

## The Ideal Teacher and the Motivated Student in a Changing Environment

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**Abstract** *The ideal teacher is described in this paper as one who effects eternity in the sense that one can never tell when his influence stops. To back this up, five categories of attributes were outlined and expected that every teacher must exhibit them to qualify as models for their students. The attributes are professional, personality, social, leadership and classroom interactions. Also, the motivated student is described as one who desires to learn on will and acts it to achieve specified goals. The need for motivation and factors that affect it were discussed, and suggestions were made on how to increase and maintain motivation in class.*

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### Introduction

The focus of this paper is to re-orient teachers and students on issues boarded on the ideal teacher and the motivated students. Indeed the cultivation of these important attributes in our educational system should form the hallmark of any education programme.

In this paper, the authors will attempt to examine the important characteristics of an ideal teacher as well as suggest strategies by which teachers can cultivate these attributes. Also, he will examine how best we can motivate our students to learn in our modern days educational system. We shall therefore begin by explaining the two concept in this paper – the ideal teacher and the motivated student.

### The Ideal Teacher

Ideal refers to a standard of perfection, beauty or excellence. It is the highest and best conceivable, regarded as exemplifying, a mode for imitation of the highest conception. It includes doing things right or producing the desired goals to the admiration of others.

The teacher is viewed as someone who has acquired some knowledge, skills, attitudes, ideas or appreciation in order to create or influence desirable changes in behaviours of his students. He is the key man in the entire education programme and the quality of his training makes or mars the end result of his job as a teacher. These views agree with most authors ideas, such as Clark (1995) who is of the opinion that a teacher is one who creates an interaction between him and his students in order to bring about the expected change in the students behaviour. Also Gbamanja (1997) is of the view that a teacher is an educationist who underwent pedagogical training, including a good knowledge of the principles and practice of education, in addition to his teaching subjects or discipline. Others include Kosemani (1994) sees the teacher as the person whom the society delegates the education of children to, in a formal setting. This individual is specifically selected, trained and educated for the job of dispensing knowledge to others according to their needs and capabilities.

Obanya (1994) gave a brief description of a teacher, as somebody who is:

1. Educated, in the sense of a broad-based form of disciplined knowledge,
2. Specialized, in the sense of in-depth knowledge in a given subject area,
3. Professionally trained, in the sense of internalisation of knowledge, skills, attitude and values needed

for promoting learning,

4. Professionally competent, in the sense of applying one's skills to really promote learning, and
5. A lover of learning, in such a way that one's own personality inspires learner.

From all these, one can accept that the teacher is one who systematically attempt at helping someone to change his knowledge, skills and attitudes in a desired direction. This means that no education can rise above the quality if its teachers and these qualities are reviewed below.

### Attributes of an Ideal Teacher

A number of attempts have made to categorize the characteristics and skills of an effective teacher, a good teacher, an excellent teacher etc. (Clark and Peterson, 1986; Clark, 1995; Awotua-Efebo, 2001; Akpe, 2003; Green and Osah-Ogulu, 2003). We will look at these different characteristics, which are in five interrelating categories. These are;

1. Professional Attributes
2. Personality Attributes
3. Social Attributes
4. Leadership Attributes
5. Classroom Interaction Attributes

#### 1. Professional Attributes

This involves the organized body of specialised knowledge, skills and attitudes that has been acquired through long and intensive preparation, maintained by force of organisation or concerted opinion, high standards of achievement and conduct, and committing one to continued study and to a kind of work for rendering of public service. The professional attributes are;

- a) Professionally trained in a broad-based form of knowledge, skills, attitudes and specialized in in-depth knowledge of a given subject area.
- b) Mastery of the subject matter, involves having a good working knowledge of the subject and the ability to impart it to the students.
- c) Updating the subject matter through attending seminars, workshops, conferences and in-service trainings to follow up in current trend of events in ones field of study.
- d) Being a life long student, that is being a practical scholar, a student of academic discipline, as put by Awotua-Efebo (2001), must be ready to learn at all times through one's colleagues, students and the environment.
- e) Professional devotion in achieving desired changes in individuals.
- f) Admit ignorance and acknowledge mistakes when necessary.

