

The ILO/UNESCO Recommendation
concerning the Status of Teachers (1966)

1966

at

50

Respect for Qualified Professionals

2016





Education
International

The ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers was adopted in 1966. A lot has happened in those five decades, the world having changed many times over. But throughout those years the importance of teachers has remained a constant. This is why we are not celebrating its 50th anniversary as a monument to the past, however, but rather for the value and relevance of its ideas on education and the teaching profession for the present and for the future.

When Education International launched the Unite for Quality Education Campaign it took little time for it to become the largest global trade union campaign in history. It helped to produce the stand-alone education goal in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The three pillars of that campaign; Quality Teaching, Quality Tools for Teaching and Learning, and Quality Environments for Teaching and Learning, share the same roots and values as the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation.

There has been, however, a major education climate change since 1966. Consensus has eroded and the nature, content, and quality of the debate on education has shifted radically since the birth of the Recommendation.

The Recommendation sees education as being of broad value to society. It does not discard things of value that are not easily measurable. The purpose of education is described as follows:

“Education from the earliest school years should be directed to the all-round development of the human personality and to the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and economic progress of the community as well as to the inculcation of deep respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; within the framework of these values the utmost importance should be attached to the contribution to be made by education to peace and to understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and among racial or religious groups.”

The Recommendation is infused with respect for the profession of teaching and teachers. It is, in fact, in large part, about professionalisation. It is teachers who must evaluate pupils and adapt teaching materials to their needs. Teaching as seen by the Recommendation as a very special profession with highly trained, qualified practitioners. Teaching is human. It is personal. It is up close.

Teachers are seen as creative actors who shape the profession and make learning happen, not as “service delivery agents” as described by some international bodies. Not only are teachers the best placed to lead in the classroom, but their organisations are the voice of the profession contributing to making education policy, to guaranteeing quality, to preserving and enriching the profession as well as defending the rights of teachers on the job.

Reading the Recommendation today is refreshing. It is written in the long-forgotten language of education; the language with which many of us learned the profession. There is no need to wade through

management-speak and market jargon to try to fathom its intentions. It is simple and direct and understandable.

In fact, the deterioration of the language of education is an indication that we desperately need to renew and reform the discussion of education. As George Orwell said, "...if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought."

A comprehensive set of principles as well as a number of specific practices are laid down in the 1966 Recommendation as well as the UNESCO Recommendation from 1997 concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel. The second Recommendation covers some of the same areas and has more detail on academic freedom issues and covers governance, autonomy, and other matters of particular concern to higher education personnel.

The Recommendations create no sterile, artificial divisions between "trade union" questions and "professional" ones. Both are related to the status of teachers, depend on teachers having recognition and representation, and largely determine the quality of learning.

We commend the Recommendations to all who are serious about education as a public service for students rather than as a new market opportunity for investors. They, as well as the body of reports and decisions of the joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts (CEART) charged with overseeing the Recommendations, give them life. They should provoke a new look at what education is all about.

Respect for the principles of the Recommendations will help build, and in some cases re-build, the status of teachers and the teaching profession. They provide roots, context, and values that can broaden, enrich and renew the debate on education reform.



