

Education and urban society

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Education's main goal is to transmit knowledge and to imbue students with the values and principles that would make them better and productive citizens in the future. Education does not only concern itself with academic excellence but also value-formation geared towards upholding the principles of equality, justice and righteousness. Teachers are tasked with providing the materials and the instruction to motivate learners to master skills and knowledge that build upon previous skills and learning.

Teachers and schools work together to provide the best learning environment for students and the public and the government always want to see results of effective teaching and student's mastery (Brower & Balch, 2005). Government set standards and policies that schools should reach and live up to or suffer consequences such as reduced funding. As an education student, I am slowly warming up to the challenges that lie ahead of me. I know that as teachers, we have a huge responsibility to the nation's children and to the country for we mold minds and character (Mueller & Skamp, 2003).

The reality of the changing landscape in education, the many educational theories and reforms that beset our educational system and the task of becoming an effective teacher are some of the things that teachers must face.

The concept of accountability falls on the shoulders of teachers and schools, in this concept, students must demonstrate mastery of learning standards set by the state government through standardized test scores. Schools that perform well and above the state standards are rewarded while those who fall below the standards are punished (Bulkley & Fisler, 2003). This was

designed to make sure that teachers and schools translate learning objectives to actual skills and knowledge.

Although the concept was harsh it left room for more complications like how tests does not absolutely measure students' learning, test scores can be affected by many variables aside from the student's competencies. The reality of bilingualism and special needs students also are affected by state testing and accommodations have to be made (Christenson, Decker, Triezenberg, Ysseldyke & Reschly, 2007). Reporting test scores and performance to the public and to the state agencies are also open to misreporting in order to raise scores so as not to lose the school's funding (Sutton, 2004).

Parent involvement is always welcomed by schools since it has been found to be associated with positive student performance. Therefore, schools and teachers make it a point to involve and communicate with parents regarding the performance of their children (University of Northern Iowa Office of Field Experiences, 2005). Grades, test scores and other pertinent information that schools maintain are protected by law. Parents and students have the right to view their grades and school records. Schools have to protect the confidentiality of their records and cannot release said information to anybody unless duly qualified by law or are given authority by the parents and student (Cutler, 2003).

Teachers often use grades as indicators of academic potential and performance and using it as a motivation by posting grades and scores might be construed as a violation of the rights of the student. Parents often dread the distribution of class records as it exposes them and their child to scrutiny

in terms of whether their child flunked the subject or had very low grades (Engvall, 2002). Therefore, teachers have to be conscious of how, when and to whom they give information about students as such in the case when wrongful test scores was released to students (Cornell, Krosnick & Chang, 2006).

Teachers and students often use instructional materials like stories, articles, software, images and music and even videos to enhance their classroom teaching. In this manner, teachers and students can easily be guilty of copyright infringement as they do not ask permission from the copyright owner. The distribution, copying and posting of copyrighted materials also constitute infringement (Quinn, 2003). One way to lessen this issue is for students and teachers to understand what copyright infringement is and to explore materials that are open, not copyrighted and are categorized as fair use to avoid copyright infringement.

Technology is a key player in today's schools and classrooms, however maintaining the use of technology is costly and some schools are challenged when it comes to providing access to students and teachers. Using technology to advance, enhance and reinforce classroom instruction had been proven to translate to better academic performance (Educational Research Service, 2004) but the challenge is do all teachers have the knowledge and skills to use technology and in some instances technology have replaced teachers which is still a much debated issue. Lastly, the use of technology opens up opportunities for cheating, for plagiarism and even the transmission of inaccurate information and knowledge.

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