#### 2. Personality Attributes

This is concerned with the variables of individual differences. It refers to one's outstanding characteristics, his abilities, emotions and social traits, his interests and attitudes. Other terms used frequently in connection with personality according to Lovel (1981) are temperament and character. The first involves innate bases such as natural tendencies, organic drives and glandular balance on the emotions, while character is evaluated against current standards of a cultural pattern, such as truthfulness, reliability, honest or their opposites. The teacher must be;

- a) Loving, warm and understanding
- b) Responsible
- c) Helpful and encouraging. That is he must be there always to assist students and encourage them in

their academic work.

- d) Patient and compassionate
- e) Cheerful and optimistic
- f) Honest, truthful and a person of integrity
- g) Sincere in act and words
- h) Open-minded and approachable
- i) Tactful and alert
- j) Empathetic, by understanding the feelings of one's students
- k) Self-controlled and not easily upset
- l) Comport himself with decorum as this will enhance the public image of the profession.

### 3. Social Attributes

These are behaviours that a teacher exhibits that influence others and in turn is influence by others too. This is very much related to personality attributes. These are;

- a) Punctuality, the teacher must always get to his class on time. Report to duty regularly and on time.
- b) Always insist on students regularity and punctuality to classes
- c) Be dedicated to work
- d) Possess a good knowledge of learners and their characteristics
- e) Accept all students and do not discriminate
- f) Always be neat and clean in appearance so as to present a model of neatness to your students.
- g) Must be happy, attractive, pleasant, good-natured, with a good sense of humour and make students feel at ease.
- h) Insists on high standards of work and behaviour.

### 4. Leadership Attributes

A teacher who enters a class to teach automatically becomes the leader of that class. Leadership attributes include,

- a) The ability to exercise authority judiciously and control the class. Although a democratic is usually encouraged, but the need to exhibit one's authority over the class must go with the power to influence or command the thoughts, opinions or behaviours of the students.
- b) Creation of conducive atmosphere for learning by showing the tendency to promote and assist learning to take place
- c) Exhibit competency in the class by possessing the suitable requisite qualities
- d) Organization- This deals with the ability to arrange the class in a coherent unity or functioning whole
- e) Must be a disciplinarian by enforcing order. Also, corrects moulds or perfects the mental faculties and moral characters of the students. It also involves the enforcement of obedience in the students
- f) Must have the ability to inspire learning through influencing, moving or guiding the students to greater heights.
- g) Show respect for one's students and make wise decisions
- h) Must uphold all that dignifies, by doing things right or producing the desired goals. In other words the teacher must be effective.

### 5. Classroom Interaction Attributes

This refers to the techniques/strategies the teacher uses when interacting with the students. These are;

- a) Skillfulness- Skill is the ability to perform some tasks well, especially as a result of a long practical

experience. It can also be referred to as a fact or a particular technique where it is the entire body of procedures or methods. Green (1994) defined skills as developed proficiencies or dexterity in the scientific art, which may require training or as a natural gift for competence and deftness in its practice, execution or performance.

- b) Creative teaching- this is a self-developing teaching and technique which encourages independence of the learner, self-discovery of the learner both in and out of the school system. Thus a creative teacher is one that is innovative, fluent, unique, flexible, original and resourceful. He utilizes every situation/condition to promote learning and readily able to reverse a difficult situation to a simple manageable one. Also in the absence of standard equipment, the teacher must be able to improvise if possible, as well as generate new ideas.
- c) Involve students in active participation in the class, so that they can depend more on their own ability to think than on the teacher. The students therefore develop a sense of confidence through participation, as more attention is given to the individual or small group work. Learners are encouraged under guidance to seek solutions to problems.
- d) Hold discussion classes to allow student compare their experiences, exchange ideas in particular topics and learn from one another. It has democratic properties which includes students involved in free guided and purposeful expression of views and ideas on given issues, problem or situation. So it is usually between two or more persons interacting verbally with each other. This assumes that every individual can make meaningful contributions to topics during discussions.
- e) Always give take home assignments clearly mapping out the problems or topics assigned. Highlight the important points emphasized in class. Also introduce study techniques, so that they can use some basic physical movements during activities or work through the application of the mental faculties to the acquisition of knowledge or to accomplish a desired goal.

The five main attributes have been reviewed and one might ask, what makes an idea teacher? That question will be answered when we are through with the second concept, the motivated student.

