

ADAM ŚWIĄTEK

TEACHER ROLES IN THE MODERN POLISH EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

In the heyday of a myriad of political, social and educational reforms and transformations, the teaching profession has become widely criticised and stigmatised to the extent that numerous teachers have already left their schools and either moved to different countries in order to seek better working conditions or simply requalified and began their careers in international companies and corporations. The growing level of responsibility, strict legal requirements, large amounts of paperwork, changes in teacher promotion, and relatively low salaries that have not changed over the years impressively seem to have reduced the prestige of the profession among other potential career choices, thus leading to a growing dissatisfaction with the job and omnipresent public disapproval. Therefore, complicated as the profession seems to have become, the changing requirements and expectations from teachers require them to adopt new roles and become complex multitaskers who need to be able to handle any activity or challenge imposed on them within the curriculum or the educational process. Furthermore, contemporary teachers need to maintain a certain degree of flexibility and self-esteem in order to manage various environments they need to work in, as well as facilitating various processes, mainly the subconscious process of acquisition in the early years of primary school, then followed by the stage of conscious learning that gradually becomes more complex and difficult for a multitude of reasons. In consequence, modern “teacherness” is a sophisticated issue regardless of the stage of

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proficiency or level of education, while contemporary teachers seem to have stopped consuming themselves to light the way for others, thus becoming more and more puzzled about the future of their profession.

This article aims to discuss the teacher's profession from several positions, stressing the fact that the modern roles the teachers need to assume while working in a school environment, regardless of the subject they teach, have changed dramatically. In this paper, the author contrasts the traditional view of the profession with the results of the research that shed new light on how the teaching profession ought to be regarded and what roles teachers need to maintain in order to remain up-to-date with their job and professional development. Therefore, the study consists of two parts. The first one offers theoretical considerations of the teaching profession and presents the way teacher roles have been understood over the years by numerous researchers. The next section presents the results of the empirical research conducted among 127 teachers from both primary and secondary schools in central Poland. As a result, it is concluded that the modern roles of teachers ought to be redefined and understood in a different way, thus adjusting them to the current demands and needs of the educational sector and shedding new light on what teachers truly do when working at school with large and highly diverse audiences.

1. WHO IS THE TEACHER?

Whether in the primary or secondary sector of education, it is the teacher who seems to play a crucial role in the entire process, often bearing responsibility for various elements of the educational procedure, such as delivering knowledge or developing students' interests and personalities over a long period of time, among others. However, as a member of the school environment, the teacher's position may have various understandings and therefore associated roles and duties.

To begin with, according to Ur (1991), a teacher might be described as a person whose vital role is to maintain and develop the process of learning. Therefore, teacher roles focus on such issues as developing theories and verifying their hypotheses, building and then developing students' awareness of an array of educational opportunities, or constructing students' individual systems of lifetime skills. Furthermore, Crookes and Chaudron (2001) maintain that the teacher is the decision-maker responsible for considering and selecting the most appropriate approaches, methods and techniques when conducting classes and managing young minds in the long run. Komorowska (2002), on the other hand, attempts to pro-

vide a more complex picture and describes teachers as multitaskers who need to be able to manage a number of duties on a simultaneous basis, thus serving multiple roles. First of all, teachers organise students' work and take decisions regarding further steps. They also help their learners and motivate them to put effort in their individual development in order to acquire particular skills. Furthermore, teachers are sources of information and assistance, being educational experts in the field of education and, especially, the target language when teaching one in a school environment. In other words, teachers constitute language models that students are supposed to follow. At the same time, they become assessors as well as listeners and observers of the actions taken in the classroom. However, Komorowska (2002) also highlights that the number of roles that teachers need to adopt often leads to individual, internal conflicts of interests, since some of the above-presented roles cannot be dealt with simultaneously. Here, Komorowska provides an example explaining that the role of an assessor may not be connected with the role of a supporter since both of them seem to have contradictory goals.

