

A REVIEW ON QUALITY TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

Teaching is generally described as an interactive process, primarily involving classroom talk, which takes place between teacher and pupils and occurs during certain definable activities. The teaching activities may be recognized as motivation, planning, informing, leading discussion, disciplining, counselling, and evaluating.

Quality teaching has become an issue of importance as the landscape of higher education has been facing continuous changes. Now, students call for new teaching methods. Modern technologies have entered the classroom, thus modifying the nature of the interactions between students and teachers. The present paper is a review on quality teaching. We will try to understand the facets of quality teaching through the review.

Keeping in view the quality teaching I have made the attempt to survey related literature in the field. I studied a number of books, journals and researches on the area of teaching. It will be the effort in this paper to enumerate various researches in this field published in some many books, journals and researches studied.

For the ease of presentation, paper has been divided into two sections. Section I deals with the theoretical aspects whereas Section II is based on research and findings about teaching.

Section I. Theoretical aspects

An attempt has been made here to examine the theoretical basis of the major dimensions with a view to obtaining an insight into the influence on the teaching. Consequently, an attempt has been made to bring together some important literature in the area under study which has been classified under the following heads:

1. Context of Teaching
2. Teacher Quality
3. Teaching effectiveness
4. Factors influencing teaching

1. Context of Teaching-

Research studies which adopted a detailed focus on life in the classroom established more sophisticated approach to understanding the complex interaction of pupils and teachers. **Kounin's** (1977) work, which highlighted the complexities of classroom life, has remained influential for twenty years. **Doyle** (1990) provides an overview of studies which have focused on classroom contexts. Classrooms are crowded and busy places in which groups of students who vary in interests and liabilities must be organised and directed. Teaching in such settings requires a highly developed ability to manage events.

Teachers who actively accept the complexity of the classroom orchestrate events in their classes more successfully than those who do not (**Doyle**, 1977). All teachers, however need to be able to handle uncertainty in the classroom setting (**Floden** and **Buchmann**, 1993).

It even remains an open question whether major interventions, such as the introduction of new technology, will significantly change classroom practice (**Cuban**,1993).

Teaching can have many outcomes. Regarding the relationship between teaching and learning, teaching is to learning as selling is to buying (**Dewey**, 1934, p.35). Most studies of teaching effects concern pupils, but teaching also has an impact on others in the school, parents, members of the community or nation, and the teacher himself or herself. Effects may be conceptualised as applying to individuals, groups, institutions, or the entire society. They may also be conceived as changes in behaviour or thought, as cognitive, affective, conative, or psychomotor events, as immediate or long term, as incremental or cumulative.

Bruner (1996) has written about the conceptions that teachers have about the minds of learners. He characterises these as:

1. Seeing children as initiative learners: the acquisition of 'know-how'.
2. Seeing children as learning from didactic exposure: the acquisition of propositional knowledge.
3. Seeing children as thinkers: the development of intersubjective interchange.

2. Teacher Quality-

Teacher quality would be determined by a complex interaction of several dimensions. It is not difficult to draw up a list of qualities that characterise an effective teacher by pooling the opinions of educational experts, parents and guardians, headmasters, principals and managers of college, teacher educators and college teachers, and the pupils. Such a comprehensive collection of judgements is bound to help in formulating a list of qualities which reflect the opinions of a variety of people, and be acceptable to all. Studies of good and poor teachers, of reasons why teachers fail or succeed, classroom performance of different types of teachers, conditions and requirements for teacher selection, reasons for dismissal of teachers, can help to confirm or modify the set of characteristics evolved through pooling of judgements. And finally, appraisal of activities involved in teaching, tests of qualities commonly associated with teaching success, and measures of pupil change can be used to provide a comprehensive picture of the total personality of an effective teacher. These qualities, however, should not be considered in an isolated way. They do not have a separate, isolated existence, but are merged into the total psychophysical organism of the individual. It is more appropriate and nearer truth to talk in terms of an effective teaching personality rather than a set of independent characteristics of a teacher (**Adaval, 1979**).

3. Teaching Effectiveness-

The term, 'teaching effectiveness' seems to imply effectiveness of teaching within the unit, whereas 'teacher effectiveness' addresses individual teacher performance. i.e. an effective teacher succeeds in producing desired changes among the students through his/her teaching. He/she is satisfied with teaching as a profession and able to accomplish the prefixed goals of teaching effectively.

A teacher's success depends largely upon his capacity to reflect the national philosophy in his own life and actions, and to initiate the child into it. Teaching effectiveness, which includes precise measurement and which is related to and perhaps depend on teaching behaviour and a host of several other factors, has always intrigued educationists. Efforts made by researchers from time to time to isolate teaching effectiveness and examine its ingredients have not been wholly successful.

Teaching effectiveness appeared to be strongly associated with the following clusters (**Good** and **Grouws**, 1975).

- Student-initiated behaviour
- Whole class instruction
- General clarity of instruction, and availability of information as needed (Process of feedback in particular)
- A non-evaluative and generally relaxed learning environment
- Higher achievement expectations
- Classrooms that are relatively free of major behavioural disorders.

