

Three Main Characteristics of an Ideal Teacher

Habip Bedir¹

¹Biology Department, Faculty of Education, Tishk International University, Erbil, Iraq
Correspondence: Habip Bedir, Tishk International University, Erbil, Iraq.
Email: habip.bedir@tiu.edu.iq

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Abstract: Education is a vital aspect of our lives, and the most essential components of this series are the teachers. The purpose of this literature review is to identify and analyze three fundamental qualities a good teacher should possess. According to the study conducted, the three most important characteristics of a great teacher are passion, commitment, and role modeling. In previous studies, scholars have dealt with these characteristics in a variety of ways; however, there is no study that provides them all together. As a result of the study, teachers who possess these traits can touch the hearts of their students and determine the future of a nation.

Keywords: Ideal Teacher, Passionate Teacher, Committed Teacher, Role Model Teacher

1. Introduction

Teachers are considered role models in the formation of students' childhood behaviors (Yildiz, 2022). The place where these behaviors are acquired is the school environment. It has been researched that younger children imitate and accept teachers' behaviors more than adults (Cheung, 2020; Yildiz, 2017a).

Passionate, committed, and role model teachers demonstrate that they differ from other educators in their contributions to students' academic success. Teachers, who have these three characteristics, strive for their students to develop in terms of knowledge. This effort is appreciated by students and parents and ensures success. This resulting success is their loyalty to their profession. Teachers, committed to their profession and students, play a vital role in the development of students (Mart, 2013). The sense of commitment to their profession in teaching is a psychological phenomenon. This commitment of teachers is one of the most critical factors in education. For this reason, only educators who are devoted to the teaching profession can make a change in the world of students and shape education. Educators who have a sense of passion, commitment, and role modeling spend their extra time for students and school, and at the same time, do their best to make their schools popular. The fact that educators have these thoughts allows them to prepare suitable environments for education for students and allow students to progress at the academic level (Altun, 2017). Teachers become role models for students not only in scientific matters but also in moral matters. For example, when schools began to open in America in the 18th and 19th centuries, their foremost mission was to teach students moral values (Mulkey, 1997; Bedir, 2013). For this reason, it was

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thought that teachers were morally valuable people. They were expected to explain their lessons well and discipline the teachers well. No matter how often they are not expressed today, these expectations still continue because teachers play a big role in students' lives and education.

1.1 Who Is an Ideal Teacher?

Ataturk postulates, “A good teacher is like a candle-it consumes itself to light the way for others”, as cited by Saricoban et al. (2019).

Teaching is a profession that has survived for many years and maintains its popularity. A school has many elements, such as students, parents, teachers, and school materials. The foremost and most important of these elements is the teacher. At the same time, a teacher is a quality measurer of an education building. If education is likened to a ship, the teacher is the one who is in control of the ship (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006).

The ideal teachers are the ones who set an example for the students with their lifestyle. They are at peace with themselves and can reflect positive emotions around them. They have information about students' academic and social life outside. They become friends with them and their mother and father when necessary. For this reason, the way the teachers speak and the emotional relationship with the students are more important for students than what they tell in the lesson (Lammers & Smith, 2008).

Students generally like teachers they feel close to more. They have a special interest in teachers who spend time with themselves during and after classes. Some students even embrace their teachers so much that they dress, talk like their teachers, and even comb their hair like their teachers. In the research, educators who treat their students warmly and make eye contact are more successful than others. Successful teachers make their students feel like their own homes (Lammers & Smith, 2008; Wilson & Taylor, 2001).

In another research done by Weinstein (1990), ideal teachers should have the qualities as follows, having an understanding, warm and friendly nature, doing the work in a disciplined way, being open to innovations, being ambitious and patient, creative, being able to communicate with students and finally being an expert in their own field.

Being an ideal teacher means enjoying success in education, being patient in a stressful school environment, being able to communicate with others both inside and outside the school, solving the problems people face in education, being a guide to students and their parents, and being responsible and consistent (Bayrak & Yilman, 2001). The concept of the ideal teacher may vary from person to person, as well as from country to country. The decisive point here is the culture of that country. Although teaching is considered very important in some countries, it may not have the necessary importance and value in other countries. In addition, the concept of the ideal teacher may vary according to the educational philosophy that people have. Since teachers are considered the architects of a country, they must also be adequately equipped. They should be able to respond to society's problems and their age. An ideal teacher can achieve the development of a country and increase its welfare level. The teaching profession is the most important factor that determines the future of a country, in other words, the fate of a country (Ustuner et al., 2021). The ideal teacher is someone who has improved himself/herself and can descend into the students' world. H/she is the one who understands what students think when they look into their eyes and

plays a role in correcting their negative behaviours. It corrects the students' outlook on life and guides them, just like the captain gives way to a ship advancing on the ocean (Day, 2004).

