LESSON 2 THE TEACHER AS A PROFESSIONAL

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2.1 OVERVIEW

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Have you ever wondered what it takes to become a professional person or rather asked yourself this question: What is a professional? Long ago, we used to identify and differentiate the type of work that a person does by the clothes that he or she wears. Anyway, that is how things were then, and I am not sure if that is still the case these days. However, what I am sure about, is that in this time and age you certainly must have met or at least lived next to a professional person, perhaps in your neighbourhood. There are many kinds of professionals out there. Spend 5 minutes brainstorming as many different kinds of professionals as you can think of.

When we talk of professional jobs, surely teaching must be one of the professions appearing on your list. Did I guess right? Teaching has been defined in many ways and I am sure once you start engaging in teaching activities, you will be able to come up with your own definition of teaching. Your experience in a particular job will allow you to define your job the way you understand and probably feel it.

Niebrand, Horn and Homes (2000), for example, suggest that teaching is a public profession. I agree, do you? This means that the work of a teacher is to serve the community and the community that you serve as a teacher always regards you as a teacher wherever you are, in and out of school. Because you serve the larger community, you must always be aware of the impression you create and make. In this learning unit, you will explore the various concepts relating to becoming a professional teacher and interact with your fellow students to share and exchange your deep learning desires.

I have already given you a background of where we are going with this topic. To learn more about professionalism and understand why teaching is regarded as a

profession, there are certain outstanding qualities or criteria used to describe teaching as a profession. Below see the images of professional teachers as an introduction to the unit.

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- gsas.columbia.edu/office-academic-diversity
- www.jobmail.co.za/blog/a-closer-look-at...tion-and-teaching-jobs-in-south-africa/
- **THE STRUCTURE OF LESSON 2**

THE STRUCTURE OF LESSON 2

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2.2 THE ATTRIBUTES OF A PROFESSIONAL TEACHER

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- The best people to provide you with insights into the qualities of a good teacher are learners themselves. They spend the better part of their lives with teachers in a school environment. Learners can give a better description of a good teacher and if you are good as a teacher, they will know and could even tell you! It is not uncommon to hear a learner boasting that, “my teacher means the world to me”. Parents also know good teachers. Unfortunately, they also know bad teachers. Parents can point at a teacher in a mall, in town or anywhere and say with pride, “the future of my child is in the hands of that teacher”. This, therefore, tells us that it is important that we, as teachers, work together with the parents of the learners that we teach to get the support that we need from the parents. A teacher who understands her/his subject matter very well, and can help the learners to succeed, is respected and will always be held in high esteem.

  Research informs us that teachers are the key to quality education. It is very interesting to listen to what learners say when they describe how excellent either their Grade 1 teacher, a Mathematics teacher in Grade 5 or English teacher in Grade 7 or how good their primary teacher was. The descriptions are illustrated in such a way that you would want to meet that teacher. This shows teachers are appreciated and respected even though they rarely learn or hear about these accolades. Reflect on your own experience.

    - Can you think of a teacher whom you admired?
    - Can you think of a teacher whom you did not respect?
    - What were the differences between these two teachers?

  Teaching in the school system is divided into different phases. As you are preparing yourself to become a qualified teacher aiming to either teach in Foundation Phase (FP), Intermediate Phase (IP), Senior (SP) and/or Further Education and Training (FET), you need to think about the qualities of a teacher required for the phase you intend to teach.

- **ACTIVITY 2.1: PREPARATION FOR DISCUSSION FORUM 1**

ACTIVITY 2.1: PREPARATION FOR DISCUSSION FORUM 1

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- NB: This exercise is meant to help you structure your thoughts and prepare for your Discussion Assignment Later. You need not submit this activity.

  Step 1:Search for video/s on the internet and watch teachers delivering lessons in the classroom or giving instructions to learners. Observe how these teachers relate and communicate information to learners. Write down notes and keep them for later use.

  Step 2: Do an internet search and look for any information and/or article about the following:

- Attributes of a professional teacher
- The characteristics of a good teacher
- Qualities of a good teacher.

You can use any search engine (e.g. Google, Navigator, Firefox). Look for an icon in the form of a magnifying glass, usually near the top of the screen, and then type in the words from the above list to see what comes up.

Find and read one or more articles related to the above issues. While reading highlight important points and make notes for later use.

Step 3: Use the notes you compiled from watching the video and your readings. Design a mind map to help you structure your thoughts and in preparation for your discussion with your group members, later.