Susan Hopgood
President, EI



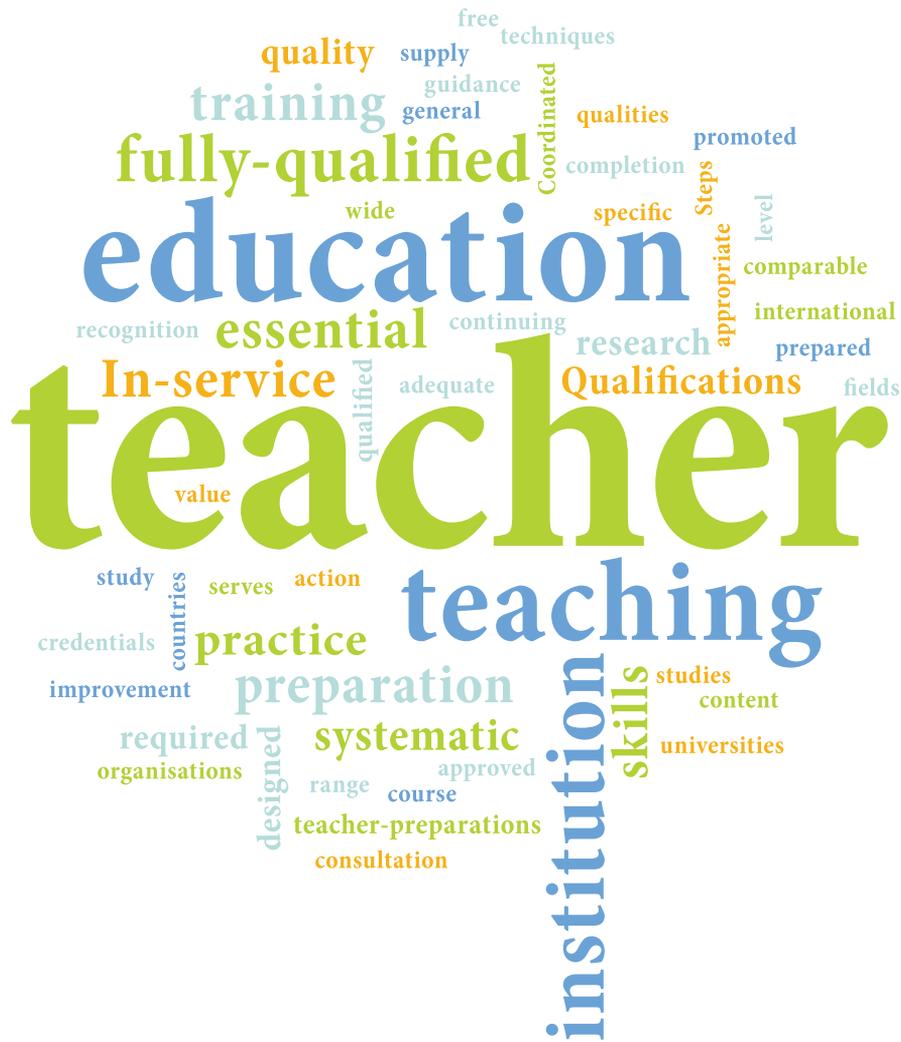
Fred van Leeuwen
General Secretary, EI

The Recommendation contains many sections which remain not only useful, but relevant to today's teaching profession. For its 50th anniversary, we have created word clouds to best illustrate 50 of the main themes of the Recommendation, but also to demonstrate its significance and compelling message five decades later.



