

TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

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A teacher has always been the core of every system of education. At present, a lot is required from them, they are given more complex tasks resulting from the local, European and global needs and problems. For this reason, nowadays, the problem of the professional competences gains particular significance. In the face of continuous changes, it requires to be redefined and it is essential to establish the main elements and types of teachers' competences. The author's teachers' professional competence model includes three main components: knowledge – general, substantial, pedagogical and psychological; abilities – communicative, managerial and social, personal features – subjective, moral and creative. However, a competent teacher is, first of all, reflective practitioner. Thus, the presented model of professional competence also consists of teachers' practical experience. The elaborated model of the competence was used to design the research and competence of modern teachers in various fields: organizational and managerial, substantial, methodical and didactical, pedagogical and psychological, communicative, diagnostic, control and evaluative, creative etc. The results of the research conducted among students and teachers show assessment diversity from both subjects. Teachers evaluate the educational reality and the level of their competences highly, whereas students criticize them more often. It proves that adaptive attitudes dominate among teachers. These attitudes block their creative activities and self-development, and schools' development. Thus, it is essential to shape the critical and emancipative attitudes among future and present teachers because they are the basis for permanent becoming competent.

Keywords: qualification, knowledge, abilities, attitudes, reflective practice

Today, it is not essential to convince anybody of the importance of education in development of countries, nations, continents. By investing in knowledge, abilities and attitudes of the young generations, we contribute to better life conditions and work effects that will give them the feeling of achievement and personal satisfaction and also it will satisfy certain social needs. In this connection, schools and teachers still have a very significant mission to complete. Nevertheless, they have been constantly criticized for many years,

in many filed, however, this criticism is convincing and justifiable. The crisis of institutional education, increasing educational problems, lack of cohesion in educational actions aiming at the needs of labour economics, unemployment and migration of school graduates looking for jobs, disintegration of family bonds, addictions and pathologies are the proof of numerous weaknesses in education, school and the crisis in functioning of teachers. Thus, *the question concerning modern teachers' professional competences*, who are major contributors to any changes, not only in education, is of huge scientific and social importance. That is why a teacher should be equipped with high level of professional competence in order to act efficiently, effectively and responsibly.

It is especially significant to work out the model of professional competence of modern teachers, because there is no one, cohesive and universal conception of competence as far as its types and constituents are concerned. The presented model of competence was used to design the research among students, teachers and students – candidates for teacher profession, which are presently carried out in many regions of Poland by the author. The results of these researches will be presented in the distinct book concerning the subject of modern teachers' professional competences in Poland. Consequently, in this article I used partial results of the empirical research conducted among Polish schools and teachers for many years. However, before the collected data is presented it is advisable to discuss the theoretical model – structure, elements and types of competences by scientific environments.

Teachers' professional competences in the light of scientific literature

The term “competence” appeared in psychology and pedagogy in the eighties of the twentieth century. It was decided that competence is a result of learning and a competent person is well prepared to do the job, ready for working efficiently (Bartkowicz, 2007:28-31).

The modern notion of *competence* is used interchangeably with the term *qualifications* what causes a lot of confusion and ambiguity because, so far, there is no one general definition of competence. Competence, however, is a wider notion. It includes qualifications and personal features allowing conscious, efficient and effective use of qualifications.

Latin word *competentia* means entitlement to act, the scope of knowledge, abilities and responsibilities for taken actions (Okoń, 1998:174-175; Gnitecki, 2005:119).

In the *Dictionary of foreign words*, *competence* is defined as the scope of proxies, entitlements and duties of the given institution or organ to realise the action specified by regulations; and also the scope of knowledge, abilities and responsibilities (Kopaliński, 1978:372).

In the *Dictionary of labour pedagogy*, competence is understood as the scope of proxies authorized on the basis of qualifications and entitlements to act, decide and judge in a given area. A competent person is authorized to act and has qualifications (Nowacki, Korabiowska-Nowacka & Baraniak, 2000:101).

M. Dudzikowa understands *competences* as abilities to do something dependable on the knowledge concerning abilities, skills and conviction of possibilities of making use of them (1994:205). According to M. Czerepaniak-Walczak, *competence* is a conscious, learned and satisfactory level of abilities conditioning effective behaviour (1997:30-45).

A lot of authors stress the fact that this is the ability and readiness to accomplish tasks on a stated level (Jenkins, 1991:161), learned ability to do things well, abilities necessary to cope with problems (Fontana, 1992:245).