Another description comes from Werbińska (2009), who claims that the teacher is a person possessing socially respected and admired features of character, such as dignity, fairness, or responsibility. Additionally, the teacher needs to be empathic and moral, thus possessing a solid system of values. Figarski (2003), on the other hand, considers teachers in terms of the teacher–student dichotomy and stresses the fact that both agents are clearly interdependent. Therefore, the teacher constitutes a language input provider that may be used in communicative situations at the latter stages of language development. Figarski's view has been extended by Zawadzka (2004), who claims that the teacher is someone who organises, advises and moderates the educational process, at the same time being an expert in a specific field. Furthermore, teachers constitute researchers and evaluators of not only their students but also their own practices, which is a very important aspect of the most contemporary teachership. Complex as it is, Zawadzka (2004) adds another, innovative role of a language teacher, i.e., the function of a cultural mediator who possesses knowledge about the target culture and thus seems to be able to familiarise their students with the necessary information regarding its numerous aspects.

As far as Wright's (1987) view is concerned, the teacher's task is to provide their students with the necessary conditions to facilitate learning by a variety of tasks and learning opportunities. In other words, the teacher serves the roles of a manager, resource, guide, evaluator, organiser and instructor in the entire process of education. However, this taxonomy of roles somewhat resembles Har-

mer's (2001) view, who proposed an essential and well-known set of teacher roles. As a result, teachers become controllers, organisers, assessors, prompters, participants, resources, tutors and observers when working with their students in a particular school environment. Finally, it is worth mentioning Douglas-Brown's (2000) viewpoint, which places the teacher in the centre of attention and defines as a person in charge of a complex procedure, most often understood as providing instructions and guiding students through the task, thus ensuring exposure to knowledge and activating knowledge absorption.

The complexity of the taxonomies described above implies that the teacher's job is a multifaceted profession. However, the changing reality and requirements of the contemporary times, i.e., the era of globalisation and technology, as well as educational reforms, require teachers to become even more flexible, often modifying their basic duties and adding a multitude of responsibilities on a regular basis. Therefore, investigating teachers' roles, expectations and viewpoints in the current school environment may be profitable in order to make the teaching profession more attractive, understandable and convincing for young people.

2. THE AIMS AND METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The study outlined in this paper aims to redefine the roles that teachers need to adopt when working in a contemporary school environment and attempting to remain active members of the entire process of education. Therefore, the author suggests that the traditional viewpoint regarding teacher roles ought to be modified and understood in a completely different way, mainly due to the fact that the 21st century has brought a myriad of different, often overwhelming school duties and expectations from teachers. In other words, the primary goal of the presented investigation is to establish a new way of understanding the concept of the teacher through their changing roles and positions in the school context, and thus find answers to the following research questions:

- Has the impact of the classic teacher roles changed in the modern educational context?
- How has the modern teachership changed in the 21st-century educational context?
- What are the new roles assumed by the teachers in the contemporary, constantly changing school environment?

For the purpose of this study, the author adopted a particular set of research techniques, which mainly stems from the character of the entire investigation.

Therefore, as far as the proper methodology is concerned, the author conducted a thorough analysis of the answers provided by the respondents participating in this study, i.e., individual answers of the participants, to be then followed by a detailed calculation of the percentages necessary to establish how many times a particular response has been provided. The choice of the procedure was mainly dictated by the specific nature of this research, i.e., both qualitative and quantitative. As regards the instruments applied within the course of the investigation, the author made use of a questionnaire regarding teacher roles at school, containing plenty of open- and close-ended questions. In consequence, the participants had an opportunity to express their own opinions regarding their roles, educational possibilities and limitations, choose the options they agreed and disagreed with, or, most importantly, define the roles and duties that they need to adopt when working at school on a regular basis. Furthermore, the author organised a series of meetings with the participants of this study in order to collect additional information regarding this dynamically changing profession in the form of both collective and individual interviews. The meetings aimed to seek and contrast the explanations provided by the respondents, as well as to understand the viewpoints that seem to accompany teachers in their daily work. Therefore, the entire investigation was divided into three extensive stages. The first one was entirely based on the questionnaire described above, then followed by the stage of collective and individual interviews conducted at the workplaces of the participants. The final stage relied on an analysis of the results of this study, which allowed the author to come to a number of conclusions regarding the contemporary roles of teachers.

