

## **The Role of the Teacher: Philosophical Perspectives**

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*Beyond the walls of our schools, the world is changing dramatically; and is pushing and pressing down hard on those who work within. Rather than hiding from or shutting the classroom door on these external changes and demands, more and more teachers and head teachers are reaching out to people and organisation beyond the school- to parents, communities, businesses and the wider profession. They are searching for new and better ways to enrich, stimulate and support their own increasingly difficult and challenging work. Yet these efforts often prove disappointing. Promising partnership fizzle out because of lack of interest, they erupt into unexpected conflicts when people's purposes are at odds with each other; they are dogged down in bureaucracy; or they subordinate educational integrity to the moneymaking opportunities of the market.*

*[A. Hargreaves and M. Fullan]*

**Abstract:** *The article examines a cohort of graduate's perspectives of their role as teachers. It places graduates' experience at the centre of their role. The article was written with the consciousness of the two interests: that the findings may reveal some similarities in philosophical perspectives between our respondents of the first cohort (2009-2013) at Kwame Nkrumah University and those of other universities or colleges of education in the country and secondly, that it brings out the unheard and often overlooked graduates' voice about their role. The first cohort was significant for the article as they had no reference of the previous groups under the degree program. Their thoughts about their role had novelty. A comparison is made between personal and public roles and how these roles affect the teacher's life at home and at work. The conflicts that arise from the clash between the two roles are also discussed. This has been done in order to show changes that have taken place from the pre-industrial era to the present day and focus for the future. A teacher in traditional society was mainly concerned with bringing up a child in a morally good society and prepared him or her for life-long activities. That of the intermediate societies was mainly concerned with transmitting knowledge and culture to children of the elite groups while teachers in industrial society were concerned with the development of skills in conformity with the development of industries. The teacher of today and tomorrow takes the role of facilitator of knowledge.*

**Keywords:** *Role, Social Status, Social Role, Role Conflict, Inter-role Conflict, Intra-Role Conflict, Role set.*

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### **1. THE HISTORICAL NOTE OF THE ROLE OF A TEACHER**

There are so many perceptions about the role that a teacher plays in society, varying from one community to the other. The way a teacher is looked upon in traditional society for example may not be the same as that in developed societies although generally the roles are the same. Datta (1984; 115) views the perception of "one's position in society as depending on the social status that is occupied by that person in the social system and the factors that determine the status of an occupation as being that of remuneration, the working conditions, the qualifications and experience, the amount of money spent on it by the state, the social influence exerted by members of the occupation as a group, and contemporary societies."

The teacher's remunerations in most countries in the world are far below other professions. This has adversely affected the performance of many teachers as they spend most of their time outside the school schedule doing their own business. In Zambia for example, most teachers spend a lot of time doing part-time work and conducting extra lessons just to get extra money to sustain their living. The

teacher is therefore pre-occupied with work outside his or her occupation thus giving the child very little attention. In most cases the working conditions are not good enough for qualified teachers. In the majority of third world countries, though there are no statistics, teachers are either accommodated in dilapidated houses or have none at all. Many end up joining the many disadvantaged people in the shanty compounds. This adversely affects teaching because most of the times the teacher will be thinking about the safety of family. There are other conditions of service that are mentioned only on paper but do not exist in reality. The Zambian situation is an example where a teacher can go on leave but still not get the leave benefits. This may drag on until one retires from the service. This is very unusual in other professions.

While the qualification of a teacher is a factor in the promoting of a worker in some countries, the Zambian system until recently placed much emphasis on experience and this discouraged most of the graduates from universities from joining as their qualification was rarely recognized. On the other hand, until the late 1990s, very little money was allocated to Ministry of Education hence all work that was supposed to be done would be left hanging because of insufficient funds.

There is also the issue of social influence exerted by members of the teaching fraternity where within the group; some enjoy upper social status while the rest are in the middle and lower categories. In most cases, this relates to the level at which one is teaching, from third level, second level or first level respectively. For example, one at secondary school will look down on a teacher at primary level and likewise one at secondary school will be inferior to one in college. This is not the way the system should be because each of the above groups has their own specific training and more of them can operate without the participation of the other. Suffice to mention therefore, the above factors affect occupations in many different ways depending on the society in which they are situated.

The differences in the way teachers approach their work is therefore evident. A teacher in Africa and Zambia in particular is still looked upon as a disciplinarian in and outside the classroom and learning hours. He or she can discipline the pupil regardless of where the offence is committed as long as it contravenes any of the school rules. In doing so, the teacher is playing the role of a parent who is not always with the child because in most cases, the child spends most of the time in school. In other societies however, whatever the pupil does outside school premises is not the teacher's concern and has to be dealt with by the authority concerned. The teacher also transmits knowledge through mediation. The role is general to teachers around the world and cannot be disputed. Being a judge is another sub-role a teacher plays in the school environment in connection with discipline. He or she is settling 'cases' every day. The teacher decides what is right and what is wrong in the life of a pupil and at the same time sympathizes and understands the pupil's problems so that the latter can have confidence in him or her. Most of all, a teacher is expected to exemplify the moral values of the society where he or she lives and works. The teacher's affection towards a pupil should be that of trying to bring up the child in a morally sound environment so that the learner can contribute to societal needs after school.

As earlier alluded to, a teacher's role is multifarious because of the absence of a set of tasks that are performed within a set of time, or formal limitations to the roles like those of a doctor or lawyer who are confined to the hospital and the court respectively. A teacher on the other hand plays the role of almost all the other professions because of the diversity of subjects that are taught in schools. For example, Datta (1984; 118) identifies some duties of the teacher in the African context as "firstly to teach; secondly a teacher is an agricultural officer because he or she teaches methods of farming and the implements that go with it. He or she is also a medical officer because the teacher offers first aid before referring the pupil to the hospital and also acts as police officer in seeing to it that pupils are trustworthy and obedient. Further, a teacher may be a judge presiding over cases and making decisions, a forest guard, looking after trees around the school and beyond, road engineer teaching pupils to repair and construct pathways and a coach training pupils in various games." There are other duties too numerous to mention here. Walkins, (1963) writes about the African teacher: He has a majestic status in society, is respected by the chief and the elders of the tribe, and is honoured with intense devotion by the youth of the land. In personal characteristics, he must be chivalrous, courteous, public spirited, law-abiding fearless. He must be well versed in the history and traditions of his people and an authentic judge of matters affecting their welfare. Other men of good repute who are specialists in various fields serve as assistants and teachers as novices. In the traditional African set up therefore, the status of a teacher is very high and is viewed as one that should produce good and exceptional members of the society.

