

THE PORTRAYAL OF TEACHERS AS REFLECTED IN POPULAR MEDIA CARICATURES

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Abstract

The decline of teachers' self and public esteem is a result of intertwined causes such as the strengthening of skeptical trends and the narrowing of the knowledge gap between generations. Hence, teachers can no longer maintain an agreed-upon social position and are subject to constant criticism which undermines their status.

The aim of the current research was to examine the image and status of teachers as reflected in popular caricatures. To this end, both content analysis and semiology methods were applied. Key findings show that most of the inventory includes caricatures implying the victimhood of teachers.

Key words: *the image of teachers, teachers' status, caricatures, cartoons, victim, victimizer*

THE IMAGE AND STATUS OF TEACHERS

Teachers are entrusted with the mission of ensuring student's intellectual growth and preparing new generations to meet the forthcoming challenges. One could assume that such an important task would receive high status and considerable reverence within any society. Yet, in many countries, teachers are treated poorly, with often appalling attitudes from students and parents alike, and sometimes have to work in two jobs in order to survive.

One of the marks of modern society is a crisis in education and a decline in teachers' self- and public esteem. This decline is a result of three intertwined social processes: the strengthening of skeptical trends, a shattering of the "people of the book" ideal, and the narrowing of the gap between adults and children. Because of these processes, teachers can no longer confine themselves to an agreed-upon social position and they are subject to constant criticism which undermines their status both from society and from within their professional community. Under these conditions, the decline in teachers' status is inevitable. Moreover, it is not a new phenomenon, but rather one more symptom of the ills of modern society (Tamir, 1995).

The two components that establish the status of a given profession have always been the salary paid and the feminization the profession undergoes.

According to Mizala & Romagura (2005), salaries may have three possible effects on the efficiency of the educational process. First, lower salaries may affect the effort and the quality of teachers' work. Second, low salaries may negatively affect the quality of teachers' education students, and hence also the quality of future teachers. Third, it may be hard to keep good teachers in their teaching profession, since they might seek better income elsewhere or at least have several workplaces. These effects can generate substantial inefficiencies in the educational process in general, with negative effects on students' learning in particular. Several papers (Murnane & Olsen, 1990; Dolton & Van der Klaauw, 1999) have examined the link between duration in the teaching profession and salary. These studies have generally found that higher pay reduces the probability that teachers will leave the profession, particularly once differences in alternative earning opportunities are taken into consideration.

The lowest salary in the public sector is given to school and kindergarten teachers, the most hurt by this being the young teachers. The Report of the Head of Salaries Department in the Ministry of Finance in Israel, February, 2020, for example, exposes the depth of the harm to teachers starting out in the education system—young teachers that the Ministry is trying to attract. These teachers are made

to work for low pay, and in addition, most of them have to make do with a part-time position, which lowers their salary even further. Thus, due to the job's scope, the monthly gross salary starts at \$1,200. The report also states that a full-time job is a privilege granted mainly to veteran teachers, whereas new teachers are required to work part time for at least fifteen years on average before being allowed to work for 90% of a full-time job. Teachers who work part-time cannot finish all their work within the hours allotted to them and so they work overtime from home without being paid appropriately. The situation shown in the Ministry of Finance report supplies only a partial explanation for the severe lack of teachers and the high percentage of novice teachers leaving the profession.

The study by Akiba et al. (2012) compared secondary school teachers' salaries in 30 countries and examined the correlation between average teacher salary and national achievement in mathematics and science. Comparing the national teacher salary data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and student achievement data from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), their study found that the countries with a higher average salary for experienced teachers are more likely to have higher national achievement.

Perceptions of teaching as "women's work" (Martino, 2008) are very much evident in the feminization of teaching. This is especially true at the elementary level, where 65.73% of teachers are female, according to World Bank data for 2017. In the Philippines, this figure even reaches 87.54% of elementary school teachers (World Bank Data for 2016, retrieved August 2019). More interestingly, the World Bank data shows that the percentage of women in the teaching profession appears to be rising steadily. This phenomenon has evoked much concern, as men are being regarded as the "dying breed" in schools (Bongco & Inero, 2020). The feminization of the profession in many countries (Mim, 2020) also causes a decline in teachers' social status. Most people who work in education are, in fact, women. They are the ones who suffer from the low salaries and the part-time employment. Although a definite majority of teachers are female, the managerial vertex of the professional pyramid does not reflect this: even though teachers make up most of the workforce in the education system, many school principals are male. Moreover, the income status within the home can shape male and female work experiences, and hence the whole process of teaching gets cheaper with the presupposed gender-roles (Mim, 2020)

Other surveys and studies contribute further explanations for teachers' weak social status. According to data from the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (2018) concerning Israeli teachers' psychometric profile, the percentage of teachers who take the psychometric exam has in fact risen over the past few years, from 54% in 2008 to 70% in 2017, but among new teachers who have taken the test since 2013, there has been a decrease. This phenomenon is common mainly among students in their first year in academic teacher education colleges, where the rate of teachers who took the exam decreased from 87% in 2006 to 56% in 2016.

