



The Issue of the Educational Presence of Teachers at School ***Zagadnienie obecności wychowawczej nauczycieli w szkole***

ABSTRACT:

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: The objective of the article was to justify the necessity of high-quality pedagogical interactions in school according to teachers and students.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS: The following issue was analyzed: what are the procedures shaping the pedagogical presence of teachers at school? Analytical method and critical review were used as the source materials are the basis for research.

THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION: The article outlined the role of three categories (relation, pedagogical tact, meeting) in the construction of teachers' pedagogical presence.

RESEARCH RESULTS: Teachers' pedagogical presence must consist of teachers' interest in the causes of children and youth problems. This is proprietary conceptualization.

CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: The undertaken issue requires additional theoretical analysis and formulation of empirical studies structure.

→ **KEYWORDS:** **PEDAGOGICAL PRESENCE, TEACHER, RELATION, MEETING, PEDAGOGICAL TACT**

STRESZCZENIE:

CEL NAUKOWY: Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie autorskiej, wstępnej wykładni i struktury obecności wychowawczej nauczycieli wraz z uzasadnieniem potrzeby oddziaływań wychowawczych wysokiej jakości w szkole w rozumieniu osoby ucznia i osoby nauczyciela.

PROBLEM I METODY BADAWCZE: Problem podjęty w artykule jest następujący: Jakimi drogami można kształtować obecność wychowawczą nauczycieli w szkole? Wykorzystano metodę analizy i krytyki piśmiennictwa, gdyż podstawę przemyśleń jako materiał badawczy stanowią teksty źródłowe.

PROCES WYWODU: W artykule zaprezentowano rolę trzech, powiązanych kategorii w budowaniu obecności wychowawczej nauczycieli; są nimi: relacja, takt pedagogiczny, spotkanie.

WYNIKI ANALIZY NAUKOWEJ: Obecność wychowawcza nauczycieli ujmuje zainteresowanie źródłami problemów dzieci i młodzieży i potwierdza ich profesjonalną działalność w szkole.

WNIOSKI, INNOWACJE, REKOMENDACJE: Podjęta problematyka wymaga prowadzenia dalszych studiów teoretycznych i opracowania struktury badań empirycznych. Zostało sformułowanych w tym zakresie kilka propozycji działań.

→ **SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** **OBECNOŚĆ WYCHOWAWCZA, NAUCZYCIEL, RELACJA, SPOTKANIE, TAKT PEDAGOGICZNY**

Introduction

The issues raised by the article, despite the emphasis that various studies and standpoints place on the great importance of proper educational interactions at school, are still not fully appreciated, as didactic performance is taken into account first. Numerous rankings and classifications of educational effects promote the results of tests, rather than achievements in the area of pedagogy, hence the totals of points are respected when it comes to the school's reputation, instead of its confirmed successes in beneficial transformations in the behavior and personality of students. Meanwhile, without a constant appreciation of the pedagogical process, it is difficult to speak of a school interested in the culture of the present and future of children and young people, since the mere utterance of popular statements about pedagogy does not contain a satisfactory grasp of their meaning, but rather betrays a lack of the necessary skills, which, after all, cannot contain illusions in terms of the effects of the activities of teacher-educators. Therefore, attentiveness in each school to this very important area is supposed to result in readiness to make decisions, which should, of course, have a certain focus. Often they are only temporary, because they do not verify the present vis-à-vis the future, and so lack some thoughtful interpretations of the mistakes made. Without guides, such as teachers, parents, guardians or public figures who understand their influence and roles, it will not be possible to create educational spaces that are interesting for children and young people. These will continue to be compulsory schools and institutions, where students are obliged, although they often disregard this rule, to remain inside their walls, at specific times and fulfill mandated tasks.