Some negative situations brought about by being an ideal teacher should be taken into consideration. Dinham (1997) claimed that the increase in the workload and working hours of teachers creates negative problems in the personal lives of the teachers. In addition, due to the increase in technology and the knowledge level of students, the expectation from teachers has increased more than in the past. In order to respond to these expectations, teachers had to compromise both their own priorities and family life. In a study (Dinham, 1997), 40 percent of educators' spouses expressed the difficulty of being a teacher's spouse and emphasized that their family life was affected. It has been stated that the absurd reasons causing this problem are the workload, excessive demands and expectations of the school and the administration (Dinham, 1997).

According to different research, the qualities that an ideal teacher should have are as follows: improved cognitive abilities, creativity, emotional compatibility with others, sharing thoughts with others, positive thoughts towards students, good communication with students and using their own language, avoiding judgment, being interested in reading, being sensitive and helpful, being specially educated in their field and terms of human relations, being able to establish empathy, behaving as they are and not telling lies (Wittrock, 1986; Ozabacı & Acat, 2005; Bedir & Daskan, 2023).

2. 3 Main Characteristics of an Ideal Teacher

2.1 Passion

The meaning of “passion” may sound strange to people, but it is at the core of education and is an indispensable feature needed for education to continue (Fried, 1995; Altun, 2017). Teaching needs passion and dedication, and teachers demonstrate these traits in their daily lives. Since learning is an active verb in terms of vocabulary, teachers are constantly searching for ways to better themselves. These endeavors and studies need not just intellectual but also emotional devotion (Fried, 2001).

Researchers have studied how some educators work with passion and determination for many years. The only answer is passion because it is not easy to do the same work for long periods or even years without passion. In order for a person to do a job consistently, he has to love that job, and it even requires a commitment that is superior to love. Passion is the only answer (Fried, 2001; Vallerand et al., 2003).

Vallerand et al. (2003) suggested that people develop a passion for activities they love and enjoy doing. Passion is something that people give importance to the things they love, even the things they are attached to at the love level. Vallerand et al. (2003) divided passion into two different categories, obsessive and harmonious. In harmonious passion, individuals participate in any activity completely of their own free will, and this does not cause any conflict in their life. Here individuals control the passion. In obsessive passion, individuals participate in an activity by being influenced by their inner world or external factors and feel an excessive dependence on those activities. Here, passion controls people (Vallerand et al., 2003).

Being passionate as a concept means enthusiasm, attention to something, dedication, hope, and desire, which are the main characteristics that an ideal teacher should have. Being passionate is not only about teaching willingly but also about teaching based on moral values and rules (Day, 2004; Daskan, 2023).

Passionate educators and leaders have constant hope and believe that every student can learn and will learn tomorrow if not today. They contribute to students' learning and motivate them constantly. What sets these types of educators apart and makes them passionate is that they constantly encourage people and change the lives of students. For this reason, the main element that makes dreams come true is passion (Davies & Brighthouse, 2008; Celik, 2017).

Passionate teachers constantly give importance to personal development because their own development means the development of their students. Passion is not a feature of some groups and can be learned and taught later. Passionate educators constantly seek out new ideas and learning environments for their students. They like the idea of technology and constantly keep themselves alert. They realize in advance the obstacles that will prevent education, come in front of the students, and take the necessary precautions. If teachers do not have the character of passion, any obstacle that comes to them becomes an insoluble problem for that teacher (Fried, 2001; Day, 2004).

Heijden et al. (2015) examined passionate teachers as change agents in their studies and put forward the following qualities that they must have,

1. Open for learning. Passionate teachers are constantly in research and follow innovations. They present new ideas to education and help in choosing the right one. They pay attention to their own academic development and follow courses that will improve them. They do not stay fixed in their careers; they have master and doctorate goals.
2. Being reflective. Passionate teachers think deeply and carefully to improve the quality of education in their schools. They take a critical approach to events. They search for the causes of events and take the lead in choosing the right path.
3. Giving Guidance. Guidance is the process of assisting another person in becoming more proficient in, or in resolving an issue related to, a topic about which they know little to nothing. Many people in the modern world have varied strategies for overcoming difficulties and creating answers to pressing issues (Bilgin et al., 2022a; 2022b). Passionate teachers successfully guide the academic development of their students. They prepare collaborative environments for their students and have improved themselves in classroom management. They always have an answer to their students' questions about life or academic issues because they have already prepared themselves for such topics.
4. Being accessible. Another feature of passionate teachers is that they are accessible to students, parents and colleagues. They also have a sense of humor and feel relaxed while working instead of getting tired.
5. Being positive. Passionate teachers have a positive perspective on education. They know how to come up with solutions even in the most difficult situations and help others find the right way. They are expected to have high moral values and set goals for students. They are fully motivated to improve themselves and their students academically.

