

## **Making a Difference in the Life of Your Students**

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Education responds to a deep need in our society. It affords us skills essential for a productive life. It opens the mind, builds character and facilitates in the formation of personalities. Education provides the freedom with which to fly and attain the unattainable. Without it we are lifeless unproductive entities blowing aimlessly in life.

Over the years, I have listened intently and carefully to not only students but colleagues and have learned that teaching is an ongoing developmental process that embodies the social, physical and emotional. I have also come to realize that education has virtually remained the same and what has changed is our understanding and knowledge of how to impart it to our students. Teachers, therefore, have to become catalysts to ensure that great things happen in the classrooms. They have to realize that their students' minds are blank chalkboards, just waiting for the inscription of information.



It is important to note that to accomplish this feat, a teacher must possess a strong academic focus within the context of a friendly classroom. Once a student enjoys learning, it is only then that education can really begin. Not only should cognitive objectives be emphasized but an amiable atmosphere is imperative. A student must feel the enthusiasm of the teacher. If that is not evident, a loss of interest is eminent. It is therefore crucial for teachers to reflect a positive and energetic attitude towards their subject. They cannot afford to be bored or disinterested if they wish to get through to their students.

It is also necessary to identify a student's need and see where additional attention is required. Enlist the assistance of the parents at this point and systematically check progress and offer praise. This of course will offer encouragement and foster a desire to please.

Approach is also the key. Develop a mutual respect through kindness and understanding. We have to remind ourselves that power does not permit the cooperation or acceptance of a student but can instead cause resistance and rebellion. We must look for assets in each student and be flexible in our attitudes and offer positive reinforcement. Encouragement is a vital part of building self-esteem and self-worth. Once this has been established it is then a lot easier for the student to learn.

In order for educators to be truly successful, we must have the capability of adapting to different roles. We must be prepared to become counselors, disciplinarians, friends and confidants. We should have the desire to endeavor to make a difference in the lives of the students. After all, we are not only teaching a course but we are teaching life.