It is important, therefore, to constantly strengthen the educational process, so that it does not lack a constructive presence of teachers, because we must not forget about the wise support that will be welcomed by the student in this student-specific disorder, which, after all, is justified because of the youth seeking their own paths. This support includes acceptance, dialogue, self-reliance, responsibility-building and thoughtful

guidance into the future. This is very difficult for some, but how can a teacher come to exhibit this necessary educational attitude without interest in being present in the process? So, let's talk about this issue in the daily activities of teachers.

Some remarks on the category of educational presence in school

Stanisław Ruciński points out that

[...] having become aware of my own existence as a presence in the world, I can say of another person that he or she is a body in the world of my experience, which I must treat as a possible place – other than my own – of conscious experience of the world, if I do not want to lapse into an unjustified recognition of the uniqueness of my own body as the only place where conscious experience of the world occurs. I must treat this other-than-my-body appearing in my experience as a place where SOMEONE exists, is PRESENT to me just as I am present to him or her (1988, p. 158).

This stance is perfectly valid, because it does not emphasize the teacher's relationship to the student, but instead stresses the complexity of understanding personal reality, which essentially concerns each of us, so one cannot complacently settle for the passive experience of one's job. What is it precisely in the face of SOMEONE who wants to actively learn about it along with their experience? This sphere of attaining understanding by means of a jointly accepted relational being thus unleashes a special educational gift, conducive to countering axiological illusions and discovering what is authentic and thinking about how this rapport can be impoverished by, among other things, the term *manqué*. After all, not everything works out, we do not always achieve what we would like to, but it is precisely the skillful clarification of this state of affairs that can bring the gradual discovery of new potentials and thus open up the future. Presence, therefore, brings an understanding of many things and finds in them the possibilities of solutions, so it is not a "technical" being in the world of children, adolescents and adults, but definitely more phatic, tactful, inspiring or, finally, mature being. These categories mentioned are very helpful in getting to know the subjects with whom we are to establish relationships, by leading them to experience their presence in relation to others and in the modern world.

Thus, Ruciński suggests in his reflections that

[...] we need to look more carefully at the content of one's experience, especially those moments of it that constitute seeing, hearing, feeling, etc., relating to other bodies, to their activities and creations. It may turn out that many elements of my experience of other people directly express some current or past presence. The question is whether one can read from certain phenomena of one's own experience the direct existence of – other than my own – conscious experience of the world, the existence of – other than my own – presence in the world, or whether one can only deduce from these phenomena the existence of other subjectivities (1988, p. 159).

This approach is also very important in a teacher's work, because on the one hand it steers the teacher towards the ability to empathize with the reactions of others, and on the other hand to reassert oneself in the regularities of arriving at given interpretations or positions. This is not an easy task, in fact it is quite a controversial one, but in general the idea is to be able to move in the direction of appreciating the personal presence of the other, because then we give each other the openness to become embodied in each other's lives, and therefore also to obtain answers to: who do we consider ourselves to be?

Accordingly, Ruciński says that

[...] only by perceiving amid the phenomena that make up the human body, what makes it possible to see (or rather read) THAT which gives the entire phenomenon of "a human being" clarity although it does not allow one to understand and see everything, it does not allow one to explain everything fully, it does, however, bring, as it were, a release from loneliness and lets one experience one's encounter with another body as an encounter with a certain presence expressed in that body. This solitude itself is perhaps so distressing and unbearable because it is absurd, full of contradictions, and probably falsifies the encounter with the full experience of another body as a human being, falsifies my experience at the most important point, because it determines the nature of my existence in the world. If I myself am a presence in an empty world, then I am a silent, solitary witness to the existence of things, and my presence as the presence of a certain subjectivity no longer finds confirmation in anyone, it remains only "presence alone" and not "presence towards" (1988, pp. 163–164).

