common to people of a given culture, making it possible to evaluate behaviour in such terms as justice, personal dignity, the right to happiness, to assistance"⁶.

An analysis of the sociological definitions and comments mentioned makes it possible to formulate the following definition explaining the notion. Work is intentional and deliberate activity of man who using their physical and biological strength, as well as the skills and abilities acquired, is striving to satisfy their material and spiritual needs. Work is, therefore, a significant value and possesses social significance.

Work morality, or teachers' professional ethics, is made up of evaluation, norms, behaviour patterns and personality ideals regulating the behaviour of individuals and relations between individuals and social groups.

¹ Cf. H. Kwiatkowska, *Pedeutologia*, Warszawa 2008, p. 206.

² J. Szczepański, *Uwagi o przedmiocie i zagadnieniach socjologii pracy*, [in:] *Jak pracuje człowiek*, ed. J. Szczepański, Warszawa 1961, p. 161.

³ R. B. Woźniak, *Zarys socjologii edukacji i zachowań społecznych*, Koszalin 1998, p. 38.

⁴ H. Januszek, J. Sikora, *Socjologia pracy*, Poznań 1998, p. 10.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 11-12.

Throughout history there was social division of labour, the result of which was the occurrence of specific professions. A profession, irrespective of its understanding and definitions, is the subject of interest of many academic branches, including sociology, psychology, economy, law, ethics and pedagogy. Each of the branches mentioned as an example only contributes its viewpoint, and that is why there are so many definitions of profession existing in the literature on the subject. From the theoretical point of view, one should distinguish problem work definitions (dominating mainly sociological studies), projective, ordering and hierarchising. S. Kowalewska emphasises that “a profession is a term that cannot be unequivocally defined, either for its meaning or its range due to inserting various intellectual content and making various emotional associations. However, one can distinguish three basic aspects constituting this notion:

- the technological aspect, consisting of manual and mental operations necessary for its performance;
- the economic aspect, connected with the size of the income received;
- the social aspect, consisting of the place in the social structure, occupied in the prestige structure and the kind of work performed”⁷.

This type of definition treats a profession as a peculiar kind of activity, determining a specific social position of the individual and possessing a market value. According to J. Szczepanski, while trying to define the notion, we come across much difficulty of the factual nature. Among others, he says that “even if we assume that a profession is a system of activities, soon a question comes up about their range. Hence, what becomes essential for the definition of a profession is a suggestion that it is the following system of activities:

- internally coherent, based on knowledge and skills, constituting the basis for the existence of a given value (objects or services), satisfying given social needs;
- systematically or permanently performed by the worker;
- being the basis of the worker’s and his family’s economic standard of living;
- connected with the worker’s prestige and social position”⁸.

The Ministry of Work and Social Policy thinks that defining a profession, and especially classifying professions and specialties, is important for the labour market needs. In the regulating documents it is said that “a profession is a set of tasks (a set of activities) separated as a result of social labour division, performed permanently or with small exchanges by individual people and requiring appropriate qualifications (knowledge and skills) acquired as a result of education or practice”⁹.

According to the directive quoted, teachers were included in a group of specialists, and hence in people from whom a high level of professional knowledge, skills and experience is required. The said article assumes that a profession is a set of skills and, related to it, store of knowledge and competence, resulting from specialisation and social labour division, performed permanently, periodically or occasionally. It constitutes the basic source of support of a given working individual and their family.

The teacher is a foundation of an institutionalised, i.e. mainly school, education, which, just like the profession, is conceived of differently. The contemporary Krakow teacher, Cz. Banach, says that „education is a social value and a hope of the present time, as well

⁷ S. Kowalewska, *Definicje i klasyfikacje zawodów*, [in:] *Socjologia zawodów*, ed. A. Sarapata, Warszawa 1965, p. 65.

⁸ J. Szczepański, *Czynniki kształtujące zawód i strukturę zawodową*, [in:] *Socjologia zawodów*, ed. A. Sarapata, Warszawa 1965, p. 15-17.

⁹ The directive of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 27 April 2010, about classifying professions and specialties for the needs of the labour market and the range of its use (Dz. U. no. 82, entry 537).

as a tool of shaping the present and the future of the individual, of human communities and of the state”¹⁰.

As has already been noted, in education it is the teacher that is the central figure, with his wisdom and experience constituting not only his own good, but also a social value, promising for the children and parents, and to some extent, to society as a whole.

