

Effective Ways to Teach in the Classroom: A Critical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This article provides an overview of teaching methods based on established pedagogical concepts, rather than presenting findings from my own practical research. The primary objective is to demonstrate the inherent bond between a teacher, and students, and the subject matter they teach, highlighting that teaching is multiple process. Additionally, it seeks to demonstrate that in order to optimise the educational outcome, there must be an alignment between a teacher's instructional approach and their students' preferred methods of learning. Clearly, we are discussing the methods and styles that teachers should use when instructing. As teaching is a noble job, a teacher must try to bring best outcomes from students. In general, I portray the teachers' role in the classroom, and how do they interact effectively.

Keywords: Teacher, learner, subject matter, teaching style

INTRODUCTION

The defining characteristic of a teacher is their aptitude for instructing students and their capacity to exert a positive impact on them. "Research constantly shows that teaching is the single most school-based factor in student's academic growth" (Teacher Effectiveness, 2015). In the modern era, the function of a teacher has expanded to include several responsibilities such as acting as a surrogate parent, advisor, guide, and exemplary figure. "An ideal teacher is an agent of change, transforming all who come into her/his ambit. As a sensei or guru, this "mystery" person is depicted by a long list of characteristics based on personality, knowledgeability, philosophy, professionalism, inimitability, and the like" (Ahmad et al., 2023). The main responsibility of a teacher is to convey knowledge, which is achieved through the act of teaching. "Teacher role refers to the different functions a teacher can have in a class. The role usually implies the relationship between the teacher and learner, particularly in terms of the autonomy the learner has over their learning" (*Teacher Role*, n.d.) Teaching often involves adhering to a designated curriculum and assuring comprehension of the material by the students. The role of a teacher serves as the foundation for all other responsibilities they fulfil. If a teacher is unable to fulfil their fundamental duty of imparting knowledge, it becomes challenging to exert any other kind of impact on the child. Teachers have a crucial role in transforming lives, igniting aspirations, and pushing the boundaries of human capabilities. The primary responsibility of a teacher is to foster, instruct, and cultivate youngsters in order to develop their utility to society. The position of teachers has undergone a significant transformation compared to the past. Gradually, teachers were provided with a designated curriculum and explicit guidelines on how to effectively deliver the curriculum. Today, the function of teachers has expanded beyond the act of teaching. Their current responsibilities encompass providing guidance to students, offering mentorship, and instructing them on the utilisation and application of knowledge in their daily life. "Teachers believe that effective teachers plan the instruction carefully and implement it effectively. To succeed it, effective teachers come to class ready to teach, adjust their instruction according to students' needs and abilities, differentiate learning, engage and motivate students" (Dulay, 2023). Teachers are currently seeking methods to influence pupils at a deeper level and motivate them to achieve higher and accomplish more.

Teacher and Student Relationship

“Improving students' relationships with teachers has important, positive and long-lasting implications for both students' academic and social development. However, those students who have close, positive and supportive relationships with their teachers will attain higher levels of achievement than those students with more conflict in their relationships” (Kaufman, 2010). “There is always a connection between teacher, student and subject matter” (Hyman & Rosoff, 1984). However, in contrast to Bhatia, “I would like to suggest that a teacher should maintain a bilateral relationship with their students and the subject matter they teach them giving equal weighting to both” (Islam, 2023). The initial inquiry is: what specific content should an educator impart to their students? The answer to this question is contingent upon the specific demographic of students that the individual intends to instruct. Hence, prior to determining the subject matter to be taught, the instructor must initially assess the proficiency level of the pupils and subsequently evaluate their requirements and preferences. Put simply, the subject matter that is to be taught should be appropriate for the students' level and should also address their specific needs and interests. “For some teachers, the ability to easily make connections and build positive relationships with students that help them thrive in a school setting is second nature. Other teachers struggle to build good relationships with students” (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Suitable Topic Selection

