

Teaching is a Noble Profession

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I've been teaching in a public high school since 1969, and I remember my classes of yesteryear like yesterday. Indeed, while the educational system here in Quebec has been in a state of continual change ever since I started, the behavior of the students has remained pretty much the same. I can honestly say that I find students today as receptive, cooperative and as respectful as always. What seems to have deteriorated over the years is the attitude towards teachers by the government, the public, and the parents. The latest bashing by the government just a few years ago was the labeling of teachers as "90% workers"; a cheap ploy designed to deprive teachers of a pay raise. Parents have become much less supportive of teachers. More and more parents come to parent-teacher interviews with a hostile attitude. All too often, they rudely demand to know why their child did so poorly. Their tone of voice is accusatory as if to suggest the fault lies with the teacher rather than with their child. This is nothing more than teacher bashing and belittles a noble profession.

Just a few days ago, I asked one of my physics students if she would like to be a teacher. She told me that she was actually thinking of becoming a teacher; however, her father changed her mind. As she put it, "My father said to aim high, stay away from teaching." How sad that such a noble profession should be considered so "low" by the public at large. How sad that the very profession responsible for producing the professions considered "superior" by the general public, such as doctors, lawyers, architects, engineers, writers, accountants, to list a few, should itself be considered "inferior". Although I will retire soon, I am as proud today of being a teacher as I was the day I started. True, the income is less than in the "superior" professions. Nonetheless, I highly recommend teaching to anyone wishing to make a meaningful contribution to society. Regardless of public opinion, teachers do make a difference. Teaching is a noble profession. Touching lives and helping to form decent human beings is the true role of any teacher. Is there a more noble profession? Is there a more noble job? Is there a more noble task? I don't think so!

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