

Teachers: the Epitome of Pedagogy

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Abstract

This study focuses on almost all factors, those if, found collectively in a teacher makes him a role model. The paper highlights the fact that an ideal teacher is one who is a friend, a performer, an artist, a speaker, an analyst, a trainer, a guide, an anchorperson and a judge. The paper concludes that the blend of personal and professional qualities and didactic knowledge of the subject are valued key points. This study also sets path for further and deeper discussion of images of a good teacher at all educational levels in general and at tertiary level in particular.

Key words: Role model; Quality Education; Lucidity; Ideal Teacher; Evaluation; Instructional objectives

1. Introduction

Teachers are the architects of a nation. It is richness of teachers' talent that fabricates the intellectual and academic architecture. It is the mosaic of talented teachers that would bring renewed vitality. Before we discuss the qualities of this constellation of educators, we have to address the query that why are the qualities of a teacher important. Because good teaching leads to effective learning, which in turn means thorough and lasting acquisition of the knowledge. (Felder, R. M., & Brent, R. 1999a). Also, the Quality Education is a basic requirement in global employment market. Today's young generation need access to quality education more than ever to compete in global market. (Almas, Y., & Khan, S.A. (2006).

The aim of Quality Education is to help students in gaining & enhancing those skills that best meet their individual, personal and professional needs. No doubt, education is acquired for better professional career and best future job openings but another aim to be focused is the ethical and moral growth of students; realization of which in turn produces maestro professionally and morally.

All these ideal and matchless wishful thoughts are achieved only when best quality teachers are present in the faculty of an institute. The question is what makes teachers "The Epitome of Pedagogy"? The factors contributing to achieve instructional objectives and ornamenting the noble profession with quality gems are varied and manifold. Teacher is a person who, when in the class room; conducts the whole show as a solo performer and the future of a nation is his audience. The fragile soul of youth needs handling with extreme care and extra attention. The qualities and features making a teacher role model are underscored:

1.1 Regular

The first and the foremost thing is regularity. The teacher must be regular not only because it is the index of discipline but also because you cannot expect and demand others to practically do, what you, yourself are not applying into your lives. Therefore if a teacher wants his students to be regular, he himself has to be regular. When a teacher is regular then all serious minded students are regular.

2.2 Punctual

If a teacher is regular, coming to class regularly without a miss, this serves half of the purpose. Regularity is a cake without icing; this icing is added to the cake when the regular teacher is punctual also. Punctuality means to be "in time" rather than being "on time". An ideal teacher is one who is in the lecture room at least five minutes ahead of time. Punctuality of the teacher compels students to be punctual. With punctual teacher class decorum is maintained and all the students are impliedly convinced to be punctual which prevents class disturbance created through the intervention of late comers.

1.3 Appearance Matters: Attire Communicates

In regard with teachers' appearance and attire there are varied opinions. One group of student favors the aesthetic beauty and believes that it further beautifies and adds hues to the class room and teaching atmosphere. Whereas, the other group says that appearance does not matter, the students are to learn. It is not important that how has teacher prepared himself and how does he look like, important is how is the lesson being prepared and how does it look like.

There is a clear difference of wearing professional attire versus the alternative. Wearing professional attire makes setting tone easier, which positively affects all other aspects of learning. (Mark, K. 2006). A survey reports shows that 60% of the students want the teachers to be well dressed and 40% are of the view that the causal appearance does not matter. In the light of the above mentioned facts, we can conclude that, though the appearance has not much to contribute in the enhancement of quality of education, but it is better to be well

dressed, as the role models set path for the followers.

1.4 Calling Roll Call (Attendance)

The importance of attendance cannot be denied, it casts impact on the students' performance in the class room. There are different attendance policies in practice and the students respond variedly to these varieties of attendance policies. Judith Lerine discusses three types (Required Explicit, Not required Implicit and Not Required Explicit) of attendance policy in detail and concluded that where attendance is explicitly required, 80% students missed classes 4 times and less than 1% missed 8 times or more; in case where policy is Not Required Implicit, 73% of the students missed 4 times or less and 7% missed 8 times and when the attendance is explicitly not required but encouraged by the professors only 52% students stayed absent 4 or fewer times while 18% missed 8 times or more. (Judith, L. R. 1992 a). We conducted the analysis and found that our analyses are in complete agreement with Judith Lerine. Hence leading to the conclusion that the professors can encourage the attendance by the method they adopt themselves. The students are attracted by the force produced by the teacher, through the knowledge, information, interest, grip on the topic and command on the subject. Even if the attendance is explicitly not required the students enjoy attending the class of such a versatile teacher. The teachers can distinctively set the pattern for encouraging attendance. The result of statistical test by (Schmidt, R. M. 1983) reinforces the fact that the students doing job conscientiously on a daily basis preparing and participating in class perform better than those who skip the class and focus on craving for exams.