Another aspect that undermines teachers' social status is the increased involvement of parents. This increased involvement undermines the perception that parents have little to say when it comes to educating their children. Other motives for the involvement include the failure of schools to effectively treat different populations; the growing intensity of social problems in schools such as discrimination, violence and vandalism, and the very fact that involvement provides parents with an opportunity to nurture and realize personal impulses, such as a tendency to leadership, demonstrating strength and acquiring prestige (Bar-Lev, 2007). It seems like the last reason actually is a painful place for the education system: the vast majority of parents are graduates of the education system themselves and consider themselves experts on the subject. The parents, born between the 1950s and the 1980s, were taught at home to respect teachers' authority. When they became parents, they somewhat rebelled against their parents' perception of being able to only trust teachers, since they themselves were, for the most part, underprivileged immigrants.

Most people distinguish between "parental involvement", which is seen as positive and "parental interference", which is seen as negative, through the following acid test: when parental activities are not coordinated with the school, it is considered harmful interference (Traeger, 1999). One could make the case that, since the 1990s, parents have become very active and in some instances even aggressive. From random and marginal involvement, parents have turned to participating in activities at the very

heart of the educational process: setting policies, curricula, teaching methods, filling the ranks of the staff and more. Local authority heads, who began to understand the power voting parents have as residents of the area, have started responding to parents' demands to participate in decision-making concerning local education matters and to empower their involvement in schools within the municipality (Noy, 2017).

Examination of the data on the status of teachers paints a complex picture. In some countries, such as the USA, teachers' social status continues to be low when compared to the status of those working in other academic professions, despite the many efforts to improve it (Merill & Ingersoll, 2011). On the other hand, in other countries these efforts led to teaching being placed in one of the top spots on their 'most desirable professions' lists. The most quoted and studied example is Finland. Studies that examined the dramatic change that took place in Finland connect it to a combination of processes: a sharp rise in the admission requirements for teacher education studies improved the quality of those accepted and increased the attractiveness of the profession; the requirement of a postgraduate degree in order to get a teacher's permit improved teachers' professional quality; granting teachers autonomy in setting the curriculum and in how they evaluate their students increased the teachers' sense that their job was meaningful (Sahlberg, 2010). Successful implementation of various means to promote the status of education is also culture-dependent and it is not clear if the successful Finnish model could be replicated in Israel. However, examining this possibility is a basis for renewed thinking about ways to promote the status of teachers in Israel (Gilat & Vangrovich, 2018). The teacher's role might intimidate some young people considering teaching as a profession, since it does not reflect their experiences of this role they recall from their school days. Nowadays, teachers' professional and value-based authority is not granted to them through the job itself, rather, it is built through their interactions with their colleagues, their students and the students' parents. Teachers must work hard to achieve their status. This could intimidate those who seek to attain that status right away (Kozminsky, 2019). During the second decade of the twenty-first century, the status of teachers in Israeli society continues to be low (Gilat & Vangrovich, 2018). Peri, Hazan and Keizel (2020) mentioned that international studies show that the social status of Israeli teachers is the lowest of all the developed countries. Surveys conducted for these studies reveal that Israelis do not want their children to choose teaching as their profession and do not trust teachers. Decades of effort, and more than ten committees, the members of which were some of the best experts in education, have not yet managed to achieve the desired change.

THE ROLE OF CARICATURES

Cartoon is a simple illustration with a quick style of depicting humans, animals or landscapes. A caricature, on the other hand, is an exaggerated drawing which aims at expressing the unique qualities of humans and human circumstances (Perkins, 1975).

