

Adjusting the Attitude of Learners

Teachers in today's schools meet face-to-face with increasing attitude problems of some learners. These problems are manifested in a lack of respect for teachers, visual boredom in learning, and a lack of work ethic for career. The lack of respect may come from a societal image of teachers as "Those who can't, teach!" Additionally, whatever is wrong in society tends to be blamed on the teacher and the school program. Teacher authority is usurped by parents and the society, which challenge the teacher's right to discipline students, even the unruly ones. Some students call into question the worthiness of professional teachers, who are considered to have lower status when compared with other professions. The fact that teachers tend to be grossly underpaid for the type of workload they face may be questioned.

Some students exhibit boredom and are not motivated to learn because they do not see the relevance of what they are studying. To them, much of what they study seems to be important only for the tests they take and has no relevance to their lives. They yearn for assurance that teachers not only are competent but also care. The lack of a work ethic may be attributable to an environment that provides everything material

they need and want. This student problem may be related to the "good life" quality of a society that tends to have everything it needs. Many students have economically secure homes, are provided with an overabundance of goods and services, and are not held accountable for responsible activities in the family.

This dilemma does not paint a glowing picture of what is waiting for the teacher when she or he enters the classroom. If this picture is accurate and is to be altered, then the teacher needs to actively develop with the students a common ground for the establishment of respect for each other.

Questions for Reflection

1. How can the teacher show respect for the students and have the students show respect for the teacher?
2. How does the teacher prepare a learning environment that has meaning to the everyday life of the learner?
3. How does the teacher work with the home and community in providing a learning atmosphere in which students develop a work ethic and recognize its value?

To answer these questions on-line and e-mail your answers to your professor, go to Chapter 12 of the companion website (www.ablongman.com/johnson14e) and click on Professional Dilemma.