

MEDALLION

PROF. DR HAB. BOGUSLAW ŚLIWERSKY, DR H.C.MULT.

The importance of his personality for the cooperation of Czech and Polish universities in the field of pedagogical sciences as seen by Prof. Alena Vališová, PhD., CSc.

Approximately thirty years ago I had the honour of meeting Professor Boguslaw Sliwerski in a professional field. It was basically a fateful meeting for me both in the human and professional sphere. Right at the beginning of our cooperation I was aware that we had many common professional topics, but also very similar views and attitudes in life. Our common goal was to gradually help teaching staff and teacher candidates to manage educational activities operatively and also to help them to navigate knowledgeably in the specific situations of particular teaching environments. The professional focus of our activities from the very beginning was to help teachers to reflect on the meaning of their own work, to form a sufficient insight into pedagogical phenomena, not to be afraid to engage in constructive dialogues, to demonstrate the ability to reinterpret problems in new contexts, to search and think independently and critically, to be aware of pedagogical processes in their development. We have always tried, together with the professor, but also with our colleagues from Poland and the Czech Republic, to present a system of knowledge that enables and opens up an understanding of pedagogy in terms of change, conflict and innovation. In our profession, we understand the above-mentioned concept as a real benefit not only for students of school teaching, but

also for professionals from various fields of educational sciences.

Our intensive cooperation has developed to this day mainly on three levels: scientific, publishing and lecturing. Both the professor and I have been awarded a number of important grant projects in the course of our joint professional career, in which we have addressed key and topical issues in philosophical, psychological, sociological, political, ethical and pedagogical contexts. Gradually, we built a team of collaborators and co-investigators of research projects from Poland and the Czech Republic. On the Polish side, experts from universities and faculties of education were involved, mainly from Kraków, Wrocław, Warsaw, Gdańsk, Poznań and Łódź. Especially the cooperation with the University of Łódź was and is very intensive and lasted for many years. The specifics and concrete forms of cooperation will be the focus of another contribution of mine, which will be published in the context of the jubilee of Professor Boguslaw Sliwerski's life at the University of Łódź. There, our cooperation is really long-lasting, thanks to the professor and his "scientific school". From the Czech side, teachers and researchers from the faculties of pedagogy and philosophy in Prague, České Budějovice, Ostrava, Pardubice, Pilsen and Ústí nad Labem have worked together in our international teams. In recent years, cooperation with the Czech Technical University, specifically with the Masaryk Institute of Advanced Studies, has also developed in connection with the digitalization in education.

The scientific topics we have addressed and are addressing in our research teams are multidisciplinary and multidimensional. Central to our grant projects and publications have been issues such as philosophy of education, ethical issues in education, educational aspects of teaching, integration of pupils into schools, multiculturalism in education, social issues in education, alternative schools and the concept of freedom in the contemporary school, authority of the teacher and the authority of the school as an institution, parental authority, key competences of the teacher and pupils, current issues in family-school relations, manipulation in educational contexts, ethnic groups in schools, ICT and its use in schools, etc. Above I have listed only some of the areas of our interest that are presented in a number of specific publications, monographs, teaching texts, proceedings, in professional pedagogical periodicals in our countries, but also in a wider international context (Slovakia, Austria, Germany, Italy, Brazil, Estonia, Slovenia, Ukraine).

For the purpose of illustration, we will mention only selected grant projects and publications where our and Polish colleagues were most involved as a team. On the Polish side, the lead co-investigator from Poland was Professor Boguslaw Sliwerski. The colleagues he recommended for cooperation from the Polish side were always not only outstanding experts, but also had human qualities and moral credit. Working on the grants brought us closer together, we organised seminars, scientific conferences and workshops, and we published together. We met at various universities and teaching institutes in Poland and the Czech Republic. The most important research project was assigned to the Department of Pedagogy of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic, entitled *Authority and the Transformations of its Concept in the Educational Environment (2005-2008)*. The

