

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Essential for educators to have empathy

EDUCATOR empathy is anticipated at all levels and in all areas of education.

Educator empathy is the extent to which an educator works to intensely be aware of students' personal and social settings, to feel care and concern in response to students' optimistic and pessimistic emotions, and to respond compassionately without losing the focus on student learning.

Recently, there was a recording of an online class posted on social media that showed a university academic reprimanding a student for not owning a laptop.

The outcome was explosive as

soon as the video went online. The scenario apprehended in a 108-second clip that had been viewed more than 900,000 times and shared by more than 50,000 Twitter users before it was taken down on March 30.

Subsequent to the hurricane on social media, the lecturer was requested to go on leave starting Friday until an investigation into the incident is completed.

What's essential now is for us to take an extensive, firm inspection of our educators and our educational philosophies.

The lecturer must not deliver

such unsympathetic expressions even though she was trying to educate her students.

Certainly, there is a benevolent, more compassionate way to educate and to inspire. This is not pertaining to punishing an educator.

It is about ascertaining from this incident and ensuring that we don't come across a repeat of such occurrences in any learning institution, either in university or school.

If we anticipate our graduates to be professional, ethical, respectful, dignified and empathetic, then our educators must lead by example in the way they act, speak and behave.

Thus, universities must be attentive and apprehensive about academics' and students' wellbeing.

The evaluation and monitoring of educators' professionalism should be carried out randomly each semester. It could be an extra component in the promotion process and extension of a service contract.

Universities must strengthen the role of academics and amend teaching policies and ethics at all levels of education.

DR ANUSUIYA SUBRAMANIAM

Senior lecturer, School of Business and Economics, Universiti Putra Malaysia