Caricatures are an integral and unique component of journalism. They offer an alternative view to formal news reporting, providing comic relief from pessimistic or complex discourse. Based on trends, facts and opinions, caricatures offer accessible and immediate commentary and analysis of contemporary issues. Caricatures can produce a potent interpretation of current affairs. They capture the characteristics of the human nature of their subjects in order to personalize the subject they wish to portray (Perkins & Hagens, 1980). Due to their concentrated form and the frequent linkage between language and image, caricatures have become an important and significant means of transmitting a message with or without words (Tsakona, 2007; Samson & Hoover, 2009).

One can clearly define five types of caricatures (Maievskiy, 2016): The first type is the most widespread - the political caricature. More often, it is the images of leaders and political figures as well as interpretations of internal and foreign policy. The fifth category is called "strip". This is a number of caricatures in a row, two to five images with a single storyline or author's idea, shared characters, with minimum text or with just the name of a work whose main idea is revealed in the pictures.

From the studies of Greenberg (2002) and Langwald (1981) one may identify three main functions of caricatures:

1. Setting an agenda – zoom-in of various social issues to generate public debate.
2. Sublimation and channeling of social anger – mediating the harsh social reality through humor.
3. Criticism - giving social interpretation and a personal moral angle to societal events and behavior.

The aim of the current research was to examine the image and status of teachers as reflected in popular caricatures.

Research questions

1. How are teachers portrayed in popular caricatures?
2. How are teachers perceived by students, their parents and other agents of education according to the caricatures?

Methodology

This study applied approaches of (a) qualitative content analysis, in which a series of procedures is used to create meaningful generalizations and distinctions from within the text; (b) semiology, a process of reconstructing the image that has been semanticized, or by adding intellect to the object. Semiotics developed out of the research field of structural linguistics which originated in the studies of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (Hebrew version, 2005). This approach saw language as a system. De Saussure proposed a simple model of a *signifier* (denotation) – in this study the actual picture chosen – and the *signified* (connotation) – the perceived concept or idea one has when relating to the picture. While de Saussure allocated a special place for linguistics within semiology, Barthes (2004) preferred to see semiology as part of linguistics, since he saw the system of signs as requiring the mediation of language, which extracts their signifiers and names what is being signified. Barthes distinguishes between the kinds of knowledge required: at the first level – **denotation** – the reader needs basic linguistic and anthropological knowledge; at the second level – **connotation** – the reader needs other kinds of cultural knowledge. The act of reading the picture is a constructive process.

Advantages of content analysis and semiology

1. They are non-invasive techniques. Unlike other techniques such as interviews, questionnaires and projection, tests are free from errors stemming from the presence of the researcher and the subjects' awareness of what the researcher might expect of them.
2. They cope well with unstructured data. In other techniques such as interviews and questionnaires, the data obtained is already structured and each category is known in advance. With this analysis, the analyzer cannot anticipate all the categories before their preliminary examination of the text.
3. They are sensitive to context, since the context and circumstances within which the analysis is conducted cannot be ignored. The interpretation of the data from the analysis should reflect real life processes, including political ones. Moreover, they cope well with a lot of data, such as data from the media (Krippendorf, 2013).

Caricature inventory

The 26 caricatures used in this study were retrieved from a collection of caricatures about teachers taken from the internet (Last retrieved, January, 2022). The entire corpus of caricatures found on the internet was used for the sake of analysis. The corpus does not include mere cartoons that do not aim at expressing the unique qualities of teachers or teachers' surroundings.

Ethics

All the caricatures used in the study are available to internet users and are not bound to any publishers' restriction. Using the qualitative research, I hereby report my proven trustworthiness as a researcher; Furthermore: In order to formulate the connotations of the caricatures, I used the tool of triangulation and hence related to all hints and indications which had been presented in the caricatures.




Research limitations





Since the caricatures used in this study have been retrieved from a collection of caricatures about teachers taken from the internet, we therefore suggest as a follow up study to collect further caricatures, on the same theme, from journals or daily printed newspapers.





Findings





The corpus of caricatures is divided into three categories in which teachers are portrayed.





Table 1. The good teacher, the teacher as a victimizer and the teacher as a victim.