The topic should be both crucial and pleasurable. If the subject is inherently interesting, then that is satisfactory. However, when the subject matter is lacking excitement and fails to capture attention, it is the responsibility of the teacher to infuse it with liveliness and captivation. “Teachers need to share their time and talent fairly, offering helpful feedback and encouragement to each student, and ensuring that the curriculum is meaningful” (David Miller Sadker & Zittleman, 2018). According to Krashen's theory of learning and his Input Hypothesis, the input should be marginally higher than the acquirer's current level of competence. “Comprehensible input refers to utterances that the learner understands based on the context in which they are used as well as the language in which they are phrased” (Richards & Rodgers, 1995, p. 132-133). The primary argument is that teachers should never impose any subject content on their students. If you impose anything upon someone who is unwilling, they will not be able to effectively assimilate it. The topic matter you select for teaching your kids should be appropriate, comprehensible, and easily absorbed by them. While a food may possess excellent nutritional qualities, it may not be compatible with everyone's digestive system. The same applies to a topic matter, and it may not function for all. Consequently, it is imperative for a teacher to conduct a thorough examination of students' preferences, abilities, and limitations prior to choosing a subject to teach. In psychology, the study of pupils can be approached in two distinct manners. They can be examined both individually and together. Indeed, it is a fact that no two pupils possess identical qualities; every student is an exceptional and distinct individual. Conversely, certain pupils may exhibit significant similarities despite their distinct individual characteristics. Consequently, a teacher has the ability to interact with pupils using both of these approaches. Nevertheless, a teacher's understanding of students will grant them a distinct sway over them. That knowledge is power is a universal truth and knowledge of students gives a teacher a “power over them which the teacher can use for the achievement of educational ends” (Bhatia, 2004).

The instinct of curiosity is called the mother of knowledge and this instinct is very powerful in young students. A teacher in selecting and presenting their materials and lessons should tap this. The teacher should keep in mind that students should consider the subject matter new enough. “Experienced teachers base every new lesson on the knowledge already acquired and connect it with previous lessons so that children may not be upset by the newness of facts presented” (Bhatia, 2004). Bhatia further says, “The standard of teaching should not be so low that pupils consider it unnecessary nor too high that they consider it beyond their reach” (Bhatia, 2004). The teacher's subject matter should be well within the students' power of understanding. Not only that, the new input given by the teacher in a class should be related to the existing knowledge already possessed by the students. This being ensured, the teaching-learning outcome can also be ensured.

Classroom Management

Studies indicate that those who excel in managing classrooms are consistently individuals who engage in careful planning. “Following are three basic principles, for setting expectations, in order to develop a classroom community: (1) rules should be few in number, (2) they should seem fair and reasonable to students, and (3) rules should fit the growth and maturation of the students. Not too long ago, rules meant obeying the teacher, being quiet, and not misbehaving. As schools have moved away from autocratic teaching styles, student responsibility and ownership of rules have become more central” (Sadker & David Miller Sadker, 2005). Teachers can handle student participation in rule formation in several ways. Some educators prefer to collaboratively formulate a set of rules with their students, but all are not like that. When pupils possess a clear comprehension of norms and a perception of moral equity, the majority of students will adhere to them. Good manners also involve meticulously organizing the classroom to avoid disruptions, instill children with a feeling of assurance and safety, and ensure that instruction can progress smoothly.

Applying Multiple Ways of Teaching

Successful teachers employ several instructional techniques in order to inspire pupils to engage in learning. Nevertheless, it is imperative to abstain from perusing a pre-composed work or neglecting to establish visual contact with one's students. A teacher's duty extends beyond mere mastery of the subject and indiscriminate dissemination of knowledge to students. Contemporary educational psychology posits that it is incumbent upon teachers to analyse their students before to designing their instructional strategies. Historically, traditional educators primarily focused on the subject matter they taught, however contemporary educators today prioritise their students. The instinct of curiosity is called the mother of knowledge and this instinct is very powerful in young students. “Teachers know what a daunting job it can be to ensure that all students in a class learn effectively. In addition to the usual difficulties of gaining everyone's attention at once, instructors also run into the issue of preferred learning styles” (Vondracek, 2009).