When considering the participants of the presented study, 127 teachers of various school subjects agreed to participate. There were 54 representatives of the primary sector of education (42%) and 73 representatives of various secondary schools (58%). The above-presented data have been summarised in greater details in Table 1 below:

Table 1
Age Range and Subjects Taught by Participants

	AGE RANGE	NO. OF SUBJECTS	%
1	25–30	17	13
2	31–35	21	17
3	36–40	38	30

4	41–45	19	15
5	46–50	29	23
6	51–57	3	2

	SUBJECT TAUGHT	NO. OF SUBJECTS	%
1	Polish	31	24
2	English	22	18
3	Mathematics	19	15
4	History	15	12
5	Geography	11	9
6	German	9	7
7	Biology	6	5
8	Chemistry	5	4
9	Physics	4	3
10	Religious Instruction	3	2
11	Social Studies	2	1

	SUBJECT TYPE	NO. OF SUBJECTS	%
1	humanistic	82	64.6
2	scientific	45	35.4

The variety of subjects taught by the respondents participating in this study allowed the author to ensure its reliability and a wide range of viewpoints based on the teachers' long-term observations and experience. Additionally, the investigation provided an interesting age range, which constitutes the added value of this research, thus observing the viewpoints and opinions of the teachers working in this profession for a long time, including a group of young teachers who only began to climb up their professional career ladders.

3. RESULTS

The presented study allowed the author to obtain results that seem to shed new light on the way the teaching profession, especially teacher roles, ought to be regarded nowadays. To start with, the respondents were asked to select the traditional roles that they thought they were still serving at the time of this study. Concomitantly, they were asked to reject the ones that they thought were no longer considered necessary and therefore commonly rejected by modern teachers due to the changing demands of the educational sector, mentality of the contemporary youth and, probably, the influence of the process of globalisation, among others.

CLASSICAL ROLES

As a result, when considering the classical roles, the respondents agreed that the contemporary teacher still seems to accept mainly the roles of an assessor (101 subjects, 79.5%), an organiser (92 subjects, 72.4%), a resource (87 subjects, 68.5%), and a controller (80 subjects, 63%). All the other roles, i.e., a guide (42 subjects, 33%), a tutor (39 subjects, 30.7%), a performer (27 subjects, 21.3%), an observer (23 subjects, 18.1%), a participant (18 subjects, 14.2%), and a prompter (9 subjects, 7%) were clearly rejected by the respondents of this study and thus regarded as no longer essential when teaching young people in the contemporary school education.

ADDITIONAL DUTIES

Another vital piece of evidence that resulted from the presented research is the fact that according to 114 subjects (89.8%), conducting regular classes ought to be nowadays regarded as a “side-effect” of the modern system of education. When asked for an explanation, the participants claimed that the number of school and after-school duties they need to adopt seems to be growing all the time and does not allow them to conduct classes in a proper way. As far as extra duties are concerned, the teachers mentioned meetings with parents, checking tests, preparing documentation, picking phone calls from parents, contacting publishing houses and organising competitions and school events, among others. Only 10.2% of the subjects (10.2%) did not agree with that claim and described the system as properly working and allowing them to conduct classes without any obstacles. Furthermore, the teachers also claimed that the after-school duties they need to complete often influence the efficiency of their classes due to the fact that certain

paperwork and other aspects of the school life need to be completed prior to the preparations regarding lessons and materials for students (109 subjects, 85.8%). On the other hand, 18 subjects (14.2%) did not see anything negative in dealing with a variety of after-school work, thus seeing no negative impact on the quality of their classes.