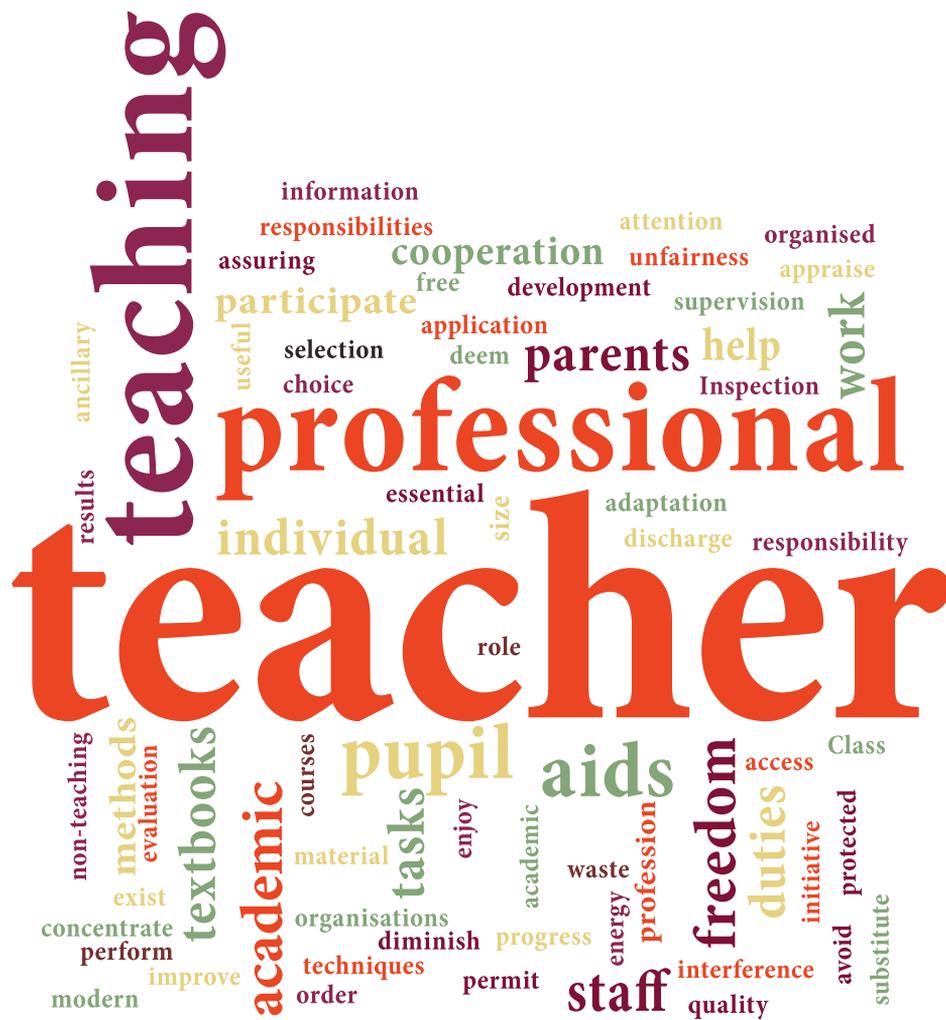
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Recommendation
status anniversary 1966 cloud teachers

Qualifications of Teachers



11. Coordinated systematic and continuing research and action in teacher preparation and in-service education are essential.
12. There needs to be an adequate supply of teachers with the necessary qualities and skills.
13. The completion of an approved course in an appropriate teacher-preparations institution should be required.
15. The value of teacher preparation in other countries should be considered. Steps should be taken towards international recognition of teaching credentials.
16. Teacher training should include general studies and cover a wide range of fields of study related to teaching and education as well as specific subject matter.
17. Teacher training should include practice in teaching under the guidance of fully-qualified teachers.
18. Teachers should be prepared in universities or in institutions of a comparable level.
19. In-service education should be designed for a systematic improvement in the quality and content of education and teaching techniques.
20. In-service education should be free, should involve teacher preparation and other institutions, and should be promoted in consultation with teacher organisations.

Professional Issues



21. The teaching profession should enjoy academic freedom in the discharge of professional duties.
22. Teachers should have the essential role in the choice and adaptation of teaching material, the selection of textbooks, and the application of teaching methods.
23. Teachers and their organisations should participate in the development of new courses, textbooks, and teaching aids.
24. Inspection and supervision should help teachers in professional tasks and should not diminish the freedom, initiative, and responsibility of teachers.
25. Teachers should be free to appraise pupils' progress using evaluation techniques they deem useful while assuring that there is not unfairness in individual pupil results.
26. Close cooperation should exist between teachers and parents, but teachers should be protected from interference with their professional responsibilities from parents.
27. The work of teachers should be organised so as to avoid waste of time and energy.
28. Class size should be such as to permit the teacher to give pupils individual attention.
29. In order to allow teachers to concentrate on professional tasks, ancillary staff should be provided to perform non-teaching duties.
30. Teachers should be provided modern teaching aids to improve quality and access to information, however, aids should not be seen as a substitute for teachers.



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