In terms of the various forms of teachers' interactions with their students, the expression "presence towards" acquires a special meaning, because it is complemented by the belief of a given teacher's behavior as a whole, which can be described as *bien vu*, so it proves that he or she does not disrespect anyone, is loyal to others, regardless of their age, type of school, education or profession, always has class and, most importantly, never provokes hostility. Such a teacher-educator is always able to display a variety of facets of his/her pedagogical culture, remains in good relations with his/her students, as well as with the school's graduates, finds common ground with possible differences of opinion, which is often the case in teaching teams, does not decline to participate in school events that have educational significance for students, works together with the parents of students, is a leader who understands that the point of such work is to serve others wisely, which has nothing to do with exploiting one or the other party. Thus, it is a rewarding activity that is intended to work together with people. With this approach, all participants in these daily events at school will come closer and closer to understanding partnership, civility, friendship as well as the appropriateness of human action.

Thus, educational presence is to keep teachers and educators interested, for example, in the sources of youth problems, as indicated by those who have experienced them and were able to overcome them. It includes building in students the conviction that decisions made about them and with them are the result of a sound approach to school and extracurricular interactions, are justified and never hinder readiness to interact – as

important for all subjects of school life. But does the teaching staff want to learn about these complex areas? Unfortunately, this is not always the case, because meetings, talks and discussions organized in schools or other institutions are not taken with due seriousness by some teacher-educators. Some are still convinced that all it takes is a punishment, a remark, a reprimand or sending the student to the school principal for the behavioral problem to be solved. Such a path is not justified, because it fails to elicit awareness of having committed a particular transgression and thinking about its consequences, and is dominated by a "formal response," which is not sufficient to solve many behavioral problems. Thus, the teacher and their students must recognize formation of character, not platitudes that are repeated ad nauseam.

Antonina Gurycka identifies important

[...] tasks of the organizer of the educational process, such as defining the goal in terms of personality and creating an idea for organizing the educational situation so that it will provide its participants with experiences desirable for achieving the goal of the educator. At this point, it is especially important to prepare a concept of such a situation and its implementation (this is not only, for example, the preparation of lesson material, but also the organization of how to teach it). The educator is the director of all situations and must, as in a theater, anticipate the role that each participant should play in them in order to gain a certain experience, that is, appropriate knowledge about him/herself, others and his or her own capabilities, as well as the necessary skills (2004, p. 35).

This context underlines very strongly the need for the educational presence of teachers, as it not only reinforces the observational-diagnostic and even artistic course of affairs, but also creates a holistic conception of the lesson in terms of student participation. This can further lead to the teachers acting in the background of the lesson, as their previous director's concepts led the students to master not only their socializing, cooperative or creative roles, but also to recognize their individual predispositions in the course of joint lessons. Teachers thus led them to a satisfactory understanding of what it means to be themselves in relation to others.

Gurycka further states that

[...] an educator is responsible for the future of his or her students and for raising a new generation for society, so he or she is subject to stress when his or her charges disrupt their own and society's life with their behavior. This is often the reason for educators-teachers professional burnout. An educator cannot predict what situations in life and under what influences of people a young person will find themselves in the future, but he or she can and should supply that student with experiences so strongly lived and implemented in the course of the process of education, that they constitute a barrier to potential negative influences. The teacher is responsible for what experiences his or her student will get out of the educational partnership (2004, p. 35).

Thus, the educational presence of teachers forms the abilities to set the course of action, which concerns the unity of the teaching staff as to how to value the process and respond to emerging irregularities and difficulties. After all, the school is now a special arena of

face-to-face interactions, but those arising more and more from the dynamic relations in the most popular social networks, which are not at all beneficial from the point of view of the psychological resilience of children and adolescents, because they are more revealing of unpreparedness for life, than personal and relational benefits.

In this context, it is worth paying attention to the substantive quality of advisory class, because it is during these meetings that students can co-create a model of openness to their problems, rather than participate in clichéd educational patterns. It is during advisory classes that one should talk about economics, values, interests, disabilities, cyberspace, tolerance or the dangers of the world, because it is then that the similarities and differences flowing from students' thoughts and reasoning are revealed, and they can build a sense of responsibility for themselves and the future, as well as prepare them to make difficult decisions, which are very likely in the face of current geopolitical events.

