

## **PROFESSIONALLY IMPORTANT QUALITIES OF THE NEW-TYPE TEACHER**

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**Abstract.** The motivation of the authors is based on the belief that the years of schooling are very important for the young and adolescent person. During this period some very important physiological and psychological changes occur in the personality. It is the time for the formation of personal qualities and moral virtues, social competences, revealing the uniqueness and potential of each person, the development of creativity, initiative and entrepreneurship. The formation of these so valuable to the human personality qualities is highly influenced by the interaction of the students with teachers of a new type. These are teachers possessing a large set of personal and professional qualities dedicated to the mission to devote their lives to educating future generations, producing creators of the human progress.

The article presents the results of the author's study conducted with students from different educational stages, with students from the pedagogical specialties and with practitioners. The research methods used are: pedagogical study, test, content analysis, correlation analysis, pertinent analysis and range scaling. It was found out that the teacher of the modern times is called upon to carry out his or her professional activity in harmony with the permanently changing world. He is required to be adaptable, creative, a good professional, a creator. He or she cannot fully fulfill his or her professional roles in the new reality unless being led by love for the children with whom he or she interacts professionally or if is not devoted to the profession he or she practices.

*Keywords:* teacher; professionally qualities of the teacher

### **Introduction**

The challenges of modern times are numerous and rapidly changing. This sets the requirement for those working in the field of education for dynamism, flexibility, adaptability, declared readiness for rapid adoption to novelties and reforms. Such readiness is also necessary for the teachers of a new type. Dynamism and readiness to accept challenges to a high degree are characteristic of young people. In this respect, our hopes for a change in the educational paradigm are directed towards students who are mastering the pedagogical profession in universities. We perceive young

teachers as carriers of progress. The National Statistics Institute has popularized alarming data for a serious aging of the staff practising the teaching profession in Bulgaria. This further forces us to work purposefully in order to motivate the young people to choose to continue their education in the pedagogical specialties in the higher schools, to integrate them with the noble teaching profession. Through the pedagogical interaction in the university, we work consistently for the acquisition and integration of a complex of professional qualities in the personality of the teacher of a new type. Which qualities of the teacher are highly appreciated in the public eyes? Is there a correlation in terms of differentiating between the professional qualities of the teacher as regarded by students attending school, students from the pedagogical specialties and practising teachers? All these are quite disputable questions that we will try to answer through the study presented in this article.

### **Discussion**

The problem of the professional qualities which are crucially important for the teacher's performance is presented in the work of a large number of authors. The opinion shared by all of them is that the qualities of the teachers contribute to their effective entering into different professional roles and the realization of different functions in the training process. Independent of the level of their professional interactions and of the complex of professional roles which they are called upon to realize, the effectiveness of the new-type teachers correlates with their high professional competence and the leading role they perform in the educational process. The new realities in the education policy confront the teacher with the challenge to form professional qualities as early as at the very stage of his or her professional academic education and training at the university, which would make it easier to adopt new roles and to permanently expand the range of functions he or she will have to perform later on professionally. In her research, Y. Merdjanova reveals the interrelation between the professional interactions and the professional roles that the teacher performs in the educational process (Merdjanova, 2010: 246). The author differentiates between four main groups of professional interactions that the teacher carries out in his or her professional activity and indicates the respective professional roles that relate to each of the four differentiated groups of interactions. In the first group, Merdjanova puts the consulting-pedagogical interactions with the client. They are realized at the level of "class community" and through the individual personal communication with different groups and teams. Typical professional roles of the teacher of a new type include: an informant, an expert, a partner, a counselor, a programmer, a consultant, a coordinator, an intermediary, a diagnostic expert, an evaluator, an initiator, an animator, an interlocutor, a prognostic instrument, a regulator, a friend, an artist, a diplomat. The second group includes professional in-school inter-collegial interactions, such as "consultant-teacher" or "employer-colleague". In the course of these interactions, the teacher needs to play the roles of:

interlocutor, mediator, assistant, associate, partner, opponent, competitor, expert, consultant, co-manager. The third group of the teacher's professional interactions is differentiated by the important factors of vocational guidance and qualification. In the realization of the interactions within this group, the teacher takes the role of: informant, consultant, counselor, expert, mediator, public figure, representative, speaker, moderator. The fourth group of professional interactions, according to Y. Merdjanova, is carried out at the level of the interactions with other colleagues, educational experts and authorities at national and international levels. In order to realize the interactions within this group, the teacher must have intercultural competence. The professional functions of the teacher are presented by N.M. Yakovlev and A. M. Sohor (Yakovlev & Sohor, 1985: 14 – 16). As teacher's professional functions, the two authors point out the following: organizer and leader of the cognitive activity of the students in the process of learning; source of knowledge in the educational process; chief assistant to the students when they encounter cognitive difficulties; representative of the state authority in the social institution which the school represents. In accordance with the normative documents regulating the requirements for occupying the position of a teacher and the types of job descriptions of the profession “teacher” in the Bulgarian school, I. Petkova differentiates a complex of professionally significant functions of the teacher of a new type (Petkova, 2012: 73). In her research body of works, Petkova insists that the contemporary teacher realizes in his or her professional activities the following functions – scientific, pedagogical, methodological, diagnostic and evaluational, as well as organizational, coordinating and controlling, communicative and consulting. In his work devoted to the role of the teacher, V. L. Levi points out that “the role of the teacher is clear, definite, unambiguous” (Levi, 1980: 77). The author also claims that it contains a huge repertoire of hidden, implicit roles. V. L. Levi presents a schematic model of the primary role of “teacher”, combining 36 supporting roles with the possibility of dynamically complementing and expanding the model. Among the auxiliary roles of the teacher differentiated by V. L. Levi are such as: enlightener, educator, informant, narrator, researcher, instructor, observer, supervisor, consultant, speaker, leader, expert, assessor, mentor, critic, friend, nurse, counselor, judge, preacher, comforter, coach, role model, psychotherapist, artist, clown, tamer, etc. The idea of the polyfunctionality of the professional teacher is shared by A. Peretti. The author identifies 30 key roles of the teacher (Peretti, 2000). Among them, the following are listed: researcher, methodologist, organizer, inspirational leader, expert, consultant, supervisor, experimenter, inspirer, practitioner, contractor, user, assessor, relations regulator, etc. Among the many traditional and nontraditional roles the teacher performs in his or professional activity, R. Clark emphasizes the creative nature of the teaching profession and the teacher's incarnations as an actor. The author points out that “... good teachers are actors; they have the ability to attract the attention of their students, to bring life to the algebra tasks, to sparkle the

spirit of Shakespeare in the hearts of their students, to make them feel as if they are on the frontline of the war” (Clark, 2013: 323). The author points out that students want their teachers to be inspired, exciting, loaded with optimism. In terms of the personality of the teacher, L. Dobson distinguishes between two types of teachers: effective and ineffective. He also points out what the important qualities are that effective teachers should have. As such, he defines the following qualities: flexibility, openness, creativity, sense of humor, ability to make observations, patience, consciousness (Dobson, 2006: 40 – 46). As can be seen from the qualities of an effective teacher considered to be “significant” by L. Dobson, the author differentiates between a complex of personal and a complex of professional qualities. Among the personal qualities of the teacher, P. Petrov emphasizes the creative abilities. The author points out that “a teacher is an immediate creator of the educational process. A creative working teacher is not just a user of scientific and pedagogical knowledge; he or she is not even a rationalizer. Pedagogical creativity requires reconciliation of teaching with research, experimentation, scientific and application activities” (Petrov, 2016:157). In the learning process, the modern teacher performs organizational and managerial functions. The educational function of the teacher is presented by M. Andreev in the following manner: “By solving the basic didactic tasks and by fulfilling the main management functions in the process of teaching, the teacher actually teaches the pupils to learn by themselves” (Andreev, 2001). Through this opinion, Andreev directs us to the idea of perceiving the teacher of modern times as a facilitator and a catalyst of knowledge, someone who through his or her professionalism provokes the informal learning of the students. The modern reality, in which the teacher performs his or her functions, increasingly requires them to possess qualities which are characteristic of the good managers. In this aspect, S. Nikolaeva points out the following: “Although managerial functions such as planning, motivation, organization, management, coordination and evaluation are typical of the teacher's work, quite rarely has this fact given ground to have it defined as that of manager of the class” (Nikolaeva, 2011:6). The idea of regarding the teacher of the new age as a manager of the class possessing the necessary qualities for that is also shared by I. Ivanov. The author points out that the classroom teacher manages 'time, space, materials, technology, human resources' (Ivanov, 2005). In order for the teacher to fulfill this function, he or she needs to be a holder of such personal and professional qualities that will optimize the learning process and contribute to its higher effectiveness. As can be seen from the above, the teacher has a key role in managing the learning process. The quality of the educational process depends to a great extent on the nature of his or her professional qualities and the specifics of their interactions with students.