At the end of the previous century, R. J. Arends aptly formulated expectations of teachers saying: “Teachers of the XXI century will be expected to master a vast store of core, pedagogical, social and cultural knowledge; they will have to become reflexive creators and professionals”¹¹. Accordingly, the knowledge updated by teachers should include scientific and technological progress taking place, the implementation of the idea of “information society” and civil society. Thereby, professional development of teachers is closely related to permanent education.

Permanent education can be understood in three different ways, as: “a principle, an idea, and a system”¹². With respect to the professional category of interest to us here then, permanent education is a set of activities aimed at supporting professional development of teachers, raising their skills, and thereby supporting the development of school and local communities. The idea of permanent education has found its way into the “Memorandum about Permanent Education” – a document worked out by the European Commission in 2000. The document contains a justification of the necessity of implementing the idea of permanent education, proving that promoting active and conscious citizenship and shaping professional competence constitute priority, undeniable and mutually self-complementing targets of the present-day permanent education.

The authors of the “Memorandum ...” justify the priority and necessity of undertaking immediate actions for implementing the idea of permanent education. They point out two basic features of modern times. “Firstly, European society and economy are based on sophisticated knowledge, access to which is the pre-requisite for a conscious and responsible use of all the resources within human reach, also determining the continent’s position and chances on the world markets, as well as the ability of employees to adapt to the changing requirements. Secondly, only science accompanying man at all life stages can ensure him the competence for independent planning of his individual path in life, in which there is a place for responsible, conscious participation in social life, varied culturally, ethnically and linguistically”¹³.

The root of the notion of development is teachers’ possessing a specific range of competence and skills acquired at high education level. While planning educational activities, one should take into account the existing social and economic conditions, as well as the school’s and the teachers’ requirements. Organising their development should be preceded by a diagnosis, covering the needs:

- “connected with practising the profession;
- connected with personality development;
- (...) existential, connected with the valid value system”¹⁴.

¹⁰ Cz. Banach, *Polska szkoła i system edukacji. Przemiany i perspektywy*, Toruń 1997, p. 41.

¹¹ R. J. Arends, *Uczymy się nauczać*, Warszawa 1994, p. 56.

¹² L. Turos, *Andragogika. Zarys teorii oświaty i wychowania dorosłych*, Warszawa 1980, p. 389.

¹³ *Europejskie Memorandum w sprawie kształcenia ustawicznego*, „Edukacja Ustawiczna Dorosłych” 2001 no. 2, p. 9.

¹⁴ B. Chmielowski, *Kształcenie i doskonalenie nauczycieli wobec perspektywy edukacji ustawicznej*, Katowice 1983, p. 70.

One of the essential conditions for the teacher's effectiveness and meeting the requirements of present-day civilisation is systematic updating and broadening of factual and methodological knowledge connected with pedagogical skills.

The condition can be complied with by an active participation in the development process throughout the teacher's professional work period.

In the post-war period, up to now, the methods and teacher professional development forms have been changing, but they have always been determined by the following factors:

- the country's need for acquiring teaching staff;
- the country's educational policy outlining tasks and directions for activities of teacher development centres;
- transformations in education manifesting themselves in its reform.

The factors mentioned have been adopted as the basis of historical periodisation of the teacher development system in Poland after 1944.

PREVIOUS TEACHER DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS

Stages of Post-war History of Teacher Development

Significant transformations have been taking place in the teacher development system in Poland since 1944, with its forms changed accordingly. From the sociological perspective, a system is "any relation structure making up a specific whole composed of coordinated elements connected by some relations, which are based on relatively constant regularities and laws"¹⁵.

The elements that ensure constancy and development are of special importance. According to R.B. Wozniak, parts of these elements are "not only groups and their members, institutions and its material elements, but also what constitutes the nature of the system – ideas, control system, group traditions, ties and contact"¹⁶.

In the last sixty years, teacher educational and development institutions have changed repeatedly, there being mutual connections between transformations in education and teacher development forms. It appears rational to confront the mutual connections between transformations in post-war education and teacher development forms so that their social role and effectiveness can be evaluated. From this vantage point, using the chronological criterion and based on the literature, the following four stages of teacher development can be distinguished:

- 1944 – 1950 – preliminary period, characterised by diversity of and lack of cohesion in the teacher development forms, as well as their complementation in relation to institutions educating candidates for work in education, or unqualified teachers;
- 1951 – 1959 – arriving at a rational conception of teacher professional development, characterised by a very close connection between development and the activities of administration organs, i.e. chief education officers of school districts and district managers of vocational education;
- 1960 – 1971 – complete uniformity in teacher development with a clearly marked vertical control along with an effort to build up functional connections with educational administration links;

¹⁵ K. Oleśnicki, P. Załęcki, *Słownik socjologiczny*, Toruń 1997, p. 210.