To the contrary, in the intermediate societies like those of ancient Egypt, China, India and the Roman Empire, the teacher was most importantly the transmitter of knowledge and culture of the elite groups to their children and parents made sure that this was done according to their will. Hoyle (1969) describes the British teacher in pre-industrial societies as being concerned with the transmission of a high culture and particular set of values to the children of the elite groups, concentrating on the unchanging knowledge of classical languages and literatures. The teacher also acted as clergyman who taught in public and grammar schools emphasizing moral values and vocational training. In the latter, pupils were taught skills like carpentry and building construction, which were life-long skills.

As noted earlier, in traditional African societies, education was and is mainly concerned with the transmission of values while that of skills occurred and continues to occur through day to day training and by watching the older ones performing their tasks. In this sense, the elders acted as teachers and at the same time as instructors. There is evidence from the transition period of the tradition to modernisation regarding the shift from the emphasis on learning to that of teaching, although the teacher may set up learning tasks as opposed to teaching by direct method (Hoyle, 1969; 12).

### 2. SOME CONTEMPORARY VIEWS

According to Drudy and Lynch (1993; 101), “roles prescribe certain ways of behaving hence teachers may have different teaching roles, depending on the type of institution and the level at which they are teaching. Indeed, teacher at kindergarten, primary, secondary and colleges may have different roles although most of the roles may generally apply to all.” Delamont in Drudy and Lynch (1993; 102) identifies two characteristic features of how roles in teaching are enacted. These features are those of ‘immediacy’ and ‘autonomy’. The earlier she says, decisions by the teacher have to be immediate because of the direct contact with the pupils as opposed to say a doctor who sends patients to hospital laboratories for the tests before prescribing medicine for them. Delamont also refers to a lawyer who can consult a colleague for a second opinion before going to defend a client. The teacher however, is usually alone in the classroom and may find it awkward to go outside and seek the opinion of other colleagues. The decisions are therefore made on the spot. On the other hand, teaching can be a profession of autonomy and isolation. The teacher has authority over many aspects of pupils’ lives and this is commonly reflected in behaviour, speech and clothing. The manner in which the teacher behaves and dresses will have an impact on the behaviour and dressing of the pupils as well.

Kelly (1970) noted a dominance of unspecific, diffuse obligations of a teacher, focusing the perception that a teacher’s role is that of responsibility for broad, more, religious and intellectual development of pupils, and giving of good example in schools. MoE(1992) regards teachers as key in determining whether the school can bring its undertaking to fruition. Teachers direct children’s intellectual formation and promote their desire and ability to learn and they also choose the methods of instruction appropriate to the child’s needs.

The role set is the organizational set up and the community in which the profession is being practiced. In the teacher’s case, the role set comprises the head teacher or principal; the deputy, members of staff and the supporting staff. In essence, all those colleagues who are in the same teaching community at that particular institution and elsewhere are embedded in this category.

### 3. THE PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

According to the Wikipedia free encyclopedia, philosophy is the study of meaning and justification of beliefs about the most general or universal aspects of things- a study which is carried out not by experimentation or careful observation, but instead by formulating problems carefully offering solutions to them, giving arguments for solutions, and engaging in the dialogue about the above . However, the concern in this article will be with the philosophy of education, a branch involving the study of purpose and the most basic methods of educating and learning. Particular attention will be paid to the role of a teacher in the philosophical perspective.

The discussion will be based on two texts: Firstly, we discuss the views taken by Downie, Eileen, Loudfoot and Elizabeth Telfer in *Education and personal relationships* and secondly, Eric Hoyle’s *The Role of the Teacher*. The discussion will hinge on their ideas and how they apply to the school system. The article also brings up examples from current situations prevailing in schools and the challenges that lie ahead in the teaching profession. While doing so, a critical analysis of the ideas from the texts will be made and where possible alternative suggestions will be advanced. A number of issues will be discussed and these will include the concept ‘role’ as used in relation to teaching, the

private views of the teacher encroaching on his or her public role, the role relationship between the teacher and the pupil, the private activities of a teacher and the way they may affect his or her public role and personal relationships. In the second part of the chapter, emphasis will be on the roles of the teacher in the school and these will include specialist roles, professional roles, formal and informal roles and the performance of the teacher in the classroom.

#### **4. THE CONCEPT 'ROLE OF A TEACHER'**

In their discussion of the concept, Downie et al (1974) begin by distinguishing the different senses related to the idea of the teacher's role. These are divided into four categories. Firstly, 'role' is widely used as class concept where individuals are seen in virtue of certain properties they have in common. This can be exemplified in groups that share a common goal like the role of a basketball player, doctor or indeed a teacher. However, this sense only describes the role in terms of things that are commonly held together and hence may not be very helpful.

The second sense is more specific and brings out the association of 'role'. This refers to an expected pattern of behaviour. This pattern can be predictive or normative in sense. In this case, a teacher is said to be playing the 'role of a teacher' and people expect him or her to behave accordingly although the teacher may not be aware of these expectations. This implies that there are rules that they should and should not be seen to follow in society. If they do anything that society does not approve of, then the teacher is likely to face censure. The argument however, does not explain why society acts as spectator and why the expected behaviour pattern refers only to a particular role and not another. The point is that there are many behavioural expectations from the teachers as opposed to other role occupants. On the other hand, a teacher must also know what society expects of him or her.