Another study by (Park, K. H., & Kerr, P. M. 1999), reveals the fact that the students attending classes regularly minimize the chance of receiving a D or an F.

The same data when applied to assess the relative impact of each absence in the students' final grade in a particular course. It was found that each absence lowered a student's grade by 0.06 in a 4.00 grading. Ten absences would lower the grade by 0.6 and same is the difference between a C Plus and a B. Again a teacher has to play a key role and handle the situation in a way that students are attracted by it and attendance is 100%. It does not matter whether the attendance is marked in the beginning, the middle or at the end of the lecture.

The statistical data collected for this purpose proves that the attendance of students scoring good grades ranges between 95%-100%. During their teaching career the authors have observed the similar results.

1.5 Instructional Method: Lecture

Among many professional teaching processes the most effective and commonly adapted is lecture. The lecture was established centuries ago as a teaching process (Swanson and Torraco 1995). There presently are many calls to move away from the traditional lecture to interactive computer learning systems that allow students' access to information when and where they need it (Rick, S., & McIntosh, N. 1996 a). This shift from conventional process to modern computerized process is in progress but the need for educators to impart teaching through lectures will remain. The face to face talk or lecture skill still holds a central position (Fry, H., Ketteridge, S. and Marshall, S., eds. 1999).

Lecturing, the essence of teaching, teachers have to display all their skills, the pivotal on which the structure of teaching lays; the crux of the noble profession: The lecture in its many forms is the most commonly used method for transferring information (Rick, S., & McIntosh, N. 1996 b).

At University lectures are one of the main methods of teaching and by far most widely used in tertiary education establishments. The teacher is adjudged through lectures, his personality is engraved on the canvas of his students' memory for whole of the life. The key points that make a lecturer or professor an ideal, a role model and one leaving his indelible image of smiling past on the screen of the cerebrum of the students are discussed in the following:

1.5.1 Planning a lecture:

Effective processes do not just happen, they are planned. While planning a lecture for the next class a lecturer must figure out:

- i. Topic of lecture,
- ii. Purpose of the lecture
- iii. Objectives of the lecture (Rick, S., & McIntosh, N. 1996 c)
- iv.

These three points must be mentioned at the very outset. That will help students to steer their intellects in a particular direction and help them decide that what they will be adding in their knowledge, when they are over with that particular class. Following example of lecture topic with both a purpose statement and an objective would help developing the understanding.

Lecture Topic: Neutrinos Super Luminal or Sub Luminal

Purpose: The purpose of this lecture is to discuss the fact and new finding at LHC, where neutrinos in fact, moved faster than the speed of light.

Objective: After attending this lecture, the student will be able to understand the effect on Physics if neutrinos move with the speed greater than the speed of light.

1.5.2 Relating lectures with the previous one

After the first lecture is over, whenever the teacher is to deliver the lecture he must begin with a short review of the key points of the previous lecture and relate the present lecture with the previous one.

1.5.3 Overview of day's lecture

Before proceeding with the day's lecture, teacher must provide an overview of what will be discussed.

1.5.4 Identifying the Topic

The teacher should have the latitude to select the topic from the given syllabus, what parts to focus on, which aspects to highlighted. This leeway would help teacher to relate the topics and to establish a suitable link among them, keeping in view the class size, the students' compatibility and their mental and intellectual standing (Eastman, D. L. 2008 a)

1.5.5 Restricting to the Topic

Covering the course and to meet the targets i.e. finishing the prescribed course in the allotted period of time, the teacher must make an instructional objective statement (Felder, R. M., & Brent, R. 1999 b). "What should students be able to know at the end of this lecture?" With such statements the teachers would have precise vision in their mind, this would help them in following the targeted track, helping teachers in deciding what to include and what not to.