This provokes us to rethink the role of the teacher in the learning process in a new way and to highlight those professional qualities that would contribute to the effective realization of the overall educational process.

### **Purpose of the study**

The study is aimed at differentiating the professionally significant qualities of the teacher of a new type. In correlation with the above-mentioned goal, we formulate the following research hypothesis:

If the teacher's professional qualities are identified, the pedagogical interaction at the higher school could be realized with an emphasis on the formation of such qualities in the personality of the teacher, which are highly appreciated by the participants in the educational process (students and teachers). This would help young teachers to realize themselves as effective teachers of a new type.

### **Research Methods**

In order to achieve this goal, we use the following research methods: pedagogical study, test, content analysis, correlation analysis, pertinent analysis, range scaling.

In order to test the qualities of the new-type teacher, the test "Diagnosing the qualities of the good teacher" (developed by G. Sabine) was used (Sabine, 1997).

### **Findings**

The test "Diagnosing the qualities of the good teacher" was conducted with 200 respondents divided equally into four target groups. The test included 50 students from the 4th grade of the primary educational system, 50 students from the 7th grade of the secondary educational system, 50 students from Trakia University, mastering the professions of pre-school and primary-school teachers and 50 practising teachers in the high school. The survey was conducted in 2017. The test was provided for anonymous replenishment by the respondents in order to achieve greater credibility of the responses. The task set in the test is to differentiate the professional qualities of the teacher of a new type by scaling. The students included in the study were given the opportunity to rank 22 (twenty-two) of the qualities in terms of significance, marking with 1 the most significant, in their opinion, quality which the modern teacher must possess, and with 22 – those which they consider to have the lowest significance for practising the teaching profession. A rank scale was obtained in which each of the proposed qualities takes up a particular position (from 1. to 22.). We bring out from the ensemble those qualities that are placed in leading positions (1st to 5th place). Following the frequency principle, we determine which of the proposed qualities are referred to as professionally significant by the highest number of the tested persons and which particular position they occupy in the rank scale.

The results of the differentiated and ranged by the respondents professionally significant qualities of the new-type teacher are listed in Table 01.

**Table 01.** Professionally significant qualities of the new-type teacher

| Rank | Students from class 4.                                            | Students from class 7.               | Students from the pedagogical specialties | Practising teachers                         |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1.   | love of children                                                  | love of children                     | love of children                          | love of children                            |
| 2.   | love for the profession                                           | love for the profession              | love for the profession                   | love for the profession                     |
| 3.   | friendly attitude to students                                     | good knowledge of the subject taught | patience                                  | skilful teaching                            |
| 4.   | goodness and attention to people                                  | patience                             | friendly attitude to students             | patience                                    |
| 5.   | understanding of the children and acknowledging their personality | friendly attitude to students        | undiscriminating attitude to all students | ability to attract the students to the work |

### **Analysis of the received results**

From the data listed in Table 01, four ranging scales of the professional qualities of the teacher of the new type are differentiated – of the students from the 4th grade, of the students from the 7th grade, of the students from the pedagogical specialties and of the teachers. Each of them presents the opinion of the relevant target group. Between the four scales we can register several cross sections. There are three zones of intersections between the ranks of the students from grade 4, the 7th-grade students and the students of pedagogical specialties. Areas of cross-sections are with the differentiated qualities – love for children, love for the profession, friendly attitude towards students. In the ranks of the professional qualities of the new-type teacher of the 7th -grade students, the students of the pedagogical specialties and of the practising teachers there are also three such sections. They are united in the differentiated qualities – love for children, love for the profession and patience.