The third concept is that of 'role' as a social function. A person's role in society is viewed as the function he or she performs, the contributions made to the maintenance of the social system. In essence, this sense is concerned with the actual effects of a person or an institution in society. A teacher has social function to play and this is to bring up the pupil in socially sound environment so that the pupil does not lead a life that is against the norms of a good society. In a school, there are usually one or two pupils who may be 'clowns' in some sense. The role of these, though they themselves may not be aware of it, is to release tension in the school especially during stressful times towards examinations. Downie (1975) gives an example that a sociologist may see a criminal as having the role of preserving the equilibrium of society though the criminal may not be aware that his actions might have such an outcome.

The fourth sense is defined in terms of rights and duties, which describe and explain the operation of institutions and why a person in a certain position in society may legitimately do certain things. It is in this vein that teachers have been put in a position where they are bound to adhere to certain rules of society that other professionals may go against unnoticed. Loudfoot (1972), however, has some reservations about the role defined in this sense. She says not all jobs can be defined in terms of rights and duties and gives an example of a musician who in a sense is like an individual in his role. Secondly, she mentions that there should be a distinction between the highly structured, narrowly defined role where rights and duties are explicitly stated and role defined in the wider sense where specific obligations are also included. A closer look at the rights and duties will yield better results in our understanding of the subject.

In other dispensations of his or her duties, the teacher needs to possess skills relevant to the teaching and to the achievement of the aims of teaching. Downie et al have distinguished between 'determining' and 'accessory' rights and duties that make up the role of the teacher. Determining rights and duties are those that determine an official position or sphere of action of a person in society in which case they are constitutive of the role. In the case Zambia, these are outlined in the government's 'General Orders' in which rights and duties are laid down for all government employers. All government workers are expected to work within this order, failure to do so may lead to a penalty. Accessory rights and duties on the other hand arise when a person occupies a particular position in society. They do not determine the role but arise, or may arise, because he or she has the role in question. There are many cases of duties. A primary school teacher for example is trained to teach all the subjects offered at this level, as well as taking account of the psychology of the growing child through the application of psychology theory. However, nothing much is said about how to handle particular cases. The teacher deals with such situations according to what he or she thinks is right at that particular instance. A secondary school teacher on the other hand is trained to teach one

or two subjects(s) of specialisation. Emphasis is on the content and background of subject(s) and on the education courses, which include psychology, sociology and philosophy. However, when the teacher graduates, he or she is found in situations where one has to play a part in other extracurricular activities acting as hostel counsellor, club co-coordinator, production unit manager, tuck shop manager and many more. All these can be grouped as accessory duties.

Within the area of rights and duties, Downier and his colleagues have gone further to distinguish two general kinds of determining rights and duties in terms of their source.

The first they call contractual right and duties, which are owed to the employer and have their origins in a contract of employment and as such may vary according to particular terms of contract. The teacher therefore, finds himself or herself bound to laid down procedures concerning rights regarding when to go on vacation, the number of working hours, the allowances and other conditions of service. "Implicational" determining rights and duties derive from the nature or aims of teaching and are owed by the teacher to the pupil and society. Duties here exist uniformly for everyone in a given role by virtue of aims of the role. In other words, this type is general in the teaching profession as it involves the teacher as an individual and what teaching is about, unlike contractual which varies from one country to another depending on the economy and the conditions laid down for employees.

A person accepting the role of teacher has a duty to fulfil the educational needs of those in his or her charge that is the duty to educate the pupils. If the teacher allows the pupil to do things contrary to their educational needs, then he or she is failing in his or her duty towards the pupils. However, while the teacher has duties to the pupil, the latter also have duties to the teachers. As a member of a school or institution, the pupil has a duty to obey the instructions of the teacher. These should, however, be within the scope of the teacher's authority. Again here there is a difference between a third level student who goes to college by choice and first and second level pupil who is at school not by choice but by obligation. The duties to the lecturer will therefore be different from those to the teacher's at levels one and two. For example, while the learner at third level will have freedom to cut through the lecturer's speech with a question that the other at first and second level may not be in that position. In general, the learner has a duty to listen to the educator because the latter helps him or her to fulfil the development of his or her capabilities in school.

In order to fulfil the aims of education, both the teacher and the pupil should help in the implementation of their duties and rights. Thus pupils should be able to obey the teacher's instruction within the latter's authority while the teacher, in his or her dealing with enthusiasm matter should show respect in the treatment of it and teach with enthusiasm for the benefit of the pupil.

The discussion above has reviewed the sense of the 'role' as used in teaching. This part has also looked at the rights and duties of the role of the teacher and examples have been given in some cases. Mention has also been made of the distinction between contractual and implicational determining rights and duties that make up the role of teacher. The next sub-section seeks to explore the private views of the teacher in relation to the performance of his or her public role.

### 5. CONFLICT BETWEEN PRIVATE VIEWS AND THE PUBLIC ROLE

The idea of 'role' can be regarded in terms of a set of rights and duties. These rights and duties may either be determining or accessory. The former define the nature of the position and are usually agreed upon by a wider audience, while the latter derive from the nature of the aims of teaching. When there is no agreement between the two, then conflict is likely to arise for the role-occupant.

It is therefore, important to consider that the individual teacher will have certain personal beliefs and convictions that may come into conflict with what is required to fulfil his or her role. This conflict can arise within the actual school situation between the teacher's interpretation of the role and the role as defined by the school management and secondly, because the out-of-school activity of the teacher may be regarded as being relevant to the enactment of that role (Dodd, 1982). In this situation, the teacher's personal views may come into conflict with those of the administration. For example, in one of the second level schools a situation arose where the teaching of Religious Education almost came to stand still. Protestant teachers might opt to teach the syllabus that was related to bible knowledge but the catholic teacher might teach conventional *Christian Living Today* syllabus. Because he was in minority, the latter just decide to drop the subject and concentrate on the other one that he was teaching. This particular teacher may have bowed to the majority but on the other hand his right belongs to religious group and the duties to educate the pupils were infringed. The best way to

have approached the issue in a critical view was to pick one class and give it the syllabus that was catholic oriented. Another incident is where a teacher is instructed to take pupils on a fundraising trip involving manual labour. The teacher may find him or herself in disagreement with the administration because pupils may already have paid for various services in the school (to the teacher's knowledge) and hence could think of fundraising as unnecessary. Again in this case, while the teacher's view may be genuine, the management will refer to the terms of doing any duty as determined by the superiors. While doing so, the management will be taking away some rights of the teacher.

