



TEACHING STRATEGIES, STYLES AND QUALITIES OF A TEACHER: A REVIEW FOR VALUABLE HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the essential qualities of a good teacher. The main focus of paper was to review various teaching strategies, styles and activities which are useful for valuable higher education. The author suggested various categories of teaching strategies to improve quality of higher education such as effective teaching strategies, balanced and integrating the curriculum, use of digital technology in the classroom, and best practices teaching strategy. The style of teaching will be differed from teacher to teacher and also students to students. There are various teaching styles used in teaching-learning process such as the authority or lecture style, the facilitator or activity style, the delegator or group style, and the hybrid or blended style.

KEYWORDS

Higher Education, Teaching Strategy, Teaching Style, Teaching Activities, Balanced Curriculum, Integrating Curriculum, Digital Technology, Teaching Skills, etc.

INTRODUCTION:

In the context of the sustained growth and diversification of higher education systems, teaching community is increasingly concerned about the quality of teaching activities offered to students. Recognizing individual differences of the learners is a basic concept when teachers prepare to teach. It is a fundamental assumption of strategic teaching and learning that what we choose to teach in the classroom should be an interaction of what we know about the variables of instruction, learning, achievement, and contextual factors. This assumption has driven our quest as individuals and groups to develop an instructional framework (Jones, 1987: p. v). To

connect with students and impact their lives personally and professionally, teachers must be student-centered and demonstrate respect for their background, ideologies, beliefs, and learning styles. The best instructors use differentiated instruction, display cultural sensitivity, accentuate open communication, and offer positive feedback on the students' academic performance.

The nationally and locally recognized institutes may implement schemes or evaluation mechanisms to identify and promote good teaching strategies. The institutional environment of higher education institutions can also lead to enhancement of quality of the teaching in higher education through various teaching strategies, styles and activities.

1. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS:

1.1 Higher Education:

Higher education includes teaching, research, exacting applied work (e.g. in medical schools and dental schools), and social services activities of universities (Pucciarelli, 2016). There is no simple definition of higher education. The international definition of tertiary (post school) education divides it into two parts. Type A (Higher Education) and Type B (Further Education). A higher education qualification at degree level takes a minimum of three years to complete, more typically four. Shortly, Higher education mainly and generally means university level education. It offers a number of qualifications ranging from Higher National Diplomas and Foundation Degrees to Honors Degrees and as further step, Postgraduate programmes such as Masters Degrees and Doctorates.

1.2 Teaching Strategy:

Lawton define, “teaching strategy is a generalized plan for a lesson(s) which include structure desired learner behavior in terms of goals of instructions and an outline of planned tactics necessary to implement the strategy”. Teaching strategies refer to methods used to help students learn the desired course contents and be able to develop achievable goals in the future. Teaching strategies identify the different available learning methods to enable them to develop the right strategy to deal with the target group identified (studylectures.com).

1.3 Role of Teaching Community in Higher Education:

The professors are good leaders in providing ideas, insight, and the best strategies to educators who are passionate for effective teaching in the higher education. It is supposed that there is an important role for nationally and locally recognized professors in higher education to become more involved in the regulation of teaching rules. This will help other college /university teachers to be familiar with effective teaching and learning procedures. Therefore, curriculum planners and faculty members can improve their teaching strategies for higher education.

2. EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING HIGHER EDUCATION

Teaching effectively involves not only the use of tools, techniques, and strategies to optimize student learning but an understanding of context, in particular how the students learn, how they process information, what motivates them to learn more, and what impedes the learning process. Anderson (1994) concluded that, “student outcomes may heavily depend on the teacher’s instructional planning, teaching method selection, and having a variety of

learning activities”. An effective teaching strategy helps students to achieve their goals and success in life.

2.1 Use of Digital Technology in the Classroom:

In the today’s teaching-learning scenario most of the students are computer literate and used laptop and digital gadgets. Use of digital technology will help to enhance both teaching and learning. It is the responsibility of educational institutions to provide integrating technology in the class rooms and laboratories. Following are the types of digital technology which will be used in the classroom.

