

Discussion question



The Teaching Profession- Beyond Degree! The profession of teaching is a responsibility that holds an imperative object of shaping the crux of the society. He must have an ability to shape abilities in the students. 'Qualifications' hardly certify a teacher to succeed in his responsibilities as much as 'qualities' do. Necessity therefore entails for such society-builders to be different, for, " School should go beyond teaching the basics. It should be teaching how to take the basics and take your niche in life" (Kirchmer)

Not different is the line on which the theme of the film " Goodbye, Mr. Chips (1939)" is based on. The profession of a teacher " demands character and courage", Mr. Chipping is warned in the beginning. What makes the film interesting is the way he succeeds in proving his spirit of professionalism and the way he establishes the necessity to go beyond the university degree in pursuit of having ' character and courage' which would help him impart knowledge to the students in the light of the professionalism.

So is it just character and courage that takes a teacher to succeed in giving " you something to take home to think about besides homework" (Tomlin)? We can think about so many other characters that a teacher must possess although the two aforementioned is as much necessary. In fact I would say that the function of a teacher should take a form which is full. Therefore he must justify the full form of TEACHER. He must teach, educate, advise, change, help, encourage and rear; all the qualities of which is given, not by a university degree but by the ability to go beyond it!

Quite influentially, Howard Gardener in his theory of multiple intelligences has pointed out that the concentration that the schools tend to give on logical intelligence and linguistic intelligence (mainly reading and writing) does not help in imparting actual knowledge for, not many students excel in

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this area of intelligence. An education institution thus, must have an approach of such kind that serves the broader vision of the education. That would be possible if the teacher utilizes different methodologies, techniques, exercises and activities that cater to not only those students who excel in logical and linguistic intelligence but also to those who do not. (Theory of Multiple Intelligences).

I once undertook a test in the net (Assesment: Find Your Strengths) developed by Dr. Terry Armstong based on the theory aformentioned and was happy to score 3. 29 points in my top three intelligences while the highest that can be scored is 5. My top three intelligences were ‘ language’, ‘ social’ and ‘ self’. This test revealed that my learning preferences would be influenced by my linguistic abilities, my social ideas and a good sense of self. In other words I would best learn if methods used to teach me gratifies and serves my preferred intelligences. Therefore I must be tough in such a manner that my interests are served. Today when I reflect as a teacher, I realize that it is often true that the way I teach is influenced by the learning preferences that I myself possess. I would, for instance, prefer to teach my students in a way that portrays my linguistic abilities by using impressive phrases or words or having a poetic and idealistic approach. I do that without realizing the fact that not all the students would have the ability to understand that method. The case would be the worst if a teacher fails to aid the teaching with other interesting activities, exercises and methodologies to grasp the student’s attention.

The scheme of multiple intelligences is even more desirable for it supports the idea of being a “ life long learner”. A teacher’s responsibility should not only be that of teaching but of knowing ‘ how to teach’. With each new

technique and method he uses to make his teaching experiences livelier, the teacher constantly is in a pursuit of learning newer and diverse things.

It is nice to remember about my own teachers in my school days and reflect how they used to be the source of inspiration and joy as far as the experience of learning is concerned. I cherish the memory of a particular teacher in my first standard that always made my mathematical learning a matter of fun and frolic. In order to teach me the sum of “ $2+3$ ”, for instance, she used to make big boxes on the ground and give numbers 1, 2, 3, etc for each box. Letting me stand on the number 2 box, she would ask me to jump three boxes forward and tell her the no of the box I reached. When I would say “5”, she would exclaim, “Very good... so, two plus three equals to...5”. There was another gentleman when I was in standard eight who always used to make sure what he spoke made sense. He provoked my thoughts one day when I was sitting with my friends and gossiping.

“What are you doing students?” he asked

“Nothing sir” I replied.

“You are not supposed to do noting!” said he.

Not all the teachers that I came by in my life were directly a source of inspiration though. I wouldn't be particularly fond of sharp-tongued, strict and nagging teachers. Yet, one thing is for sure, the negative aspects of the teachers that I lived my life with thought me not to follow them. I owe them however for; I wouldn't have learned what not to be if it were not for those ‘bad’ teachers!

I have always known as a student as well as a teacher, that this profession is one of the few sources that make a difference in one's life. A teacher shapes a student's life and ameliorates his own. He inspires, builds, nurtures and

fabricates a human life- all of which are virtues that are attained by experience and character. The certificates of his university degree would not make as much a difference in a teacher's own life as his merits and virtues would make in a student's life.

Works Cited

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