The reactions to conflicts that arise in the school situations are twofold. Downie et al call the first 'ignore-your-own- attitude' and the second, 'resign - if- you- disagree '. The first one means that the teacher ought not to have a view of his or her own because doing so will have bad consequences for him or her. While this view indicates that teachers should not only enact those views that they personally agree with but also listen to other people's views, it is obvious that in some cases, the teacher may have a genuine view but will tend to ignore it just to avoid conflict. In my view, the 'ignore-your-own -attitude' can lead to the teacher taking a subtle stance in all issues that may be of importance for fear of conflict. It may also be possible that the teacher will not contribute anything to the development of the institution if one takes this view. On the other hand, one might say it is justifiable to ignore one's views and implement the disputed policies rather than come into conflict, as indicated in the example of the Catholic teacher who dropped teaching Religious Knowledge to avoid confrontation with his protestant colleagues, although at the same time his rights of choice were infringed.

The 'resign-if-you-disagree' view leads to discontinuity on the part of the pupil's education and the teacher may find him or herself in an awkward position of not finding another self-sustaining job. But on the other hand, if one has to act responsibly, then his or her views have to be taken into account. Take the example of Teacher X who is given the responsibility of Boarding Teacher. This teacher prepares the budget and the menu for the pupils. While he does all this, other people who do not in some cases comply with the teacher's budget do the buying of food. These other people do this partly to benefit themselves. Because the boarding teacher is not consulted on what is bought, he decides to resign his post and leave the post to the buyer. He has done this to avoid conflict because according to the terms of a boarding teacher, one should do all the duties mentioned above and therefore, to maintain his credibility, the teacher opts to resign his post as boarding teacher.

The 'ignore-your-own- attitude' view is not always a good alternative to decision making because this in most cases would lead to many developmental ideas being ignored. Therefore, this attitude should be the last decision to make after exhausting all possible avenues of resolving a conflict. Many teachers have brilliant ideas that would go to waste if this attitude was maintained. There should, therefore, be a balance between the teacher's views and those of the management in order for institutions to run smoothly. On the other hand, all the actions taken by the teacher must be for the good of pupil and not self-satisfaction of the teacher. Basically the teacher is there for the pupil and whatever the former does, should end up benefiting the latter. By opting out, the teacher may leave out the role open for some with less concern than he was. While this is true in some case, teachers should not be held responsible for resigning position if their rights are infringed. The other context in which there may be conflict between the teacher and public or official demands is that of relationship between the teacher and pupil. This has created a lot of misunderstanding in the teaching profession. The article explores what relationship is and the way it should be viewed.

## **6. ROLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER AND PUPIL**

Relationship is the way, in which two or more people or things are connected, or the state of being connected, or still, the way in which people or groups regard and behave towards one another. Downie et al say that relationship relates to a situation, bond or occasion which links two or more people like kinship, marriage, business association and other related links and the altitude which the people so linked have to each other like fear, pride, respect, envy, contempt and so on. In the case of people, relationship can be twofold: First, a person's relationship entails that each party is concerned about what matters to the other, that is, seeking to discover what matters to them and developing a concern about or interest in that person's engagements with an feeling about those things. The matter referred to here may be very intimate or close to someone's heart like in the case of family relationships, close friendship, sexual relationship and activities related to social engagement. When a relationship reaches concern should be reciprocal meaning that both sides should benefit. Secondly,

an impersonal relationship can hold only between individuals already acknowledged as person but to put this notion aside and concentrate on the personal relationship be personal or to some extent impersonal regarding the teacher-pupil relationship?

The teacher-pupil relationship is set up to serve a particular purpose and this should be education of pupil, and hence the individual relationship should be entered into without ulterior motives. This means that it should only be for educational purposes and nothing more than this. There is what may be referred to as institutional relationship where the institution has guidelines on the behaviour of teachers on the one hand and pupils on the other. In some schools for example, it is held that the relationship between the teacher and pupils should not be a very 'close' one. The suggestion here is that the teacher should not be seen in the company of a pupil for a long period of time lest other teachers or pupils suspect intimate relationship. While this could be true in a way, it should however not undermine either the authority or the purposes of teaching because a teacher may just be explaining a teaching point to a pupil who was not very clear and there are so many such pupils who fail to follow lessons in class but will when alone with the teacher. On the other hand, the relationship may come about as a result of mature friendship, personal liking by the pupil or teacher or just getting on well with each other. It is common in many schools to see a young new teacher in the company of pupils, not that they are in intimate relationship but that the new teacher is more approachable because the pupils have not yet found his or her strengths and weaknesses. This however, does not mean that there are no older teachers who are not approachable, there are and these will give fatherly or motherly advice in most cases. The relationship that we have indicated above is common with older pupils at second and third levels, but for younger pupils, they simply look at the teacher as a special adult and relationship is simply viewed in terms of personality. This entails that the teacher will guide the child in whatever way. For the younger ones the teacher is always right. A child may object to what the parents what the parent says just because the 'teacher said this'. If a parent tries to insist on the point, then the child will certainly say 'until I ask the teacher'. An incident occurred where a head teacher was heavily accused of embezzled school fees. The parents went to the school in numbers to go and air their grievance and maybe recommend the sacking of the head teacher. When the parents approached the school, the head teacher instructed the pupils to stone them and they scampered in all directions. Apparently for the younger pupils, the teacher was more enlightened than the parents were.

