

**Speech presented by the MEC for Education at the World
Teachers Day Celebration in Tulamahashe Stadium on the 10
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Different Teacher Unions (SADTU, NEPTOSA, SAOU)

**A very special welcome to the Principals and teachers we are
celebrating here today**

**Parents, students and the community at large, good morning
and a very warm welcome to you all.**

All of us recall special teachers — people who not only taught us but inspired us in ways that changed our lives. William Arthur Ward once said, "The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires."

Here are five life-changing values inspired by unforgettable teachers.

The Teachers I Will Always Remember...

The Teachers I Will Always Remember... Taught the Value of Learning and Knowledge

They were enthusiastic about their subject. However, they gave more than knowledge. They showed how learning could enhance creativity, spark interests, and uncover talents. They instilled in students a curiosity to learn and an undying passion to keep learning.

The Teachers I Will Always Remember... *Taught the Value of Respect*

They treated others with honour. They explained how kind words, and sometimes silence, could prevent hurtful confrontations and turn enemies into friends. They taught the value of respect for the community as well as the individual.

The Teachers I Will Always Remember... *Taught the Value of Integrity*

They demonstrated empathy for those who were ill or suffering from personal loss. They would go the extra mile to offer support. Their ethics inspired students to live with courage and approach life with honesty, dignity, and self-worth.

The Teachers I Will Always Remember... *Taught the Value of Responsibility*

They taught that personal actions have consequences and that the individual must be accountable for his or her choices. They emphasized that when people think others are to blame for problems, that very thought is the real problem. They taught that each student was ultimately responsible for his or her learning and its impact on their future

The Teachers I Will Always Remember... *Taught the Value of Perseverance*

They taught that education continues until our last breath. They told stories about the hard times they had faced, and how God had often turned difficulties into blessings. They refused to let students quit after repeated failures. They demonstrated that "Faith is the assurance of things not yet seen."

Not all of these teachers taught in formal classrooms. Nor did they all have a formal education. Some of them are still teaching, and the education they provide is priceless.

I believe that the greatest gifts we can give our children are the same kind of values these teachers demonstrate. Then our children can also become unforgettable teachers, sharing values that will inspire happiness and faith for future generations.

Education is the key to everything. To peace and democratic stability. To jobs and economic growth, to good health, to respect and harmony between the sexes and between different faiths, ethnic groups and communities. It is the key to literally billions of unique human beings fulfilling their unique potential.

And teachers are the key to education. You can have a school without a building, without books and pens and desks and blackboards. But you can't have a school without a teacher. It's as simple as that.

Teaching and learning in Mpumalanga still faces a lot of challenges. These range from:

- recruitment and retention of qualified teachers,
- breeding a suitably qualified second layer of teachers,
- breeding teachers who possess strong mathematical skills,
- teaching and promoting African languages,
- teaching and communicating efficiently in the English language,
- compensation of professionals,

Teaching is essential because it makes all other profession possible, for teachers to perform at their optimum, they must be given their dues and benefits that are commensurate to their academic qualification and experience.

To this end, we are committed as government to improving the conditions for service of our teachers, be it classroom related, learner teacher support material related and even financially related improvements.

TEACHERS MATTER, Teachers are the backbone of the education system. They hold positions where they are able to influence the lives of their learners, in negative and in positive ways.

Learners, we should not wait for special occasions such as this to celebrate the work our teachers are doing, we should celebrate it every single day by co-operating and giving our best in and out of the classroom. We must inspire our fellow learners and be the best versions of ourselves that we can be.

Thank you all for sharing this special day with us, as we go back to our classrooms, ***MAY EACH ONE TEACH ONE!!***

I thank you!!