



QUALITIES OF GOOD TEACHING

Vera and Clayton Whitcomb

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..... P R E F A C E .....

This booklet is the third of a series of teacher education publications being written primarily for the teachers of Palau District. The chief purpose of this booklet is to present in a simple form some of the qualities that go to make up a good teacher. It is designed for use in summer workshops for teachers, discussion groups, and as a means of stimulating discussion on teacher education.

.....Wm. V. Vitarelli, Editor

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## Q U A L I T I E S       O F       G O O D       T E A C H I N G

What does it take to be a good teacher in Palau? How do we know when our teaching is good? How can we improve our teaching? The purpose of this little booklet is not to tell you the answers to these questions but to share some ideas with you. By sharing these ideas we may learn together, for no one knows all the answers, especially in Palau where there are so many new things happening.

The first things we think of when we think of a good teacher are:

1. Being a healthy person,
2. Being a happy person and
3. Being an interesting person.

In addition to these basic qualities most of us would agree that a good teacher likes to teach; that he believes his teaching will help improve people; and that by becoming a teacher he, himself, will be able to live a better life.

In the United States a study of 12,000 letters from school children was made. In these letters the children explained what they liked about their teachers. They were very honest. Here is a list of the things they mentioned:

1. A teacher who is cooperative and democratic.
2. A teacher who is kind and considerate for each individual child.
3. A teacher who is patient.
4. A teacher who has an interest in many things.
5. A teacher who has good personal appearance and who has a pleasing manner.

6. A teacher who does not play favorites -who is fair.
7. A teacher who has a good sense of humor.
8. A teacher who has a good disposition and who is not always changing his mind or making up new rules.
9. A teacher who is interested in each pupil's problems.
10. A teacher who can keep up with new discoveries and who can learn new ways of working.
11. A teacher who gives praise when it is deserved and who knows when the pupils are doing good work.

These eleven points set a high standard for teachers. In meeting the responsibilities that these points imply, we realize that good teachers will:

1. Like children sufficiently to want to work with them over long periods of time:
  - a. We will accept them on the basis of helping them to grow. We love their charm, vitality and creativeness.
  - b. We will try to understand how children feel; why they get angry, why they may be afraid, and will try to work with children so that these feelings are respected and dealt with sympathetically.
  - c. We will recognize the fact that all children are not the same in intelligence, knowledge, physical or emotional development and will try to deal with each child as an individual.
2. Get along well with people and have many friends.
3. Be living examples of what they say and teach:
  - a. We need to live richly, experience many things and be interested in new ideas and discoveries.
  - b. We should teach others to learn for themselves and do things with them and not always for them.
  - c. Show our happiness and confidence.
  - d. Be helpful, understanding, and warm in our association with others.

4. Enjoy the life of learning, not only by acquiring knowledge through reading but by getting knowledge through trying new things (experimenting), putting the facts we have learned into practice, and by thinking through ideas that grow out of our reading and living.
  - a. We should also be willing to share our knowledge by learning to write what we have learned so others can read about it.

What are some of the things good teachers need?

1. Teachers should know about the world in which we live.
  - a. The physical nature of the world,
  - b. How people work,
  - c. How people govern themselves and make laws,
  - d. The way humans used to live and how present day customs came into being... (history),
  - e. Present day problems in the local community and in the world.
2. Teachers should understand children's minds and try to find out how they feel and think so that we can judge wisely the kind of information which children can absorb at different stages of development and growth.
3. Teachers should know some things so well that they will feel sure of themselves and will teach with freedom and imagination. They will teach in a natural way so that the children will feel as though they are participating in the learning process. Some of the best teaching comes from teachers and students learning together. No teacher can know everything and should not feel uncertain when he has to say he does not know.
4. Teachers should know enough about how children grow and develop so that they will realize that,
  - a. Children like to learn,
  - b. They like to learn especially when they think of their teachers as one of them,
  - c. Children learn best by doing real things; it is usually after a good foundation of "living knowledge" is gained that people learn well from books.

5. Teachers should be learning all the time and should seek the truth.

a. When we approach problems we should know how to use the scientific method and be willing to find facts and truth without prejudice. A man who knows the truth and still believes otherwise is not learning.

6. Teachers should be interested in orderliness in their thinking, their teaching, and in their own lives. Much happiness can be gained from helping children to understand and solve the problems of their lives. A good curriculum is based on a sound knowledge of children and a thorough knowledge of the world about us.

#### Children need creative teachers

1. Teachers should be able to work with children in a variety of materials and should provide ample time in the day's schedule for projects and activities that require some kind of hand work.
2. Teachers should be sensitive to the ways in which life experiences can be reexpressed by children. We must not destroy a child's world; nor should we replace it with an adult's world. We must help him learn and grow and create so that he can progress step by step into life situations and problems.
3. Teachers should be examples of the values and the way of life that is exemplified by democratic principles.
4. Teachers should be secure within themselves so that their manner of working reflects strength of character, dignity, and ease.
5. Teachers should be able to exert authority without requiring submission. Submission is always an indication of forcing another person's will. This is not in keeping with the democratic method. Teachers should be examples of authority by reason of intelligence, experience, and professional knowledge.
6. Teachers are artists and scientists. They should be able to work experimentally but not in a hit-or-miss way. A good teacher should have some idea where he

is going, know many ways to get there, and be always trying better ways of working with children. This means planning with children on what the goals are and reviewing what has been accomplished with them.

7. Teachers should respect the child's world of fantasy and should permit the child's imagination to develop naturally, but at the same time it is the duty of the teacher to help the child build a realistic balance between what is make believe and what is real life.
8. Teachers should establish a good balance between:
  - a. Giving support, sympathy, comfort and protection; yet at the same time encourage the child in reliance, independence and growing up.
  - b. Permitting a full measure of freedom from restraint and prohibitions and establishing clear limits and boundaries of acceptable behavior. Wherever possible these boundaries should be established through discussion and planning with children.
  - c. Efficiency, orderliness, and routine and the need for a certain amount of human casualness.

Teachers are the key to Palau's future.

Palau will realize its desires, its future, and its ambitions only as its people are prepared for these things. The responsibility of the school is to keep its fingers on the pulse of Palau, learn its needs, desires and hopes, analyse its possibilities and then work for the fullest realization of them. This requires the best citizens as teachers, the closest cooperation with the community and continuous evaluation of our progress and direction. This is a cooperative job for all who are interested in the best development of the resources of Palau.