On the issue of reciprocity mentioned earlier, the teacher-pupil relationship is restricted. While the teacher can have access to personal concerns of the pupils, the latter has restrictions. If the teacher's personal concerns are made public, it may lead to distraction and impediment to purpose of teaching while teachers themselves have to personalise circumstances and concerns of pupils for educational reasons. However, pupils have a need for privacy as well although many institutions have ignored this right and therefore, the teacher-pupil relationship is not such as to require deep involvement on the part of the teachers with personal lives of pupils. The teacher's principle concern should be with educational matters though again it is hard to differentiate between what concerns education or not. On the whole, the role of the teachers extends beyond the subject and instructional process itself and they bear some responsibility for the general welfare of pupils and their development of a sense of right and wrong.

There are so many ways in which a teacher can use role position to influence his or her relationship with the pupil. This can be done through certain teaching subjects and so obtain the unsuspecting pupil. In doing so, the teacher may be trying to enhance his or her private views, taking advantage of the relationship.

According to Downie et al, there are two ways in which a teacher can enhance private views through the relationship. First, a teacher may put forward views on political or social matters that are unrelated to the teaching subject. In this case, a teacher may belong to one political party in a country and will try to win the favour of his or her pupils by talking ill of other parties. In most countries in the world, pupils and students through the influence of their educators have seen the downfall of government while helping to usher in new ones. However, the teacher will have achieved his or her private aims. On the other hand, the private views will have infringed the teacher's duty to the learner and this may come about in three ways. In the first instance, the teachers will be failing in his or her duty to educate the pupils.

Thirdly, a pupil may be victimized because he or she does not share the same views as the teacher. Thirdly, the teacher may be failing to treat pupils as persons, but simply as a conveyor belt to enhance

his or her interests. With the three notions above, the teacher will be failing in his or her duty as a moral agent.

Second, the teacher will present his or her private views in the context of teaching a particular subject. This is most prevalent with teachers of History who may be teaching socialism, capitalism, fascism or anarchism while teaching History. The teacher will try to add colour, omit or distort facts just to prove the point of argument. If the teacher falls into predicament, then one will be failing short of duties entrusted to him or her. The teacher will be failing to educate pupils but instead will be propagandizing them with favoured ideologies. To some extent, the teacher will treat unfairly those pupils not in agreement with his or her views and hence failing to respect pupils as rational persons.

What we should bear in mind is that pupils have their own lives to lead and the teacher should not see the pupils as a vessel to be filled with teacher's personal views. While the teacher owes allegiance to the subject matter and he or she should teach according to laid down curriculum, one may depart from it to some degree as long as this does not promote the teacher's own interest but the pupils. When a teacher wants to make a point clear, it is not wrong to digress and give examples that are not in the curriculum but within the wider scope of the subject. However, there must be objectivity in the presentation of facts by the teacher. He or she must cultivate a sense of self-awareness. That is, if one notices that teaching may distort the aims of the subject matter, there is need to quickly realize and back out and concentrate on facts.

While the teacher can have conflicts in his or her dissemination of duties as discussed above, he or she must lead a life free from the public, for as noted earlier on, a teacher is just like any other citizen bound by the laws of the country of citizenship and those of nature. Because of this, there is need to establish to what extent the private activities relate to individual's public role performance.

## **7. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRIVATE ACTIVITY AND PUBLIC ROLE**

In the teaching profession, the private activity of a teacher is of importance because this has led to many teachers either being expelled from the service or simply losing public dignity. It is true in some quarters that if a teacher or someone directly connected to him or her like husband or wife does something wrong or thought to be wrong in their private lives, the community and school authorities usually question the accused.

Sexual morality is one issue that has haunted the teacher significantly. Whether male or female, teachers are expected not to indulge in any sexual activity with their pupils (Downie, et al, 1974; 137). According to the authors, teachers are public figures and are therefore expected to be examples of high moral conduct. While this is true to some extent, one might tend to disagree in consideration of the right to choose a life partner. For example, if a newly qualified teacher enters into a relationship with a pupil with the intention of marrying after the latter has completed school, there is no reason the relationship should not be allowed. In this view, as the relationship does not interfere with the teacher's teaching programs and the pupils learning capabilities there is nothing wrong. In fact, the view taken by Downie and his colleagues is mainly applicable to institutions that are in selectively remote and small settings where the teacher is one of the few noticeable public figures. In cosmopolitan towns and cities, the institutional managers are mostly concerned with the teacher's performance in class.

Teachers have also been involved in the issue of illegal drug taking, which may also be rampant among pupils. This of course is a serious offence and if it affects the teachers ability to teach management has the right to act accordingly. In this case, the teacher must be proved guilty by law. Teachers have sometimes been accused of abusing drugs on the basis of their appearance when in fact they do not. Whatever the case, drug test should be conducted, so that people are not penalized or reprimanded from assumptions. If this is done, innocent teachers will be protected from victimization.

Many teachers in some countries, especially in the third world have been subjected to intimidation because of their involvement in politics. A teacher may decide to join a political party but the government may warn him or her that as civil servant, one was not supposed to engage in partisan politics. This also goes with social activities and civil demonstrations. While it may be fitting on part of government, I think the teacher, just like other citizen of the country has the right to be a member of any political party of choice and also that of social gathering even though the latter should have the blessing of the police as agency that enforces the law.



There are other defects that relate to teacher's role that many be obvious to follow in order to avoid controversy and reprimand. Irregularities such as dishonesty especially with public funds, giving private institutional information to outsiders, unpunctuality, badtemper and lack of sympathy for the pupil may be punished if proved. In some schools, teachers who always want their ideas to be heard are often seen as self-opinionated but in most cases; new ideas bring about good results. For example, a school decide to do away with term tests to be replaced with monthly test. When the management gave it a thought and tried the system for one academic year, the results were the best ever because the pupils were kept reading throughout the year until their end of year examinations. It may be argued that the idea of self-centeredness cannot be blamed on the teacher, who has such an attitude because all human beings, have them including those who talk of others as having defects, have them too. The argument is that some people who are self-centered have brilliant ideas that might lead to development and if they are ignored, society would not benefit anything from these people. Therefore, when decisions are made for or against a teacher accused of some of the above-mentioned defects, there should be a closer analysis of the degree and to what extent it affects the teaching process. A distinction must therefore be drawn between those activities that are directly connected with the teaching role and those that are not. The school management should not be rigid in decision making but leave room for teachers to express their views. This will help develop the learning process and the teachers' rights will also be respected.