SKILLS NEEDED

When considering modern teachers and the skills they need to possess, the respondents claimed that contemporary teachers need to reveal a very high level of organisational (115 subjects, 90.5%) and leadership skills (104 subjects, 81.9%). Therefore, these two aspects were said to be vital when working in the modern school environment. However, apart from the above-mentioned elements, contemporary teachers need to be able to reason logically (98 subjects, 77.2%) as well as to know how to promote their workplaces in order to attract new students in the following years of their teaching careers (97 subjects, 76.4%), thus providing themselves with particular numbers of working hours. Additionally, teachers need to be interpersonally skilled (96 subjects, 75.6%) and maintain proper relations with their students and workmates. When it comes to the aspects that were not considered vital, the respondents rejected the importance of making predictions and planning skills (35 subjects, 27.6%), intrapersonal skills (27 subjects, 21.3%), empathy (26 subjects, 20.5%), as well as calculating skills (23 subjects, 18.1%) and high self-esteem (23 subjects, 18.1%).

AFTER-SCHOOL DUTIES

Another stage of the conducted research concentrated on the duties that teachers have to deal with after school, often consuming a large amount of their private time. As a result, 100% (127 subjects) of the participants highlighted the fact that the most overwhelming activities they need to deal with after their regular classes are checking, correcting and writing tests for students, as well as dealing with the extensive administrative stuff, a common feature of any school environment nowadays. The teachers also claimed that the number of documents is still growing due to the changing requirements and constant implementation of numerous modifications in the system of education. Other serious after-school duties included dealing with various individual problems of students (111 subjects, 87.4%), preparing classes (105 subjects, 82.7%), working with students before official school or national competitions (99 subjects, 78%), meetings with parents (93 subjects, 73.2%), promoting schools and preparing charity actions (91

subjects, 71.7%), organising numerous initiatives imposed by the principals (89 subjects, 70%), and participating in professional trainings that do not always correspond with teachers' interests and needs (78 subjects, 61.4%). As far as the remaining aspects are concerned, the respondents claimed that school trips (47 subjects, 37%) and methodological and scientific conferences (22 subjects, 17.3%) ought to be taken into consideration as well; however, these aspects seem to be less time-consuming than the ones mentioned in the initial part of this section of the presented article.

DISCOURAGING FACTORS

When considering the duties that teachers would most willingly reject and stop dealing with, the participants of this research highlighted, first of all, the administrative matters they need to face at various stages of the schoolyear (127 subjects, 100%). However, apart from that, educational fairs ought to be reconsidered (97 subjects, 76.4%) since their value and effectiveness have significantly dropped nowadays. The remaining factors included obligatory, often ineffective trainings (87 subjects, 68.5%) and frequent staff meetings (72 subjects, 56.7%).

The presented research also helped to discover why numerous specialists in English feel discouraged from entering this profession. Additionally, the author attempted to find out why teachers decide to leave their schools and requalify to show their dissatisfaction with the current system of education. As a result, three dominant factors have been discovered. 127 respondents (100%) agreed that the most confusing and discouraging factor is the amount of paper and administrative work they have to deal with, usually within a short period of time. Apart from that, 120 subjects (94.5%) claimed that constant changes and thus a lack of stability in this profession do not bring any positive impact on both teachers and students, often resulting in growing frustration and dissatisfaction with the entire process of education and its individual components. The other factors mentioned included low salaries (112 subjects, 88.2%), limited perspectives (94 subjects, 74%), parents of their students (93 subjects, 73.2%), more and more responsibilities (90 subjects, 70.9%), or even the students themselves (44 subjects, 34.6%), who often treat education and personal development as a secondary goal.

MOTIVATING FACTORS

As far as motivating factors are concerned, 121 respondents (95.3%) pointed out that a particular pay-rise would motivate them most. They stressed that the current salaries in Poland are relatively low, especially when compared with

other European countries. Therefore, raising teachers' salaries and bringing them to the level of European educational institutions would probably result in more willingness to work in a school environment, increased motivation, and also fewer teachers deciding to abandon their dream job. Other factors included public appraisal (108 subjects, 85%), access to proper teaching aids (107 subjects, 84.3%), further perspectives of promotion (94 subjects, 74%), access to professional, free of charge trainings (75 subjects, 59%), better work organisation (72 subjects, 56.7%), and well-equipped classrooms (66 subjects, 52%). In consequence, a combination of all the above-mentioned factors would create a perfect type of environment for any teacher to work in.