The selectively quoted definitions prove that the notion of *competence* has a subjective character because it embraces the scope of somebody's knowledge, abilities, entitlements and skills making it possible to complete tasks. Nevertheless, the scope of teachers' interactions is very wide, thus it is very difficult to name the types of competences. They concern: organizing and managing the processes of teaching and education; supporting students' development; taking preventive, corrective and compensatory actions; developing skills and interests, shaping attitudes, value system, cooperation with family etc. Only taking actions connected with teaching and education together makes a teacher competent. These activities are most often concentrated around the following three groups of actions:

- *substantial actions*, concerning contents of the taught subjects;
- *pedagogical and psychological actions* concerning: teachers' workshop, organizing and managing learning processes, educating, protection and using the appropriate methods, techniques and teaching aids.
- *educational actions* concerning the ways of acting pedagogically that include: communication skills, motivating to learn, shaping social attitudes, solving problems, cooperating etc. (Kocór, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d).

Teachers' professional competence theoretical model and its components

The analysis of the scientific literature and my own deliberations allow me to define *competence as the group of abilities making it possible to use knowledge, skills and attitudes to accomplish tasks connected with teaching and education of children, teenagers and adults on a specific social level and taking responsibility for them*. Thus, competence is an ability to act effectively in a given situation, based on knowledge, skills and attitudes as a competence carrier.

Teachers' professional competences manifest themselves both in skills in completing tasks and effectiveness of verbal and non-verbal behaviours, which lead to intended results as aims of these actions. The effectiveness is manifested by teachers who possess knowledge concerning the subject taught and the process of teaching and educating, those who are able to pass this knowledge in a clear and understandable way, and those who have good relationships with students and other entities, who can solve every day's problems, assess their own work effects and students' progress. Being competent means: have qualifications to accomplish a specific activities, possess knowledge and skills in a specific fields and ability to accomplish some areas of tasks. In a general description, competence can be presented in a triangle form, the peaks of which symbolize the three components: knowledge, skills and personal features.

As it is shown above, teachers' professional competences are revealed when this triad of knowledge, skills and attitudes through which they are expressed, is applied and used in the specific activities and behaviours, and also in complex, unforeseeable didactic and education situations. They are significant when they are vested with in the appropriate time and according to the specific situation – consciously and responsibly. The complexity of the teacher profession and multiplicity of specializations incline towards

capturing competence in holistic categories, because teachers' image, and especially their functions and tasks description do not fit in one role only. It is often incomplete, cursory and concerns some chosen competences. It is caused by the fact that in some situations teachers are teaching and in other situations, they are educating, upbringing and taking care of students, even inspiring, advising, shaping attitudes, supporting comprehensive development of children and teenagers.

Knowledge is a basic component of teachers' professional competences. Without knowledge it is impossible to accomplish their tasks effectively. Knowledge is a set of contents, views and statements established in human mind. It is a result of scientific research, gained experience and processes of learning. It includes all the forms of social consciousness such as: science, ideology, religion and magic. The knowledge of a competent teacher consists of: general knowledge, substantial knowledge and pedagogical and psychological knowledge.

General knowledge about the world concerns various fields of social functioning and this includes: historical, sociological, philosophical, literature, art, theological knowledge and other sciences. This knowledge concerns not only teachers but also every human being because it is indispensable for the appropriate functioning and mutual communication between people. Creative and effective teacher, irrespective of the taught subject, has to possess the general knowledge, which allows them to make decisions, assess and interpret specific facts, events, phenomena and cope with problems in various situations. It is necessary to assume that a teachers who possess more general knowledge can make more issues subject of their teaching and can communicate with students and other entities more elastically.

Objective knowledge is indispensable to teach effectively. It concerns the contents that have to be taught at schools and students are obliged to acquire. Objective knowledge delivers contents for teachers' didactic work. High level of this type of knowledge favours teaching effectiveness, widens the scope of transferred information, makes it possible to choose the appropriate methods and techniques for education. It simplifies addressing various issues that are the subject of education. It can be said that a teacher who possesses bigger scope of objective knowledge can help and motivate students better. The knowledge is not given to teachers once for all, thus it has to be enriched all the time.

