

*Dawid Mędrala, Marek Kaczmarzyk*

## **Contemporary world of education and challenges in the teacher-parent relationship**

### **Introduction**

Entering a new era, into the 21st century, in the time of the development of new technologies, new problems occurred, which so far the society has not had to face. These problems have an impact on every area of human life. The transformation of the politics, economic and, above all, technological transformation resulted in the formation of a new entity, called by scientists "information society" (May, 2002). The transformation of society resulted in changes that people living in the last century did not have to deal with (Niesporek, 2018). To function efficiently and adapt to new requirements, society had to make changes in almost every sphere of social life. However, these changes were not initiated by the school. School cannot be reduced to the level of an institution whose only function is to convey knowledge to children. The school should also be the place where the child is raised. Unfortunately, because of the social missing of acceptability of this fact, it is not usually possible. The widespread freedom of criticism towards school in society is becoming more and more destructive. This reduces the school to the role of an institution promoting mediocrity resulting from the convenience of "wearing a mask", protecting against criticism from other social groups. However, criticism of the school does not result from actions leading to cooperation or helping, but a desire motivated by finding someone to blame for problems or failures in the process of raising a child. Today we see a crisis related to the proper raising of a child. We are moving away from the educated culture, in which the most important thing was the correct raising of the child, today we are looking for those to blame for the incorrect raising. Nowadays, in times of crisis, schools need effective and quick changes that will help us build the lost educational culture.

Our children are affected by many factors shaping their behavior, worldview and the decisions they make. The large number of these variables throughout the child's life makes it impossible to specify and classify them. However, we can try to answer the question of what factors have the greatest impact on the raising process. Children, among all adults, have the first and most frequent contact with their parents. It is these people who are responsible for many variables that affect children throughout their raising. One of the most important factors is the time in the life of each child

when it enters a new social space - school. A child from a familiar model of known rules (represented by the parents), gets into a new unknown area. This organization, newly met by a child, introduces a young person to a new world - school culture. This space is an opportunity for him/her to develop, but also an opportunity to learn about the rules of social order. Participants who are part at the school's culture create a community that shapes attitudes, views and even principles according to which the school organization functions (Nowosad, 2018). From the child's point of view, this is an important space in his/her life, in which he/she will shape a model of his/her behavior and worldview, influencing his/her raising during many years of education.

We come to the fundamental question: What is the role of school today? The school should find a new place in the current social structures as an organization with two inseparable functions: didactic and educational. By combining these two functions, it is possible to define the role of the school as making decisions aimed at the good of students, their families and the requirements which are placed on these people by social life (Śliwerski, 2006).

### **The role of the school**

The school takes on this role alike, taking certain obligations towards students and the consequences resulting therefrom. Rigidity of imposed rules on teachers and an attempt to adapt to them does not help at work, but causes limitation of emotional intelligence, which seems to be very important in teacher profession. The emotional intelligence is emphasized by the American psychologist, Daniel Goleman, who explains that this ability allows teachers to gain motivation for their work and persistence in achieving purposes or regulating emotional mood (Grabowiec, 2013). This ability is extremely important, especially today when more often teachers have symptoms of professional burnout caused by the multitude of educational and raising obligations imposed on them. The obligation to convey knowledge to the child and educational responsibility are not facilitated by subsequent amendments to the law and the rigidity of the rules of school functioning imposed by politicians. We come to the limit of what we know. There are new attempts to systematize the functioning of teachers in relationship with students, where the law dominates, not intuition, where the imposed orders replace the relationship. Correct relationship, not only between the teacher and the student, but also between the teacher and the parents, that seems to be the only way to properly raise a child. Unfortunately, currently raising a child takes the form of a loose set of independent interactions that are difficult to match with each other. We look at home and school as independent sub-environments and we consider how to distribute responsibility for particular aspects of the education/training process between them. In such a situation, any failure or inappropriate behavior of the child requires finding the cause of this situation. At this moment, teachers most often blame the child's parents for inappropriate behavior, arguing that they probably got it out of the home environment. Parents, on the other hand, blame teachers for the same behavior, where the argument is the amount of time spent at school every day (Sędek, 2019). It is worth emphasizing that a child goes to school at the age of 6.

It already has his/her own emotional baggage, shaped attitudes and views derived from the culture passed on by the parents. When a child goes to school, he/she spends 5-6 hours there and the rest of the time is shared with other people. It depends on the parents who their child will spend the rest of the day with. It can be themselves or their friends or peers (Zajac, 2013). Moreover, remember that every person who comes into contact with our child has an impact on his/her raising. If possible, it is reasonable to choose the people who our child is staying with.