We observe an absolute coincidence in differentiating the first two qualities of the modern teacher in the four zones of intersections. The four target groups which were surveyed place in the first position among the professional qualities of the teacher of the new type the love for children. Such ranking was performed by 92% of the 4th-grade students, 86% of the 7th-grade students, 80% of the students in the pedagogical specialties and 66% of the practising teachers. They all share the view that it is of utmost importance for the modern teacher to love the children and to devote their full professional activity to interacting with them. If a teacher masters his or her profession with a clear understanding of the fact that it requires a permanent interaction with children, this would imply that he or she loves children, has the need to give them his or her love and reciprocally to receive theirs. Children are very sensitive to the specifics of

the teacher's attitude and commitment to them. They quickly discover who truly loves them, and also discover the hypocrisy and the indifference of the teacher towards them, which distances them from him or her. Good professionals in the teaching profession are characterized by the high quality of their theoretical and practical training, coupled with openness and warmth in their relationship with which they gain the love and confidence of their students and turn them into their own adherents. This provokes us at the stage of shaping the pedagogical competence of future teachers at the university to make a determined effort to involve students in collaborative initiatives and interactions with students. These would help students enjoy the interaction with children, reveal the attractiveness and usefulness of the profession they occupy; make them more open and dedicated to the attitude towards the students. The second position among the professional qualities of the new-type teacher, in the four target groups, is occupied by the love of the profession. Such a response is differentiated by 84% of the 4th-grade students, 74% of the 7th-grade students, 64% of the students in the pedagogical specialties, and 58% of the teachers. The love for the profession is formed as a consequence of a meaningful and well-realized professional choice, correlating with the triadic bond between the needs, abilities and interests of the person. If the teacher has achieved this balance of professional choices, his or her professional realization would help him or her feel happy and satisfied with the results they achieve. This satisfaction would contribute to staying for a longer period in the profession. Teachers who love their profession, through their practice, satisfy the needs of the highest hierarchical level of all their needs. They are aimed at professional self-realization and self-improvement. Satisfaction of these needs requires hard work and dedication to the cause – the education of the younger generation. Teachers who perform their professional duties with confidence in the importance of their noble mission are guided in their activities to the same extent by love for children as by the love for the profession. This provokes us to create a supportive educational environment for university students which would help to reveal the best aspects of the teaching profession and to involve young people in it.

The grading scales of the professionally significant qualities of the new-type teacher of the 4th-grade students, of the students from the 7th grade and the students of the pedagogical specialties are in correlative dependence in the differentiation of the quality “friendly attitude towards the students”. This is the second intersectional area in the three scales. Students in grade 4 rank this teacher's quality in the third place in 84% of the cases. Students in grade 7 ranked this quality in the fifth place in 38% of the cases. The teacher's friendly attitude towards students is ranked fourth in the ranks of the students in the pedagogical specialties. The proportion of students who place this quality in the fourth position is 40%. The specificity of this answer reveals the fact that modern school practice is popular with teachers who are friendly to students. Among the large set of teacher roles that are popularized by researchers in the teaching profession are such as: an older friend, a counselor, a confessor, an assistant and other roles whose realization requires the student to feel that his or her teacher is friendly and can be trusted. The

openness of the teacher, as well as his or her good will, is very quickly revealed by the students and defines their attitude towards him or her. The formation of such qualities needs to start at the stage of the university education of the future teachers.

A third cross-sectional area between the ranks is found in the differentiated quality of the teacher of the new type as “patience”. This quality ranks fourth in the ranks of the 7th-grade students with a 58% share. The teacher's patience was put in the third position by 42% of the students in pedagogical specialties covered by the study. The Patience quality was ranked fourth in 44% of the practitioners covered by the study. Practising the teaching profession presupposes the realization of interactions on the part of the teacher at different levels: teacher – student; teacher – parent; teacher – teacher; teacher – governing bodies of education; teacher – local authorities; teacher – non-governmental organizations and others. In order to achieve effective interaction at all levels and to respond adequately to the claims made to it, the teacher requires a great deal of patience and tact. The teacher also needs to be patient with the realization of didactic goals in the process of learning by his students. Already at the stage of his or her preparation at the university, the prospective teacher needs to understand that the learning process results are not automatically obtained, but a purposeful and lengthy process is required for their realization.