Psychological and pedagogical knowledge allows teachers to make use of the objective knowledge: organize the process of teaching and educating at schools and classrooms correctly, recognize the output state of the working conditions of schools or other educational institution; diagnose the level of knowledge and skills of children and teenagers; diversify syllabuses depending on students' abilities, their interests, aptitudes, needs and social conditions; create author syllabuses and classes; select appropriate teaching methods, control and assess students' school achievements and their own work etc.

Skills, as a basic condition for the effective teachers' work, they allow them to use their predispositions and knowledge concerning pedagogical activities. Competent teacher must be vested with skills of teaching and learning, educational influence on children and teenagers and organizing care, supporting and helping students in need. From the level and quality of didactic and educational actions point of view, the key skills are the following: managerial, communicative and social.

Managerial skills express the effectiveness of appropriate actions taken by teachers in a scope of: planning, organizing, motivating, coordinating and

assessing the didactic and educational processes. These skills are shown when a teacher is able to: state aims and take actions making it possible to accomplish these aims; take up the cooperation with teachers, families and local environments; take appropriate aids conditioning tasks accomplishment; operationalize the aims of teaching and educating and program the contents of teaching; organize school and after school classes; coordinate activities depending on the needs and abilities of students; select the appropriate methods and techniques for teaching conditions; elaborate the principles for motivating to the specific behaviours and the system of controlling and assessment of students' achievements considering their individual abilities; determine the causes of school failures, suggest ways of eliminating and preventing them; assess their own work, compare gained effects with the assumed effects and take responsibilities for them.

A competent teacher also possesses *communicative skills*, which allow sending and receiving statements depending on the conditions and situations in which they appear. The ability to communicate favours the accomplishment of tasks at school such as: increasing work effectiveness; building good relationship among school entities; increasing students' motivation to learn and work over themselves; advising, supporting and helping; solving problems; eliminating misunderstandings and conflicts at school; levelling various views and students' attitudes etc. Because of the increasing democratisation of schools and education, the communicative skills constitute the significant component of competence of teachers open to constantly changing needs of students and environment.

Social skills are displayed in teacher's ability to take and maintain appropriate relationships with parents and local communities aiming at: levelling students' development and environment deficiency, creating the feeling of trust and safety at schools. Social skills are expressed in: negotiating and cooperating with various educational and social subjects; solving difficult situations; respecting students' emotional needs and supporting them, releasing initiatives, providing help for the socially neglected; creating common *educational frontline*; pedagogization of families etc. Their effectiveness is determined by: the ability to cooperate, ability to level deficiencies and solve problems.

Personal features. A feature is a certain predisposition and tendency of a human being, concerning relatively constant and repeating ways of behaviour in specific social situations. Personal features, which influence the behaviour of individuals, consist of general and specific features. The general features consist of:

- ❖ health state, intelligence, attitudes, memory, predispositions, habits and customs;
- ❖ skills, abilities and predispositions, musicality, dexterity etc.
- ❖ character features – strong will, persistence, egoism, obstinacy, aggression

Specific features for a teacher profession are the following: subjective, moral and creative. *Subjective features* are connected to: motives of choice of the profession and professional satisfaction, passion for working with children and teenagers and the feeling of self-realization. Identification with the profession, feeling of satisfaction together with substantial preparation and the level of pedagogical and psychological qualifications are manifested in: teachers' work efficiency, attitudes towards the profession, desire for increasing qualifications constantly and perfecting their professional skills, taking part in scientific researches, introducing innovations etc. These

features build teachers' professional prestige and allow them to realize their didactical and educational tasks, analyse and assess their work effects.

Moral features are supplements to practical skills and teachers' competences. Moral qualifications of teachers' activities belong to their essence and character and are expressed in: attitudes and behaviours during classes and after-classes activities, feeling of responsibility for the quality of teaching and education and comprehensive students' development, giving them good examples. Teachers have moral competences when: they are able to deep reflection concerning the assessment of any ethical deed, they know their ethical obligations towards educational subjects, desire to cope with their expectations, respect the law and stress their duties, work effectively for the good of their pupils, feel responsibility for their deeds and knowledge about moral norms and value system delivered to the students.

Creative features (Lat. *creatio* = creative) are characterized by teachers who work effectively and are innovative, active and creative. They can be manifested in: didactic, educational, preventive, protective, social and cultural activities etc. Teachers' creative competences are expressed in the ability and readiness to develop creative life attitudes of the students and in the following skills: perfecting the workshop; elaborating on syllabuses; using multimedia for the purpose of their work; building in-school assessment system; conducting researches for the purpose of educational practices, coordinating activities concerning environments; cooperating with parents; introducing new forms and work methods, supporting students in their development etc. (Kocór, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d).

