



Key Attributes of a Good Teacher

Key Attributes of a Good Teacher is a statement of excellence. It details key characteristics expected of the best teachers in Vanuatu. Teacher preparation is the major determinant of the extent to which the characteristics of good teachers are evident in beginning teachers. However, it is assumed that not all of the characteristics are to be found to a marked degree in beginning teachers, and may take many years to develop fully. Some, in fact, are not dealt with at all in pre-service teacher education programs, while others are covered only cursorily. Nevertheless, all are characteristics to which all teachers should aspire.

The following categories of attribute have been used:

Professionalism is an attitude of mind that causes a teacher to strive, on the basis of an agreed code of behaviour, for excellence in the performance of his/her teaching duties. It includes professional ethics.

Content of Teaching is what is taught. It includes subject matter, attitudes and values, learning processes, and skills. It includes things that are transmitted both explicitly and implicitly.

Practice of Teaching is what a teacher does and how it is done.

Interaction with Families and the Community highlights the need for teachers to engage meaningfully with other stakeholders in education .

It is hoped that the attributes table below can be used to help determine the aims and objectives of teacher education programs in Vanuatu.

KEY ATTRIBUTES

1. PROFESSIONALISM

1.1. Professional Values. Good teachers:

1.1.1. are committed, as their primary responsibility, to improving student learning;

1.1.2. understand and are committed to the responsibilities and obligations of belonging to the teaching profession;

- 1.1.3. exercise consistently high levels of professional conduct and principles of fundamental justice in their dealings with students, colleagues, and the school community;
- 1.1.4. have, and can clearly articulate, a philosophy of education as it relates to the aims of education and approaches to teaching;
- 1.1.5. understand their professional obligation to contribute to the social, cultural and economic well-being of the Vanuatu community;
- 1.1.6. ground their teaching in the belief that all students have the capacity to learn and should be treated compassionately, justly and equitably;
- 1.1.7. take into account in their professional activities the disparate values held by individual students, groups of students, families, and the school's community;
- 1.1.8. understand the influences that have shaped their own values and beliefs and how these values and beliefs may influence their interaction with others;
- 1.1.9. exercise discretion in dealing with matters of confidentiality, trust and sensitivity in relation to students, parents and professional colleagues;
- 1.1.10. actively engage in debate about current educational and social issues that affect teachers' work;
- 1.1.11. are willing to contribute to educational change and the shaping of educational policy.

1.2. Professional Knowledge and Dispositions. Good teachers:

- 1.2.1. recognise the home as the foundation of learning and its continuing significance in students' development;
- 1.2.2. understand the implications of changing family structures and relationships for interaction between the home and the school;
- 1.2.3. are knowledgeable about the part of the education system in which they work, and its relationship to other parts of that system;
- 1.2.4. are able to explain clearly and justify the place of their teaching specialism in the curriculum as a whole and their relevance to Vanuatu society;
- 1.2.5. are critically aware of the extent of the 'hidden' curriculum and the ways in which it influences student learning;
- 1.2.6. understand their role as facilitators of the moral, spiritual, social, cultural, creative, aesthetic and physical development of children;
- 1.2.7. keep abreast and take account in their teaching of social and cultural change;

1.2.8. have a critical understanding of the social, economic and political impact of technology on the Vanuatu community and its implications for the content of teaching and learning;

1.2.9. understand the framework of laws, regulations and policies that affect teachers' work;

1.2.10. have an understanding of the workplace outside school, and of teaching as a preparation of students for paid employment and for lifelong learning;

1.1.11. have a general understanding of the history and context of Vanuatu education.

1.3. Professional Development. Good teachers:

1.3.1. aim to continually improve their English language competence;

1.3.2. effectively adapt their practice on the basis of continual critical reflection on and evaluation of their teaching, and seek feedback and appropriate support from other professionals;

1.3.3. participate in a range of professional development activities as part of their continuing professional development;

1.3.4. value collaboration and work collaboratively as part of a team of staff members, including ancillary staff, within the school and the profession as a whole to improve teaching and learning;

1.3.5. work collaboratively with teacher education institutions to provide positive field experience opportunities for teachers in training;

1.3.6. adopt a mentoring role with beginning teachers;

1.3.7. exercise a leadership role in professional organisations including teachers' unions.

2. THE CONTENT OF TEACHING. Good teachers:

2.1. base the content of their teaching on clearly defined aims, objectives and learning outcomes as laid down by education authorities and agreed within the profession;

2.2. incorporate in what they teach sound knowledge and understanding of the subject matter, processes of inquiry, concepts and skills;

2.3. incorporate in their teaching changes in the body of knowledge in their subject area and interpretation of that knowledge;

2.4. take account of and build upon where appropriate students' goals and prior learning and experiences outside the classroom;

2.5. enhance language skills across the curriculum;

- 2.6. present content in an integrated way;
- 2.7. incorporate appropriate cultural values.

3. THE PRACTICE OF TEACHING

3.1. Planning and Evaluation. Good teachers:

- 3.1.1. plan their teaching on the basis of recent, relevant pedagogical research;
- 3.1.2. establish expectations for students that are clear, challenging and achievable;
- 3.1.3. use a wide variety of fair and consistent assessment strategies and instruments for diagnostic, formative and summative evaluation;
- 3.1.4. relate assessment strategies and instruments to learning objectives, content and tasks.

