

THE FIRST PURPLETOD HOMEPAGE

In a recent research on teacher professionalism and the professionalization of teaching I came across the following comments (i) "Critics complain teachers' unions stand in the way of education reform, and protect underperforming educators" (ii) "Public is split on the subject of teacher unions; 27% indicated they helped, 26% said they hurt and 37% said they made no difference" (iii) "Unions continue to block reforms needed to improve schools by rather putting their focus on teachers instead of pupils" and (iv) "The crisis that is portrayed in the media is of a different nature. The media crisis rarely talks of inequitable funding, of widely disparate communities with widely disparate resources, of this country's growing gap between the have and the have-nots. Instead, this media crisis cuts a broader swath and acts as if public schools cannot do anything right and that teacher unions are the enemies of education".

To South Africans this narrative sounds very familiar and very close to home; but it is not. These are comments on the social challenges faced by the United State of America (USA).

As an educationist I have a very keen interest in business and finally started and registered my own company. This has been a long journey of achievement. My insight has been to couple these two passions, education and private enterprise. Over the course of our ongoing conversations we will return to this intuition...this is the birth of "PURPLE TOD CONSULTING".

This opportunity should result in an ongoing conversation via social media on matters of education, schooling, the teaching profession, teachers, learners and parents. This site will primarily be a date for teachers. Teachers will be conversing from all corners of our beloved country and reaching all nine (9) Provinces. It is about time that we as teachers do the talking about our profession instead of the Minister and MECs, the organised teaching profession, administrators and researchers. We should all strive as teachers to make this site an active an integral part of our professional being.

We work with the minds of young South Africans and transform them into full and well-rounded citizens. Our job is to extend their minds, mould, and amaze and amuse them. Through the journey of life-long learning we inculcate a craving and yearning for reading, writing, mathematics, the sciences and culture. A yearning for learning that is satisfied by both the home and the school.

Carl Sagan (Cosmos) pointed out that as humans we have neglected the simplest and greatest of human need which is touch. The peril is so dire that we are in danger of losing our humanity. Without touch we become detached with increased separation of the heart and mind with increased anxiety and violence. Sad as it is, as teachers we know that in contemporary society it is more complex...teachers are people too and must protect themselves against all natural instinct to nurture. Teachers are advised and sometimes told to keep physical distance and separation between teacher and learner.

Join me on this lifelong journey of discovery and dialogue. As professionals let us be fair, play the ball and not the person, be dignified and considerate in your comments and your opinions, be honest and truthful to yourself but more so, let's participate!

Stephanie Allais (a Senior Wits Researcher) recently commented in the Sunday Times 07 December 2014 that "Much mischief in our education system is caused by how results are used and interpreted". She argues that "Not all assessment is bad, strong national curriculum accompanied by rigorous national exams play a major role in building educational equality and supporting potential". Then she reminds the nation that "We also need to remember that reforming exams and curriculums can only do limited good without good teachers. And good teachers can only do limited good in the context of poverty hunger and violence" - (February 2015)