

## TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

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### 1.0 WHAT CONSTITUTES EFFECTIVE TEACHING ?

Teachers teach so that students learn. If learning does not take place, teaching has not occurred. Teaching constitutes a variety of activities deliberately planned and conducted by teacher over a group of students to see that a positive learning to the desired extent takes place. Learning is relatively permanent change in behaviour. A teacher can be said to be effective, if he is able to plan and conduct a variety of learning experiences and is successful in bringing about desired educational change among his students.

Images of an effective teacher carried in the minds of students may be varied depending upon situations like the subject being taught, attitudes of students etc. These images are formed while teacher is interacting with students. The images of an effective teacher convey a sense of impact on the students, the emotional and intellectual stimulation that has occurred and which has been instrumental in making students to think.

If asked, everyone may remember a few teachers who were strikingly different from the others. We may have

come across some superb teachers who touched us, who made us think, who kindled love for a subject and whose classes we would not miss for any reason. In contrast, we may also have memories of poor teachers whose classes were unstimulating, boring and many times we might have felt chatting with friends in canteen more rewarding than attending their classes.

Some teachers are good in theory classes, some in demonstrating and explaining experiments in laboratories, some in guiding project work while some are very good in interpersonal communications in informal situations. There is no evidence of any one instructional method being superior to another. A combination of techniques, knowledge of subject, enthusiasm, personality and a number of other immeasurable factors determine effectiveness of a teacher. There is no objective usable criterion for identifying effective teachers.

The following characteristics of a teacher are generally considered adequate to explain effective teaching.

- i) Systematic organization of subject matter.
- ii) Good speaking ability - communi-

cation

- iii) Ability to explain clearly.
- iv) Ability to encourage thought.
- v) Sympathetic attitude towards students
- vi) Expert knowledge of subject
- vii) Enthusiastic attitude towards subject
- viii) Fairness in making test questions and marking of answers.
- ix) Tolerance towards student disagreement
- x) Pleasing personality

When senior students of State University New York at Albany were asked to identify three teacher qualities (from the list of above ten) considered to be of greatest importance in teaching a course (subject) qualities chosen the most by students of physical and biological sciences were :

- i) Ability to explain clearly
- ii) Systematic organization of subject matter.
- iii) Expert knowledge of subject

Interestingly, "sympathetic attitude towards students" and "pleasing personality" were chosen the least number of times. The five most important qualities for teaching in general in the order of importance were identified by students as :

- i) Expert knowledge of subject
- ii) Systematic organization of subject matter
- iii) Ability to explain clearly
- iv) Enthusiastic attitude towards subject
- v) Ability to encourage thought.

## 2.0 EFFECTIVENESS AND TRAINING

There is a commonly expressed

opinion that effective teachers are born and not made. Such statements are not based on realities of life. Teaching is a skill consisting of a number of micro competencies like communication, introducing a topic, demonstrating a concept, using a chalkboard, using an overhead projector, summarising a lesson, asking and writing good questions, etc. It has been proved all over the world that any skill can be imparted through systematically worked-out training programme. When we see animals from circus and Dolphins from Disney World performing unimaginable feats, how can we say that teachers can not improve effectiveness through training?

It is unfortunate that a large majority of teachers from colleges of higher education do not feel it necessary for them to undergo specific training programme to enable them to teach better and effectively. When teaching is treated as a profession, any teacher from higher education has to have a basic training to make him eligible to practice the profession of teaching. When teachers of primary and secondary schools have to be trained before they can start teaching in schools, why should it not be so for college education ? Will present day college teachers, send their sons and daughters to schools where teachers are not trained?

## 3.0 IS EFFECTIVENESS MEASURABLE ?

Precise measurement of effectiveness of teaching is very difficult. However, it has been established through various observational studies that effective teachers take their teaching responsibilities seriously, put an

appreciable amount of effort in their classes and expect a similar level of commitment from their students. A characteristic feature of such teachers is that they love their job and their students, and exhibit a deep sense of satisfaction when they teach.

To objectively assess effectiveness of a teacher, hard data can be gathered from classroom observation of teachers (through video filming and assessed by experts) and from the experience of students who receive classroom instructions. Other supporting data could be gathered from colleague teachers, publications, researches, associations with professional bodies etc.

Every teacher feels that he is doing a good job and does not want anybody to evaluate his performance. Anybody trying to evaluate his performance is taken as an encroachment on his autonomy in the classroom. There is also a general feeling running among the teacher community that 'students do not know what is good teaching; they can't be objective in absence of any criterion and so evidence gathered from students has no reliability and validity.' Researches on student assessment of teaching do not subscribe to this view. It has been found that students know what is good teaching and even though they do not have criterion to judge quality of teaching, they are able to identify good teachers and bad teachers.

