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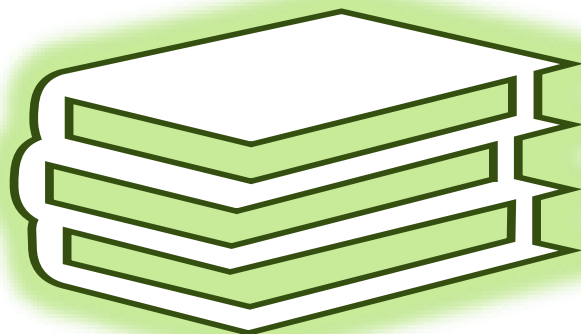
1501-

BEING A PROFESSIONAL

TEACHER

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INTRODUCTION

“A good teacher can inspire hope, ignite the imagination, and instill a love of learning.”- Brad Henry

Being a professional teacher? How does one possibly answer this question? Is there really a right or wrong answer? To put simply no there isn't, but one can be guided on how best to carry one self and get the best out of the learners you will one day have the fortune of teaching.

The online module “BPT1501” is all about learning to be a professional teacher. Having a sense of professionalism in whichever career one pursues is important as it implies that the job is taken seriously and demonstrates one's skills and competence at the job. Therefore, professional teachers are skilled, competent and effective teachers and carry out their duties according to the standards

THE SEVEN ROLES OF A GOOD TEACHER

"The greatest sign of success for a teacher... is to be able to say, 'The children are now working as if I did not exist.'" - MARIA MONTESSORI

1. Learning mediator

Teachers can mediate and facilitate the learning experience by providing experiences that will help students constructively learn, and by posing questions that can further a student's thought process. Being a mediator involves serving as a go-between and exposing students to new and exciting ways of learning. This is done by creating the right environment, catering for students of all backgrounds and talents etc.

2. Interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials

Teachers design and student driven activities and environments that recognize and accommodate student diversities. A teacher should be well grounded and have a basic understanding of the principles of the curriculum. They should also have a thorough knowledge of the subject/s that they are teaching and the best ways in which to integrate it with the other subjects. Subject and course work should be original.

3. Leader, administrator and manager

While the classroom should not be entirely teacher driven, it is important that the teacher maintain a level of discipline and be able to resolve conflicts in an ethical and logical manner should the need ever arise. A teacher should also be flexible, understand the school management systems and should be able to adapt.

4. Scholar, researcher and lifelong learner

A teacher never really stops learning. We learn new things everyday not only from the children we are tasked with teaching but from our fellow colleagues as well. With the advent of technology in the current age it makes it possible for teachers to keep up to date with the latest in teaching styles and methods.

5. Community, citizenship and pastoral role

As a teacher one should be respectful of not only the various cultural backgrounds of their students but their fellow colleagues. They need to be able to guide and counsel their students should the need arise. As teachers it is important to uphold and ensure that a child's basic human rights are met.

6. Assessor

Teachers need to ensure all assessments are conducted in a fair and ethical manner, showing no trace of favouritism to any one learner. Keeping of efficient records is vital so one may keep track of a learner's academic progress. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that students are aware of all the relevant information pertaining to the assessment itself. E.g. Due dates, mark allocation etc

7. Learning area/subject discipline/phase specialist

A teacher needs to be able to communicate effectively with not only the students but the parents as well. They should have a vast knowledge of the subject area they have specialised in as well as offer extra learner support for those learners that may require it. Again, a teacher should be flexible and be able to adopt different modes and methods of teaching at any given time.

MY FAVOURITE ASSIGNMENT – ASSIGNMENT 3:

“Education is the key to success in life, and teachers make a lasting impact in the lives of their students.” - Solomon Ortiz

I have chosen Assignment 3 – Interview and Report a Professional teacher. This was my favourite assignment as it granted me the opportunity to not only to formulate and ask the questions that would quench my curious mind, but to observe and understand first-hand what it takes to not only be a teacher but a good role model.

Many people assume teaching to be an easy task. Very few people realise the amount of hard work that goes into teaching. The first thing I learnt from my interview with the professional teacher is a person requires certain traits to be successful as a teacher, love and passion for what you do, compassion and most of all patience. A teacher needs to be adaptable and flexible. Mrs SL Abraham, the teacher I had the great fortune to interview has all these qualities and more. Being in the profession for 33 years, I could gain much insight into what a teacher's life is like, not forgetting the struggles that occur daily.