### 8. THE TEACHER IN THE SCHOOL

According to Hoyle (1969), the role concept indicates a position or status in which case 'teacher' is a specific occupational position. Secondly, it is a pattern of behaviour associated with the position that is independent of any particular person occupying the role. Thirdly, a role is a pattern of expectations held of the occupant of the position: the expectations held of a teacher will imply how he or she will act. It is therefore with the above in mind that we base our behaviour towards the occupant of a particular role position, on assumption that in general he or she will tend to conform to the expectations and fulfil certain obligations. When we know that a person is a teacher, then we will know roughly how he or she will act when performing the role.

There are however some teachers who come to embody in an extreme way some of the qualities expected of the role. This often leads them to be called 'typical teachers' because they confirm to exaggerated expectations of the role as stereotype. On the other hand, the expectations of the teacher from other people are many. Most of these expectations are related to the idea that the teacher is able to teach pupils moral values of society apart from the school curriculum.

The teacher's public role is differential especially in the role set (school administrations, inspectors, pupils and parents) who have a direct relationship. Each group in the role set has specific expectations depending on the areas of interest. The school administration might be interested in the pupil's performance in the teacher's classroom or subject area, the behaviour and the extent to which the teacher obeys the school and professional regulations, while inspectors may be interested in the preparation of lessons and presentation to the pupils. The pupils will take interest in the teacher presents the material to them and if the material will help them achieve the goals in the examinations. Parents will be happy to see teachers produce high grades in the performance of their children. They also expect a teacher to morally sound so that pupils can emulate. The teacher's role is differentiated according to function (subjects and the ages taught), authority over other teachers, attributes like qualifications and experience. In this case, different expectations are held of different types of teachers. When a teacher plays the role of father, mother, husband, wife, captain of the club, they are different expectations held for each role. Because the teacher is confronted with different sets of expectations, he or she faces a potential role conflict. The concept of role conflict has already been dealt with earlier and the case examples will be discussed further. The question here is, to what extent is the teacher's behavior determined by the expectations held of him or her and to what extent is he or she free to perform the role according to his or her desires. This definitely depends on the individual teacher and expectations held of him or her. The bottom line however is that "a teacher is to some extent like all other teachers, like some other teachers, like no other teacher" (Hoye, 1969). This implies that the teacher is like all other teachers because one belongs to that particular group and must conform to the governing rules. He or she is like all other teachers in the sense that within the teaching profession, there are teachers who can have the same views and act as sub-group and he or she is like no other teacher because as an individual, each person has one's own line of thought and to some degree should be able to fulfil his or her personal needs.

## **9. THE BASIC ROLE OF THE TEACHER**

Musgrave and Taylor(1962) quoted in Holye (1969) asked a sample of teachers from different schools to come up with what they considered as basic aims of education and the following were identified; moral training, instruction in subjects, social training, education for the family life, social advancement and education for citizenship. The fundamental role expectation is that the teacher must be able to control him or her in conformity with the above aims. This also applies to the control of the class that one teaches. Holye (1969) says that to maintain discipline, the teacher should maintain social distance from the pupils and that in public he or she should maintain formal interaction with colleagues and members of the society. Any undue familiarity with the pupils on the teacher's part is seen as a threat to the general esteem of teachers with suspicions that the teacher who is too familiar with pupils is undermining the authority of his colleagues by talking about them. In some countries, a teacher calling a colleague by first name in the presence of pupils is often as potentially undermining the authority of the teacher. But this indeed depends on the culture adopted by the community in which the school operates. Therefore, even the basic role of the teacher should not be taken universally but it should vary from one community with the other depending on the culture adopted by that particular community where the school is situated. Apart from the basic roles, there are specialist roles that are equally performed by teachers.

## **10. SPECIALIST ROLES OF A TEACHER**

In school, teachers are differentiated in a number of ways and this gives rise to variations in the expectations applied to them. One group of specialist roles is that which includes the administration (Principal or Head Teacher, Vice Principal, Head of Department and Section Heads, House Co-Coordinator). Other related roles are those of subject teachers who specialize in certain subjects especially at second and third level institutions.

Subject specialization has some problems and to some extent leads to formation of cliques in schools. Some teachers consider their subjects as superior to others and in most cases; teachers of science and mathematics consider themselves as the 'hard ones' and this brings conflict in schools especially if pupils are made aware of it. Recent studies have however suggested that teachers should not consider any one subject as superior to the other because of the different types of intelligences that human beings possess. Gardner (1993) has identified eight kinds of intelligences that interact in achieving human behaviour and one of them stands out to be discrete and hence we hear of a person being good at mathematics or sciences. Therefore, while we can say that we possess many types of intelligence, one of them may come out above the others and hence we see people specializing in certain subjects. Gardner talks about linguistic intelligence as the one that enables individuals to communicate and make sense of the world through language and so we have journalists, narrators, orators, poets and other linguistic related fields. The logical-mathematical intelligence entails the use and appreciation of abstract relations producing scientists, philosophers and mathematicians. The music intelligence allows people to perceive visual or spatial information, to transform this information and recreate visual images from memory as do engineers, architects and sculptors. Through Bodily-Kinaesthetic intelligence individuals use all or part of the body to create products or solve problems thus we have in this category, dancers, craft people, surgeons, athletes and choreographers. Inter-personal intelligence enables individuals to recognize and make distinctions about others' feelings. Psychology and sales people may excel in this category intra-personal intelligence helps individuals to distinguish among their own feelings, to build accurate mental models of themselves, and to draw on these models to make decisions about their lives and this is relevant to most occupations. Lastly, the naturalistic intelligence makes people distinguish among, classify, be sensitive to, and use features of the environment. In this category we have farmers, botanists, florists, geologists, archaeologists and others dealing in environment issues. Therefore, during the process of growing, people develop strength in a certain type of intelligence that may determine the type of occupation that individual will undertake in life. Teachers should therefore move away from the notion of considering some subjects as being superior to others, instead they should promote multiple intelligence in order for all the pupils to be included in the learning process and at the same time avoiding inferiority complexes among subject specialization. Related to specialist roles in the school are professional roles.