ENTERING THE PROFESSION

Another question of the presented research regarded entering the teaching profession again in the case of having a choice of changing and leading the participants' lives in different ways. In consequence, 111 respondents (87.4%) claimed that they would not enter the profession if they had a second choice now. Only 16 subjects (12.6%) stressed the fact that they would not see themselves in different jobs, thus defining teaching as the only career path worth following in their lives. However, most of the subjects (92 teachers, 73.2%) claimed to be against some of the educational reforms introduced recently, thus indicating that they radically changed the way they approach their profession. On the other hand, only 34 subjects (26.8%) maintained that the reforms seem to have brought no serious impact on how teachers approach their job from a wider perspective.

THE TRICHOTOMOUS RELATION

In the following part of this investigation, it was revealed that there exist particular types of relations between the three participants in the entire educational process, i.e., teachers, students and parents. Therefore, the subjects were asked to declare the relationship that seems to be most difficult to develop and maintain in a school environment. The results revealed that the *teacher-parent* relationship seems to be the most complicated to maintain, according to as many as 89 subjects (70.1%). As far as the other type of relationship is concerned, *teacher-student*, this one is believed to be relatively easy since only 38 subjects (29.9%) claimed it to be more complex than the one mentioned above. However, the research also raised another interesting point regarding personal relations and, simultaneously, within the course of the educational process itself. Difficult as it is, the teachers highlighted the fact that the *parent-child* relationship often con-

stitutes the most complex problem and obstacle when working with young people. According to 77 subjects (60.6%), most habits, responses, behaviours and values are brought from home. Furthermore, the respondents claimed that it is often easy to observe that the relations between parents and children do not always work out, which should be seen mainly in terms of frequent misunderstandings between both sides as well as divergent arguments and viewpoints on many subjects. Finally, the teachers also mentioned the fact that parents do not always know how to talk to their children, which means that the very basic communication between them significantly fails due to conflicting expectations or ways of seeing various aspects of life and education.

CONTEMPORARY TEACHERSHIP

When considering the contemporary “teachership” and its numerous aspects, 81 subjects (63.8%) claimed that parents ought to be more involved in the process of education of their own children, thus devoting more time to support them at home and get more involved in school. Important as it is, the respondents underscored the fact that parents often attempt to impose additional duties on teachers since they are unable to cope with them themselves or simply lack the time to complete them at home. Finally, parents seem to feel more comfortable when teachers deal with particular personal issues of their children, which is often regarded as participating in a particular part of a child’s process of growing up. Only 36.2% of the respondents claimed that they do not need a greater involvement of parents of any kind, especially when considering the educational process and daily school matters. Finally, the author asked the participants if they thought that certain institutions, such as municipality or county offices, local educational authorities or teacher training institutions ought to be more involved in the process of education from the practical viewpoint, thus taking over certain educational responsibilities to allow teachers to devote more time to proper teaching and personal development. In consequence, 127 subjects (100%) agreed that the number of duties they need to deal with often overwhelms them on a daily basis and discourages from further pursuing their careers in this sector. None of the investigated teachers disagreed with the question.

NEW TEACHER ROLES

In order to summarise the results of the presented research, a vital outcome should be presented. To start with, 125 subjects (98.4%) declared that constant changes in the Polish system of education force teachers to accept new roles and

become universal in their profession, often being able to deal with difficulties of almost any kind. On the other hand, only 2 subjects (1.6%) of the respondents claimed that they did not observe any changes and no new roles need to be adopted. Therefore, referring to the 98.4% of the subjects mentioned above, the presented research allowed the author to provide names for completely new teacher roles in the contemporary classroom and school environment. As a result, the following innovative roles have been suggested:

Table 2

Teacher Roles According to the Subjects

	Teacher roles
1	Administrator
2	Mediator
3	Promoter
4	Psycho-pedagogue/diagnostician
5	Coordinator
6	Motivator
7	Implementor
8	Researcher/practitioner

As far as *administrator* is concerned, this role is connected with the amount of paperwork and documentation that the teacher needs to deal with throughout the school year. As the number of documents is constantly growing, teachers need to carefully administer all the initiatives they would like to run and then document all their actions. In other words, it might be said that the contemporary teacher is responsible for managing the engine of a system that needs certain foundations in order to exist and work properly.