I had the opportunity to not only interview Mrs Abraham but observe her as well as she conducted her class. This for me was the cherry on top as I got to gain valuable knowledge about the pro's and cons of the various teaching styles used. One very important teaching style observed was including the learners and always making them feel part of the lesson. As a result, learners are more engaged in the lesson and you will win the learners attention which is pivotal.

After the interview it helped me develop my teaching philosophy. My teaching philosophy is to not only motivate, but challenge learners to reach their full potential. Teaching is a career that requires compassion, patience, kindness, and most of all passion. These are qualities I believe I possess. All children are

unique and have something special that they bring into the class. They require a stimulating educational environment where they can grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially.

Without out doubt it was an amazing experience doing this assignment and this specific assignment stood out the most for me!

CHALLENGES AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE

"Failure is a great teacher, and I think when you make mistakes and you recover from them and you treat them as valuable learning experiences, then you've got something to share." - STEVE HARVEY

I personally did not have any difficulties that were not easily resolved with any of the said assignments. The assignments were easy enough understand. The problems I would think most if not all students faced were the constant connectivity issues with Myunisa. Being a module that is entirely an online module would require a student to be able to firstly be able to connect without an issue. Difference in communication from the teaching advisors. This for me was the biggest problem. This I felt spanned throughout the entire module.

If I had to knit pick, out of all the assignments, assignment 6 for me would be the one I had most difficulty with. I am certainly no poet and to write a poem was an entirely new experience for me. Being a perfectionist at heart it was imperative that I had got it right. Another first for me was recording of said poem and uploading on YouTube. I am quite a shy person and to record the poem and upload it was a task that I found quite daunting.

As with any problem there is always a solution. The poem took several tries and practice. Until one day I wrote a poem based on something that meant a lot to me, and that was being grateful. My mum was my inspiration behind this as she always taught me one major life lesson to always be grateful. Although I felt the uploading of the recording on YouTube unnecessary, it made me realise that to be in this profession it would require me to be more social and not as shy. The recording helped me overcome my shyness, for this I am thankful. It did take me several tries, (again my perfectionist tendency) but eventually I hope I got it right.

Regarding the communication issue had it not been for the various Telegram groups/WhatsApp groups I believe most students like myself would not be aware of what to do exactly. Thanks to said platforms students could exchange ideas as well as compare the communications that they had received. I was lucky enough to have a teaching advisor that communicated often but felt it quite unfair that the communication given was not of a standard format.

SELF-REFLECTION

"I am a teacher. It's how I define myself. A good teacher isn't someone who gives the answers out to their kids but is understanding of needs and challenges and gives tools to help other people succeed. That's the way I see myself, so whatever it is that I will do eventually after politics, it'll have to do a lot with teaching." - JUSTIN TRUDEAU

Before beginning this module, I always thought there is only one way to teach. Studying this online course has equipped me with many valuable lessons on bringing professionalism into my career. It has taught me about the various roles and responsibilities that an educator plays; the different characteristics that define effective and quality teaching.

We are here to help the child along his journey through education. I have gained various teaching strategies and learning ethics by reflecting on teaching practice and by finding innovative ways to develop abilities of learners such as knowledge, skills and values. Making learning lifelong, interesting and fun, for example giving learners appraisal in class, either a reward or certificate for good work, this will motivate learners to strive for their goals and by creating a positive learning environment. This module has also taught me the ways in which we can use technology in the classroom to our advantage.

Learning about cultural diversity and how to ensure you as a teacher can cater for this. Designing lesson plans and managing the classroom effectively, for example making sure the classroom is prepared for all learners from all backgrounds and learning talents. Making sure all students are involved with everyday lesson and by using different techniques to get them to pay attention in the classroom.

The knowledge that I have gained from this module shall remain embedded in my mind and will come in handy when I am a qualified teacher one day

and am expected to live up to the standards of professionalism that are put in place.

OVERALL IMPRESSION

My impression of the module, there is quite a bit of work that needs to be done. Being a first year UNISA student, and having to study an online module for the first time I found the task quite daunting. First and foremost the communication. Teaching advisors/assistants should receive a standard form of communication as I had stated earlier. Some groups received more guidance from their TA's than others. This I do not find fair.

Including blog post in assignments. Some students didn't even bother with the blog posts or even commenting on said blog posts. This just added undue stress on the student. Some of the learning units and assignments were repetitive.

On the brighter side, I believe that Being a professional teacher has the makings of a great module. Personally, I would like to thank UNISA for introducing this module as it equipped me with the necessary knowledge about professionalism in the class. It has been a wonderful experience with a few blunders here and there but nonetheless I have overlooked it – Thank You!

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