

Effective Classroom Teaching And Learning: Ways To Make It A Success

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ABSTRACT

There is no blinking the fact that classroom is the proper place to exhibit teachers' techniques, skills and knowledge. The effectiveness of teaching learning process in the classroom speaks of the favorable situation the teachers are expected to create; and at the same breath, the amount of sustained interest they can arouse among the learners. Then the question of learners' cooperation and participation in the classroom activities crops up. This relationship between teachers and learners is inextricably connected to make a cemented tie between them to reap the harvest of teaching learning process, and thereby achieve the objectives the classroom activities are meant for. This is the reason why the write up captioned Effective Classroom Teaching and Learning: Ways to Make It a Success dwells upon several factors effective classroom teaching and learning is responsible for.

Keywords: *Strategies, Effectiveness, Environment, Skills and Learners' Centered Class.*

INTRODUCTION:

Teaching in the classroom is not a one way process; it is rather a complicated art and commitment, concerned with tri partisan interest, tri partisan participation, and tri partisan success. To talk about success is to talk about those of the teachers, learners, and the authorities of the institutions. It is, however, important to note that there are certain strategies for teachers which serve as keys to the effectiveness of classroom teaching and learning. Question may be raised as to the teachers' capabilities that they alone are sufficient to yield desired success as the fruits of their teaching learning process, because it is universally acknowledged that teachers themselves are the best methods. They know best where, when and how- what techniques and strategies are to be applied. Then, what's the use of overloading new strategies? Yes, that's the moot point. We need such teachers as will be able to present themselves as creative law makers, not law breakers. Given some new techniques' attracting teachers to form their best choices, or stimulating their thoughts, or at least, making them feel flattered to do their best, it is no wonder, then, what better choice there can be than dealing with what goes ahead.

As to the teaching characteristics that make teaching effective, a noted scholar Paul Ramsden in his excellent book, **Learning to Teach in Higher Education**, writes, "... a great deal is known about the characteristics of effective university teaching. It is undoubtedly a complicated matter; there is no indication of one 'best way,' but our understanding of its essential nature is both broad and deep." (p.88-89). He organizes that essential knowledge into six principles, unique for the way he relates them to students' experiences. They are, however, analyzed below.

1. Interest and explanation – "When our interest is aroused in something, whether it is an academic subject or a hobby, we enjoy working hard at it. We come to feel that we can in some way own it and use it to make sense of the world around us." (p. 98). Coupled with the need to establish the relevance of content, instructors need to craft explanations that enable students to understand the material. This involves knowing what students understand and then forging connections between what is known and what is new.

2. Concern and respect for students and student learning – Ramsden starts with the negative about which he is assertive and unequivocal. “Truly awful teaching in higher education is most often revealed by a sheer lack of interest in and compassion for students and student learning. It repeatedly displays the classic symptom of making a subject seem more demanding than it actually is. Some people may get pleasure from this kind of masquerade. They are teaching very badly if they do. Good teaching is nothing to do with making things hard. It is nothing to do with frightening students. It is everything to do with benevolence and humility; it always tries to help students feel that a subject can be mastered; it encourages them to try things out for themselves and succeed at something quickly.” (p. 98)

3. Appropriate assessment and feedback – This principle involves using a variety of assessment techniques and allowing students to demonstrate their mastery of the material in different ways. It avoids those assessment methods that encourage students to memorize and regurgitate. It recognizes the power of feedback to motivate more effort to learn.

4. Clear goals and intellectual challenge – Effective teachers set high standards for students. They also articulate clear goals. Students should know up front what they will learn and what they will be expected to do with what they know.