The students of grade 4 rank fourth in the ranks of the teacher's professional qualities the quality of kindness and attention to people. Such a response is differentiated by 60% of the 4th-graders involved in the study. The fifth position is taken by the quality “understanding of the children and acknowledging their personality”. This response is given in 56% of the cases. The two differentiated qualities are interconnected. They require a manifestation of humanism and openness in the teacher's relationship with the students. The learning process is subject-subject oriented. In the course of pedagogical interaction, the teacher and the students are realized as equal subjects. A good teacher understands that the category “ideal student” does not exist. He or she perceives and respects the pupils' personality in their diversity. In order to achieve the maximum possible success rate with all students, the modern teacher needs to take into account the specifics of the individual pupil's personality and to differentiate his or her approach to it. In order for the teacher to have the necessary understanding of the child's personality, he or she needs to know their peculiarities. In this respect, the training of the teaching staff at the university should provide in-depth knowledge of general, age and pedagogical psychology.

The third position among the professional qualities of the new-type teacher in the 7th grade is occupied by the good knowledge of the teacher of his or her subject. Such an answer is differentiated by 64% of the seventh graders. This answer could be analyzed in correlation with the qualities differentiated by the practising teachers occupying third and fifth positions. These are: “skillful teaching” with 54% of the responses and ‘the ability to involve students’ in 40% of teachers' responses. As the age goes up, students increasingly appreciate the professionalism of their teacher. The modern teacher requires expert

knowledge of the subject which he or she teaches. When the teacher presents boringly and uninterestingly the subject matter to the students, he or she is not able to awaken in them interest and curiosity to the scientific field of that subject. The motivation of the students to study the respective subject is low, their effectiveness in these classes is unsatisfactory and this leads to low results. By increasing the criteria for assessing his or her work, the teacher is required to have expert knowledge of the scientific issues of their subject area, to be familiar with the latest developments in the science of the subject matter, to apply innovative approaches and methods in his or her work. In order to involve the students in the work, the teacher needs to have in-depth general and specific pedagogical training, to be able to use effective strategies for implementing pedagogical interaction with the students. Teachers with high pedagogical competencies perform not a reproductive but a productive type of training, in which pupils are realized as active subjects. They are given the opportunity to analyze, synthesize and evaluate scientific information, as well as to apply the acquired theoretical knowledge in practical terms. These teachers offer their students not an informational but a transformational type of training, in which they are guided not by the amount of information received, but by how much of this information has been transformed into the students' minds and turned into real knowledge.

The fifth position in the rank scale of the professional qualities of the teacher of the new type, according to the students of the pedagogical specialties, is occupied by the equal attitude of the teacher towards all the students. Such response was differentiated in 38% of the cases. Equal attitude towards students is characteristic of the professional activity of the democratic type of teacher. He or she knows the strengths and weaknesses of each student, respects their rights, but at the same time brings to them all the requirements of observing uniform rules and obligations. The interaction of the teacher with the students cannot be characterized by high success if he or she shows selectivity or discrimination in his or her attitude towards individual students, or if he or she does not establish fulfilling communication with the whole class community. This provokes us to introduce the students from the pedagogical specialties to the ideas of the democratic type of pedagogical communication in the process of education.

### **Conclusion**

As a result of the performed study we came to the following conclusions:

- In order to effectively carry out their professional activities, the new-type teachers must, to the highest degree, be guided by their love for children.
- A significant quality for the modern teacher is the love for the profession.
- The new-type teacher, in order to be a good professional, needs a high theoretical pedagogical, as well as “private” methodology for teaching their subject and psychological training.
- In order to be differentiated as a good professional, a modern teacher needs to base his or pedagogical interaction with the students on the subject-subjective approach to education.

The working hypothesis has been confirmed. Once we have identified the qualities of the modern teacher which are highly appreciated by the participants in the educational process, we can develop a strategy to optimize the pedagogical process in the higher school. We have to direct the training of students from the pedagogical specialties at the university towards the formation of those qualities that are brought to the leading positions in the rank scale of the teacher's prominent qualities. This makes it possible for the expectations on the part of the consumers of the educational services towards the teachers to come true and young teachers become effective teachers of a new type.

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