6. Being committed. Passionate teachers are very concerned and loyal to the schools where they work and to their students, parents and colleagues. They are dedicated to the teaching profession and take great pleasure in their work.
7. Being trustful. Passionate teachers have a strong sense of trust and empathy towards their students. They are kind and friendly towards their students and in case of any problem, they are ready to solve it. When students share any special situation with their teacher, they know that their teacher will not share it with anyone.
8. Being self-assured. Passionate teachers feel confident in their abilities at work as professionals. Teachers are expected to make a difference in the development of students. They do all the work they do with self-confidence.
9. Being innovative. Passionate teachers, above all, are open to innovations and follow educational developments closely. After thoroughly researching and examining innovations, they integrate their beneficial aspects into education. Their ideas are needed if any technological changes are to be made at the school.
10. Feeling responsible. Passionate teachers feel responsible for providing the highest quality education throughout the classroom and school. They work to increase the education level of both their own students and the students of their colleagues. They both take the initiative and support others to do the same.
11. Being collegial. Passionate teachers believe working actively and productively with their colleagues will produce positive results. Their working together is fruitful for both the school and the students. They regularly hold educational meetings and bring new perspectives to education.

2.2 Commitment

Another hidden factor behind great success is commitment. Teaching is a career that is somewhat more mentally draining than other sectors of education (Celik, 2017b). This type of mental and physical exhaustion can sometimes lead to teacher burnout. The number of teachers that quit as a result of this process is not insignificant. The dedication of educators to their profession is required to overcome such obstacles and sustain their energy and motivation (Day et al., 2005). It is a requirement for educators to be dedicated to their profession. Teachers who are committed to making a difference in their students' academic and personal life (Sammons et al., 2007). Educators who do not have this commitment will encounter problems over time and risk burnout (Nias, 1996).

As in other sectors, teacher commitment is crucial to the future success of schools and education in the subject of education (Huberman, 1993). Their commitment as a teacher is intimately tied to their academic life. A teacher who is dedicated to education and his/her pupils conducts a constant study, investigates the latest teaching techniques, and reveals what is helpful for students; all of these characteristics have a significant impact on his/her academic life and that of his/her students (Firestone, 1996). Committed teachers are people who genuinely love what they do. They live not for themselves but for future generations. They spend their lives in constant search. They search for effective methods to remove the barriers their students will encounter in learning. Their life has a mission. They research the world, others, and even themselves, and they help others do that research (Zehm & Kottler, 1993).

Crosswell and Elliott (2004) divided teacher commitment into 6 categories:

1. Teachers' commitment as passion. This concept explains the commitment of the teacher as a positive desire.
2. Teachers' commitment to spending time with students during extracurricular times. On the other hand, this concept is that the teacher spends time with the students outside the school from his/her own time. This time out can be inside or outside of school. While doing this, the teacher still aims to teach students something.
3. Teachers' commitment to his/her students' personal wishes and needs. This concept is the teacher's commitment to focus on the personal needs of his teachers. These needs can be personal or academic.
4. Teachers' commitment as having a responsibility to teach moral values, knowledge, ethics, behavioural education and belief. This concept is about the duty of the teacher to convey information to the students. Teachers with this responsibility prepare students for the future. They are responsible for getting them all kinds of education and preparing for exams.
5. Teachers' commitment to the school community. This concept is the relationship of teachers with other individuals in the school. This responsibility helps him get outside the four walls of the classroom and even beyond the school boundaries.
6. Teachers' commitment to educating themselves professionally. This concept asserts that educators should continue to develop professionally. During this study, they both develop academically and assist their peers.

Teachers who are committed are invariably enthusiastic about education. Teaching or spending time with pupils is nearly a form of love for them. This commitment assists them in overcoming the challenges they confront in their daily lives and academic careers (Celik, 2017b). These teachers think their commitment or passion is the most important aspect of teacher dedication. Commitment is a significant factor in educators' willingness to continue their work and profession, as well as a positive advertisement to others (Crosswell & Elliott, 2004; Celik & Yildiz, 2017; Yildiz, 2017b).