Except for the components listed above, in which candidates for the profession of a teacher should be equipped, competences of teachers already working at schools and education consist of practical experience and critical reflection over them.

They can be treated as the fourth important element of the professional competences of the modern teacher, so called: *reflective practitioner*, who through the critical reflection over practice becomes ready for changes and constant professional and moral development (Kocór, 2010a). We have to remember that today, a diploma gained once is not enough, thus it is necessary to extend the knowledge and perfect ourselves, gain new skills, and among others, learn by experience, analyse them critically and on their basis earn new knowledge about the world and thanks to it, initiate newer and better ideas. This is important as far as teachers' work is concerned, whose competence level is a factor determining the quality of their educational services in every country and society. For this reason, not only knowledge or skills, but also consciousness and attitudes – emancipative and critical, active, creative and responsible – determine the process of becoming a competent teacher.

Nevertheless, teachers' professional competences are not valuable and precious themselves, but the effects of using them in practice by every teacher – for the good of the students and for the purpose of shaping the competences are. The key matter for the education development is measuring teachers' professional competence level in order to initiate changes in the ways of educating, perfecting and motivating them to work on themselves constantly.

Teachers' professional competence from the educational practice point of view

In accordance with the title of the article, the aim of the author was not only to *elaborate the cohesive, universal model of teachers; professional competence, but also to measure them with reference to Polish teachers*. Initiating research among the future and present pedagogical staff and students of various types of school in the area of the Subcarpathian Voivodeship, the answer for the following question was searched for: *What is the modern teachers' professional competence level?* An assumption was made that teachers' competences are revealed in behaviours in various school and after school situations. These pieces of information influenced the choice of the research method and sample and the construction of the research instrument. The method used was diagnostic opinion poll and the technique – questionnaire.

Teachers' professional competence self assessment

Competences are not the phenomena that can be easily observed or measured, thus they require using multiple methods and research techniques. One method of measuring teachers' professional competence is their self-assessment. 331 teachers filled the author version of the questionnaire from the Subcarpathian Voivodeship. Teachers hired at primary schools constituted less than half of them. Every third worked in gymnasium and twice less of them (18.1%) worked in secondary school. Teachers from the urban school, teaching social and humanistic subject constituted the majority of the teachers taking part in the research. One fourth of them, taught mathematic and natural subjects. Every ninth led the artistic and recreational classes and 15.1% were the form-masters of classes I-III or teachers of the preschool education.

The profession of a teacher is feminised, thus women dominated, constituting around three-fourths of the respondents. Considerable diversity appeared due to age and job seniority. Every fourth teacher was less than 30 years old and had a few year job seniority with children and teenagers (up to 5 years). Every third of them was middle-aged and had worked at school for from a few to a dozen years. The same group are: 40-50 year-olds, and every fourth teacher had a dozen-year or more pedagogical job seniority time (15-25 years). There were also people with 25-year and even longer experience in the profession (15.7%), and 6.1% of the teachers were 50 or more years old. These teachers had very high level of professional promotion, almost half of them were certified teachers and every fourth of them was nominated. The degrees of trainees or contract teachers were possessed by twice less of the questioned teachers. In other words, they were mainly experienced teachers with diplomas of higher schools of pedagogy (42.9%) and university (32.9%). 15.1% of them, which is twice less, had diplomas of different schools.

The collected data informs that majority of the teachers positively assess their competences. Around three fourths of them treat them on the high level. Small percentage of the teachers formulated moderate opinions, and only few of them assessed themselves negatively. On the one hand, this index is positive, but on the other hand it is alarming. As we know, teachers do not function in their jobs professionally. They are often criticized that they are not active enough, that they are instrumental and adaptive. Also teachers themselves often complain about the state of their preparation. This

pessimistic fact is documented by the researches, which I carried out among 1000 teachers in many regions of Poland (Kocór, 2006). Nowadays, I develop them in the Subcarpathian Voivodeship and the results are similar, indicating that despite the fact that today instrumental and adaptive education is being abandoned with critical and creative education taking its place, teachers still take affirmative attitudes, which do not motivate them to act creatively and develop becoming the blockade against quality changes.