- Use of computers in the classrooms (For Theory and Practical purpose)
- Creating class websites and blogs (students and teachers blog)
- Use of digital microphone in the classroom
- Use of mobile devices with high-speed internet facility
- Use of smart interactive whiteboards
- Use of online media
- Use of online study tools
- Offer a variety of communication and sharing methods
- Flipped Classrooms

2.2 Balanced and Integrating the Curriculum:

The practice of integrating curriculum involves students in the unit development process. It affords them the opportunity to identify topics, develop questions, plan inquiry, divide tasks, research information and share the learning process and content. Technology resources are also embedded into daily practices of the classroom. The Table-1 shows that the balanced and integrating curriculum

Table-1: Balanced and Integrating the Curriculum

What a Balanced Curriculum is	What a Balanced Curriculum is Not
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes brain growth and development through an enriched environment • Prepare students for success in college and in life • Includes a challenging and common curriculum • Include entire standard course of study • Include all subjects verses those subject tested • Educated the whole students • Creates active participants rather than passive observers • Based on the knowledge of how students develop and learn • Allows students to use the whole brain • Provides a curriculum that is rigorous, relevant and promotes relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching without assessing student • Teaching to the test • Teaching the teacher's favorite or most comfortable topic(s) • Teaching some disciplines sporadically (seasons or holidays) • Teaching ONLY English Language Arts and Mathematics • Teaching few minute classes to hundreds of students • Planning and teaching in isolation • Only for some students in a class • One size fits all" • An individual effort needs

2.3 Best Practices Teaching Strategy for Higher Education

Thomas L. Friedman, author of *The World Is Flat*, refers to a twenty-first century world that will be very different from the one in which we were educated. To survive in a new, globally competitive world, today's students will need creativity, problem-solving abilities, a passion for learning, a dedicated work ethic and lifelong learning opportunities. Students can develop these abilities through instruction based on best practice teaching strategies. Best practices are applicable to all grade levels students in higher education. Best practices motivate, engage and prompt students to learn and achieve. Students who receive a balanced curriculum and possess the knowledge, skills and abilities to transfer and connect ideas and concepts across disciplines will be successful as measured by standardized tests and other indicators of student success. The following are the benefits of best practices teaching strategy.

- There is a joyful feeling of purposeful movement, industrious thinking and a vital and vibrant atmosphere and environment.

- Teachers often use collaborative and/or authentic tasks that place students at the center of the learning process.
- Teachers are actively engaged with different groups and students are anxious to enlist visitors in their various tasks or assignments.
- Students are engaged and focused on their career oriented work
- Seating arrangements are clustered, varied and functional with multi-instructional areas.
- Project materials and books are numerous.
- Classrooms are activity-based spaces as opposed to places to "sit and get" lectures.

3. EFFECTIVE TEACHING STYLE

Every teacher has his or her own style of teaching and as traditional teaching styles evolves with the advent of differentiated instruction; more and more teachers are adjusting their approach depending on their students' learning needs. But there are a few fundamental teaching styles most educators tend to use in higher education.

3.1 The authority or lecture style:

The authority model is teacher-centered and frequently entails lengthy lecture sessions or one-way presentations. Students are expected to take notes or absorb information. This style is acceptable for certain higher-education disciplines and auditorium settings with large groups of students. The pure lecture style is most suitable for subjects like history, which necessitate memorization of key facts, dates, names, etc. It has some drawbacks because; there is little or no interaction with the students. Also it can get a little snooze. That's why it is a better approach for older, more mature students (Post Graduate Students).

3.2 The demonstrator or coach style:

The demonstrator retains the formal authority role by showing students what they need to know. The demonstrator is a lot like the lecturer, but their lessons include multimedia presentations, activities, and demonstrations. Example: Mathematics, Science, and Music etc. This style gives teachers opportunities to incorporate a variety of formats including lectures and multimedia presentations. It has some limitations that it is well-suited for teaching mathematics, music, physical education, arts and crafts; it is difficult to accommodate students' individual needs in larger classrooms.

3.3 The facilitator or activity style:

Facilitators promote self-learning and help students develop critical thinking skills and retain knowledge that leads to self-actualization. In this style teacher motivate the students to search information from various information sources (Print & Electronic). This style trains students to ask questions and helps develop skills to find answers and solutions through exploration; it is ideal for teaching science and similar subjects. This strategy has some challenges for teachers such as to interact with students and prompt them toward discovery rather than lecturing facts and testing knowledge through memorization. So it is a bit harder to measure success in tangible terms.