publication of the same title, which was the output of the grant project, allowed to address the problem of authority in education from different perspectives: the phenomenon of authority in a globalized world and in a pluralistic society; authority and its pedagogical contexts - history and present; authority in the mirror of educational reality; relativization of authority and its impact on children and youth (Vališová, A. et al. 2008. *Authority and changes in its conception in the educational environment*. Charles University, Karolinum Publishing House, p. 338. ISBN 978-80-246-1939-2). I will only mention the articles of Polish colleagues from the above mentioned comprehensive publication: Wrobel, A. *Autorytet w perspektywie antropologicznego wymiaru pedagogicznego działania* (s. 43-51); Bledowska, M. *Pozycja ucznia w klasie szkolnej* (s. 127-135); Sliwerski, B. *O roli biografistyki pedagogicznej w kształtowaniu postaw kolejnych pokoleń wobec autorytetów naukowych i dziedzictwa myśli* (s. 135-149). We have recently met together at international conferences on *Managing the Motivational Readiness of Technically Educated Students for the Teaching Profession* (Education Policy Fund 2014-2018) and at a workshop on *Developing Digital Competences of Social Science Teachers at Vocational Schools* (TAČR 2018-2021). Despite the workload, the professor found time to participate in conferences on Czech grant projects and presented mostly one of the main papers. Professor Boguslaw Sliwerski's presentations were always of a high professional standard, communicated in a very understandable and interesting way, and were always interactive.

Last but not least, our intensive cooperation consists of long-term active participation in the editorial boards of journals, in presenting reviews of professional studies in our and Polish pedagogical periodicals. At present, cooperation within scientific committees and disciplinary councils in the preparation

of opposing opinions on doctoral theses and participation in their defences is also developing more and more. Recently, we had the opportunity to work with Assoc. PhDr. Jitka Lorenzová to write a review of the fundamental professional publication *Pedagogika. Podrecznik akademicki* by authors Zbigniew Kwicinski, Boguslaw Sliwerski and collective, which was published by Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN SA in Warsaw in 2019, p. 1120 and will be published in the Czech Republic in April 2024 in the journal *Diagnostika a poradenství v pomáhajících profesích* (Diagnostics and Counselling in the Helping Professions). The review was also published in 2023 in a Ukrainian professional journal ([Вісник Київського національного лінгвістичного університету. Seriya Pedagogika ta Psychologiya](#). 37, 86-89. ISSN 2413-3329. <https://doi.org/10.32589/2412-9283.37.2022.272904>. Available from: <http://visnyk-pedagogiy.knlu.edu.ua/article/view/272904>). It was a pleasure to work with my colleague Jitka Lorenzová to write a positive review on such a fundamental publication. The professor's publications are certainly a bestseller in the professional pedagogical community not only in Poland but also abroad.

My personal encounter with the professor was not only crucial for my professional development, but our joint meetings with students, PhD students and researchers were certainly enriching for many other colleagues from Poland and the Czech Republic. We enriched each other with new pedagogical theories, practical experience and the results of extensive international research. We met professionally at universities, faculties, schools of different levels and types, but our meetings also had a personal, human dimension. Many of our Czech colleagues recall the invitation to the professor's family, which was certainly challenging for Mrs. Anežka Sliwerská.

However, she handled everything with refinement and grace. I also have an inner need to thank her on behalf of myself and my colleagues from the Czech Republic. With Professor Sliwerski and our colleagues, we tried to be a model for many students to choose a friendly educational approach, we tried to "shave off" the sterility of the university environment with our approach and to show that a teacher and a student can become close colleagues, friends and confidants.

I would like to thank, on behalf of myself, as well as on behalf of my team of close colleagues from the Czech Republic, to highly respected Professor Boguslaw Sliwerski for his professional activities and his human approach to students and colleagues, for supporting the rest of us, whether in the form of collegial sharing or by providing friendly advice. I sincerely wish you much creative strength in the years to come.

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With great respect and Sincerely

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