## **11. PROFESSIONAL ROLES**

One characteristic of a profession is that its members enjoy a high degree of autonomy with regard to their immediate task. However, this is very different in the teaching profession where the teacher is

made to conform to what the school regulations stipulate, and, to adhere to the role as an employee. This includes observing rules determined by the supervisors especially in teaching techniques, standardization of the curriculum and loyalty to the school. If the teacher fails to do the above, then a conflict is likely to arise with the authority. Because of the many roles that are entrusted with the teacher, he or she should be flexible in handling problems. He or she must also apply professional knowledge to teaching problems, make good decisions regarding curriculum techniques, participate in collective decision making regarding the goals of the school and loyalty to the profession and its standard as a whole. Gouldner (1957-8) quoted in Hoyle (1969) make a distinction between two types of teachers. He calls a 'local' teacher one whose actions are guided by the expectations of those within the organization. The 'cosmopolitan' is not so committed to a single organization and his activities are influenced more by fellow professional roles among teachers in the school and it is important for the authority to identify them as such to avoid conflict. Corwin, (1965) notes something on the typology of adaptation amongst American college teachers.

The 'ritualized' frantically obeys all rules and regulations of the official organization; the 'neurotic' frets about the discrepancy between the rules and actual practices; the 'robber baron' cuts up red tape and uses the system for what he feels were its original professional ends; and the 'rebel' disregards all bureaucratic rules.

The 'ritualized' teacher is the one who always obeys what the authority says and whatever the case may be, they will always support the administration. In some schools, these are referred to as 'informers' because they will inform the administration on anything that teachers discuss which goes against the authority. The 'neurotic' teacher usually bends the rules in practice and does what he or she thinks is the right way of doing things and usually does not care much about where he or she flouts the rules or not. The 'robber baron' teacher tries to end the red tape that exists in the profession and often ends up being involved in union activities. The 'rebel' teacher does things the way he or she wants and usually not follow any rules and regulations of the institution.

On the other hand, Presthus (1962) suggests three patterns of adaptations. The, 'upward mobiles' accept the status quo and earn promotion within the school. The 'indifferent' has no real professional commitment; he or she goes through the motions of doing his or her job and finds personal satisfaction elsewhere. The 'ambivalent' does not conform to bureaucratic demands of the school, but is nevertheless professionally oriented and often inspires the needed changes for the better. The above can have widespread implications for teacher satisfaction but needs more research to be proved.

Within the professional roles, there are appointments that are made in the school by the school management. While appointments may be made in good faith, there are factors that may impinge upon the roles. The age of a teacher is a factor when making appointments; hence younger teachers are disadvantaged in certain cases because of lack of experience. Gender is another factor where some posts are directed to male teachers only, while others to female teachers like that of sports co-ordinator and school matron respectively. Qualification is also a barrier especially the gap between university graduates and non-graduates. The two groups tend to regard each other with suspicion. A university graduate may tend to regard the non-graduate as having a sound repertoire of teaching techniques acquired from college, but as being incapable of teaching his subject up to or beyond ordinary level. A non-graduate on the other hand may concede that the graduate may have deeper grasp of the subject background, but consider this irrelevant to the school situation and believe the graduate to be too academic for the pupils and not to possess the basic classroom competence. While these factors exist in most if not all the schools, it may be suggested that teachers come to a compromise and a study into the merging of teaching techniques both at graduate and non-graduate level would lessen this controversy. This usually manifests itself in the results from the examination. The other suggestion is that roles be differentiated from the qualification factor but performed according to one's ability. While the above are related to formal roles, there are also other roles in the teaching profession that may be referred to as informal.

### 12. INFORMAL ROLES

Hoyle identifies informal roles as unplanned patterns of association between teachers and amongst pupils. He goes on to mention three functions of informal structures: firstly that they allow for individuals self-expression in ways not catered for by the formal structure, and secondly, they facilitate the working of the formal organisation since no blue print can prescribe in detail what every individual should do. Thirdly, they may seek to modify official goals and procedures of the formal

organization in the interest of integrity, self-esteem and general ease of the life of participants. These informal roles are very subtle and cannot be easily noticed, such as a teacher acting as a staff room lawyer. He or she is always defending the views of fellow teachers who 'would like to say something without speaking'. Another is the principal's or head teacher's 'nark' who is always informing the former of what is going on in the school. Other informal roles may include that of a teacher being approached by the pupils over advice on serious problems. There are some teachers who are more easily approachable than others and hence their importance in the school. Informal roles may vary from one school to the other and one community to the other depending on the needs of the pupils and their expectations of the teacher.

### **13. THE TEACHER IN THE CLASSROOM**

The classroom is considered to be the teacher's office and within it, he or she enjoys a high degree of privacy and autonomy. The teacher has discretion over what and how he or she teaches. However, in most cases, the personality and type of training received at college might incline a teacher to modify his or her role depending on the type of school that one teaches in. The role that the teacher performs in class is dependent on the teaching situation and the personality of the teacher.

A number of sub-roles arise for the teacher in the classroom. One of these basic roles corresponds with the major functions of instruction, socialization and evaluation while another is concerned with motivating pupils, maintaining control, and generally creating an environment for learning. Hoyle calls these 'facilitating roles'. Teachers are involved in a wide variety of sub-roles inside the classroom depending on personality characteristics and their perception of the teaching task. Each sub-role is accompanied by a brief indication of its function as in following; representation of society (includes moral precepts), judge (gives marks and ratings), resource (possesses knowledge and skill), helper (provides guidance for pupil difficulties), referee (settles disputes amongst pupils), detective (discovers rule-breakers), object of identification (possesses traits that pupils imitate), limiter of anxiety (helps children to control impulses), ego-supporter (helps children to have confidence in themselves), group leader (establishes the climate of the group), parent surrogate (acts as objects of bids for attention from younger children) target foe hostilities (acts as object of aggression arising from frustration created by adults), friend and confidant (establishes warm relationship with children and shares confidence), object of affection (meets the psychological needs of children Hoyle (1969).