1.5.6.1 Designing plot /lucidity:

The playwright, first of all sets a plot and then weaves the story around it, likewise the teacher designs a plot to structure his lecture this would increase the overall clarity. The brilliant material must be wrapped in an attractive package. Thoughts of teacher must be lucidly organized. There is no hard and fast rule for producing lucidity. The demand of one subject may vary from another. The teacher, according to the requirement of subject and topic can adopt any one or more of the following: (Eastman, D. L. 2008 b)

- i. *Simple list*
- ii. *A classification hierarchy (with points & sub points).*
- iii. *A chained structure.*
- iv. *Organogram*
- v. *The road map for the lecture.*
- vi. *Or any other option that suits best to the teacher.*

1.5.7 Down Sizing:

The topics the teacher has to cover are always vast and with different explanations by different authors, so teachers have too much material at their disposal. If a teacher tries to follow these, the work might build into an awkward mess. Picking up certain topics , leaving behind others makes the picture clear, if the shunting and eliminating is not done before hand, it would lead him in narrowing the topic in front of the students in the class, therefore, effacing unwanted material and out growths must be practiced while preparing for the lecture. (Eastman, D. L. 2008 c),

1.5.8 Monotony:

Any monotonic audible sound makes the surrounding boring and eventually students lose interest and further make students to yawn and doze. The teacher to avoid such situation must keep changing the pitch at which he is speaking, induce variation. This variation in pitch, loudness and quality can make the students alert and attentive. A statistical survey proves that the students like the teacher whose lecture is not monotonous.

1.5.9 Avoid mere writing, reading out and copy paste technique.

The teachers who come to the class, begin their lecture with mere writing on the board, start reading from the text book and compel the students to focus on which is being read, or those teachers who take full advantage of modern techniques of PowerPoint / excel etc but their slides are nothing but copied from certain on line links, and nothing is neither added to them nor deleted, according to the requirement are regarded as "Time Pass" teachers: The topics taught in almost every subject need explanation, the best teacher is one who uses explanation methodology. Instead of making students to focus on the board or compelling them to copy word by word (jotting down of notes) or stressing on line to line concentration on text book, or forcing them to watch slideshow with un winked eyes, should use these techniques judiciously and each word, every point and single topic that needs explanation must be explained; otherwise, not only the use of teaching aids would be undermined but the clarity and students' learning will also be weakened (Eastman, D. L. (2008 d). A statistical survey of BS, MS and PhD students shows that 100% students of all three levels favor the teacher who:

- i. Instead of reading from the books uses book very little but covers major part of the text
- ii Uses PowerPoint with life in it and originally developed slides.

1.5.10 Pace:

Adult attention spans average ten to twenty minutes, doing the same thing for more than 20 minutes without a change of pace causes students to lose interest, they start getting bored. The vigilant teacher feels this and changes pace, tries to recapture students' interest. An experienced teacher can equip himself with the skill of changing pace every now and then add rhetorical questions, jokes, personal experience or demonstrations (Major,

J. G. 2011)

1.5.11 Questioning during the lectures:

Teaching gives birth to curiosity and curiosity gives rise to questions. The more curious the student is, the more inquisitive he is. How the questions should be responded during the lecture? Some lecturers do not encourage questions, some do encourage but restrict students to ask questions when they are over with the topic or at the end of lecture. Third group welcomes questions any time and also anywhere, they are, open to questions, type of teachers. A statistical survey proves that students are comfortable with third type. Questions are mostly relative to the topics being disseminated and rise in a spur with the brain wave and may extinct sooner the topic is over. So if students are restricted from asking questions during lecture, they may forget or slip that particular question by the time question answer session starts. Therefore “any question any time” policy seems to be good fit for satiating the thirst of queries of students.

1.5.12 Length of lecture

Very important feature to be taken care of, by the teacher, is the length of the lecture during specific period. It is always good to pre plan for this while preparing the lecture but it may not be followed religiously. The mood of class and teacher both are vital. Sometimes, if the teacher is tired and fatigued but tries to cover the specific length (the one pre destined) of the lecture, by attempting this, the lesson/topic may lose the charmed attraction. At this specific occasion he may cover as much as comfortably allowed, and can complete the left over portion next time, when he feels himself at ease.

Similarly, when majority of the students are over occupied with mid terms or assignment forcing a full length lecture may lose the impact. Again, teacher can use his discretionary powers and stop his lesson when he starts feeling that majority of the students are not at the levels of apprehension, where under normal conditions they are. Lectures apprehended are better than a full length lecture with majority of the student not understanding. The solo performer (a teacher) can control the situation as suits best.