The educational presence of teachers also brings valuable advice and support that prevents ignoring issues raised by others, ridiculing them or commenting on them from selfish points of view, and obviously has to do with learning about the student's world, being able to observe or respond reasonably to misunderstandings and difficulties. Therefore, it must not be sporadic and irregular, but represent a constant personal activity.

This presence must be noticed and accepted by the students, because it also promotes the recognition of the teacher-educator as a leader, which is of great importance for their participation in school and extracurricular life. After all, they engage in given activities with the conviction that what they are doing is meaningful, and not done out of coercion and following orders. Teachers as leaders should convey spontaneous and original messages, and not worn-out clichés, which is unfortunately what teachers who are not interested in such work with students do.

On what basis, then, should the educational presence of teachers be built?

The personalistic aspect of educational interactions is often emphasized. It can be represented as a triad of categories of educational presence: pedagogical tact – relationship – encounter. These categories encompass not only personality-forming education, but also aim to reorganize the educational objectives of the school, so that they also refer to teachers' very good knowledge of educational methods and techniques, as well as the quality of preventive programs selected to be implemented.

The three categories can form the integrity of educational relations at school, as well as set the direction of effective education by understanding and interpreting the events that take place in the process. These are experiences, inspirations, styles of reprimanding, appreciation, and even moral problems, as after all their occurrence in the lives of students and adults is obvious, but what is important here is how they relate to the choices made and decisions taken. Thus, this is a very important way of forming appropriate life attitudes.

A relationship is, in the proposed approach, a type of educative linking of mutual messages to protect students against giving up on creating their own system of values, because it is easy to expose egoism, selfishness or disparagement of others when they have various problems or cannot name the construction of their lives. And yet it is worth

looking at it from the perspective of its distortions. Then it is possible to think about the dilemma of authenticity as to our place in the world.

As Umberto Fontana stresses,

[...] all professions that deal with other people for educational or therapeutic ends include the toil and risk of becoming a complementary system, in order to be able to become capable of the proper use of relationships. [...] To enter into dialogue (both between individuals and between disciplinary realities) means precisely to enter into a relationship (2002, p. 124).

Thus, the relationship between teacher-educators and students is supposed to lead to the building and strengthening of responsibility for the pursuit of goals determined by uplifting educational interactions. It is worth recognizing their special importance in various areas, because they give a better insight into the complexity of interpersonal relations, which will be very useful in independent life. They are fostered by pedagogical tact, which is the main feature of the respect one shows and accounts for the actual quality of the educational interactions that teachers engage in, since without this category it will be very difficult to determine their effectiveness.

Thus, Konstancja Hojnacka remarks that tact is one of the main virtues in the world of *savoir-vivre*, one of the virtues that “most wisely regulate relations between people,” it is “an innate spiritual sensitivity, some kind of silent internal brake, an instinctive orientation or sense of what can and cannot be done.” The author stresses that “a tactful person is full of spiritual reserve, alert, poised and able to behave well in any situation. He or she knows what to say to whom and always finds the right words at a given moment, knows how to settle a misunderstanding, when to leave at the right time, when to change the topic of conversation, what to say nothing about or what not to notice out of a sensitivity” (as cited in *Savoir-vivre*, n.d.). A person may lack tact. But is lack of tact the same as tactlessness? When we think about this question carefully, we must come to the conclusion that tactless behavior is something much worse than behavior lacking in tact. It is only an inability to behave tactfully in certain situations, a certain social awkwardness that can be disarming at times.

It is precisely tactlessness that offends people deeply, offends human dignity and makes us feel insecure in the presence of people displaying such behavior, for fear that our social life will be destroyed or ridiculed. Our social energy is very often extinguished due to tactlessness, which thus steers us toward vigilance, but also hinders us from being spontaneous, showing a sense of humor or having socially useful fun. We are afraid of malicious comments, hubris or mockery, and yet we do not have the strength to react to this very thing... tactfully.

