

The Bachelor of Education Course

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Commitment to Teach

The Greek Philosopher Isocrates (300 B.C.) identified the characteristics of a good teacher as one who is capable of influencing students through a demonstration of his knowledge, teaching skills and ethical conduct. Four hundred years later the Roman orator Quintilian reiterated the desirability of these qualities by his insistence that teachers should possess moral excellence, complete mastery over content, the skill to teach at a level appropriate to the learner's abilities, and the enthu-

siasm to motivate students by making learning interesting and attractive. These qualities, held as fundamental in the teaching profession, are built in the B. Ed. programme and generalized under two major objectives, namely to develop in course participants the commitment and the competency to teach in the most effective manner.

A commitment to the teaching profession is evinced by one's efforts to understand oneself and one's role as an educator; a commitment towards the well-being of one's pupils, towards the furthering of one's own knowledge and that of the pupils; and equally, a commitment to the ethics and values of the profession. The teacher education programme attempts to instil this commitment through an understanding and appreciation of the values and functions of education.

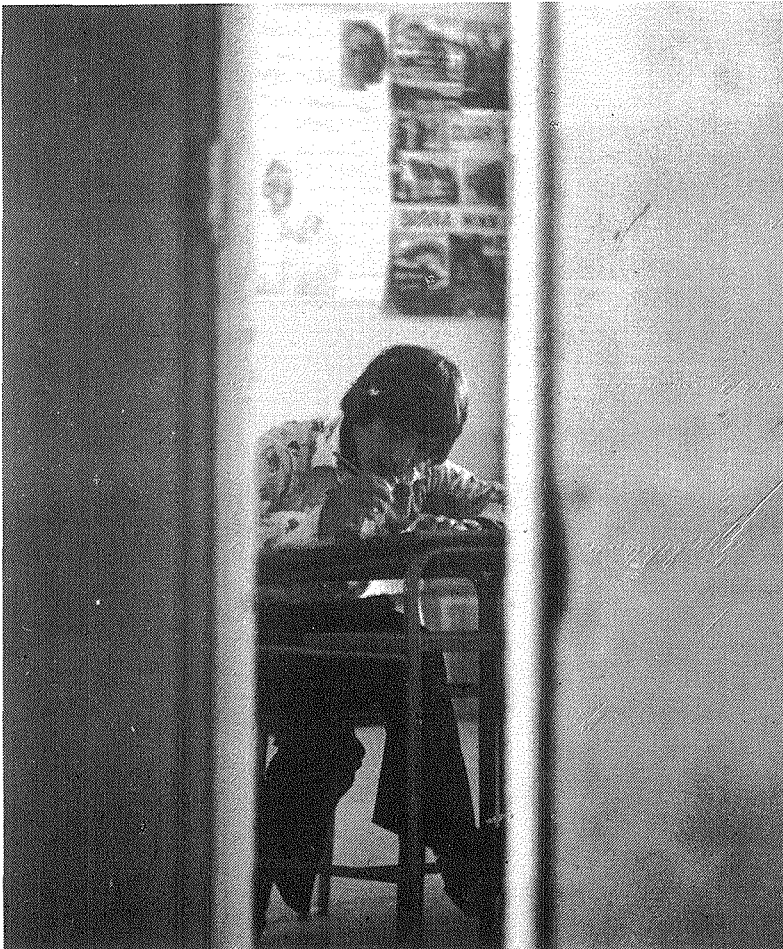
Students come to the course after some thirteen years of schooling where their concepts of education may become confused and garbled. The Faculty attempts to follow John Dewey's advice and encourage students to:

'... through reflective thought, transform a situation in which there is experienced obscurity, doubt, conflict, disturbances of some sort; into a situation that is clear, coherent, settled and harmonious'

or, in R.S. Peters's words to initiate students by 'getting them to see, understand, appreciate the inside of things, in this case things educational. Such initiation includes an awareness and an ability by students to organize their own learning and teaching processes so that they are able to adapt themselves to various teaching strategies not only in the early immediacy of their leaving university, but as far as they could possibly do so throughout their career'.

Commitment by itself is not enough, competency is complementary to commitment in any profession: in teaching no less than any other. Anybody remotely associated with education is

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Competency to Teach

sensitive to the fact that 'telling' is not teaching, that merely listening does not necessarily lead to learning. Teaching requires, and learning depends on specific techniques: techniques in the selection and structuring of content, communication techniques, together with techniques in the evaluation and assessment of the pupils's work and one's own instructional process. Competency in teaching must include the ability to understand one's pupils, gauge their needs and sense their likes and dislikes. The teacher who is committed must also be able to arouse the pupils' interests, maintain their attention and keep discipline. It is a poor teacher indeed, who has profound commitment but lacks instructional techniques.

The Faculty believes very strongly in Alfred N. Whitehead's maxim that:

'The importance of knowledge lies in its use, in our active mastery of it: that is to say, in its wisdom.'

A third major concern among Faculty staff is to practice what they preach through a conscious effort to apply sound educational principles in all their relations with students. Thus, the Faculty has developed a policy of consultation, and a healthy rapport with the students, who are regarded as mature individuals capable of benefiting from, as well as contributing to academic and professional growth.