## Proposed solutions

When looking for a way out of the situation in which the school found itself and solutions to problems related to education, it is worth looking at the roots of the educational process. Contrary to appearances, it is an invention of contemporary societies with millions of people, which consists of many social sub-environments, and the ability to find a suitable place in each of them is one of the basic competences.

Our species, from the very beginning of its evolutionary path, has been solving most of the problems posed by the environment using its social character to this (Dunbar, 2015). The increasing size and complexity of the brains was related to two directions of the selection pressure. The first was the emphasis on the importance of joint adjustment - the ability to solve problems together.

This direction strengthened (and still strengthens) competences in the field of both non-verbal (Rizzolatti, 1988) and language-related communication (Bergen, 2017).

The second direction concerned the adaptive value of unique behaviors, allowing for solving specific problems that rise locally and so rarely that their solution was not of significant importance for biological evolution. Such solutions have no chance of becoming part of the genetic baggage and are unavailable for future generations. Big brains that allow for behavioral flexibility. This, in turn, means that the rise of behaviors / processes that allow them to be passed on to next generations may have an adaptive meaning for the direction of evolution of the entire population. Such a non-genetic message can be defined precisely as a process of education. From this perspective, education is one of the fundamental evolutionary achievements of our species.

This means, given our evident evolutionary success, that the basic features of this process have their foundations in our very distant past. It seems that in times of a clear crisis it is worth looking back and looking for inspiration to solve it.

The human primal groups of collectors and hunters, in which our species spent the majority of its existence, most likely consisted of small teams of around 150 people (Dunbar, 2010). They were basically isolated from other groups.

Such a coherent, homogeneous system can be considered a kind of village where the educational process of subsequent generations took place and the process of knowledge transfer (raising and education) was strongly related to it.

The raising process requires, especially in young children, the fulfillment of certain conditions. At the first, the child learns and remembers, first and foremost, in a situation of security. The absence of strong stress is a condition for the proper functioning of memory and motivation systems, mainly through the efficient functioning of the hippocampus involved in memory processes. Stress, mainly related to the reaction

of the hypothalamus and, more generally, the limbic system, limits the activity of the hippocampus, which translates in a simple way into the ability to remember, recall and consciously process information (Kaczmarzyk, 2020). This fundamental relationship is evident in today's school environment, where stress is a common phenomenon. Exams and tests are associated with a significant level of stress, and this is an intrinsic feature of the school institution. In this case, a specific form of the "educational uncertainty principle" appears. The exam, which is considered to be a tool for assessing the student's knowledge and competences, causes stress of varying degrees. The level of stress affects the activity of the hippocampus and the level of availability of long-term memory resources, which are the basis of the measured competences. In other words, the exam allows us to notice the knowledge and competences of the student only as a function of the stress stages on the activity of information processing procedures. The sensitivity of these systems to stress is different in different people, and even in the same person in different psychophysical states, determining the level of knowledge, and the level of reaction to stress in this case is objectively impossible.

From a biological perspective, parents were responsible for keeping our primary groups safe. They are the guarantors of a sense of safety. People's large brains are a significant problem during childbirth. A child is born at a point that is not the end of the prenatal stage of brain development in other primates. This makes the danger of childbirth acceptable. The consequence, however, is the immaturity of the central nervous system at birth and this entails the helplessness of the newborn. The solution is strong and long-term childcare. Hamilton's discovery of the principle of investing in genetic resources, known as kin altruism, also works in humans. From there, in combination with the specific situation described above, the strong attachment of parents to their own children is necessary and the selective pressure on behaviors that ensure the safety of their offspring.

The second condition for the optimal development of cognitive potential and, consequently, the transfer of cultural information, is the creation of opportunities in the developmental environment to solve problems (problem situations). Solving problems is, of course, a condition for creating a strategy to respond to environmental challenges, but the problem situation itself is a source of discomfort, it causes a stress response. There is an apparent contradiction. The optimal development environment must combine contradictions.

Most often, the task of challenging is not assigned to parents from a biological perspective. Other kind adults are needed for this. In the primitive groups of human "villages" they were, of course, fulfilled by neighbours as well as distant relatives of the child, which the Hamiltonian imperative is not as strong as for the parents. Efficient cooperation between these groups provided the child with what was (of course is now) necessary for child development: challenges and a sense of safety.

The world today makes it practically impossible to build such primary villages. We fulfill educational and raising tasks towards children in a multidimensional social space, in which the complexity of relationships weakens the unequivocal, intentional educational influence. The question is whether it is possible to recreate the conditions even only partially analogous? Of course, for people involved in education, the answer must be, at least in part, yes. From the parents' point of view, such a method

of creating a village for their children is the selection of friends, their own social environment. People who visit our home and those we visit in the company of our own children are an extremely important and often underestimated component of the educational environment.