In the teacher's work with students in this area one can use, for example, the group decision technique or improvised playacting. They allow students to express themselves, empathize and, of course, formulate conclusions for daily use in interpersonal relations.

A meeting, which usually crowns the teacher's pedagogical artistry, is also a great educational opportunity. After all, why pretend, when it is possible and worthwhile to breathe authenticity into this unique personal encounter? Thus, it requires a constant

educational presence, awareness of the role one plays, connection with the person, aesthetic convention and, of course, credibility.

Jadwiga Bińczycka claims that

[...] among human needs, whose satisfaction is a prerequisite for human development stands out the need for beauty and ideals, the need for the meaning of life. Without a doubt, in order to satisfy the above needs, an encounter with a personal symbol of value can be of primary importance. Thus, an encounter, by bringing one closer to the world of moral values, motivating to undertake the effort of self-education, facilitating the "introduction to a life of value" fulfills an important role both at the individual and social level (1993, p. 61).

This approach to the encounter evokes a great desire to get to know people by perceiving values, rather than in a casual, quick way, with a sense that it would be easy to dismiss these values and a belief in one's own self-sufficiency. The encounter strengthens dialogic relations, often moves us deeply, but also stimulates reflection. So, it is not a demand for an ideal world, but draws attention to the meaning of culture and good manners in the actual, yet complicated reality.

It is justifiable, therefore, that the educational process is strengthened by the reasonable presence of teachers and students in various spaces of reality, because each of them contains people, their culture, customs, habits, and the ability to analyze reality is necessary for this. Therefore, the teacher can be a guide, trying to encourage students to express themselves, to justify certain mechanisms, to design solutions, or to experience higher culture, because education is areas of experience, not just a school classroom where students only hear prohibitions, injunctions, admonitions and, of course, get teacher's marks.

The nurturing presence of teachers is very helpful here, because it shows the axiological connectivity of the subjects at school and is a factual picture of the teachers' interactions in this relational area.

Meanwhile, it is necessary to stress the position taken by Krzysztof Rubacha that

[...] the system of teacher education is internally inconsistent. It is a matter of incompatibility of educational outcomes and educational content. In a word: such ambitious effects cannot be achieved with such modest hours as we have in Poland. And that's what our standards are. The number of hours of classes in psychology or pedagogy is more of a provocation than the minimum necessary for even a superficial knowledge of these disciplines. Classes shaping skills, i.e., long and repeated training in various competencies, are absent from this curriculum. And when it comes to the effects, however, there is an expectation that these skills will be as advanced as those that can be obtained from professional training. The apprenticeship programs themselves do not situate the student seriously in school work. What he or she does at the internship apparently does not enhance his or her sense of educational effectiveness, no matter how nicely it might be described in the educational outcomes (2021, p. 220).

Therefore, it is important to make changes in teacher education, as well as in the professional community, so that the prospects of professionalism determine a clear actualization

of the educational process, serve students, future teachers and, of course, society, because the will to create a school out of values and freedom should always be exposed in this profession, and unfortunately, this approach is not always followed.

Conclusion

The issue of educational presence at school should be appreciated by teachers. It should not be overlooked because of established, schematic patterns of educational interactions, and even because of mistakes, which are possible if they are not learned and verified.

The educational presence of teachers is, of course, oriented towards the immediacy of contact, but in the age of ever-evolving technology, it can also have its place in this area. It seems that it is possible to initiate, for example, Educational Internet, and thus enable teachers to talk freely with their students, create educational support groups, share one's achievements, ideas, or even dilemmas with others, have friendly conversations with students' parents, hold sessions of pedagogical councils with clearly defined educational issues, discuss scientific literature dealing with these issues, build educational programs or present one's work workshops.

It was rightly pointed out by Bogusław Śliwerski that "thinking through education is not thinking about education" (1991, p. 178). This difference should be examined constantly, as their morals are really quite different.

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