3.1 What kind of teaching qualities are required for a Foundation Phase Teacher?

3.2 What kind of teaching qualities are required for an Intermediate Phase Teacher?

3.3 What kind of teaching qualities are required for a Senior Phase Teacher?

2.3 TEACHING SKILLS AND COMPETENCES FOR CLASSROOM TEACHING

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- Students training to become teachers do so to cultivate skills for teaching to enable them to engage with knowledge in such a way that it is effective and learners are able to understand what is being communicated. To teach requires one to have skills that will help you to deliver the message in an uncomplicated way. Teaching skills should be perceived as a group of teaching acts or behaviour that are used to facilitate learning directly or indirectly (Mohan, 2011). Thus, teaching is an act of conveying a message in a creative and understandable way (Madson, 2006), so that the listener, or learner in our case, acquires knowledge by actively engaging with the information made available.

Due to the diversity of learners and a variety of ways in which knowledge must be communicated in our current classrooms, teachers require a broad collection of teaching skills. This is because learners of today are different from those of past years. For example, children born in recent years learn to see, touch, feel and hear a cellphone from the age of 6 months or even earlier. Thus, modern teachers experience different kinds of learners who are able to answer a cell phone from pre-school or nursery school, for example. Therefore, we need to understand that technology plays a significant role in our lives and that of today's' learners. In other words, technology is increasingly transforming our classrooms, the lives of our learners and the lives of teachers as well.

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- hechingerreport.org/20-years-teacher-reinvents-classroom-using-technology/
- It is appropriate to use technology in our classrooms. However, you need to understand that technology is merely a tool that enhances learning and keeps learners interested in task. It is the interaction with information and with others that results in learning. Teaching still matters most and the teacher plays a significant role in the classroom.
-
- www.responsiveclassroom.org/about/principles-practices/
- SKILLS TO BE LEARNT

  Research,

  Reading,

  Writing,

  Analysis

  Critical thinking, and

  Reflecting.
- **ACTIVITY 2.2: PREPARATION FOR DISCUSSION FORUM 1**
- **ACTIVITY 2.3: PREPARATION FOR DISCUSSION FORUM 1**

ACTIVITY 2.2: PREPARATION FOR DISCUSSION FORUM 1

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- From the definitions given, it is clear that different people define teaching skills differently. However, they agree that such skills are needed to facilitate learning as well as interaction in the learning situation.

  Do an internet search and list ten (10) essential teaching skills that a modern teacher needs to cultivate in order to facilitate learning effectively in the modern classroom. In your list, you need to explain the importance of each of the identified teaching skills. Tabulate your response as follows:

Essential Teaching Skill	Importance

A professional teacher should possess a variety of skills to help influence her/his teaching and to meet the needs of each learner as a way of reaching all learners in the classroom. It is important to learn and develop a variety of teaching and learning skills and competences during teacher training (Spear and Reinhard). However, some of the teaching skills and competencies are acquired while already practising or in the teaching field.

- www.slideshare.net/MidhatSaad/raazia-presents

- DISCUSSION FORUM 1

Stage 1: Spend at least five minutes brainstorming the competences needed by teachers in modern and diverse classrooms.

Stage 2: Search the internet and find videos where you will be able to observe a teacher in the classroom applying a variety of competences in their teaching. List the variety of competences identified and explain how they were applied in the classroom.

    - Below read about Competences of a Professional Teacher

- www.jet.org.za/clearinghouse/primted/st...s-sace-version-10-20170822.pdf/download

2.4 TEACHERS' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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- Perhaps as you go through some of the material that you are reading right now, you are also thinking of the real classroom situation. You are now starting to ask yourself many questions and maybe you now start having some doubts if you will be able to cope working with the children in the classroom situation. Well, you are not alone! Remember that you were also once a learner at some stage and your teachers would always prepare and plan the material they would be teaching to make sure that they kept you active throughout the day. That was good then. You were a learner and carefree. Now it is your turn to learn well in advance, making sure that you keep learners engaged throughout the day. It is now your turn to understand your role and be responsible as a professional teacher.

Teachers, whether teaching for the first time or having been teaching for a number of years, always worry about the type of learners they will have each year. They worry about the question of discipline, the size of the class and how to manage it as well as all the other new things they will learn about with and from their learners. As the experts would always say, the success of classroom management depends entirely on the ability of a teacher to prepare and organise him or herself. As a teacher, you will only succeed if you have a clear understanding of your role and are able to captain and command the class in front of you. There is more to this topic.

Like a gifted actor on stage, teachers must switch roles every day. A competent teacher must be able to fulfill different roles at the same time. This requires flexibility and adaptability on the side of the teacher. At times, one role may be more important than the other. For example, if the parents of one of your learners are going through a divorce, you will, as a teacher, have to take a pastoral role to be able to comfort the child to help him/her deal with the situation. This is one of the seven roles that teachers are expected to play. Read about the seven roles in the following diagram that teachers are expected to play at school.

