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ORIGINAL PDF URL: <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/1071653>

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER BEING A GOOD MODEL IN THE SOCIETY FOR THE NEXT GENERATIONS

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ÖZET: İlkel veya gelişmiş bütün toplumlarda öğretmen çok önemli bir konumdadır. Öğretmenin toplumun yetişmekte olan nesillerinin şekillendiricisi olduğu gerçeği asla unutulmamalı ve bu gerçekten hareketle öğretmen yetiştirme politikası üzerinde önemle durulmalı. Öğretmenler topluma iyi birer örnek olacak şekilde eğitilmelidir.

I-INTRODUCTION

In all societies from least to most civilized, the teacher plays a critical role. The teacher, with few exceptions, is one of the chief molders of the future members of a society. We choose, as a society, to hand over an important part of the education of our young to specially trained professionals and as a society, we have certain expectations of our schools.

We want our teachers to be good human beings, balanced and educated persons who will set good examples to our children, and to have the knowledge and skills to guide them surely. Furthermore, our second major expectation is that the teacher is supposed to represent certain ideals in the community. These ideals differ somewhat from one to society to another, but there is an underlying similarity. A teacher must form a good model not only for her pupils at school, but for all the individuals in the society.

II-TEACHERS AT SCHOOL

The weightiest social relationship of the teacher is her relationship to her students: it is this relationship which is teaching. There is a line in Saint-Exupery's "The Little Prince" that applies to any endeavor, but especially teaching. It reads: "That which is essential cannot be seen with the eye. Only with the heart can one know it rightly." The following lines are the reflection of a young student's feelings toward his teacher clarifying the expected characteristics of a good teacher [1]:

*I want a teacher who has a contagious enthusiasm for her teaching.

*I want a teacher who is creative.

*I want a teacher who can add pace and humour to the class.

*I want a teacher who challenges me.

*I want a teacher who is encouraging, and patient, and who will not give up on me.

*I want a teacher who will take an interest in me, as a person.

*I want a teacher who knows her subject well, and who can explain something on the spot, if necessary.

*I want a teacher who will take a minute or two to answer a question after class.

*I want a teacher who will treat me as a person on equal basis with all the members of the class.

*Finally, I want a teacher who will leave her emotional baggage outside the classroom.

III-TEACHERS IN SOCIETY

In a school, a learning situation is a compound of political, economic and psychological factors. For a teacher to diagnose a learning need requires knowledge not only of the academic history and performance of the pupil in question, but also of the social interactions in which she engages in the classroom and outside the school.

In 1975, Skilbeck[2] indicated that a teacher should be familiar with the:

*cultural and social changes,

*expectations including parental ones,

*community assumptions and values,

*changing relationships (e.g. between adults and children),

*ideology.

Waller[3], in 1961, pointed out the types of the role expectations of a small community from a teacher. They are as follows:

*The teacher must be available for lecture courses, public occasions, lodge functions and edifying of all sorts.

*She must join in local groups.

*The moral requirements are extremely important. She is supposed to be more trustworthy than other mortals, more moral, more learned.

*With regard to sex, the community is often very brutal, indeed. The parents prefer male teachers married.

Undoubtedly, the fact that the teachers must be models of whatever sort of morality is accepted. A place of honor is ready for him if she behaves so. A teacher knows that especially in small, conservative societies this place is part of the iron frame work that shuts the teacher, as a sacred object, and keeps her from acting as an ordinary human being.

IV-THE TEACHER STEREOTYPE

It would be incorrect to assume that teaching inevitably develops the same character traits in all teachers. There are all kinds of teachers. There are "Natural born teachers" and "Made teachers", and different classes of each. There are problem teachers whose personalities take them far from contact with reality. There are negative or positive teachers. Especially, it is true that there are several kinds of "Good teachers".