On the other hand, despite crisis and the degree of criticism in the social environment, we have a space that, if properly understood, shaped and appreciated by adults, could constitute the framework of a functioning structure, of course in the dimension determined by the realities of the educational contemporary villages of our children. This space is precisely the school.

The model of raising a child in recent years has changed dramatically under the influence of environmental and social factors. Parents have to face the new challenges posed by society in the 21st century. Due to these challenges, parents are forced to transform and build their “villages” in a way different from, for example, their parents when they raised them in the 1980s and 1990s. Nowadays, young parents are moving away from living in multi-generation homes where their parents and grandmothers grew up. Today’s parents often move and live with their children away from their families (Preuss, 2021). As a result, young parents remain alone after their child enters the world. They do not have the support of other family members, which at the initial stage of raising a child is very important, especially for mothers. The alteration of a baby that absorbs all attention often leads to serious consequences such as postpartum depression. This disease, occurring even a week after birth, can last up to 12 months, without appropriate treatment, it can introduce permanent changes in the psychological safety of both parents, and in many cases it can permanently affect the child (Kossakowska, 2019). Moreover, obligations and requirements are imposed on a young mother at case??? How proper and good raising of the child???, regular care for his/her appearance and personal development, and continuation of professional work. Failure to meet these excessive requirements results in the fact that the young mother begins to feel this failure and has the impression that she is not a good enough mother. It influences her self-esteem leading to asking questions, such as: “Am I a good mother?”, “Did I fail as a mother / wife / daughter?”. The model of raising a child, in the absence of a “village”, can be dangerous for the child and parents. It follows from the above considerations that the two most important factors in bringing up each child, parents and school, require a change in approach to this complex and long-term process. They need a space where the school, parents and children can work together. School culture can be this space in today’s social structures. Parents must enter into this structure, but in order to find themselves in it, they need the support of teachers. Because the best that can be given to a child is cooperation between parents and teachers; seeking a purpose together, supporting each other in difficult situations, showing empathy and understanding, listening to each other and taking advice on what is happening at school and at home.

## Summary

It seems that the key to improving the quality of a child’s raising is, above all, appropriate communication between teachers and parents; meeting regularly and

communicating by phone or e-mail, not only in bad situations, but also in good situations (Thompson, 2016). The teacher-parent relationship should not be about pointing out mistakes and blaming each other for the child's inappropriate behavior, but most of all about preventing the events leading up to it. Preventing such behavior will only be possible with strong and reliable cooperation between teachers and parents based on mutual trust, support and empathy. Only this kind of cooperation will enable us to fulfill the complex purpose imposed by us, spread over the years, which is raising a child.

The cooperation of parents and teachers, is absolutely necessary in the case of dreams about changing the function, structure and importance of school in people's lives, however it is only a symptom of a much wider problem. It results from an absence of the understanding of the holistic nature of the educational process. In today's world of huge communities, many environments which each of us is forced to enter during the day, the awareness of the diversity of factors that shape a young person is decisive. Homogeneity and full intentionality of the process related to raising and education seems practically impossible to achieve in today's world. The mere awareness that our adult influence in this area is merely statistical in nature is a huge challenge to our expectations. Both parents as well as educators and teachers see their actions as clearly measurable and leading to the purpose set by them. However, the variety of social relationship may force us to change the way we view our role. The more that the rapidly changing world means that the future which our children and proteges will live in will almost certainly pose problems that not only we ourselves cannot solve, but probably even imagine them.

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### Abstract

Entering the 21st century coincided with a serious crisis of the school. Among many problems that are noticed and diagnosed against the educational environment and the school as an institution, the most important problem is the limits of responsibility for the effect of the raising process. The most visible symptom in this case is the worsening quality of the relationship between parents and their children's teachers. The article is an attempt to interpret the basis of this phenomenon both from the perspective of contemporary challenges and the foundations of the educational process related to the evolution of our species. The authors try to describe the limits of possibilities and responsibility, they also point out the complexity of factors influencing raising as a source of misunderstandings between people representing the environments of the family home and school. The authors also propose a change of perspective allowing for a different interpretation of these misunderstandings.

**Keywords:** raising culture, school, education, child, school culture, relationship

### Dawid Mędrala

Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland

email: [dawidmedrala@o2.pl](mailto:dawidmedrala@o2.pl)

ORCID: 0000-0002-4089-9175

### dr prof. UŚ Marek Kaczmarzyk

Faculty of Natural Sciences, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland

email: [marek.kaczmarzyk@us.edu.pl](mailto:marek.kaczmarzyk@us.edu.pl)

ORCID: 0000-0002-1887-2136