In the Additional Resources Platform, you will find the following documents: The,

- Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ).
- National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development and
- South African Council for Educators, Code of Conduct.

From these documents, you will learn more about the roles and responsibilities of a professional teacher.

Each of the roles you will have read about from the various documents is defined in terms of foundational, practical and reflexive competencies. Do you know what all these terms mean? Let me help you, then:

- Foundational competence means that the teacher can demonstrate his/her understanding of the knowledge and thinking which underpins the action taken.
- Practical competence means that the teacher can demonstrate and consider a range of possibilities for action, make considered decisions and perform action chosen in an authentic context.
- Reflexive competence means that the teacher can integrate the above two competencies in order to reflect more critically on both and to learn more or to change practice as needed.

The simple explanation is that as teachers, we need to know the content that we teach, be able to teach and communicate the required knowledge in an effective way and be to reflect on and improve our teaching.

The roles that you read about in the various documents are explicit and it is expected of you as a teacher to take up each of these roles seriously. These roles should be seen as a commitment that you, as a new teacher make when you sign a teaching contract. There are also some sub-roles you must perform, although these roles are hidden, implicit and not written and you learn about these roles as you go along.

- **ACTIVITY 2.4: PREPARATION FOR DISCUSSION FORUM 1**
- **ASSIGNMENT 1: DISCUSSION FORUM**

ACTIVITY 2.4: PREPARATION FOR DISCUSSION FORUM 1

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- Stage 1:Spend at least five minutes brainstorming the hidden roles the teachers perform in a diverse classroom.

  Stage 2:Search the internet and find videos and readings about the implicit roles a teacher performs in the classroom. List the many roles and responsibilities you watched on videos and read about.

  Step 3: Use the notes you compiled from watching the video and your readings. List the identified roles and explain the following:

  - What is your understanding of hidden roles? Give examples.
  - What are the benefits of taking the responsibility of becoming an effective teacher?
  - How do teachers apply the identified roles in the classroom?

SSIGNMENT 1: DISCUSSION FORUM

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- Reflect on the readings you made and in your own words respond to the following questions:

  Some South African teachers do not seem to regard their function as crucial. They give out this message through their absenteeism, lateness and lack of preparation (SAIDE, n.d:34).

  Does this statement motivate you on your journey to becoming a teacher?

  Respond to the above question by using the following as your points of reference

  a. Teachers' responsibilities/accountability

  b. Teachers' knowledge

  Your response to the above question should be about 200 words. Post your response on the discussion forum. In addition to your post you need to also respond comprehensively and respectfully to at least three (3) other students' posts

  Evaluation: Your work will be assessed in the following way:

1. An indication of a position taken and your response that supports that position. (4)

2. Your response using the given points of reference

2.1 Responsibilities/Accountability

· A least three (3) types of teachers' responsibilities are mentioned (6)

· A clear, comprehensive and appropriate response showing how motivated/demotivated you are by the statements (12)

· The response is contextualised to education. (2)

2.2 Teachers' knowledge

· The response indicates the type of knowledge/s acquired and the process of acquiring the knowledge (8)

· The response indicates how types of knowledge/s and the process of knowledge acquisition motives/demotivate you (8)

3. Posting

Respond to three (3) posts and support your position with factual information (10)

Total: 50X2 = 100

2.5 THE CHALLENGES THAT TEACHERS FACE

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- Teachers are faced with many challenges in their everyday life. Some challenges are not difficult to handle (e.g. correcting minor misbehaviour), but others are systemic (e.g. protests about fees or textbooks or salaries) and thus very difficult for an individual teacher to handle. Personal value systems impact significantly on teacher effectiveness in certain roles. For example, the educational policy requires that teachers should always, promote gender equality. However, this is in sharp contrast with some cultures within which teachers operate: according to some societies, men are believed to be superior to women. In some societies, men are still regarded as sole decision-makers and as a result, they take nothing coming from a woman seriously. It is interesting to note that in the teaching profession in South Africa, that while women make up most of the teacher population, men are disproportionally represented in principal positions. This, therefore, poses a dilemma for teachers. And the question: How, then do you, as a teacher, promote gender equality if the community within which the school is located, insists that it does not accept gender parity as it is foreign to it and will not abandon its culture of male dominance?

  Harley (2000) believes that circumstances at school determine the possibility of teachers fulfilling particular roles. In under-resourced schools, for example, teachers are entirely dependent on their own resources. Some classrooms have no electricity, some have a few or no books at all, some do not have stationery, some have bare concrete floors, others have old chalkboards, and all these conditions

force the teacher to resort to some survival tactics like doing a lot of talking in classrooms and using a lot of verbal interchanges with the learners. And as teachers, we must face all these challenges as this is the profession that we have chosen. This is our calling.