In order to explain this problem, I will use their knowledge self-assessment: general about the world, pedagogical and psychological and substantial knowledge concerning the subject taught. Teachers assessed its level from 1 to 5. I calculated average values of their assessments.

The substantial knowledge had quite high grades. This fact proves that teachers feel most self-assured in the area of the knowledge concerning the subject they teach. This type of knowledge was declared on the highest level by most of the teachers. General knowledge was indicated more rarely and was indicated by less than every second questioned teacher, and every third of them assessed their knowledge about the world at the average level.

Psychological and pedagogical knowledge was assessed a bit better. This kind of knowledge is necessary to understand and plan teaching and educational processes well and to support students' development. In case of the directed knowledge, teachers' opinions were more moderate indicating rather high level of this type of knowledge. Nevertheless, very high grades were presented by significantly smaller percentage of teachers, and even less of them assessed their psychological and pedagogical preparation as average.

The analysis presented above shows that teachers assess their subject knowledge at the highest level, specialist knowledge at lower level and they are not certain of their general knowledge concerning: philosophy, literature, art, history, sociology, theology and other sciences. Consequently, because of their deficiency in general knowledge about the world, it seems necessary to verify and consider the influence of these deficiencies on their professional activities and readiness for changes and constant development.

The other important components of teachers' professional competence are skills concerning the fulfilled roles and tasks. I divided them into the following skills: communicative, managerial and social. The research showed that teachers assess their communicative skills at the highest level. Almost every third of them declared the level of this skill as very high, and every second declared it high.

The second place was taken by managerial skills concerning: self-work and students' work organization and managing the educational processes. On average, every fifth respondent described them resolutely and every second rather positively. The positive self-assessment of their skill is proved by high average grades.

The next place is taken by diagnostic and reality interpreting skills. Around the half of the teachers assessed them as high, and three times less – very high. Similar percentage of the teachers described them as average. Pedagogical diagnosis concerns the measurement of school achievements and evaluation of syllabuses. Nonetheless, teachers assessed these skills as rather average than high.

The assessment of creative skills, which are the basis for the rank-and-file initiatives for changing school and pedagogical innovation, was very similar. The research shows that the majority of teachers assess them rather positively and every fourth of them treats their predispositions and readiness for changes as average. These results are positive, but mostly they are surprising and puzzling because their high self-assessment suggests that teachers are really engaged in the process of changing schools and in fact,

this is not true because other researches show that they expect to be given ready guidelines and directives taking instrumental or even passive attitudes (Kocór, 2006).

Teachers' behaviour and attitudes are strongly connected with their personal features, which are also very important components of their professional competences, together with knowledge and skills. The list of teachers' personal features is, however, very long thus the necessity to group them into three major following areas: general, subjective and creative.

The research results inform that *the highest grades* are attributed to the general features by teachers. They include: health state, intelligence, attitude, skill and predispositions such as: musicality, dexterity etc. They also include personality features such as: persistence, stubbornness, habits and customs. High level of these features is confirmed by the highest average self-assessment rate and high percentage of positive grades.

The second place, as for the level of skills of the specific group, is taken by so called teachers' social features such as: empathy, tolerance, understanding, readiness for helping others, honesty, kindness etc. Almost one third of the teachers assess them very high and every second rather positively.

Features connected with planning and designing of pedagogical activities and their effects were assessed a bit more negatively. Every fifth of the teachers gave them very high grades and every second – high. Their average level was chosen by more teachers than the features discussed before. Basing on these facts, it can be claimed that teachers have a lot of difficulties in introducing quality changes at schools because they do not feel prepared enough. They definitely lack favourable conditions for perfecting and working on themselves constantly. This important aim is shaded by their race for promotion and keeping their jobs, status and school bureaucracy (Kocór, 2010d).

Nonetheless, we have to remember that professional competences are strictly connected with teachers' activity areas: didactic, educational, preventive, diagnostic, compensating, therapeutic, environmental, modernistic and other. They are demonstrated in abilities and effectiveness in taking functions and tasks. The questioned teachers were also asked about the level of these components. The calculations show that communicative and didactic competences had the highest notes, because their average grades had the highest values (4,28 and 4,14). About 90.7% of teachers claimed to have high level of: knowledge, skills and personal features necessary to communicate well and effectively. This should result in dialogue and partnership among students, parents and teachers. But, are they really present at schools? Does correct communication between all the subjects take place at school? In my opinion, this is negated by the facts that parents' and teachers' expectations concerning themselves are divergent, fault-finding, often stubbornness, parents are engaged in school more apparently and clerically than consciously and creatively. Consequently, it can be concluded that, teachers still think adaptively what determines their functioning and competence level. These facts prove that in teachers' education it is necessary to leave instrumental and adaptive doctrine and take rather emancipative, critical and creative ones (Kocór, 2006).