The "good teacher" Caricatures (3).	Denotation	Connotation
	<p>A teacher dressed as a Superwoman is flying above the class. She is smiling and looks content. The students applaud the teacher.</p>	<p>The teacher, succeeding in her role as a teacher, feels like a superhero. She is popular and receives the students' approval.</p>
	<p>A teacher dressed as a Superhero is flying high above, surrounded by books, holding an apple.</p>	<p>The teacher is like a Superhero, skyrocketing through the power of knowledge.</p>
	<p>A teacher with six hands holding a calculator, a globe, some brushes, a bag, a microscope and a book.</p>	<p>The teacher stays upright even though their work demands multitasking.</p>




The teacher as a victimizer (8)	Denotation	Connotation
 <p>A cartoon showing a female teacher standing at a blackboard. The blackboard has the alphabet written on it. A male student is writing 'STUPID' on the board. The teacher says, 'Just your name would be fine.'</p>	<p>The teacher crosses her arms, demanding that the student writes only his name.</p>	<p>The teacher is assembled within herself, refusing to recognize the talented student.</p>
 <p>A cartoon of a teacher on a video screen. She says, 'WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL KIDS. HOPEFULLY ONLY A VERY SMALL NUMBER OF YOU WILL GET SICK & DIE.' The students in the foreground are terrified.</p>	<p>A teacher talks to the students through the screen. She tells them that "hopefully only a small number of them will get sick and die". Her students are terrified.</p>	<p>The teacher is insensitive and distant and scares the helpless students. COVID-10 showed the education system to be dysfunctional.</p>
 <p>A cartoon of an elderly teacher holding a drawn gun. A sign on the wall says 'THE SPEAK OF HEAVING TEACHERS.' The teacher asks, 'WHO CAN EXPLAIN ELLIPSIS SECOND AXIOM FOR ME, HUH???' The students are raising their hands in fear.</p>	<p>An elderly teacher threatens her students with a drawn gun. The students are frightened and raise their hands to surrender or answer the teacher's question.</p>	<p>The burned out teacher can only get the students' attention using threats.</p>
 <p>A cartoon of a teacher with a large nose pulling a student by the ear. The student's face is distorted in pain.</p>	<p>A teacher with harsh features pulls the student by the ear. The student's face is distorted by pain.</p>	<p>The teacher is portrayed as a frightening person who hurts the student. The teacher manages to make the student as twisted as he is. The teacher succeeds in duplicating his image.</p>

 <p>#MartyBucella www.martybucella.com</p> <p>"You can take a student's phone away, but you're supposed to give it back after class, not sell it on eBay."</p>	<p>The principal scolds the teacher for confiscating a student's mobile phone and selling it on e-Bay.</p>	<p>The teacher is presented as insensitive human, definitely not a suitable educator.</p>
 <p>דביר, צא ונקבנה!</p>	<p>A Zoom class taking place during the pandemic. The teacher is angry and calls for one of the students to leave the classroom.</p>	<p>The teacher follows the "old world" as if she has not become accustomed to the digital development in education.</p>
 <p>תפסו אותם! הם לא מקשיבים!</p>	<p>A lesson that takes place during the pandemic. The children wear masks and are distant from one another according to the procedures. The teacher scolds the students: Capsule 2, you are not listening!</p>	<p>The teacher intensifies the distance imposed during the pandemic and alienates the students.</p>
 <p>cartoon.kulichki.com</p>	<p>An aging teacher with a reprimanding face, rebukes frightened adults. The teacher holds a stick in a threatening manner.</p>	<p>The depressing school situation stays as a traumatic recollection for the grown up students, long after their graduation.</p>

The teacher as a victim (15)	Denotation	Connotation
	<p>The girl tells an adult (her parent?) that her teacher taught her to share. The adult distorts her words and concludes: "Her teacher is a communist"!!</p>	<p>Teachers are easily blamed. The implied slander damages the credibility of teachers and harms their social and professional status.</p>
	<p>A parent brings his son to the first grade and tells the teacher: Take him now and give him back to me after high school. The teacher is in uncomfortable.</p>	<p>The parent belittles the teacher and clarifies his opinion about the teacher's profession: A mere babysitter.</p>
	<p>The teacher leans against his busy desk and hides his face with his hands. Those around him disrespect him. For example, one smokes in his face, the other sticks out his tongue, the third steps on his head.</p>	<p>The teacher is subjected to a hostile surrounding, struggling to cope with the profession's growing demands.</p>
	<p>The revealingly dressed teacher stands on the chair terrified of a mouse and cries for help. The mouse laughs at her and corrects her regarding its identity: I am a mouse and not a rat.</p>	<p>The picture disparages the teacher. She is presented in an unprofessional manner. Even a mouse proves her wrong and questions her intelligence.</p>