1.5.13 Repetition of a word/a phrase/sentence be avoided

An ideal teacher is one with ideal habits. Sometimes a very good teacher is in habit of repeating a word, a phrase or a sentence. Though this is done unconsciously, but students are not comfortable with it. For example a teacher may be in a habit of saying “Like”, “you know what I mean”, or “when I was in college” etc. every now and then, this should be avoided.

1.5.14 Small relative jokes / incidents

The students are most of the time at college/university for a large span of time (8-9 hours and sometimes more). The monotonous routine of attending classes makes them tired and exhaustive. For good breathtaking their lungs require a good amount of fresh air. Similarly in order to refresh the brain and to enhance the retaining power, their minds need relaxing energy, this could be well provided through small relevant jokes and incidents. This makes the class lively and students become more attentive and energetic. The statistical survey shows that students at all levels are desirous of such activities within the class. One of the teachers using this techniques says, “In my class, if occasionally, I forget to relate any joke or personal incident, the students would demand for one or at the end of the class would remark, “No jokes today!”

1.5.15 Personal acquaintance of students

Ego-centric nature of human beings demands that one should be recognized personally and treated specially. The teachers knowing students personally by their names win favor of students as compared to those who are weak at recognizing students. When someone gets personal attentions or feels as if being personally recognized his behavior becomes more positive. Then that teacher is more than a teacher for the students, wins more respect, obedience and his mere words become commands to be followed and obeyed. Among qualities of a good teacher one should try to master this quality as well.

1.5.16 Be with students and make them accompany you through the journey

It is said that eyes express more than words. Knowing the skill of decoding silent expression is a key note for a good teacher. In a class very few students are vocal, bold and inquisitive who come forward and ask questions. The majority of the students are shy, reluctant or hesitant but they have questions to ask, which go unasked and many queries remain unanswered and unsettled. The teacher having mastered the art of reading through eyes can solve this problem. Knowing this art is not sufficient, the teacher must have eye to eye contact with every student and in return my unquestioned queries will be answered. One question from one student is always one in number but it benefits the whole lot of student in the class and in turn becomes, as many students are there in the class. Not only this, it would also make students feel that the teacher is with them, accompanying them through the journey.

1.5.17 Teacher must remain in the class till the time is over

Coming to class has been discussed under the heading of Punctuality. Expressed by Aristotle in Poetics the ideal situation for an ideal drama is Beginning, Middle and End. Similarly an ideal class also has Beginning, Middle and End. The ending should be proper and on time. Commitment to time schedule is moral obligation on the teacher; therefore a teacher is bound to follow the time span of the class religiously. A model teacher is one who

fixes his presence in the class room within the extreme fractions of beginning and ending (timings) of the class room.

1.6 Assessment:

Lecturing culminates in a very important phase of teaching:

The acme of “Teaching Drama” is the assessment: Under this heading the performance of students during the academic period (Semester) in the courses taught during that specific time is adjudged. Prima facie it seems to be the assessment of students but in fact, it is the assessment of students and teacher both. (The assessment of teacher is discussed under the separate heading). Right now, assessment of students is focused.

Assessment is to judge how much students have attained in a particular course taught to them in a specific semester. The students are assessed through:

1.6.1 Quizzes

Through this activity of assessing the students can be assessed any time during their class. The teacher has discretion to ask questions from the topic already covered by him/her at any time whether during that very period or thereafter. This technique is very effective to keep the students attentive. The proportion of the quizzes may vary from institution to institution. Though its portion is not big, yet it is very effective.

1.6.2 Assignments (Home Task)

Mere listening to the lectures does not serve the purpose. In order to have a grip over the subject, a regular revision is required. Some of the students do it at their own, but some still are made to revise by the teacher. The teachers do this through assigning them the tasks for their home. This is termed as assignments. Like quizzes, assignments also carry weight age. The proportion is again according to the university/institute’s policy. i.e. varies from institute to institute. The fragment of assessment helps students not only to revise, but through this students come to know how much they have attained, what are the problems, ambiguities or misunderstandings faced by them. The students can point out the problems, while they are attempting their assignments and later on, they can discuss it with their teacher.