Psychological Approach to Students

Given a class size of fifty students, it is highly improbable that all fifty students will possess distinct learning styles. Moreover, it is improbable that every individual will possess identical psychological characteristics and have a uniform approach to learning. Not all students in a class will derive equal benefits from a single teaching approach, regardless of its quality. A teacher should employ a wide range of instructional approaches and styles to the fullest extent possible. A teacher should possess the ability to adapt and perform various responsibilities in diverse educational settings. Nevertheless, it is impracticable for a teacher to employ numerous styles. It is unnecessary. “A garments factory produces just a few categories/sizes of shirts and buyers buy the category that more or less suits them. Similarly, if a teacher uses just a few styles, they will meet the demand of all students. Variety is the spice not only of life but also of a class” (Islam, 2023).

The primary focus of a teacher is how to address these disparities among students. Providing a meticulously structured lecture to a group of individuals who adhere to societal norms will result in their collective enjoyment and a high probability of achieving a positive teaching-learning outcome. However, if there are individuals in your class who are convergers, concrete learners, and communicative learners, your lecture will not be deemed satisfactory. Likewise, if there are any students in a class who have a specialised sensitivity to sensory stimuli and the teacher's instructional approach does not align with their particular style, these learners may encounter challenges and their learning outcomes will be impacted. Bargar and Hoover observe that “Differences in psychological type between teachers and students can lead teachers to misunderstand learning styles of students” (1984). They also observe that “Conflicts in type can lead to difficulties in interpersonal communications among students and between students and teachers” (Bargar & Hoover ,1984). A teacher, therefore, cannot remain indifferent to their students' psychological types and learning styles. According to Harmer, teachers “have to start with the recognition of students as individuals as well as being members of a group” (2003). He suggests that teachers should tailor their teaching methods according to their students' learning styles. “Another approach aimed at improving student behavior while

also improving teacher– student relationships is Restorative Justice. Restorative Justice is a relatively new approach combating the problems facing students who do not find success in school when traditional discipline practices are used” (Pavelka & Thomas, 2019).

Teachers should also keep in mind that there are different psychological types of learners. According to Jung (cited in Bargar & Hoover, 1984, p.56-57), Learners are categorised into introverts and extraverts based on their attitudes. Introverted learners tend to be reserved or timid when it comes to interacting with their surroundings, while extraverts are typically lively, dynamic, and engaged in activities for the majority of the time. Introverts are characterised by their quiet and reserved nature, frequently causing them to go undetected during classroom activities. Jung examines students who possess intuitive and sense perception functions. The perceptive students have a tendency to comprehend material in a comprehensive manner, and they typically exhibit qualities of imagination, creativity, and a preference for theoretical pursuits. Conversely, the perceptive students have a tendency to approach things in a realistic, observant, and accurate manner. Jung categorises students into thinking and feeling kinds based on their judgement function. Individuals of the thinking type 2 typically make judgements that are characterised by logic, analysis, and objectivity. On the other hand, judgements produced in the feeling mode are guided more by personal values rather than strict logic. According to Jung, “Introversion is the polar opposite of extraversion, intuition the polar opposite of sensing and thinking the polar opposite of feeling” (cited in Bargar & Hoover, 1984).

CONCLUSION

As educators, we possess a distinct chance and responsibility to exert influence in our households, communities, businesses, and educational institutions. the desired future they envision. Therefore, no matter how much we study during our lives, we will never complete the process of acquiring knowledge. Overall, employing many instructional methods allows the instructor to enhance their teaching approach, while engaging in varied learning strategies facilitates more effective and efficient learning for both the teacher and the student. Good educators should recognise that diversity is the essence of both life and learning, and students always appreciate different learning method .Furthermore, it is essential for a teacher to align their instructional approach with the unique learning style of each student. While individualised education is often regarded as the most effective approach, it is often deemed impracticable to implement. In such a scenario, a teacher may consider categorising their students' learning styles and thereafter adapt their teaching methods accordingly. An effective and optimal teaching-learning outcome can only be achieved through a matching of teaching and learning styles.

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