
Qualities of a Good Teacher

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Abstract

A person ready to teach should be knowledgeable in a given subject areas and at the same time a professional. Teaching is a calling, not a job taken because one is not able to find a job in his chosen career. Teaching is not a job that should be entered into by accident or as a last choice. Possession of qualities of a good teacher is a must for those in the profession. In discussing the qualities of a good teacher, it then means that bad teachers exist and they have their own qualities which are the opposite of those of a good teacher. A good teacher should be familiar with the philosophy, objectives and ethics of education, duties of a teacher and the professional ethics. A good teacher should know that his duties are towards his students, parents of the students, fellow teachers and other co-workers, and himself.

A teacher is a person that possesses academic knowledge in a given subject and has the skills to pass the knowledge to someone who is his student. The teacher is trained in the art of teaching and pedagogy of the profession and is certified to teach others who are interested in getting either the knowledge in the subject being taught by the teacher or both knowledge and skills.

Teaching is a career or vocation. It is therefore exclusively meant for those who have the calling into it. The possession of only academic credentials cannot make one a teacher. Such a person must receive the training of a teacher and possess the qualities of being a good teacher. In Nigeria today, teaching is one profession that both teachers and non teachers are in its practice. Most of the non teachers are in it because of little or no openings in their careers of interest and first choices and are using teaching as spring boards to get to where their interests are or use it as a waiting activity for their hopeful choice employment in the future or still use teaching preparation for further studies. The other category of persons in teaching but not professionals are those with interest in

teaching but not trained. The presence of non professionals in teaching is as a result of shortage of trained teachers to take up teaching.

There are among the professional teachers who accidentally chose teaching and are not living and acting as teachers. Teachers by accident, teachers using teaching as a spring board and those trained but not living as teachers, do introduce some unacceptable ethics and methods into the profession that are not acceptable. Generally, a profession is known with its acceptable ethics that are qualitative. Anything outside the known qualities is not quality. Deviations in teaching call for stating and restating the qualities a teacher should know, have and practice.

Characteristics of a Good Teacher

Qualities of a good teacher, characteristics of a good teacher and traits of a good teacher are all one and the same (<http://www.reacheverychild.com/features/traits.html>). Teaching as a career has qualities that a teacher should move into them with ease if he has the calling. Living by those known qualities in teaching, makes him a good teacher.

In teaching profession, like any profession, there are both good and bad teachers. This paper however, is interested in who is a good teacher and how to identify him. Opposite characteristics of a good teacher are those of a bad one. The qualities in a good teacher as listed in <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?> would include but not limited to:

- i. Good at public speaking.
- ii. Growth to a level of effectively meeting the different learning needs of his students.
- iii. Patients with his students, parents of his students, colleagues and all stake holders in education.
- iv. Diligence at work.
- v. Ability to make workable plans.
- vi. Prepare and deliver lessons well.
- vii. Being firm and at the same time flexible, depending on the situation.
- viii. Skillful at work and ability to improvise.
- ix. Be professionally competent at work.
- x. Be a motivator so as to draw his students' interest.
- xi. Be resourceful and creative so as to succeed.
- xii. Be passionate about his work and love learning
- xiii. Persevere to achieve the best for his students
- xiv. Have respect for his students, parents, colleagues and school administration
- xv. Have a good sense of humour
- xvi. Be physically fit, full of energy and in good health.

Philosophy, Objectives and Ethics of Education

Some of the early requirements in teaching a teacher should be knowledgeable about the philosophy of education, objectives of education and ethics of education (West-Central Africa Division Policy, 2008 ed).

- a. **Philosophy:** In addition to the general meaning of philosophy that searches for truth and knowledge concerning the universe, human existence, human behavior, beliefs, basis for making judgment and decisions (Robinson, 2004 ed), philosophy of education seeks to balance development of the whole person – spiritual, physical, intellectual and social. Developing a life of faith in God and respect for human beings. Philosophy of education is about building character, nurture thinkers and not mere reflectors of others’ thought. Those in education as educators must love service and not pursue their selfish ambitions. The development of each person’s potentials is important to education. Philosophy of education teaches embracing all that is true, good and beautiful (WAD, 2008 ed).
- b. **Objectives:** The objectives of education in this paper are its aims, goals and wishes. The objectives of education to students and citizens, achieving proficiency through high quality teaching. It is the wish of the professionals and society that the student or children develop love and appreciation for privileges, rights and responsibilities, guarantee each individual and social group his place in the society. The objectives of education are also interested in having each child respect the other child; children develop respect for the home, society, religion and government of the day. Education is to teach the acquisition of core vocational and various skills, character building, civic education and responsibilities. Other objectives are use of leisure, self-realization, social adjustment, economic efficiency and ethical maturity.
- c. **Ethics:** Ethic stands for the known behavior, moral system, principles, justice, duty and all norms of a person or group. Ethics expected in education and teaching include but not limited to dedication to truth, avoidance of controversies, no conflict of interest and personal integrity. No partiality. Justice and objectivity in evaluation of students, protection of students and fellow teachers, fostering cooperation between home, community and school. Supporting the school administration, respect for constituted authorities, obedience to God and government and be an ambassador for God to mankind.