¹⁶ R. B. Woźniak, *Zarys socjologii edukacji...*, op. cit., p. 10.

- 1972 – 1989 – creating a system of teacher permanent education at the post-diploma level, characterised by a structural diversity, contradictory tendencies and specific difficulties arising from the social situation at home and in the world;
- 1990 – 1999 – restructuring the education system in Poland closely connected with the reform of the state system, the essence of the system being decentralisation of the state's authorities in managing public services, including education. As of 1 September 1999, the implementation of the education system reform was initiated.

The Problem of Teacher Development from 1944 to 1950

The major task of education authorities in the first post-war years was to fill in huge staff shortages resulting from the extermination of the Polish intelligentsia during the occupation and, partly, later on. People with no qualifications, and often with no secondary education, were employed to work as teachers. The teachers' professional bracket was very diversified. Teachers educated before the war returned to work, with qualifications at a high or secondary pedagogic level; teachers educated just after the war were taken on, with incomplete qualifications, e.g. secondary school graduates after six-week or six-month courses, as well as people who had not graduated from lower secondary level, but had just completed a six-month course; also graduates of two-year pedagogic grammar schools, two-year pedagogy or one-year state teacher courses. Also, there were shortened forms of obtaining qualifications for teaching in secondary schools, State Teacher Courses (STC) were reactivated, as well as Higher Teacher Courses (HTC) and the APT (the Association of Polish Teachers) Institute. Those in a way effective activities resulted in quantity and quality shortages being progressively made up in the teaching staff.

However, another problem sprang up: how to ensure to this diversified professional bracket conditions for development, assistance in sorting out numerous teaching and educational difficulties being the natural result of the war and occupation, how to motivate and stimulate those teachers to self-education and self-development. For this, the education authorities had a clear and definite plan that consisted in creating, as soon as possible, various kinds of institutions supporting the teacher in his difficult and responsible work. Military actions were still under way when the education authorities operating in the liberated regions got a circular letter from the chief of the education department of 30 November 1944, about organising interschool physics, chemistry and biology laboratories, in which among others we read: "Since the implementation of the physics, chemistry and biology curriculums in secondary schools encounters serious problems (...), in places where there are at least two state or private schools, interschool laboratories should be organised, and wherever possible, display rooms: for physics, chemistry and biology, in order to make it easier for schools devoid of sufficiently equipped laboratories or rooms to improve work conditions through a coordinated cooperation with other schools"¹⁷. It determined the ways to use display rooms, the principal's duties, the way to supply teaching aids, and their protection.

The above document, reflecting the department's care of the teaching level at schools, found its complete unfolding in decisions contained in the circular letter No 62 of 25 October 1945, about organising didactic and methodological centres¹⁸. Since the laboratories and display rooms were first of all to serve secondary schools, and for chosen school subjects for that matter, it became necessary to expand methodological supervision over other teachers

¹⁷ Circular letter of the Education Department of 30 November 1944, no. 1-4, entry 33.

¹⁸ Cf. Circular letter of the Education Department no. 62 of 25 October 1945.

as well. This function was delegated to didactic and methodological centres, the initiation of which was ordered by the Ministry of Education at all education offices.

The targets for the operation of the centers were formulated as follows: “the character of those centers should be of display and practical nature (...). On the other hand, such a centre might be a research point, where all didactic and methodological issues might be solved in an experimental way, e.g. concepts of new teaching aids”¹⁹. Since didactic and methodological centres gathered schools of all types, it was recommended that the experience of the so called methodological centres, which had existed in the inter-war period, having been created on the strength of the instruction of 1938, should be made use of. That experience was actually drawn upon by methodological centres, which took on themselves a very ambitious task of developing teachers’ practical competence, motivating them do academic activities, both experimental and creative, as well as facilitating contacts with university circles.

Those ambitious targets were the result of adopting a more general principle of the commitment to use the latest academic achievements in the operation of educational institutions. The reference to good educational experience of the twenty-year interwar period should be favourably noted. On the then organisational foundations of the official horizontal ties between development institutions and school authority bodies, and the functional mutual vertical subordination, later organisational structures were built serving to improve teachers’ qualifications until 1972.