### **The Motivated Student**

A motive is what causes a person to act in a way. It implies an emotion or desire operating on the will and causing it to act. Therefore, motivation is the choice of activity one makes, plus the persistence and intensity with which the activity is pursued. It involves the desire to learn and the level of involvement that students exhibit in their learning experiences. It is the energy students put into their academic work to achieve specified goals. It is also a state of need in a person that drives behaviour towards some goals.

Motivation brings up a need within the student, and the behaviour that is aroused is steered up by this need, with the aroused behaviour being directed towards the goal the student wants to achieve.

### **Need for Motivation**

Researches of Green (In press) and Awotua-Efebo (2001) revealed that students who are well motivated in the learning process tend to do well in their academic work, even when the learning environment is not ideal.

This implies that they are not likely to misbehave in the classroom. Conversely, some normal students who are bored and uninvolved will not learn even in the most desirable environment, because they are not motivated.

### **Factors that Affect Motivation**

Students are motivated to learn in general;

- a) When their teacher is facilitative – that is, he makes learning easier through being honest, genuine

- and real, accepts the students as persons of worth, with dignity and deserving respect.
- b) When their teacher is enthusiastic – that is lively and energetic, face and hands to express enthusiasm.
  - c) When their teacher is creative and uses variety in his teaching.
  - d) When their teacher have the support of their parents who encourage them to work for the benefit of these children.
  - e) When they have had successful learning experiences through having tasks they can succeed in doing, in order to reinforce their desire to learn. As when they fail in their tasks, they loose their drive, self-confidence, esteem and sociability.
  - f) When they have a strong need for approval and recognition that can be achieved through praise and rewards occasionally.
  - g) When they are given freedom to explore , think, create, work, according to their interest, and ask questions.
  - h) When their teacher use thought provoking questions, which are open-ended to encourage divergent thinking.

### How to Increase and Maintain Motivation

Sincere motivation is very important for effective learning to take place, it is our duty as teachers to know what conditions increases or decreases it. It should be noted that one means couldn't motivate all the students ina class; as such variety of methods should be utilized when dealing with your students. Let us examine the different methods we could use to increase and maintain motivation.

1. Exhibit a face and voice that shows interest in the students and the topic.
2. Start with dramatizing in some topics. For example, bring out some students to represent a man, wife and children when introducing a lesson on the family.
3. Display objects or charts for students to examine/observe and allow them to express their reactions or ask questions about it.
4. Hold up a real object and begin to talk and ask questions about it.
5. Ask questions that require the students describe their past experiences or present daily life, and the topics should relate to students past experiences and daily life.
6. Use a story that relates directly to the topic.
7. Make the topic seem important for them to learn at that particular time and emphasize how the topic is useful in their everyday lives.
8. Give them enjoyable, imaginative and challenging tasks, which will make them, use what they are learning or have learnt in variety of ways.
9. Usually a wide variety of learning materials and activities, especially those the students can manipulate and use.
10. Allows them ask imaginative questions which stimulate the students to think creatively or critically, rather than factual questions that rely on memory.
11. Allows them to suggest possible assignments.

### How to Detect a Motivated Student

A motivated student can be detected by the level of involvement the student exhibits in the learning situation. Thus, a motivated student is,

- a) Industrious, interested in learning and attains her goals.
- b) More co-operative and more desciplined in general.
- c) Exhibits curiosity over things his enviroment.

- d) Learns faster and easily too.
- e) Retains what is learnt.
- f) Demonstrate matured reasoning ability.
- g) Prefers to work the company of older children and adults.

## Conclusion

In this paper the authors examined two important concepts the IDEAL teacher and the MOTIVATED student. To become an ideal teacher is the hallmark of the teacher profession, as the most striking point about education before the civil war in this country was the high status of the teacher in the society. Irrespective of the school size, or his salary, the teacher was respected, cherished, revered and feared. He was disciplined, responsible, very effective and represented the symbol of what is good in the society (Manilla, 1989; Obioha, 1990; Green, 2002) why can't we all as teachers still exhibit the qualities that rewarded our colleagues of yester years?

The needed is re-echoe the words of Gbamanja (1997), that

A non-teacher cheats

A poor teacher tells

An average or mediocre teacher informs

A good teacher teaches

An excellent teacher inspires, and this is where my ideal comes in . this is because an ideal teacher affects eternity, as one can never tell where his influence stops. We should all aspire to become models for your students by exhibiting all the attitudes narrated above. Thus an ideal teacher is one regarding as exemplifying, a model for imitation for his students who gets motivated for greater heights.

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