

Global Teacher Award Questionnaire - Wendy Horn

Also, could you please tell me how you feel about making it to the top 50 list?

Being selected as one of the top 50 teachers for Global Teachers Award, 2018, is both an exciting and humbling experience. It is also a little bit daunting, knowing that educators will now look up to you to inspire, mentor and lead them.

It is not possible to become an excellent teacher on your own. The selection recognises the hard work of all the teachers that have mentored me, worked with me and have shaped me into the teacher I am today. It also recognises the incredible sacrifices the parents make in supporting their children in attending in receiving the best education they can provide, many at a tremendous sacrifice to the family as a whole, and finally it rewards the scores of learners who have passed through my classrooms and laboratories, and their hard work and dedication. It is a privilege to be able to mould young people, preparing them to be positive and active citizens of our country.

How would this recognition help you and your work?

I have always worked on improving science teaching in South Africa, through teacher training, the resourcing of schools with suitable technology or teaching material, and through promoting hands on scientific investigations. When I won the National teaching award in South Africa, I could see the positive impact it had. I was able to obtain resources, have direct lines of communication with officials, and the media coverage created an awareness of what we as teachers could achieve in our classrooms. Teachers were inspired to do more, the whole community was energised. The learners were so positive, believing more in themselves just because I had won an award. The girl learners especially believed more strongly that they could do science, that they could be the next great inventor or engineer.

Thus, I could reach more learners, more teachers and more parents, telling the story of the love for science, awakening the understanding that we need to train problem-solvers and analytical thinkers.

The Global Teacher Award will have an even greater impact. I hope with this award to reach further than the Western Cape Province, but to have an influence on the teaching and learning of a wider community.

This award would also provide an opportunity to learn from the top teachers in the world, to see best practise in other countries. This could only benefit those I pass this learning onto, both learners and educators.

How important is a role of teacher in our society?

Teachers, specifically in the South African context, are much more than just the conveyor of academic content. It is expected of teachers to create social cohesion, to teach tolerance and promote inclusivity in order to create a society where we are able to live and work together. Many South African teachers live the values of "Ubuntu", 'I am what I am because of who we all are', it encompasses our humanity toward each other.

Currently, many South African learners are the first in the family to complete high school and attend a university. Teachers need to bridge the gap between this generation of parents and their children.

We often fill the gap created by parents who are working long hours, or absent fathers/mothers. In many communities, the educators are the glue that holds that community together.

Further, teachers must inspire the next generation to be better than us. We are role models and have more power than we know to influence the children in our care. We must treat that power with respect and know that we make a difference.