Experience of persons forms some definite imagined constructs relating to the appearance or behaviour of persons falling within certain occupational categories. These imagined constructions are called "stereotypes". When a stereotype has once become current, it may be passed from one individual to another by social contact. They are generally visual and they are "pictures in our hands" according to Waller[3], and as He indicated, the more common stereotype of the teacher, that of the self-sacrificing, gentle, kind, self-effacing creature, over-worked, underpaid, but never out of patience, and always ready to "give freely of her time and money" for school purposes. This is the resultant of a friendly reworking of experience, it is idealization of a teacher. Waller[3] says that this favourable stereotype represents the community idea of what a teacher ought to be. So, teachers are forced to remain, more or less, within the boundaries of behaviour set up by the stereotypes.

V-BEING A GOOD MODEL

In contemporary societies, teachers play a major role in contributing to the solution of an array of economic, social and cultural problems[4]. Although a great majority of sociologists and educators agree on the importance of certain specific roles of teachers, the expected role may show changes from society to society due to cultural differences. For instance, our expectations from a teacher as a good model in Turkish society are as follows:

*A teacher should have a secular, contemporary attitude in order to develop the society always preserving our national character like our great leader and Headmaster Atatürk.

*Her behaviours must be kind and gentle. She should have the ability to create and maintain successful interpersonal relationships within a friendly atmosphere in her environment.

She must dress appropriately to the time and place. Since clothes is a reflection of one's personality, she must always be well-dressed.

*Her private life is always watched by the people around her, because parents want a reliable teacher for their children.

*A teacher must be forward-looking and open to innovations.

*She must be sociable. She must take part in social activities, perhaps taking the responsibility of the leadership of a social group of committees.

*A teacher should show a special interest to the problems of her students, and of other individuals, as well.

*She must be calm and collected when faced with unexpected situations in order not to create panic in the people around.

*She should act as a problem-solver in society, not a trouble-maker.

*She must be a model in obeying social rules. Furthermore, she must warn the others to obey certain roles in order to maintain order in society.

*She should use the standard form of her mother tongue as much as possible to reflect the best characteristics of our own society. She should also be aware of the importance of the Turkish cultural values and norms.

*Being well aware of the significance of the teacher-parent relationship on the success of her students, she should always be in contact with the families of her students.

*A teacher should take care of her health. By doing so, she will show the importance of a healthy body and mind, and she will set a good sample for the others. She should be familiar with First Aid, and she should avoid using or doing things harmful to her health. For example, according to the statistics, 60 per cent of medical doctors, and 75 per cent of teachers smoke in Turkey. Is it possible to talk about being a good model for the next generations with this nasty habit?

As it is clearly realized, these are the desired characteristics of a good teacher. But, do most of the teachers in our country behave in these ways? Does society respect teachers? Let us add a few more questions: Is this profession attractive to the young generation? How many Lycee graduates will write

Education Faculties at the top of their University Entrance application lists? In other words, does a teacher have a high status in society? Or is it one of the professions that produces an unacceptably low standards of living for those practising it?

It is difficult to give positive and satisfactory answers to these questions. Certainly teachers must gain confidence of being people who are looked up to in the community. They must be accepted as leaders, good models for the next generation. People must not lose status as a result of being teachers.

VI-CONCLUSIONS

Recently, teachers and teacher policies have become the centre of considerable concern in U.S.A. and in European countries. Critics question the capacity of the teaching force either to maintain established standards or to adapt to the modern world. Parents are increasingly demanding in their desire for their children's success, and are more closely familiar with the educational world than ever before. These call on a wider repertoire of skills, and more active co-operation by teachers with their colleagues, parents, and other bodies in the community.

The main solution is the training of the teachers. The pre-service phase of teacher education must accommodate some basic concepts related to her professional and also personal development. An awareness of her own duties and rights being a model for the society must be created. Attractiveness of the profession through high salaries and rewards must be increased and it must become a desirable profession not only for low-class students, but also for the children of the rich and the elite.

As a final suggestion the establishment of the new "Teachers' Centers" may be thought as a professional gathering place for teachers. Of course, the aim is not to create filthy, card-playing or cigarette-smoking rooms for lazy staff, but to provide local opportunities for teachers to exchange ideas, to meet the communication needs of them, and to supply the necessary social facilities and opportunities for serving as a good model for the next generations.

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