	<p>Various objects such as a partially eaten apple, a shoe, a protractor and a flowerpot are thrown at the teacher.</p>	<p>The status of teachers has changed for the worse.</p>
	<p>On the left (1969), the teacher sits proudly and the parents reprimand the humiliated child for his grades. On the right (2009) the teacher sits scared while the parents are angry at the teacher. The child seems smug.</p>	<p>The status of teachers has changed for the worse.</p>
	<p>On the left (1968), the student brings the teacher a bouquet of flowers. The teacher sits upright, smiling behind a desk. On the right (2018), the teacher is bent and scared, the student is pointing a gun at her.</p>	<p>The status of teachers has changed for the worse.</p>
	<p>On the left (1960), parents scold the child for his low grades. On the right (2010) the parents and even the student himself scold the frightened teacher.</p>	<p>The status of teachers has changed for the worse.</p>

	<p>Even though the discourse is about how to reduce teachers' overload, the bored bureaucrat is taking a nap.</p>	<p>The education system abuses the teachers and does not undertake the mission of improving their working conditions.</p>
	<p>A teacher wants to teach his students how to read maps. One of the students "quotes" his dad's GPS: "I don't need to rad maps".</p>	<p>The available technology causes students to belittle teachers' knowledge.</p>
	<p>The decision maker orders Robin Hood to get money from the teachers.</p>	<p>The education system abuses the teachers and does not undertake the mission of improving their salary.</p>
	<p>Teachers are required to respond to a school shooting even though they ought to teach about "Love and Life".</p>	<p>The ignorant government continues to load "impossible missions" upon teachers, regardless of their true tasks.</p>

	<p>Teachers are required to respond to school shooting</p>	<p>The ignorant government continues to load "impossible missions" upon teachers, regardless of their true tasks.</p>
	<p>A young mother wakes up her children, who are locked in a can, to return to school, after the teachers' strike ended.</p>	<p>School teachers as babysitters.</p>
	<p>A student brags about provoking his teacher. His parents are indifferent.</p>	<p>Teachers as an example of restraint and self-control despite daily provocations. Parents are apathetic to the educational process.</p>

DISCUSSION

Through popular caricatures about the educational setting in which a teacher is the main or secondary character, we wished to learn how teachers are portrayed and the implications of this portrayal for the status of teachers. The selection of caricatures used is intended as a cultural and human event in which the viewers encounter a multi-layered experience of the human condition: the aesthetic, psychological, social and moral or value-based planes (Cohen, 1985).

The corpus of caricatures is divided into three categories in which teachers are portrayed: the good teacher, the teacher as a victimizer and the teacher as a victim.

The research literature on good teachers goes into great detail about the image of the good teacher, who typically has a positive student-centered approach, projects authority and clear boundary-setting through their disciplinary expertise and how knowledgeable they are, and not necessarily because they have been appointed as class manager. The good teacher imparts values and ethics and has a robust

morality, and can serve as a role-model for their students (Kessler & Tetter, 2007; Stipek, 2006; Goncz, 2017; Arnon & Reichel, 2007).

All the caricatures portraying the **"good teacher"** (3 caricatures) convey his/her ability to master numerous tasks. Such images are characterized with exaggerated outstanding features of appearance. With the help of the drawings, the recipients' attention is drawn to the specific inner and outer features of the capable teacher situated in a very demanding surroundings. Those caricatures reveal the increased work tasks that teachers have had over the years. Among the relatively new work tasks are those related to pedagogy, school development, work team activities. Moreover, teachers today are expected to influence children's lives to a greater extent than in the past; teachers are expected to guide students' food choices, use of language, dress code and manners (Brante, 2009). This tends to create more work tasks, or at least more factors to reflect on. As teachers have been given more tasks while none have been taken away, one can expect teachers to have the qualities of a Superman or a juggler.

The "good teacher" caricatures include images that do not need any text and clarifications. The main process of event awareness happens in the viewer's mind while perceiving the full picture without any comments needed.

The **"victimizing teacher"** (8 caricatures) is an almost demonic character, sometimes with a vicious face and sometimes with no face at all. The situation of the victimizing teacher is reminiscent of the 'regimented place of memories' in the thinking of Foucault (1997). Within the subtext, the caricatures show us a disturbing world in which the real becomes undesirable. As such, the teacher belittles or humiliates students, creating a 'negative pedagogy' (Colluci, 2000) which has overt and covert, as well as formal and informal facets. According to common practice, 'negative pedagogy' refers to punitive methods commonly used in schools. Informal damage is the kind that is not defined by the system's rules but is expressed in the teacher's humiliating behavior (Aroas, 2018). Psychologically speaking, when a person perceives themselves as a victim, one of the ways to eliminate this feeling is to project (Freud, 1987) and to victimize the person before them in a perpetual mode that contradicts any education theories. The image of the "victimizing teacher" in the caricatures is divided into four categories, similarly to the taxonomy of Hughes & Kwo (2007):

The physical abuser: These teachers hurt students physically. They may yell at the children, roll their eyes when asked questions, and make fun of them. In our corpus, a teacher with harsh features pulls the student by the ear. The student's face is distorted in pain.