- The alarming levels of overcrowded classrooms. Overcrowding in KwaZulu-Natal schools has reached alarming proportions - 670000 pupils are being taught in classrooms of more than 55 pupils each, ...
- www.timeslive.co.za/thetimes/2013/05/06/teachers-are-clueless
- Lessons continue in an incomplete classroom Congolese children in an unfinished classroom at a primary school in Goma, North Kivu Province.
- www.passblue.com/2012/06/20/schools-fai...est-where-population-grows-the-fastest/

2.6 CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

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- Management does not reside with school leadership only. It spreads across, in- and outside the classroom. Teachers are expected to manage learners as well as the work they do daily. Beaty-O'Ferrall, Green, Hanna (2010) argues that teaching is complex and cannot be reduced to discrete tasks that can be mastered one at a time. Teaching and management are integrated and prospective teachers need to be aware of this complexity. They need to be aware that teaching is increasingly becoming complex and challenging these days and needs to be prepared from the initial training. Perhaps one of the toughest challenges of teachers is a variety of technologies such as cell phones and video games in the classroom. This is a different challenge that can distract the discipline, management and the work of the teacher in the classroom. The teacher needs to find ways to help learners use technology for meaningful learning rather than superficial entertainment. This suggests that teachers are faced with a multiplicity of tasks that must be managed as well as managing learners with diverse characteristics and behaviours. There are other challenges such as overcrowding, discipline, managing own work, schooling disruptions, the list is endless.
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Rwanda
- **ACTIVITY 2.5: PREPARATION FOR ASSIGNMENT 2**

ACTIVITY 2.5: PREPARATION FOR ASSIGNMENT 2

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- NB: This activity is divided into three stages and is meant to help you structure your thoughts and prepare for your next assignment. It is not for submission.

  STAGE 1: BRAINSTORMING

  1. Spend at least five minutes brainstorming what you think are the key challenges teachers face in their classroom and/or their schools.

  2. On the basis of your brainstorm, formulate some questions that you hope your pre-reading will help to answer.

  STAGE 2: READING

  1. Highlight the links given below and find articles to read. As you are reading the article write down some notes you will need to use later.

  Teachers' Challenges: http://www.iccb.org/student/pdf/resource/challenges.pdf

  Classroom challenges: http://www.iccb.state.il.us/student/pdf/resource/chanllenges.pdf Teachers' challenges: http://www.cepd.org.za/files/pictures/The%20Challenges%20Facing%20Education%20Interview%20Nov%2009.pdf

  2. Find one article on the challenges teachers face and experience in your own context. BE it in South Africa; Zimbabwe; Ethiopia; Abu Dhabi or in your country. Read the article, make notes and highlight important points. Keep your notes safe because you will need to use the information later in your assignment.

  STAGE 3: POST READING

  3. Use the notes you compiled from your readings. Design a mind map in preparation for the assignment you will be writing and submitting.

2.7 ASSIGNMENT 2: CASE STUDY

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- Your assignment will be announced in due course by your teaching assistants (TAs). In this assignment, you are going to do a lot of research and thus use different sources. You need to acknowledge the sources you have used in your assignment: for example:

  A book: Author. (Date). *Title*. Place: Publisher.

  Kahn, S. (2012). *The One World School House: Education Reimagined*. London: Hoffer and Stoughton.

  An article: Author. (Date). Title. *Journal name and volume number*, pages cited.

Laurillard, D. (2002). Rethinking teaching for the knowledge society. EDUCAUSE Review, 37(1), 15-16.

An online source: Author. (Date). Title. URL. Date of access.

Millwood, R. (2017). Holistic Approach to Technology Enhanced Learning (HoTEL) learning theories map. Accessed from http://hotel-project.eu/content/learning-theories-map-richard-millwoodon 11 January 2017.

- **2.7.1 REFLECTION**
- **2.7.2 REFLECTION ON LESSON 2**

2.7.1 REFLECTION

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- This is a reflective activity about teachers' professionalism. Your response to this activity is important as they show your understanding of teachers' professionalism.

Question 1: Thinking of your own context, what other sub-roles do you expect to play as a teacher in your classroom? Indicate the hidden or additional roles you expect to play as a teacher in your imaginative school.

Question 2: Write two (2) paragraphs explaining the significance of the additional roles you have identified.

2.7.2 REFLECTION ON LESSON 2

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- The purpose of this section is to help us understand how well the online delivery of this learning unit enabled you to learn.

  There are no "right" or “wrong” answers. We are only interested in your opinion. Please be assured that your contribution will make a difference.

  - Write 5 statements about your experience in this learning unit and keep this information for later use in the year.
  - Suggest ways in which we can improve the module.

2.8 REFERENCES

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