At that time, such forms of teacher development were introduced that have survived until present time, as basic, and prominently included among them was direct methodological training, exemplary lessons, meetings of subject specialists teams, display of teachings aids and laboratory equipment, lectures, methodological courses. It was then, too, that an initiative was made to organise the so called regional conferences.

Through the directive of 9 November 1945, the Minister of Education handed over the organisation of regional teacher conferences to the Association of Polish Teachers. At the same time, school inspectors were authorised to excuse teachers attending such conferences from classes at school (up to five days in a school year). Regional conferences, which had been held in Polish education before, too, were organised as “an attempt to raise and develop the teacher’s work, to keep up in the teaching staff interest in general modern culture and science, education and upbringing”²⁰.

Being an attachment to the above-quoted directive, the instruction states that conferences are also to “tighten friendly ties between the teaching staff of a given region, facilitate organizing further self-education”²¹. Among the eight recommendations dealing with the subject matter of the conferences, there was also an expression saying that conferences are to serve the organisation of teachers’ cultural life.

From the perspective of the years, one can say that it was regional conferences that became an important and universally accepted form of teacher professional development. In the first place, they made it possible to meet on friendly terms with colleagues and spend time at social events, which in the case of the teacher profession practised then in wide dispersion, at small places frequently separated from one another by many kilometres, was

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ Instruction (Attachment) to the Directive of the Minister of Education of 9 November 1945 (Dz. U. MOiW 1945, no. 9).

²¹ Ibidem.

of essential culture-creating character. The conferences survived for many years, going into liquidation only in the 70s.

The teacher development forms mentioned were of a passing and initial character, however, and for the most part based on structural solutions of the interwar period. The changing staff situation in education and new tasks that needed to be undertaken required the creation of a coherent network of development centres, including all educational activity types. This role was to be played by didactic and academic centres. In September 1948, at the Ministry of Education, central didactic and academic centres were appointed for individual teaching subjects, in provincial cities – district didactic and academic centres, and in smaller towns – regional didactic centres. They were obliged to “normalise and unite the efforts of the teaching masses in carrying out school reform and in permanently developing active education workers”²². Since quite a number of teachers had only secondary or incomplete secondary education, and since teachers with no pedagogic qualifications were still being employed, development subjects were the principles and methods of effective pedagogic work.

Teacher Development from 1951 to 1959

From 1951 to 1959, teacher development was dealt with by the centres mentioned. At the individual centres, all the teachers of a given speciality from the district (region) were gathered, irrespective of the education and school type. The major form of their work was conferences and mutual friendly contacts. The directive says “about the necessity of getting in touch with academic circles and pedagogic magazines, undertaking actions making teachers raise their academic and methodological level”²³.

After doing its job, the system of didactic and academic centres, temporary and complementary compared to other ways of preparing pedagogical staff, was in 1951 replaced by an institution with clearly defined tasks for teacher development. The Central Centre of Developing Educational Staff (CCDES) was appointed then, which in addition to central development forms (central courses) managed the provincial centres for developing educational staff, set up in provincial cities (PCDES). The latter were to carry out three task types:

- improving the ideological, political, and pedagogic level of teachers;
- providing assistance to schools;
- managing county centres.

At the county (town) level, county (municipal) centres for developing educational staff were set up (CCDED, MCDED), whose job it was to get to know and propagate the best teacher experience, raising their qualifications by providing practical assistance and managing interschool methodological teams. The interschool teams shaped conditions making it possible for teachers to exchange experience and to help one another methodologically, which was of special importance to unqualified teachers and those starting work. The said teacher development centres were given a clear structure. Its major element was the didactic and academic section. There were twenty one sections appointed at CCDES and PCDES each, whereas at county centres fifteen methodological teams were created, made up of instructors working at schools for six hours a week. The section’s director and chiefs were nominated by the Minister of Education, and the PCDES director, section chiefs and instructors were

²² The directive of the Minister of Education of 9 September 1948 (Dz. U. Ministra Oświaty 1948, no. 11, entry 197).

²³ Ibidem.

appointed by the chief of education of the presidium of the provincial national council. The section's operation was based on model subject laboratories, as well as methodological libraries. Counselling and consultative bodies were established at the CCDES and PCDES, consisting of school principals, education authorities representatives, an Association of Polish Teachers body, the Association of Polish Youth, the director of the public library, the director of the house of culture, and other institutions cooperating with schools.