5. Independence, control and active engagement – “Good teaching fosters [a] sense of students’ control over learning and interest in the subject matter.” (p. 100). Good teachers create learning tasks appropriate to the student’s level of understanding. They also recognize the uniqueness of individual learners and avoid the temptation to impose “mass production” standards that treat all learners as if they were exactly the same. “It is worth stressing that we know that students who experience teaching of the kind that permits control by the learner not only learn better, but that they enjoy learning more.” (p. 102)

6. Learning from students – “Effective teaching refuses to take its effect on students for granted. It sees the relation between teaching and learning as problematic, uncertain and relative. Good teaching is open to change: it involves constantly trying to find out what the effects of instruction are on learning, and modifying the instruction in the light of the evidence collected.” (p. 102)

Agreeing with what Mr Ramsden says about effective teaching, I would like to simplify my thirty four years’ teaching experiences at different levels of educational institutions. Effective teaching in the classroom, as I have gathered, involves certain essential pre-requisites which, however, can be put in and analyzed under three heads: one- teachers’, two- students’, and three- institutional authorities’.

One- teachers’ qualifications: first, I would like to point out to their professionalism-their attitude to the profession they are involved in. During my teaching career, I have met some colleagues who were not satisfied with their job. They were found languishing in pangs and pains, frustrations and depressions. Where job satisfaction is a prime factor to bring about success in the relevant field, if the teachers’ minds go on swinging like pendulum, suffering from Hamletian complex and frustrations, effective teaching in the classroom loses its way, and it goes on fumbling in the blind alley of success. Second, teachers’ sufficient knowledge of the topic or subject they deal with, coupled with the skills, updated methods, techniques and approaches of teaching matters most. Third, pre-preparation: Some teachers are so confident about the readiness of their knowledge and effectiveness of their skills that they do not think it necessary to get prepared for their delivery. They want to perform everything on the stage. Yes, to be confident is good, and it goes with effective teaching, but to be overconfident is damaging. Humans are not machines that they can recall everything they have already learned. To forget

anything is the connatural quality of human psyche. This is why; we need to refresh our memories. Moreover, learning has no end. It's a continuous process. Fresh reading or learning may help create new and innovative things, and novelty brings variety, and variety begets new interest. In fact, students may derive maximum benefit from teachers' updated knowledge'. Fourth, teachers' awareness about the audience: what levels of audience or learners to be addressed? Taking into account this aspect, the preparation and presentation should be made. Fifth, objective or objectives of the lesson should be ensured. Only the good presentation, demonstration and practice do not help see the outcomes of teaching. Different assessments, tests and evaluations are to be arranged in order to see whether the goals or objectives have been achieved.

Sixth, learners' centered class is another point of cardinal importance to reap the fruits of effective class. Creating congenial learning environment is a must for heading towards effective class. Participatory class, that is, learners' participation needs to be ensured. To draw students' attention to the point of focus, the teacher is expected to begin the class with a warm up activity. This will bring about a familiar atmosphere in the class. The teachers should realize that the students are the target point of teaching, and teaching in the classroom is not a one way process- it goes in a bi partisan spirit; hence they must have active participation in the teaching learning process through different brain storming activities being engaged in pair and group works, role play, simulation, story telling, debating and giving feedback. In ensuring these activities, the teacher should play the role of a motivator, facilitator, guide and helper. It is not expected that the teachers will be giving lecture or making delivery without caring about whether the audience could have had a go into, or understanding what he/she delivered. 'Chalk and talk', or 'jug and mug' policy of teaching is no longer effective- it is one sided, but teaching is not a one sided approach. It is many- faced, and also a kind of technology; so it demands to be treated as a cutting-edge technology- that requires interaction- interaction between students and students, students and teachers. Even the teacher should never forget that all the students in the class are his/her audience. The back benchers' interest should not be overlooked. It may happen that his/her voice does not reach them. In that case, he/she should decide how he/she can be audible to the unheard. Eye contact with the students matters much. It engages their attention, and makes them feel important. The Students should never be discouraged if they make mistakes. It is worth while not to forget that students have also their own pride. They never want that the composure of their mind goes under stress and strain. So, they can be corrected applying some technique or techniques that are students- friendly. Besides, they should be encouraged or appreciated using expressions like thank you, many thanks, good, excellent, bravo, etc. It is true that human minds undergo mixed experiences in life- sweet and bitter. Teachers are no exception. It may happen that a teacher comes to the class with a lugubrious or melancholy mood. If she/he cannot suppress her painful feelings, this may have impact on the teaching learning process. It is, therefore, desirable that she/he should put on smiling look though it was acting. In fact, a teacher is an actor/actress.