The level of chosen competences in students' and teachers' assessment – results of the other researches

The following researches conducted in 2008-2009 among 188 teachers and 903 students from various types of schools in the *Subcarpathian Voivodeship*, shows that students give more rigour opinions about teachers' professional competences than teachers themselves.

The interviewed teenagers attended various types of schools. One fourth of them attended primary school and secondary school. Every third was from gymnasium and every sixth attended technical college. Girls constituted almost half of them, and boys – the other half. Similar number of students were from cities and rural areas. The majority of them had good material status and every fourth – average. As far as their parents are concerned, every third of them had secondary education, however the majority of them were university graduates. More fathers, however, finished vocational schools.

Taking teachers' personality features into account, it can be noticed that the majority of them are women which proves the profession feminization. Research was conducted among teachers of various ages and job seniority at schools. Most of them, more than one third were 40-50 year olds. There was less teachers between 30 and 40 years old. Every fourth of them was below 30 years old and every tenth was 50 or more. The data concerning their age and job seniority proves that this staff was experienced. Teachers entering the teacher profession, (working less than 5 years) constituted one fifth of all the teachers, and similarly teachers with the longest job seniority (25 years or more) also constituted one fifth. The most popular job seniority period was from 5 to 25 years.

Features concerning type of finished school were divided equally. About half of them were graduates of higher schools or pedagogy universities. Every second teacher was certified and every fourth – nominated. One fourth of the teachers were trainees and contract teachers (contract teachers constituting twice as many as others).

In the elaborated research tool, I included statements concerning various teachers' behaviours and skills, which were assessed from 1 to 5. The results gained in this way allowed to compare students' and teachers' competence assessment grades and to diagnose their general level, and the levels of their specific types.

The statements to be assessed concerned didactic, methodological and managerial competences. The gained opinions concerning school and after-school classes were mostly positive, however teachers assessed them better (94.2%) than students (64.3%). None of the teachers criticised their competences, nevertheless, every eighth student assessed them negatively (12.5%). In general, every fifth teacher and every third student assessed teachers' didactic competences very positively.

In other opinions, these competences had very divergent opinions. The following aspect: *They manage the class work appropriately, the classes are orderly and clear*, was given positive grades by almost all teachers (95.2%), however, only 69.4% of students affirmed this statement. 12.1% of teenagers criticised teachers or had ambivalent attitudes towards them (18.3%). Nevertheless, teachers did not assess their competences negatively, and only few of them were hesitant. These facts may prove modern teachers' adaptive personality and lack of rational and building criticism.

Next types of competences are control and assessment competences. I expressed them in the following statement: *They currently inform students about their progress, faults, deficiencies, weak and strong points etc.* This

aspect was positively assessed by 77.5% of students and 93.1% of teachers. It was criticised by 8.4% of students and only two teachers. This also proves the advantage of instrumental and adaptive thinking over creative and emancipative thinking of modern teachers. The following research results lead to the similar conclusion, for instance, the majority of teachers and every third if the students agreed with the following statements:

- *They/I use clear and convincing control and assessment system of students' work, give reasons for given grades;*
- *They/I assess students' behaviour objectively, who agree with their/my criteria.*

The control and assessment function is connected with teachers' diagnostic competences. They are to diagnose the mood, conditions for learning at school and outside schools. The highest notes were given to the following statement by 97.9% of teachers and 77.4% of students: *They / I attentively observe what is happening in classrooms, study interpersonal relations, atmosphere etc.* The lowest grades were given by 58% of students to the following aspect: *They collect information concerning the reasons for school failures and students' difficulties with learning.* As it is shown, teachers' assessment was higher (91.0%) than students'. These facts prove that teachers think in categories of the old system and they are not ready for changes. Students were mostly critical (25.1%) towards the aspect of individual contact between teachers and students. As opposed to them, teachers highly assessed (88.3%) their competences in this area, and only one of them assessed them low. The discrepancy between the two subjects is clearly visible – students criticise, teachers affirm their own competences. Is this really true? Is there any cooperation between students and teachers in still overcrowded classes? In my opinion, this also proves teachers' non-critical personality. Similar conclusions can be drawn from the competence assessment analysis concerning skill recognition and children and teenagers' interests and expectations. Every fifth of the students was critical about the teachers and the same number of them had no opinion. Nonetheless, most of the students (58.0%) approved teachers' diagnostic skills and 92.1% of teachers affirmed them too.