#### 4.0 EFFECTIVENESS - STUDENTS EXPECTATIONS

There is an impression among teacher community that student ratings of college teachers reflect nothing but teachers popularity, attractiveness and

leniency while dealing with student's work, and this does not reflect teacher competence. The study at State University New York and many other studies report that only a small percentage of students consider teacher characteristics - "pleasing personality" and "sympathetic attitude towards students" - as important in teaching a course. There are studies which report that it is the quality of teacher-student relationships that contributes more to teacher's effectiveness rather than "his pleasing personality and sympathetic attitude towards students". Strict and demanding teachers are rated outstanding by the students of professional programmes like engineering. A sense of satisfaction with teacher's teaching comes from positive emotions like excitement, enthusiasm, respect.

Students expect clear, logical and structured presentation of concepts and principles from their teachers. A study conducted at Georgia Institute of Technology by Dr. Anant S. Deshpande on student evaluation of teachers from Mechanical Engineering Department clearly shows that :

(a) Teachers who are high in Cognitive Merit [who exhibit mastery in subject knowledge and present the content clearly, logically with a plan and schedule] and Stimulation [who encouraged students to think for themselves, presented problems as challenge to the class, tried to increase interest of the class in the subject, used variety of teaching aids, gave demonstrations of concepts/principles, used illustrations based on practical experiences] were considered by engineering students as being the most effective.

(b) Students apparently do not

mind an atmosphere of strenuous and rigorous academic performance. In fact, they probably expect it.

(c) Students want teacher who is highly competent and systematic in his teaching effort, who sets high but reasonable standards of performance and who stimulates them in their performance efforts.

(d) Overloading of course (term) work, obscurity and difficulty of presentation may make stress omnipresent in instructions of science, mathematics and engineering subjects.

Joseph Lowman has presented a two dimensional model of teaching effectiveness in which he states that the quality of instruction results from a college teacher's skill at creating both intellectual excitement and positive rapport in students, the kinds of emotions and relationships that motivate them to do their best work. A teacher who is accomplished in both is most likely to be outstanding for all students.

## 5.0 EFFECTIVENESS AND ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE

It is generally seen that teachers work more effectively and give their best while working in an organization (institute) which is open, which works on mutual trust, has friendly atmosphere, where innovations are welcome and supported, and where seniors sympathetically encourage faculty in their career development efforts. Many times it is observed that a faulty member blossoms into an effective teacher while working in one institution and the same teacher on transfer to another institute loses charm and effectiveness in teaching because of a closed, secretive unhealthy climate

prevailing in that institute.

Therefore, a great responsibility lies on the shoulders of Principals, Heads of Departments and senior faculty to encourage co-faculty to give their best by developing a healthy organisational climate that brings out the best in person. Good, innovative work of teachers should be recognised and rewarded. Reward need not always be monetary in nature. Rewards may come in the form of letters of appreciation, recognising contributions publicly, deputation for higher studies/training, sponsoring for seminars and conferences etc.

## 6.0 EFFECTIVENESS IN NEW ROLES OF TEACHERS

All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has prescribed a set of duties and responsibilities of Polytechnic and Engineering College teachers. Major common features of role of technical teacher consist of :

- i) Teaching
- ii) Planning and implementation of instruction in laboratory
- iii) Student assessment and evaluation
- iv) Developing resource material (for teaching in classroom and laboratory)
- v) Assisting in and conduct of continuing education activities.
- vi) Assisting in extension services in the industry and community, (Consultancy and R and D services for Engg. College teachers)
- vii) Co-curricular and extra curricular activities.
- viii) Student Counselling.

AICTE has tried to bring clarity to the role of a technical teacher. The duties prescribed above actually high-

light expectations from a technical teacher and forms a basis on which effectiveness of a teacher could be judged. It is a fact that many existing teachers are not systematically exposed to duties like developing, learning resources (item 4), conduct of continuing education for working professionals (item 5).

One needs specific knowledge, skills and attitudes to effectively perform any of the above activities. Unfortunately there is very little of systematic effort (especially in engineering college sector) to train teachers to perform the above duties properly and with confidence. Efforts of four Technical Teachers Training Institutes in training of polytechnic teachers and improving performance of polytechnics is now showing some results especially in states where a project for strengthening of polytechnic education system is underway with assistance from World Bank finances. It appears necessary to start teacher training activities for Engineering Colleges on scientific lines through professionally trained educators.

Efforts of I.I.T.'s and ISTE to improve quality of teachers appear to be limited to upgradation of subject knowledge only. Separate teacher training establishments should be set up to look after the skills needed by teachers to effectively perform the duties and responsibilities specified by A.I.C.T.E.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION :

Our country is passing through a

critical phase of competing with the global market and is faced with the issue of attaining international quality standards in products and services. Technical Education system must produce high quality engineers and technicians and other quality services to the technological community around. To do this, our teachers must rise to the occasion and improve their effectiveness in various aspects of their changed job specifications. Systematic and intensive training of engineering teachers appears to be very vital issue of the present times.

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