Lastly, it is worth remembering that learning process involves, at least, three principles: doing, thinking and enjoying. If the students are allowed to be involved in different activities, they will have the chance to develop their thinking faculties, and anything done this way will certainly be enjoyable, and it will have a durable effect on the learning process. It may not be out of place to mention here that the whole presentation and activities should be time bound. Coming to the class with the ringing of the bell, and going out from the class with parting bell should never be violated. That's why; there should be a plan, segmenting different activities as per the length of the class. One may call it a lesson plan. In order that the students may have a deeper understanding of the topic what can also be done is that they may be advised to have discussion on the discussed topic among their classmates during recess, and even after the class hour.

Two- students' role: It has already been said that teaching learning process is not one sided. To make the classroom teaching effective, the teachers alone cannot be entrusted with the whole responsibility. The students are the components, an inseparable part. They are, in fact, the target group. As the teachers should exhibit their professional attitude, the students should also show their learning interest. They should be committed to getting benefits from classroom teaching. So, from beginning to the end, their presence in the classroom is desirable. Being absent from the classes for some days, if they attend the classes in the middle or at the end, it is cumbersome for them to have a grasp of the course. Again, students need to have advance idea about their course and curriculum before they attend the class. This will facilitate them to have comparatively easy understanding of the topic to be taught in the class. In this regard, the parents and guardians can play a vital role. They can motivate them. Of course, the social and cultural background of our parents and guardians may stand here as a factor. Students coming to study at college and university levels sometimes come with a base not up to the mark, built at primary and higher secondary levels. So care should be taken at primary and secondary levels to have further improvement of classroom teaching procedures.

Three- role of the institution: appointment of teachers is so significant that it can either weaken or strengthen the backbone of teaching. I should say if education is the backbone of a nation, teachers are the backbone of an effective class. So, while appointing teachers for an educational institution, there should be a fair selection procedure; and teachers having the backbone of sound knowledge, proper education and skills should be appointed. For further strengthening their backbones, their salary, accommodation, teaching aids and training be arranged in a proper way. To create congenial environment and to make classroom teaching effective, classroom should be furnished with necessary updated teaching materials and visual aids including multi media facility. The size of the classroom will be such as will accommodate the ideal number of students for an ideal class. The seating arrangement needs to be made in a way as will enable the students to move the benches/chairs as may be required to conduct pair and group works.

Last but not least. Teacher training, which is otherwise called teacher development, can add fuel to the engine of effective classroom teaching. Change is the go of the world. Nothing on earth remains static. Everything undergoes modification and change. So is the case with teaching method, technique, procedure and approach. One method is supplanted by another, one technique is altered by other, one procedure is followed by a new devise and a prevailing approach is modified by another. To make the teachers familiar with the updated technology of teaching, and to develop their skills, they need to be trained. This can be done rightly by the authority concerned.

CONCLUSION:

There is no end to the discussion of effective classroom teaching. It is very much a subjective subject. What is appropriate to me may be inappropriate to other? Yet, the reflections of experiences coupled with the citations from Ramsden's and excerpts from *The Teaching Professor's* may be thought provoking, and go a long way about the effective classroom teaching and learning.

REFERENCE:

1. Ramsden, P. (1992). *Learning to Teach in Higher Education*. New York: Routledge.
2. Excerpted from *Effective Teaching: Six Keys to Success*, *The Teaching Professor*, March 2006.