Another role defined by the respondents ought to be referred to as *mediator*. In other words, teachers are responsible for managing various conflicts between students as well as students and parents, often unprovoked or due to the generation gap, which still seems to exist and build a barrier between them.

When it comes to the *promoter* role, it has become one of the vital aspects of working as a teacher. In the era of demographic problems, every school is supposed to promote their educational offer in order to attract as many potential candidates as possible. However, promotional actions and initiatives often take place after work, thus limiting the amount of time that teachers can devote to prepare their classes, develop professionally, or simply rest after a tiring day at work.

As far as *psycho-pedagogue/diagnostician* is concerned, this role requires teachers to deal with a number of dysfunctions (ADHD, Asperger's syndrome, dyslexia), mainly in terms of diagnosing them and diminishing their effects on the development of knowledge of particular subjects. It is also connected with the fact that numerous schools lack professional psychologists, often forcing regular teachers to analyse their students' problems in detail and then send them to specialists in order to obtain particular documents allowing teachers to modify their school requirements.

When working at school, teachers also become the so-called *coordinators* and *motivators*, which means that, apart from coordinating and thus participating in an array of school events on a regular basis, they need to maintain and coordinate cooperation with numerous external institutions (court-appointed curators, emergency centre representatives, Erasmus+ agencies, county or district offices, etc.) in order to meet the needs of the contemporary educational sector and thus make their schools highly competitive in the educational market, i.e., to sign partnership agreements or ensure participation in various European programs, among others. They also need to motivate their students to work and then maintain their interests for as long as it is possible in order to succeed in their educational process.

Teachers also need to become a certain kind of *implementors* in order to test new platforms and pieces of software or simply implement innovative solutions to practice specific language elements.

When it comes to the final role, i.e., *researcher/practitioner*, understood as students inventing language novelties that need to be analysed by their teachers and then absorbed in order to comprehend students' utterances, it seems to be significant due to the fact that student language often contains lexical items that seem to be used only among particular members of a group. Therefore, teachers need to analyse and often absorb various, previously unheard-of language forms, such as modern slang expressions, colloquialisms, new words, etc., in order to be able to comprehend the contemporary peer-to-peer communication, talk to students, and make communication possible in a variety of situations.

Complex as it is, contemporary "teachanship" requires teachers to become multifunctional in their profession in order to adapt to diverse situations when working in a school environment. Changes seem to be inevitable and soon other roles may be necessary to function effectively in the target community.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The impact of the ongoing changes and reforms seems to have changed and redefined the way teachers understand their own profession and their roles. In other words, it needs to be understood that modern education requires teachers to be much more flexible, multimodal and multifunctional than in the past, concurrently dealing with a much wider range of matters and unexpected situations. Complex as it is, contemporary education resembles an entirely novel environment, often requiring numerous adaptations and modifications in order to work effectively. Furthermore, demographic variations and “fighting for students” seem to have modified educational priorities, often making numerous teachers requalify and leave their professions. Therefore, education is becoming too bureaucratic and provides less time for genuine teaching. In other words, certain aspects of schoolwork, such as promoting educational offers and cooperating with external institutions, have become vital for numerous schools to exist on “the map of educational facilities” at all. That is why teaching is becoming more problematic, and teachers often claim that they need to undertake more responsibilities for little money, thus being undervalued and regarded by the public as constantly complaining about everything.

Another serious doubt about the teaching profession is the fact that, according to teachers, it has lost its status and prestige, especially when compared with other countries around the world. Therefore, the participants claimed that contemporary teachers are no longer regarded as the central part of the entire system of education and, simultaneously, the system no longer hinges on them. Undoubtedly, there are multiple factors responsible for that situation, often reaching far beyond the duties that the teacher ought to deal with on a regular basis.