In 1951, there was an organised system of teacher development existing in Poland, organisationally and principally coherent, closely tied with the supervision system, school management, and the environment. From the perspective of years, one should note its essential values, among which should be stressed orientation at providing practical assistance to teachers who, generally speaking, still demonstrated low formal qualifications. It was then that transformation was made from four-year to five-year pedagogic grammar schools, and teacher faculties developed their activities in the latter half of the fifties.

Another value was counselling organised in self-education teams. For the most part, those institutions based their activities on teachers' social involvement, on professional ambitions and understanding the difficult situation of the education system. The sections' chiefs and instructors were the best teachers, sometimes university teachers. However, the centres for developing education staff affected only grammar school teachers (secondary and primary), with the vocational education – managed by the Central Office of Vocational Education (COVE) and the provincial Management of District Vocational Schools (MDVS) – having their own methodological centres, which performed identical tasks towards teachers of this type of schooling. This dispersion did not favour raising the level of pedagogic counselling. Transformations in the education system and improving the level of teacher qualifications made it necessary to change the ways of teacher development.

From 1958, in the provinces there functioned provincial methodological centres appointed at education departments of the presidium of the provincial national council, instead of the previous PCDES and methodological centres at district management of vocational education. It was the duty of the instructors of those centres to provide counselling to teachers of all school types, as well as organising methodological conferences and open (model) classes. The instructors of the county (municipal) methodological centres, in addition to direct counselling, were also obliged to take part in research and academic observations. The institutions mentioned so far, in addition to instructional activities, were also co-organisers of teacher development forms, mainly through running courses preparing teachers for the so called simplified and external exams. However, a gradual evolution is taking place in the forms of operation of methodological centres. The growing staff level makes it necessary to increasingly involve teachers in developing their own work and profession, and thereby Polish education.

Directions and Forms of Teacher Development from 1960 to 1971

The period from 1960 to 1971 was a period of complete uniformity in teacher development. In 1960, the Minister of Education replaced CCDES with the Central Methodological Centre (CMC) in Warsaw, which in addition to the previous tasks took on some new ones, above all the effort to prepare teachers for implementing school reform (introducing a uniform, universal eight-form primary school). Also, various methodological materials were started to be drawn up for teachers, and charge of central subject periodical press was taken.

The district methodological centres that came into being at that time, in addition to raising teachers' professional level, first of all took up propagating the best pedagogic experience, as well as organising course development forms.

In counties there were county (municipal) methodological centres, which in addition to the tasks mentioned previously, organised schools and model laboratories, as well as taking care of prominent teachers. Methodological conferences and taking care of young teachers were objectives that again were to be accomplished by methodological centres and self-education teams functioning at schools.

As merits of the Central Methodological Centre – District Methodological Centre – County Methodological Centre one should also recognise repeatedly organised all-Poland tests of teaching results. True, they had been held before, too, i.e. in 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1953, their organiser being the Ministry of Education or the State Centre of Program Work and Pedagogic Tests. The range of the tests was very extensive, which led to the results not being added up on time and passed on to the interested ones. The tests of 1966 involved thousands of primary schools, and in 1968 – five hundred schools. Both the way of their preparation, carrying them out, drawing up and use reflect very well an organisational potential of the counselling institutions. The results were made available to the educational authorities at the beginning of the new school year by being published in pedagogic and methodological magazines, as well as reported at subject conferences. Many years had to pass before such a complete and rational evaluation of the effectiveness of educational work was performed again.

Another achievement of methodological centres was undertaking various kinds of work with the management staff of educational institutions. Through courses and conferences principals got knowledge about the organisation theory, psychology and pedagogy, sociology, ways of managing pedagogic teams, and processes carried out at school. It was from there that academic circles got signals of the need to create the theory of managing educational institutions, of the need to use praxeology in their activities. The first postgraduate study comes into being for the managing education staff, organised under the auspices of the APT of the District Methodological Centre in Kielce, in cooperation with academic workers of the University of Warsaw. That activity was developed in the 70s, 80s and 90s in the form of postgraduate studies and various types of courses enjoying much popularity and getting high marks. The characteristic feature of all the undertakings as part of organisational methodological centres was an orientation at carrying out practical needs, very specific ones and reported by teachers or pedagogic supervision. The dominating thing was then orientation at immediate and one-time assistance, with there being little activity aimed at permanently affecting teachers' professional attitudes and predisposing them to solve problems independently and creatively.