Assignments cast liabilities on both, the students and the teachers. The students trying to complete their assignments using cut, copy, paste facility, either from their classmates or Wikipedia, Google or other search engines may be able to get the credit of assignments but this is momentarily but in practical and professional run such students suffer. The students must take the advantage of all search engines but should add their own labor, hard work and ideas in it.

The liability of the teacher is to assess the assignments on merit and must point out the salient features missed out or copied from other sources. Another tool they can use is the grading; the assignments should be graded keeping in mind the originality of the work and not the thickness and appearance of the presentation.

1.6.3 Mid Terms

The midterm examinations are also termed as, “Wake up Examinations”, because these are held on the half way of the term. After being conducted the students get the clue about their performance so far, and they also get the idea about the labor and hard work the students have to further instill in the forth coming Final Examination. This is the essence of semester system which informs the students about their day by day performance and students could easily improve. A good teacher informs the students about the performance and informs them about the weaknesses and how to overcome those.

1.6.4 Final Examination

The final examination comprises of major portion of assessment. The weight age again varies from institute to institute. A vigilant teacher is one who assesses the students according to their mental caliber. The question paper is set on such a pattern that all students (average, good and toppers) are kept in view. When we say this, we mean that, Question Paper should comprise of three parts. One part which all students could easily attempt and solve, second which can be solved by good and toppers, and the third one which only those could solve whose concepts are really strong and their mental skills are adjudged. The advantage of this type of question paper is that capabilities of all enrolled students could be testified without any discrimination. If a paper is set keeping in view only the average students then average, good and toppers will all be at the same level and if paper is set only for toppers then other two categories will find no room for themselves. Therefore the best paper is one in which all three categories of students are assessed. Though setting paper of such a pattern is a hard task for a teacher but all types of students benefit from it and also it challenges the vigilance of the teacher throughout the semester and forces him to classify the students and workout his lecture accordingly. The authors while teaching their courses adapted the same strategy and found that all three types of students got their respective credit in evaluation.

One more feature prevalent in certain institutes for evaluating students is “Best of”. In the students are assigned five assignments or five quizzes and are evaluated by averaging the best three assignments or quizzes. This discriminates those who perform well in all five and benefits to those whose performance is good only in three. If the purpose is to benefit the weak students or to those students who perform carelessly in 2 evaluations/quizzes out of 5, then the question is why is the need of benefiting weak or careless students and not

the students who work hard in all 5 evaluations. One more valid argument is, if teacher or examiner himself provides escape to the students they will definitely exploit it. If the teacher is firm and strict he announces that there are three and only three evaluations the result will definitely be better than the one in which more chances of evaluations are given.

1.7 Assessment Is Two Way

The teachers assess students and institutes evaluate teachers. They are evaluated for their course and it is their students who assess them. Just as grading often makes students uncomfortable, course evaluation makes professors uncomfortable.....but faculty generally believe that course evaluations provide the best available information..... (Bateman, G., & Roberts, H. (a)) These course evaluations have limitations.

- i. The course evaluations are available after the course has ended. If the evaluation is conducted after the course has ended then there is no time for teacher to improve during that specific semester. To make course evaluation effective these should be conducted at the very outset of the semester, one in the mid and third one at the end.
- ii. In certain institutions the course evaluation is not shown to or discussed with the relevant teachers, if the concerned teachers are not discussed how they would come to know about their weaknesses and in turn how could they overcome these. The course evaluations must be discussed with the teachers concerned.
- iii. In course evaluation questionnaires carry general purpose questions that apply to all courses are asked. The general purpose questions do not serve course specific purpose, therefore, the questionnaire for course evaluation must carry course – specific purpose (Bateman, G., & Roberts, H. (b))
- iv. Feedback Mechanism: In addition to the course evaluation, there must be an abrupt feedback mechanism, which through a very few numbers of questions tells about the lecture; continually and quickly, what is and what isn't working (Bateman, G., & Roberts, H. (c)).

2. Conclusion

A teacher is the nucleus of the education all over the world. Whether it is primary, secondary or tertiary level of education, for all, the teacher is the hub of academic activities. The strength of the educational institution does not lay in the structures of the building held erected; the real strength of the institutions is their teachers. Institutions having faculty bedecked with the qualities discussed in this paper make them leading ones in this competitive chase. This redounds the honor of the institute and nation. Teachers calibrate the students not equipments.

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