Consequently, taking preventive measures and supporting students' development is an important area of teachers' work. In order to diagnose this kind of competence I asked them to assess the level of: organizing free time activities and teaching how to manage free time rationally, preventing school failures, organizing school and after-school activities. The research showed that the assessment levels of these areas of teachers' competences are divergent too. Every fourth students and only 3.7% of teachers assessed their skills concerning organizing free time for children and teenagers negatively. The great majority of teachers had positive attitudes towards them (83.5%). On the other hand, twice less of the students (45.9%) praised their teachers, but every third of them hesitated.

The results of the research prove that the majority of teachers (84.6%) assess their competences as for organizing school and after-school activities highly. Students, however, more rarely affirm teachers' supporting role. One fifth of the students had ambivalent attitudes and criticised teachers, on the other hand, teachers criticised themselves very rarely.

Teenagers (16.9%) also criticised teachers as far as the following statement is concerned: *They / I support students' development, develop their predispositions, skills and interests.* This aspect was assessed negatively only by 3 out of 188 teachers. Almost all of the teachers (90.4%) expressed

positive self-assessment, however much less, only every second students (57.0%) affirmed teachers' competences developing their skills and abilities.

The differences were also visible in assessing students' motivation for learning and working over themselves. 89.9% of teachers assessed themselves highly and only 63.5% of teenagers had positive opinions in this area. 12.6% criticised them, 22.8% had no opinion. Only few teachers (2.1%) were self-critical. Similar distribution of grades was gained as a result of assessing moral competences:

- *They / I feel responsible for the effects, quality of their / my work and students' development.* This aspect was positively assessed by 97.4% of teachers and 73.7% of students;
- *They are / I am self-critical, open to criticism, trying to meet students' expectations and needs – students' good is the most important for them / me.* This was positively assessed by 95.2% of teachers and much less (59.0%) of students.

The assessment of the following aspect was kept at a greater distance by the teachers: *They are / I am impeccable example, they / I have the authority among students.* 87.3% of pedagogical staff claimed that they are moral authorities for their students. This result is very optimistic, because of the fact that nowadays it is frequent to hear about the crisis of teachers' authority with its all consequences. Nevertheless, the majority of students (65.8%) positively assessed teachers' moral competences, which are fundamental for all of the other types of teachers' competences.

Conclusions

There are a lot of examples of teachers' affirmative attitudes and students' critical views on the level of teachers' competences and those presented cursorily above are just the part of much wider diagnosis, which I am going to present in a distinct monograph.

The competence high self-assessment proves teachers' instrumental and adaptive personality, which does not allow them to assess reality rationally and objectively. Thus it blocks teachers' readiness for developmental changes in educations. These facts are also documented in other researches – too extensive to include and describe in this paper. They concern, among others, class form-master functioning assessment, teachers' involvement in the process of European education, teachers' expectations towards schools, their opinions on the subject of accomplished educational changes and changes taking place nowadays, including the Polish educational reforms from 1999, their attitude towards their profession, working conditions and professional burn-out. I describe these aspects in other publications, already published or being elaborated on at the moment.

The presented competence model was used to design wide empirical research, which I would like to conduct in many regions of Poland. They are directed not only to teachers or candidates for teacher's professions, but also to students and their parents who assess teachers' attitudes and behaviours in school and after-school situations. Thanks to various subjects' opinions it may be possible to establish the level of teachers' competences used in their practice every day, which determines attainments of the educational goals in both individual and social dimension.

Dynamic research on the subject of competent teachers, spread in time, is necessary to: introduce new solutions, initiate experiments and improve educational systems and perfect pedagogy staffs, motivate them to work

incessantly over themselves, change attitudes from instrumental and adaptive into critical, emancipative and creative, because only they can guarantee the development and progress in education everywhere and always.

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