4. Factors Influencing Teaching/Teacher

All educationists agree that teacher effectiveness is the most important determinant of what constitutes effective teaching. Some of the factors reported to be influencing the teachers' effectiveness has been given below:

Personality Factor-

In identifying the personality traits of an effective teacher, we have to realise that there are certain characteristics of a general nature, which may be common to all professionals. These qualities are essential for a normal, healthy and balanced individual. These may not be necessary for an engineer or a medical practitioner, but are essential in the case of a teacher (**Nelson**, 1998).

Academic Achievement-

Academic achievement reveals scholastic performance of the individual in the curricular subjects and shows learning outcomes (**Debnath**, 1971). Generally it indicates proficiency in subjects. Academic achievement of a teacher is a weighted aggregate of division obtained at high school, higher secondary, graduate, postgraduate and other examinations.

Subject Matter Knowledge-

Subject matter knowledge is another variable that one might think could be related to teacher effectiveness (**Collinson**, 1996).

Intelligence and Teachers' Effectiveness-

Intelligence also known as the general mental ability helps an individual to adjust to the environment and learn from the past experiences. Operationally speaking, intelligence is the ability which helps an individual to succeed in school or in some job (**Linda**, 1990).

Adjustment and Teachers' Effectiveness-

Teachers who are adjusted to their circumstances, domestic or departmental, seldom feel difficulty in coping with the situation. They easily get along with their students and colleagues (**Wangoo, 1984**).

Job Satisfaction and Teachers' Effectiveness-

The job satisfaction variable is found as very important predictor of teacher effectiveness (**Novack, 1999**). A teacher who is satisfied with his students, colleagues and working conditions will be successful in developing good relationship with the pupils, colleagues and administrators.

Interests and Teachers' Effectiveness-

A teacher having no interest in his job will never try to improve his mode of teaching. If the teacher is not interested in a particular subject, he cannot arouse curiosity of his pupils and help them properly. Taking into consideration these facts, it is very necessary that teacher's actual interests should be known for determining his effectiveness in teaching (**Birney, 1999**).

Attitude Towards Teaching Profession-

Attitude means any symbol, person, slogan, constitution, ideal or ideas towards which people can differ with respect to positive or negative effect. Teachers having positive attitude towards their profession will be more devoted to their job (**Mahadevappa, 1980**).

Teacher-Pupil Relationship-

A teacher who has a good relationship with his students, should perform his duties with interest and with satisfaction. Good teacher-pupil relationship should be considered as a significant determinant of effective teaching (**Taylor, Fraser, and Fisher, 1997**).

Socio-Economic Status-

Many sociologists determine social status on the basis of the account of income, social background, education, occupation etc. Obviously teachers' effectiveness is influenced by socio-economic status of the teachers (**Linda, 1990**).

Section II. Research and Finding Aspects

This part of review of literature dealing the study on different dimensions of quality and effective teaching.

Khandelwal (2009) empirically identified specific behaviours that represent characteristics of excellent teaching in India based on student narratives. The six important areas or behavioural dimensions identified were:- 1. Rapport with students. 2. Course preparation and delivery, 3. Encouragement, 4. Fairness 5. Spending time with students outside of class, and 6. Maintaining class control.

Allan, Clarke and Jopling (2009) studied the perceptions of First Year undergraduate students regarding quality teaching in higher education following a phenomenographic approach of qualitative research procedure. The study posited 10 factors that describe effective university teachers, the top 5 of which were 1. Demonstrate excellent knowledge of their subject, 2. Including group activities 3. Encouraging group discussion 4. Being approachable and 5. Starting sessions on time. Other personal attributes of teachers that were evaluated highly by the first year undergraduates were i. Patience, ii. Respect students' opinions and iii. Enthusiasm.

Delaney, Johnson, Johnson and Treslan (2008) conducted a qualitative study on students' perceptions of teaching in higher education in Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada. Nine characteristics of effective instructor were identified and also defined by student generated narratives from 330 usable responses. These were i. Respectful ii. Knowledgeable, iii. Approachable iv. Engaging v. communicative, vi. Organized vii. Responsive, viii. Professional and ix. Humorous.

Ellis (1996) conducted research on discipline. His study revealed how teachers who create a positive program with the students in their classes demonstrated quality in teaching. The increased instructional emphasis on social skills in this cooperative learning setting decreased classroom misbehaviours and allowed more time for classroom instruction.

Gage and Needels (1989) have conducted research on teacher behaviour for quality teaching. They examined the way teachers behaved in the classroom and its effect on student behaviour. They found that specific teaching behaviours are correlated with beneficial outcomes in terms of students' learning.

Berliner (1988) conducted research on knowledge of content. Results from studies by Berliner found that teachers placed emphasis on the importance of the teacher having a thorough knowledge of content before embarking on the teaching path.

Shulman (1987) studied on curriculum and pedagogical approaches. He suggested that the teacher must have a deep understanding of the curriculum and a range of pedagogical approaches to enable quality teaching.

The acts of teaching include the logical acts of teaching - informing, explaining, describing, exemplifying, instancing, showing, and the like - and those quite different acts of controlling, motivating, and evaluating which are managerial in nature and which are essential ingredients of teaching as enacted in the interactions of teacher and taught, made necessary by the institutional context of teaching. There are also those acts involved in planning of teaching - diagnosing, selecting, and prescribing what is to be taught.

From the above points on quality teaching we can conclude that there may be many facets for the quality teaching. It may be related to teachers, classroom interactions, learning resources, students, infrastructure, teaching methods, evaluation etc. But the most important students must be in the centre point in every aspects of quality teaching.

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