Being a committed teacher brings many benefits to educators, but the most important thing is to maintain this quality. Fransson and Frelin (2016) put forward the following categories in order to sustain teacher commitment,

1. Personal factors
2. Teaching factors
3. School context factors
4. Professional development factors
5. System context factors

Personal factors are the factors related to the personal life of a person. Such as having a warrior spirit, being able to think positively, constructive mentality, and helping the family.

Teaching factors are largely between the student and the teacher. It is that the teacher effectively presents the topic, provides positive feedback to students, and receives favorable responses from them. In this context, additional elements include the teacher's careful lesson planning and the lesson's progression (Küçük, 2023a).

School context factors are teachers' relationships with other colleagues and administrators, positive and creative school atmosphere, and finally, constructive comments from parents and students.

Professional development factors are that educators adapt themselves to technology and are in academic research in this direction. In this context, they are in constant research and adopt all innovations in their education.

On the other hand, system factors are related to the general structure that will increase and motivate the teacher's willingness to work. It can explain that education should not be under the influence of any economic or political system.

2.3 Being a Role Model

A good teacher is a phrase used by many educators to describe a "role model" (Arnon & Reichel, 2007). The ideal teacher is someone who motivates students, guides them, and creates the best environments for them to learn (Young & Shaw, 1999). In all civilizations, from the most developed to the least developed, the important task of being a model for the role of the teacher has been undertaken. Teachers play an important role in the shaping of future nations. Teachers are expected to be role models for students and those around them and guide people to the right path (Lunenberg et al., 2007).

The student whose character has not yet been formed is open to imitating those around him, making observations, and, most importantly, taking a model. Many cognitive and affective behaviors can be gained, especially in primary school children, by modeling adults. Teachers who are successful educators can teach students creativity, effective learning or study strategies, and problem-solving strategies (Demirbaş & Yağbasan, 2005; Küçük, 2023b). Teachers should be role models for students with their behaviors at school. Many student behaviors are shaped in primary school, so teachers should be aware of this and try to be positive role models for students. Teachers are primarily responsible for the positive development of student behavior (Lunenberg et al., 2007).

The teacher is comparable to a life-guiding guide. In reality, the primary responsibility of a teacher is to evaluate diverse teaching strategies, select the most effective ones, and shape student behavior. This is due to the fact that kids accept all information from professors without question. They accept their instructor in every way. Because instructors are their role models, they will even view inappropriate conduct as acceptable (Singer, 2000; Küçük, 2023c).

Teachers are evaluated not just based on the content of their teachings, but also on the positive and bad behaviors they model for their students. In addition to teaching his courses academically, a teacher is responsible for attaining positive accomplishments and serving as a role model for his students. Student-teacher interactions in the classroom are the foundation of education. For this reason, teacher conduct plays a significant role in establishing the classroom climate (Day, 2004; Küçük, 2023d).

In their study, Üstüner et al. (2021) identified the personal and professional characteristics that an ideal (role model) teacher should possess, based on the opinions of instructors.

2.4 Personal Characteristics,

- Being open to change and innovation,
- Being in good relations with people,
- Caring about people's values and cultures,
- Being patient,
- Being tolerant,
- Being curious and inquisitive
- Being assertive and decisive,
- Being altruistic,
- Being energetic,
- Being open to change and innovation,
- Being in good relations with people,
- Caring about people's values and cultures,
- Being impartial and fair,

2.5 Professional Characteristics.

- Giving value to students,
- Being good in the teaching profession and subject knowledge,
- Valuing the teaching profession,
- Considering individual differences in students,
- Being a guiding guide for students,
- Knowing their rights and responsibilities,

3. Conclusion

Teachers are an integral part of education and are the architects of a country's future. In this article, we focused on three basic features that an educator should have in order to achieve success. These are passion, commitment, and role modeling. As a result of the studies, we have seen that these three characteristics are the main points of the teachers who can descend into the emotional world of the students and set an example for their colleagues. At the beginning of the research, we thought that the subjects of passion and commitment were close to each other in terms of meaning, but after examining them in detail, it was concluded that both of them should have the characteristics that a teacher should have. Finally, being a role model was chosen among the qualities a teacher should have. As a result of detailed studies, it was revealed that the students saw their teachers as role models and wanted to be like them. It was concluded that many students imitate their teachers' behaviors, especially in primary school. This study will be a useful study for those who have just started their teaching career or who want to research the characteristics of an ideal teacher.

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