3.2. Management and Instruction. Good teachers:

- 3.2.1. effectively select and sequence learning activities, and manage and pace teaching time to achieve planned student outcomes;
- 3.2.2. apply a variety of human, material and technological resources to maximise learning;
- 3.2.3. are as impartial as possible when discussing controversial matters with students;
- 3.2.4. create and maintain a learning environment which:
 - is interesting and challenging
 - is orderly and purposeful
 - is safe and supportive
 - is positive and enjoyable
 - encourages students to take control of their own learning
 - encourages students to take intellectual risks
 - respects the right of each student to form his/her own judgments based on appropriate knowledge
 - fosters self-discipline, responsibility and creativity
 - develops in students an awareness of the consequences of their own behaviour
 - encourages cooperative learning
 - enhances each student's psychological, emotional and physical well-being
 - encourages effective resolution of conflict
 - fosters cultural identity;
- 3.2.5. are skilled at:
 - motivating and engaging students
 - effectively structuring learning tasks

- grouping students appropriately, e.g. whole class, groups, pairs, individuals;
- integrating learning across the curriculum;

3.2.6. develop sound routine procedures to manage recurring tasks;

3.2.7. respond appropriately to situations which may arise incidentally;

3.2.8. maintain effective records for purposes of student assessment, evaluation of teaching, counselling of students, reporting to parents, recording critical incidents;

3.2.9. effectively complete administrative tasks associated with teaching and pastoral care.

3.3. Communication. Good teachers:

3.3.1. use appropriate oral and written English at an advanced level to communicate clearly and effectively within the classroom and in other professional contexts;

3.3.2. where necessary use Bislama as a means of explaining difficult concepts;

3.3.2. assist students to improve their English language skills in all learning situations.

3.4. Consideration of Individual Needs, Abilities/Disabilities and Aspirations. Good teachers:

3.4.1. understand that each student has diverse talents and interests, and take account of this diversity in their teaching;

3.4.2. match appropriately teaching methods, processes of inquiry, resources and content with the developmental level, temperament and learning style of students;

3.4.3. respect students as individuals, and adapt their teaching to suit the individual learning needs of all their students including the special needs of:

- girls
- boys
- gifted and talented students
- students with disabilities, learning difficulties or behaviour disorders
- students from low socio-economic backgrounds
- students from other parts of Vanuatu
- students from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds
- students in crisis;

3.4.4. engage effectively in the pastoral care of students.

4. INTERACTION WITHIN THE SCHOOL AND WITH FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY. Good teachers:

In addition to his/her normal classroom duties, the teacher will be expected to carry out various

supplementary tasks within the school, and in some cases, the teacher will have some responsibilities towards the wider community.

4.1 Interaction within the school. Good teachers:

4.1.1 TEACHING OF SUBJECTS FOR WHICH HE/SHE MAY NOT HAVE RECEIVED ANY TRAINING

- The commonest of these subjects are R.E., P.E. and Agriculture
- In some schools, a teacher may be asked to act as a relief for colleagues who are absent, and to teach their lessons if no work has been set.

4.1.2 DUTIES

- In all schools, there will be duties to perform as school staff members - surveillance of the campus, dormitories, prep rooms, the dining hall, working parties, farm work, etc. In most cases, the aim is to supervise attendance, behaviour, cleanliness and social integration.
- In boarding schools, most staff will be assigned to “houses”, where they are expected to act “in loco parentis” (i.e. in place of the student’s parents). The teacher must be able to counsel the students, and to listen to their problems - homesickness, loneliness, bullying, fear, boy-girl relationships, deaths or illness in the family, family breakdown, domestic violence. The teacher must know how to cope with large-scale emotional problems in the school - hysteria, black magic, fear, religious mania, etc.

4.1.3 CAREERS GUIDANCE

- Many students will require counselling with regard to choice of future school, tertiary courses, future careers, etc.

4.1.4 EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- The new teacher will usually be called upon to participate in one or more extra-curricular activities - fund-raising, “culture nights”, “string-band concerts”, “music nights”, involvement with sports teams (training, coaching, refereeing)

4.1.5 SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

- The teacher may be asked to take devotional meetings, to lead the students in prayer, and to counsel the students on their spiritual development

4.2 Interaction with families and the community. Good teachers:

4.2.1 MEETING THE EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

- Many parents have strong ideas regarding their children’s religious beliefs (“not allowed to change”), participation in extra-curricular activities (“no sport, no music, only study”), dress (“no shorts or trousers for girls”), careers (“my son must be a doctor or a lawyer”; “my daughter must leave school in Year 10”) and other patterns of behaviour. Often, these ideas will contradict school policy, or the school’s knowledge of the student. The new teacher must be aware of these contradictions and be ready to address them.

- recognise and take into account the ways in which families differ in their expectations of children and their willingness and ability to sustain their children’s development;

- respond positively to advice, expressions of concern and requests for assistance from parents and the school community;
- treat parents with respect and without discrimination;
- effectively communicate student progress and learning to students and parents;
- work collaboratively with other professionals and families in the interests of the total learning environment of the school, and the academic, social, emotional and physical needs of their students;

4.2.2 Meeting the expectations of the community. Good teachers:

- actively engage in the collective responsibility for the ongoing development of the school and its relationship with the wider community including social and business agencies.
- The new teacher must learn how to develop positive relationships with other members of staff, the Principal and school administration, parents, the wider community.
- The new teacher may be expected to contribute his/her time, efforts and money to activities in the nearby area (especially if he/she is a “man ples” of that area). Such a teacher must be able to balance professional duties with community responsibilities.
- Community relations may require the teacher to make school resources available to the local village community - classrooms, equipment, students, etc. The new teacher must be able to cope with these demands, usually by referring the person to the school principal.

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