It should be noted that all the above might be performed in both the functional and facilitating modes. Although the points above are relative to western culture, all of them actually apply to other parts of the world. In relation to the above are leadership roles enacted by the teacher.

As a leader, the teacher's task is to lead pupils towards those learning and behavioural goals that have been prescribed for them. The teacher must therefore develop a variety of leadership techniques to overcome the children's reluctance to work hard and behave properly. The appropriateness of leadership behaviour in the classroom is relative to the nature of the group and to the task at hand. The teacher must take into account the different variations between school classes in terms of age, gender, social background, and ability and group affiliations. Each of the above requires a different teaching style and the teacher should firstly identify the type of class he or she is teaching and then apply the relevant teaching technique. This means that the teacher should be highly adapted in behaviour. A skilful teacher may play different roles like those of a comedian but still retain his or her role without losing the good will of the pupils. Cunningham (1951 quoted in Hoyle (1969) concludes regarding his research on leadership patterns in the classroom thus: "Teachers, whom observers agreed were most effective, used the widest range of patterns according to the appropriateness of the pattern to the situation". Getzels and Thelen (1960) enhance the idea by saying that the major quality of the successful teacher is flexibility and Hoyle supports that a successful teacher is someone who: has the skill to form accurate perceptions of the classroom situation and the changes that occur within the situation, is aware of the teacher roles, which are appropriate to different situations, possesses the personality skills which allow him or her to adapt to changing situations. If indeed a teacher manages to encompass the above attributes, he or she should be able to fit into any school regardless of the area in which that school is situated.

### **14. CONCLUSION**

The concept of the role of a teacher in a philosophical perspective is the focus. The concept helped in explaining the conflicts that the teacher encounters in his personal and public lives. The teacher has been and will continue to be seen as having a special place in the life of a pupil with regard to the

question of moral example. Because the child spends most of the time with teachers in school, the later has a lot of influence over the former and hence parents have many expectations of a teacher. In cases where the teacher does not conform to the expectations, then conflict arises. The school authorities also have their conflicts with either the school administration, the community and with colleagues.

Within the school, if teachers are not provided with the opportunity to air their views or observations, then conflict is unavoidable. While there may be administrative rules to follow, the school management will be doing well to listen to some private views and then decipher what is worth taking note of. The teacher has the right to his or her own privacy and therefore, school management or the community should not have a complete obligation to prescribe the type of life that a teacher must lead when not in school. It is emphasised that pupils are influenced by individual teacher's behaviour, but schools through their ethos, have often played a major role in shaping the life of pupils. We often hear of words like 'these are graduates of St Pauls, St Francis, St. Canisius, Hillcrest, David Kaunda, Munali, Kambule to mention a few renown schools in Zambia' entailing that their behaviour is commensurate to the schools. Teachers are key individuals in determining whether the school can bring its undertakings to fruition. It is teachers who shape children's intellectual formation and promote their desire and ability to learn. The teachers choose instructional methods appropriate and relevant to the child's emerging needs. The teacher's personal relationships with the pupil are of crucial importance especially during the formative years of the child's personality. In class, the teacher is responsible for guiding and instructing pupils in the learning that is prescribed for them. They, therefore, need proficient in the subjects they teach, and the resourceful in translating their knowledge into effective learning experiences for their pupils. Since teachers are among society's principal agents in promoting socially responsible behaviour in young people, society establishes for teachers standards of conduct that it does not of the other professions. Teachers are not allowed to indulge in carnal relationship with the pupils. The general orders of Zambia, a government that guides civil servants on discipline emphasises this fact and if proved guilty, the penalty is instant dismissal from employment. The teacher, therefore, needs to adopt a set of values and ethical frame work for professional conduct in order to achieve the aim of good moral conduct.

It is evident that in some societies, the private activities of teachers are directly linked with those of the public role and in many cases the teacher is victimised for being involved in activities that society or school management deems immoral or inappropriate. However, it may be argued that in modern times, many teachers will agree to be restricted to their private views, activities or other lifestyle that they wish to lead outside school. This implies that if the role of the is to be developed by encouraging new teachers to join the profession, teachers have to allowed authentic moral view points and be given freedom and rights to be allowed to lead private life free from the prying eyes of the community and the school management. This will also encourage young people who will have certain congruence between their personal and public views to join the teaching profession.

The society or the community, in which he or she teaches, shapes many aspects of a teacher's role. The relationships with other members of the community which are particularly significant for the teacher vary according to cultural, geographical and administrative features of the contest in which he or she is teaching. For example, a teacher in a rural school with a small community and a teacher in a large school in a city have different role-sets from each other, and their relationships are likely to differ. The performance of roles will therefore be significant according to the type of school in which one teaches. The different roles performed by teachers will include, specialist, professional, formal and informal and all are determined partly by the teacher's personality and partly by the expectations, which are held of him or her as a teacher. Within the teaching profession, roles will be differentiated according to authority, function, attributes such as age, gender and qualification and then social status. These in effect create antagonism within the role-set. The roles that teachers play in the classroom and the teaching styles that they adopt are varied. Some teachers will have a much more discovery talent of learning new methods and applying them than others, and the teacher's role behaviour will be determined, as earlier alluded to, by the nature of his or her personality, his experiences, and the teaching situations in which he or she finds him or herself. In cases where a teacher fails to match his or her style to the situation, it is very likely that he or she will be deemed ineffective. There is need therefore for teachers to be flexible in their enactment if roles and familiarity with different teaching styles that will help teachers define their own relationships to the classes and pupils they have to teach.

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