Teacher Development from 1972 to 1989

At the beginning of the 70s, the situation began to change swiftly. Manifold activities were undertaken making way for another reform. One of the first ones was an initiative aimed at making it possible for working teachers to graduate from complete academic studies in the four-year extramural education. At the same time, a decision was made to change the former forms of teacher development. The idea of permanent education, universally accepted throughout the world as the essential consequence of the scientific and technological revolution, was transplanted onto the field of development and brought fruits in the form of definite organisational structures.

In 1972, the Central Methodological Centre was wound up, and the Institute of Teacher Training and Educational Research (ITTER) was set up in Warsaw. Its job was to plan and coordinate the education and development of teachers, carrying out educational research ordered by the Ministry of Education, chiefly in the field of pedeutology and subject didactics, as well as coordinating the activities of the local branches. The ITTER was appointed by the Council of Ministers directive with the status of an academic college (academic and didactic institution)²⁴. This decision reflected the need to raise teacher development to a higher level, adapting it to the growing education of teachers. In nineteen provincial cities institutes for developing teachers and educational research were appointed as ITTER branches, which were to become a peculiar academic base for education in a province. For the most part, the ITTER organised teacher course development, prepared them for higher education, and carried out educational research in accordance with the headquarters and the environment's needs. Some of the staff of the previous District Methodological Centre became methodologist inspectors at Education Offices, taking on methodological counselling along with inspecting and evaluating the teacher's work. From 1973 to 1975, there were subject methodologist inspectors, but the reform of state administration did away with the posts of inspectors. Appointing the methodologist inspectors team grew out of the assumption adopted earlier on that a teacher of high professional qualifications should be evaluated by a specialist, an expert. This state lasted for nine years to practically return in 1981 in a situation a little modified against the one from 1973. The advisability of this transformation probably arose from social tensions and criticism which was not always rational, which in the years 1980 to 1981 involved different institutions and spheres of social life. One could also connect it with withdrawing from the implementation of the ten-year secondary school concept. The record of facts and decisions concerning the appointment and dissolution of teacher development institutions no doubt testifies to their low stability. There are no empirical materials proving the necessity of such frequent changes; also, there is no rational analysis or evaluation of the previous experience.

In the 70s, one can notice a tendency to create a uniform development system, i.e. a combined treatment of counselling at the teacher's "workshops" and development through passing on pedagogical knowledge (lectures, seminars, talks). In 1972, a decisive division was made in this respect, with course development entrusted to the Institute of Teacher Development and its local branches, and with inspection and direct counselling entrusted to the so called subject methodologist inspectors. At the end of the 70s, this system became the target of very extensive criticism, the result of which was that in 1981 the uniform development system was brought back, carried out in various forms, but by the same organisational unit, i.e. teacher development branches.

In the 70s and 80s, the forms and teacher development methods greatly developed. In addition to a wider use of modern methods and didactic techniques for teacher development, one should mention the activities of the Radio and Television Teacher University (RTTU). This form of passing information and teacher development earned universal recognition. From radio talks on pedagogic subjects, which had already been taking place in the interwar period (e.g. talks of "the old doctor", Janusz Korczak) to modern form of image and word emission. The RTTU made it possible to get through with information about educational problems to all teachers, as well as to wide social circles. In this way, tens of thousands of teachers in the latter half of the 70s prepared for the implementation of reformed curricula of elementary education, acquired pedagogical, psychological and sociological knowledge facilitating extramural education, and finally had a chance for an authentic self-education and self-development.

²⁴ Cf. The directive of the Council of Ministers of 16 June 1972 (Dz. U. of 1972. no 24, entry 172).

System Transformation and Teacher Development in Civil Society

The 90s were a time of the political system restructuring, which was started in 1989, with shaping the consciousness of civil society as its accompaniment. This process is one of the most complicated problems of the transformation period, and also the condition of the new political system stability. Restructuring Poland affected the educational sphere as well. Restructuring the social and political system of the state required an adjustment to all its structures, including the education system, to fit them to the actual needs of fully democratic society, which guaranteed natural rights of the individual (including the freedom of choice), with the individual as such treated subjectively, not objectively. The subsidiarity principle should be applied (the state is to support and coordinate natural development processes, without enforcing frequently autocratic solutions of the teams which are currently exercising power).