The respondents’ answers reveal that there is a particular level of dissatisfaction with the profession, often resulting in fewer teachers aiming to continue their dream careers. In other words, teachers choose other career opportunities, such as corporations and multinational companies in big cities, which usually offer higher salaries and better working conditions, even if they now have to work 40 hours a week and usually experience more stress and inconvenience. This, on the other hand, shows that teachers are ready to sacrifice their desired workplaces and career paths in order to earn more and do not have to deal with and take responsibility for numerous unexpected situations they ought not to be responsible for.

The presented research permits an important conclusion regarding the current state of methodology of language learning, especially when considering it within the framework of the teacher roles defined in this study. It needs to be remem-

bered that the traditional roles attached to teachers may no longer be up-to-date and need a thorough redefinition in order to understand the teaching profession in a new way. Constant changes and modifications in the educational system require teachers to assume new functions and roles, often without any prior preparation or training, thus giving teachers no choice but to accept them. However, the roles suggested in this paper may soon be enriched by further aspects, making the profession more complex than ever before.

5. FINAL REFLECTION

Complex as it is, the profession still seems to be worth trying since it constitutes an invaluable experience for someone who wishes to work with young people and to develop them as both citizens and persons. Therefore, the complexity of this job might comprise a factor that would enable teachers to become multifunctional and ready to deal with any situation. As a result, the profession may have a dual nature, which means that, on the one hand, it brings invaluable benefits in terms of experience and building an individual system of self-confidence and empathy, and, on the other hand, becoming flexible in dealing with multiple tasks simultaneously. That is why despite numerous difficulties or even complaints and doubts raised by teachers and people working in a school environment nowadays, the profession still seems to be worth trying due to its multimodal character.

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S u m m a r y

This article constitutes a suggestion for substantial changes regarding the understanding of contemporary teacher roles as adopted in the diverse school environment, regardless of the actual subject being taught. Having discussed classical teacher roles from a diachronic perspective, the author defines new teacher roles, based on research conducted with 127 primary and secondary school teachers. The research reveals that classical roles that have defined the teaching profession for years must be redefined due to the dynamic nature of the contemporary school environment. This article, divided into two main sections—theoretical and empirical—clearly implies that the tasks and duties of the contemporary teacher define the innovative roles, thus bringing about new challenges for teachers in the dynamic Polish educational context. As a result, this article is the starting point for a discussion concerning future teacher roles and teaching itself, including those requirements from teachers at various stages in education.

Keywords: teachers; roles; education; individual differences

ROLE NAUCZYCIELA WE WSPÓŁCZESNEJ POLSKIEJ EDUKACJI

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Niniejszy artykuł jest propozycją ważnych zmian w odniesieniu do ról, jakie odgrywają współcześni nauczyciele w zróżnicowanym środowisku szkolnym, niezależnie od nauczanego przedmiotu. Omówiwszy klasyczne role nauczyciela z perspektywy historycznej, autor definiuje zupełnie nowe role nauczyciela w oparciu o badanie empiryczne na grupie 127 nauczycieli szkół podstawowych i średnich. Badanie wykazuje, że klasyczne role, które przez lata definiowały nauczyciela i określały jego zadania w klasie, muszą być zredefiniowane, głównie w związku z dynamiką współczesnego środowiska szkolnego, a tym samym wymaganiami i oczekiwaniami od nauczycieli. Niniejszy artykuł, podzielony na dwie główne sekcje, teoretyczną oraz empiryczną, wyraźnie wskazuje, że zadania i obowiązki współczesnego nauczyciela jasno definiują innowacyjne role, a tym samym nowe wyzwania, stojące przed nauczycielami w bardzo dynamicznym polskim środowisku edukacyjnym. W rezultacie praca stanowi impuls do szerszej dyskusji nad przyszłością ról i samego zawodu nauczyciela, oraz wymagań stawianych pedagogom na różnych etapach edukacyjnych.

Słowa kluczowe: nauczyciele; role; edukacja; różnice indywidualne