The mental abuser: Those teachers harm the students' soul. They may yell at the children, roll their eyes when asked questions, and make fun of them. A representative caricature is the one that bestows the notion of the depressing school which stays as a traumatic recollection for the adults, long after their graduation. In our corpus, several caricatures portray a teacher who is insensitive, certainly not a suitable educator. Some caricatures refer to the teachers' dysfunction and misconduct during the COVID-19 pandemic. The teacher intensifies the distance imposed during the pandemic and further alienates the students.

The archaic teacher: teachers who are not updated, refuse to learn and hence impair the students' growth. In our corpus, one teacher is gathered within herself, refusing to recognize the talented student while the other follows the "old world" as she has not adapted to the digital development in education.

The burned out teacher: teachers in a state of chronic stress that leads to physical and emotional exhaustion, cynicism, detachment, and feelings of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment. In our corpus, we observed a worn out teacher who can only get the students' attention using threats.

The "teacher as a victim" (15 caricatures) constitutes the largest category in the study. The teacher as a victim may suffer from students' behavior, parents' conduct, a low image and also from the education system. The teacher is often in the eye of a storm composed of the students, teachers and principals in the school-wide organization, but is also under the strict supervision of outsiders such as parents, inspectors and officials from the Ministry of Education. This victimhood discourse places the responsibility for the victim's situation on the shoulders of others who are seen as 'responsible', but

this kind of victimhood has many implications. There is a dual usage of the concept of the ‘victim’ (Gan, 2005): on one hand, they are a passive victim of others, but on the other hand, they choose to be an active sacrifice on the altar of their beliefs (Keizel, 2012). The distinction between the two meanings teaches us that, in caricatures, teachers are portrayed mainly as passive victims of the other agents of education. Examination of the corpus shows that teachers are not just victims of school violence from students but, rather, they are mainly victims of the system and its policies. These education policies, which are sometimes seen as fickle, leave their mark on the teacher's personal resilience. According to Gaziel (2007), education policy is driven by political and economic processes which put pressure on the education system to change and adapt itself to varying needs. In our corpus, for example, the education system abuses the teachers and does not undertake the mission of improving their salary. In this context, the situation in which the decision maker orders Robin Hood to get money from the teachers sheds light on the teachers’ weakened status. The fact that most teachers have an unimpressive paycheck, emphasizes the fact that the teaching is, in many countries, still the lowest ranking free profession (Gilat & Vangrovich, 2018).

In conclusion, the portrayal of teachers as seen in the caricatures is that of weak or weakened teachers. Teachers have to earn their status and the trust of their students, they also have to earn the trust of the parents. Education officials may threaten many teachers who feel that the school or the classroom is not just a workplace, but often also a battlefield, and instead of cooperation they experience struggle. This portrayal of the teacher corresponds with the content analysis of Trčková (2018), whose study revealed that two newspapers: The Czech broadsheet and the UK Daily Telegraph call attention to problems regarding the teaching profession, advocating social change and higher job prestige. The Daily Telegraph even foregrounds teachers’ wrongdoings.

Kozminsky, (2019) raises acute questions: Who would want to work like that, when the press and the public disparage their abilities and dedication, when their authority relative to the students is decimated, and when parents take an active role in managing their classroom?

One of the ways to improve the status of teachers and the teaching profession is to recruit teachers with clear-cut expectations about their aims in the realm of pedagogy. Good teachers believe that all children can learn and that the environment within and outside school is not an acceptable justification to lower expectations. Good teachers can communicate that faith to their students as well as their parents. Another way to improve the status of teachers and the teaching is to strengthen the trust in teachers and their professionalism. Mutual respect is the basis for dialogue between teachers and students, between teachers and parents and between teachers and their superiors. Respectful and open discourse based on recognizing teachers' professional qualities will establish teachers' status and expand their proficiency in writing, evaluating, encouraging educational initiatives and in establishing creative learning spaces. A weakened and damaged portrayal of teachers will be a loss for everyone.

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