An important guarantee of the political transformations in Poland is the efficiency of the education system, which should be shaped in such a way as to be able to react according to the actual challenges of modern times. Since no such guarantee was given by the structure of the education system functioning until 1989, it was necessary to create a new education system from scratch, one that as per the “Law of Education of 7 Sep.1991” among others covers primary schools, lower and higher secondary schools. From 1990, preparations were started for a reform in education. Initially, the preparations were performed by the Department of General Education. In January 1991, as part of the department, a curriculum department was created, and in January 1992 the team working on the education reform was separated from the Department of General Education and given a status of an independent bureau subjected directly to the Ministry of Education, under the name of the Bureau for School Reform. The Bureau was set up to start preparations for a general curriculum reform in general education.

From 1990, four great reform programmes were carried out: high education reform, the operation of educational administration, transforming vocational education, and general education reform, which came into force as of 1 Sep. 1999, and had been preceded by a reform in the curriculum base, outline of teaching plans, a set of textbooks based on the pluralism principle, and a considerable decentralisation of decision making in this field. As of 1 Sep. 1991, the new education system started operating based on article 2 of “the Law on education system of 7 Sep.1991”, “with the school system composed of primary schools and lower and higher secondary schools”²⁵.

In article 77a of the law quoted above, there were also regulations concerning a possibility of creating institutions for teacher development, activities of methodological consultants, and the operation of private institutions for teacher development, which can be set up and run by legal persons that are not units of the local government and natural persons. Work of the Ministry of National Education on increasing the role of local communities on the school’s operation coincided with efforts by the government to increase the role of local governments.

As a result of those activities and based on the “Law on local government of 8 March 1990”, legal solutions were adopted, according to which as of 1992 local governments took over the responsibility for nursery schools, and as of 1 January 1994 – for the operation of primary schools, and as of 1 January 1995 – for the operation of lower and higher

²⁵ Law of 7 September 1991 about the education system (uniform text Dz. U. of 1996, no. 67, entry 329).

secondary schools²⁶. Above all, the success of restructuring the education system depended on the teachers. They had to be prepared for new conditions.

Since the new education concept was adopted, the Bureau for School Reform at the Ministry of Education initiated a course cycle bringing the subject matter to the teachers, education office workers, and institutions for teacher development. On completing a course, each participant received all information documents concerning the reform in preparation, so that he could offer complete and dependable information about it in his own area. Gradual information about directions and progress of preparatory work was made available to the teachers and workers of teacher development centres also through the Information Bulletin of the Bureau for School Reform. Originally, the bulletin was issued as an insert to the monthly "Open Society", of which ten thousand copies were published, and as of June 1993, the circulation was increased up to thirty five thousand, with the bulletin becoming an independent periodical under the name of "School Reform".

Information preparation of teachers at large was also carried out through "Educational Television". From Sep.1992, once a week "What School" programme was on the air. The first eighteen parts were devoted to presenting the assumptions of the new education concept. Another element of the preparation programme for the teaching environment was a series of meetings of methodological consultants with authors of curriculum bases for individual subjects. It lasted from September 1993 to the end of 1994 and involved all methodological consultants in Poland. At the end of November 1993, at the Ministry of Education, there was a meeting of managers of teacher development centres. It was devoted to the role of teacher development centres in preparing them for school reform. The significant conclusion of the meeting was assigning to those institutions a function of information centres about school reform. In addition to the information campaign, it became necessary to shape teachers' skills, since school reform brings in its wake the necessity of changing forms and methods of work with the learner. Teacher development centres organised didactic workshops, at which teachers acquired skills of organising classes using questing methods, brushed up and broadened knowledge about the psychology of learning, organisation of work, sociology. Training the art of communication, listening to another human and getting across to them became necessary.

RESUME

In this examination, an analysis of the operation of teacher development system in Poland between 1944 and 1999 was undertaken. Thorough changes in the education system that are taking place in Poland should be closely correlated with the modernisation of teacher development, since pluralism is one of the principles of operation of civil society. Educating and developing teachers should be more innovative and prospective. Teachers should have easier access to diverse professional development forms carried out by qualified staff. This role, described almost entry-like, this meaning, the nature of transformations and the forms of the system of professional teacher development pose a challenge to education, which should deal with the challenges of the modern world and civilisation changes in our country.

²⁶ Cf. Law of 8 March 1990 about local government (Dz. U. of 1990, no. 16, entry 95).

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