Teacher Duties and Responsibilities

The qualities of a good teacher are judged from the responsibilities of a teacher. The school authorities and other stakeholders in education expect the teacher to act according to his responsibilities as a teacher. The responsibilities or duties of a teacher

The Intuition

go beyond passing on knowledge and discipline to students but to direct students to lead a fulfilling life that can go beyond a successful career. The National Education Association (NEA) of the United States of America code of ethics for education profession as cited from cdn.api.twitter.com ... that

The educator, believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, recognizes the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence and the nurture of democratic principles. Essential to these goals is the protection of the freedom to learn and teach, and the guarantee of equal education opportunity for all (<http://www.citruscollege.edu>).

The summary of this code is total development of individual child under the individual's rights to education.

The responsibilities of a teacher run across students, parents, management and himself. These can be summed up as facilitators inculcating intellectual, spiritual and social development of students in their formative years. Teachers are to assist in uplifting the social, intellectual, emotional and personal-social of students through preschool, high school and university.

a. **Towards Students**

- i. To model students' behaviours and mannerism by self example
- ii. Prepare daily lessons, weekly and long term plans.
- iii. Flexibility in meeting students' needs in acquiring knowledge and skills.
- iv. Evaluation of students through quizzes, tests and examinations.
- v. Supervision of students' conducts during classes and other activities while in school.
- vi. Understand students' diverse backgrounds, strengths, weaknesses and areas of interests of each students.
- vii. Enforce discipline
- viii. Honesty in students appraisal and no favouritism
- ix. Resolve conflict among students.
- x. Meet the need of each student under his care by adjusting his teaching methods.
- xi. Always there for his students, parents and attend conferences to develop self and improvement on the job.
- xii. Protect all students' records.
- xiii. Confidentiality with students' records
- xiv. Keep students busy with take home assignments.

b. **Towards Parents**

- i. Keep parents updated of their children and wards progress

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- ii. Discuss children problematic behavior.
- iii. Encourage parents to penetrate diverse interest of their children and avoid commanding them into choosing careers/vocations that do not appeal to them.
- iv. Encourage parents to attend and participate in the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings.
- v. Team up with parents for the progress of the children.
- vi. Maintain home-school relationship.

c. **Towards Management**

It is the duty of a teacher to:

- i. Attend staff meetings, conferences and school programmes like sports, picnics and educational tours.
- ii. Maintain healthy relationship with other teachers and staff.
- iii. Show honesty and sincerity towards the profession.
- iv. Should help in formulating school policies
- v. Carry out administrative duties as assigned
- vi. Support school administration, fellow teachers and other staff.
- vii. Keep to the contract terms

d. **Towards Himself**

- i. Should be a teacher by calling
- ii. Should possess teaching qualifications.
- iii. Should be honest and sincere towards the profession.
- iv. Follow professional practice as they affect students, parents, records and colleagues.
- v. Make plans that can be implemented with schedules.
- vi. Have knowledge of teaching subject(s) and any current developments in the area(s).
- vii. Should be co-learner with the students.
- viii. Should accept differences of each student.
- ix. Be eager for professional development to upgrade knowledge and ways of teaching
- x. Should avoid unethical relationship with students and fellow teachers.
- xi. Comply with school rules and procedures.
- xii. Accept team work with other teachers, staff and the school administration.
- xiii. Hold classes as scheduled on the time table.
- xiv. Enforce school rules and regulations on students.
- xv. Be a true model to the students.
- xvi. Keep, protect and maintain accurate students' records. Cases of missing scripts and grades of students should not be tolerated and affected

students should not be made to suffer the teacher's unprofessional approach to work.

Performance Appraisal and Teacher Effectiveness

Performance appraisal is a necessary tool in bringing out good qualities in a teacher and teacher effectiveness. Performance appraisal is the process of a supervising educator observing and evaluating the performance of a teacher (<http://www.ehow.com>). The supervisor is any or all of these – Heads of departments, administrative faculty such as principals and vice principals. The teacher supervised should receive feedback of his weaknesses and strengths in teaching appraisals as cited in (<http://www/ahisd.net/departments/hr/perfect/TeacherAppraisalProcess.pdf>)

Appraisal is meant to increase teacher's effectiveness by having the chance to know and correct his weak areas in teaching and strengthen the strong areas the more. Teacher evaluation, assessment or appraisal should be done regularly so as to make quality in teaching a daily and deliberate process and as noted in <http://www.answers.com/topic/teacher-evaluation-methods>, <http://tntp.org/assets/documents/Teacher-Evaluation>, book.google.com/.../Assessment_testing_and_evaluation-in..., www.education.gov.uk/.../a00201884/new-arrangements.

Conclusion

Teaching is not all comers' profession but only for those with a calling. Stakeholders in education that a teacher will work with while performing his duties include: students, parents of the students, fellow teachers, school administrators and education supervisors, boards of education of both local and national governments. His duties include making education available to all and maintaining high standards in teaching.

Teachers having qualities of good teachers are expected to produce graduates who are matured enough to discuss issues that affect the nation and how to solve them and less of discussing events and people.

Recommendations

The under listed recommended points, though not exhaustive will contribute in raising the qualities of a good teacher:

1. Teachers are not born but trained; therefore, men and women with a calling in teaching should first be trained before being engaged.
2. Untrained persons in teaching profession who have the calling should be trained.
3. Revisit yesteryears training patterns by upgrading and using for today and tomorrow's training of teachers.
4. Conduct appraisal teacher evaluation from time to time for effective teaching helping teachers in their individual weak areas and

5. Flush out those not ready to accept and add value to education.

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