3.4 The delegator or group style:

The delegator style is best suited for curriculum that requires laboratory activities, such as chemistry, micro-biology, and biology, or subjects that warrant peer feedback, like debate and creative writing. In this style group

discussion on the latest topics was organized where teacher in an observer role that inspires students by working in achievement of common goals. Considered a modern style of teaching, it is sometimes criticized as eroding teacher authority. As a delegator, the teacher acts more as a consultant rather than the traditional authority figure.

3.5 The hybrid or blended style:

It is Hybrid or blended style which follows an integrated approach to teaching that blends the teacher's personality and interests with students' needs and curriculum-appropriate methods. It enables teachers to modify their styles to student needs and appropriate subject matter. Hybrid style runs the risk of trying to be too many things to all students, prompting teachers to spread themselves too thin and dilute learning.

4. TEACHING ACTIVITIES FOR VALUABLE HIGHER EDUCATION

Kassem (1992, p. 45) defined, "teaching techniques as teacher's activities in the class to involve students in the subject matter, and requires that students participate in learning activities, share equally with other learners, and react to the learning experience". For example, allowing students to choose the type of assignment they do or which problems to work on can give them a sense of control that may just motivate them to do more. Monk and Dillion (1995) suggested in the planning and managing for teaching science that the aims of activities are to help teachers to develop the following:

- Knowledge of the elements of planning and classroom management;
- Skills and strategies for organizing and managing activities in lessons;
- Skills and strategies in planning and managing continuity between lessons;
- Experience in developing and planning a scheme of work. (p. 53)

Competition in the classroom is not always a bad thing, and in some cases can motivate students to try harder and work to excel. Work to foster a friendly spirit of competition in the classroom, perhaps through group games related to the material or other opportunities for students to show off their knowledge. The Table-2 shows the teaching activities for valuable higher education.

Table-2: Teaching Activities for Valuable Higher Education

- Use positive competition
- Track progress
- Provide opportunities for success
- Organize various games
- Organize Teamwork event
- Offer varied experiences
- Give students responsibility
- Give students a sense of control
- Define the objectives
- Change classroom environment
- Make things fun
- Know your students
- Identify and try to solve personal queries
- Help students find intrinsic motivation
- Harness students interest
- Give praise when earned
- Encourage self-reflection
- Create a threat free environment
- Be excited
- Allow students to work together

5. QUALITIES AND SKILLS FOR A GREAT TEACHER

The qualities and skills are vital importance in the overall development of personality of teachers and career of students. A great teacher is one a student remembers and cherishes forever. Teachers have long-lasting impacts on the lives of their students, and the greatest teachers inspire students toward greatness. For the valuable higher education there is strong need of quality teaching communities. To be successful, a great teacher must have the qualities and skills.

These qualities and skills can be possess by self-learning, training (In-house and job oriented) and participated in skill oriented programs, workshops and seminars. With the help of internet surfing and self learning teachers can improve their subject knowledge and knowledge of other disciplines. For the valuable higher education teachers must have posses the qualities and skills. The table-3 shows the various essential qualities and skills for a great teacher.

Table-3: Qualities and Skills for a Great Teacher

- | Qualities | Skills |
|--|---|
| • An engaging personality and teaching style | • Assessment or evaluation skills |
| • Clear objectives for lessons | • Correct speech and appropriate voice tone |
| • Constant learner | • Effective discipline skills |
| • Encouraging and positive words | • Good classroom management skills |
| • Gentle and kind | • Good communication skills |
| • High expectations of their students | • Good listener |
| • Inspire students toward greatness | • Good sense of humor |
| • Knowledge of curriculum and standards | • Leadership skills |
| • Knowledge of subject matter | • Managerial skills |
| • Passion for students and teaching | • Promotion or marketing skills |
| • Positive body language | • Research skills |
| • Respect for students and other teachers | • Teambuilding and teamwork skills |
| • Strong rapport with students | • Technical & ICT skills |

6. CONCLUSION:

The concept of quality teaching is complex and open to a range of definitions and interpretations. This review has therefore adopted a pragmatic approach, based on how

institutions define quality in their own circumstances. It was illustrated that a good teaching strategy helps the students to question their preconceptions, and motivates them to learn. These strategies, styles and activities help

to increase the quality of higher education. But whenever the teachers can teach by these strategies, they are faced with some barriers and requirements. Some of these requirements are prerequisite of the teachers' behavior and their outlook. Also, there are some major barriers which are associated with laws and regulations. Therefore, to have an effective teaching, the faculty members of universities/colleges should be aware of these barriers and requirements as a way to improve the teaching quality.

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