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Methodology of teaching - A glimpse of effective teaching techniques

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Abstract

It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge. A teacher is a person who plants the seed of knowledge, sprinkles them with love and nurtures their growth to produce successful students of tomorrow's dreams i.e. basically a teacher is a person who helps people to learn. Different teachers use different techniques to teach but with the same common goal i.e. 'successful output in student's learning'. These strategies are determined partly on subject matter to be taught and partly by the nature of the learner. For a particular teaching method to be appropriate and efficient it has to be in relation with the characteristic of the learner and the type of learning it is supposed to bring about. The present research paper throws a glimpse of light on effective teaching techniques.

Keywords: Commitment, preparation, organization, tolerance, story telling, open to questions, innovative, enthusiastic, research

Introduction

A good teacher is like a candle who consumes itself to light the way of others. A teacher must be a researcher and has to make use of maxims of teaching i.e. to proceed from known to unknown, simple to complex, easy to difficult, immediate to remote, factual to conceptual etc. s/he has to make use of analogies and illustrations. A good teacher can inspire hope, ignite the imagination and instill a love of learning and must be able to explain the concepts in order to reinforce verbal experience by using teaching aids.

While using the technique of communication boosters (body language) i.e. gestures and postures, teacher has to be very careful and a good teacher must be able to put himself in the place of those who find learning hard.

A glimpse on 'Effective Teaching techniques'

1 Commitment: Teachers are the sculptors of the future society. Therefore, they must realize their great responsibility that has been entrusted in their hands in producing good citizens with great democratic values. This indicates that teachers with high levels of commitment work harder, demonstrate stronger affiliation to their schools, and show more desire to carry out the goals of teaching than teachers with low levels of commitment. More importantly, students of highly committed teachers are more likely to learn material and develop a positive attitude towards school than those of teachers with low levels of commitment.

To be passionately committed, teachers should develop cultural sensitivity by controlling and caring student's activities. Teacher must also find time for solitude to reflect in private moments on his personal professional life. Such a self-introspection would not only give them opportunity for self-improvement but would make them able to inspire their students to do the same. The responsibility that lies in the hands of a teacher is huge, so a modern teacher must always be aware of this and be truly committed to their profession.

2 Preparation: The critical orientation in teacher preparation combines a progressive social vision with a radical critique of schooling. On the one hand, there is an optimistic faith in the power of education to shape a new social order; on the other, a sobering realization that schools have been instrumental in preserving social inequities. Just as the teacher plays an important role in social reform in this orientation, so teacher education is part of a larger

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strategy to create a more just and democratic society. The teacher is both an educator and a political activist. In the classroom, the teacher creates a learning community that promotes democratic values and practices through group problem solving. In the school, the teacher participates in curriculum development and policymaking. In the community, the teacher works to improve school conditions and educational opportunities through community involvement and political activity.

Ginsburg (1988)^[4] offers the following rationale:

As educators of teachers, we must . . . operate as activists in broader struggles for social transformation . . . because these broader structural and ideological struggles are . . . dialectically related to the struggles within teacher education, because we need to be models for the people we seek to educate as teachers; and because becoming involved in such political activity will help us to establish relations with others whose lives are similarly enabled by these broader structures. (p. 214)

Intending for an effective class solely depends on the classroom teaching and performance of the prepared teacher therefore a teacher should constantly hold on to the valuable ethos in mind.

3 Organization and Clarity

Good organization and the planning of a course in advance are key factors for success. It is very important that a teacher organizes the lesson properly and allocates the time to cover it in its entirety. An organized teacher uses examples, details, analogies, metaphors, and variety in modes of explanation to make material not only understandable but memorable. Effective organized teacher makes difficult topics easy to understand, they design the subject with creativity and makes the objectives of the course clear by presenting facts and concepts from related fields. They have thorough command in the field and discusses viewpoints other than his/her own. An organized teacher is dynamic and enthusiastic has an aura of self confidence who shows love in the field and enjoys teaching.

4 Tolerance: In an increasingly diverse and multicultural society, it is necessary for teachers to manage any prejudices they may have and to treat all their students equally without showing favoritism or partiality. Teaching tolerance can really be that simple: expecting each student to work with every other student, then reinforcing this with a classroom climate that allows no tolerance for prejudice of any kind. Kids may still struggle some with full acceptance as they make their way through life, but you will have provided a solid foundation and an example they can follow. It's very important that you practice tolerance before you speak.

#5 Story Telling: One of the best ways to teach and transfer ideas is through stories. The best teachers have used this method in their classes for centuries. Teaching a lesson by incorporating story-telling techniques is a fantastic teaching skill to develop at anytime. Utilizing it leaves your class wanting to find out what happens next. An engaged class is the best way to increase participation and collaboration.

#6 Open to Questions: Having discussions and collaborating in class are essential for encouraging students and implementing new teaching techniques. Teachers must be open to answering their student's questions. Modern

teachers truly listen to their students questions and answer them honestly, not just with a cursory or textbook response. It may sometimes occur that a teacher doesn't know the answer to a question or s/he doesn't have the time! If this happens, then the teacher shouldn't waffle or brush the question off, s/he should respond with perseverance that s/he will look in to it and get back to the student with a proper answer after the stipulated time.

7 Ancient and Modern teaching techniques: Ancient or Traditional method relies mainly on textbooks while the modern method relies on hands-on materials approach. In traditional method, presentation of materials starts with the parts, then moves on to the whole while in the modern approach, presentation of materials starts with the whole, then moves to the parts. Traditional method emphasizes on basis skills while modern method emphasizes on big ideas. With traditional method of teaching, assessment is seen as a separate activity and occurs through testing while with modern method of teaching, assessment is seen as an activity integrated with teaching and learning, and occurs through portfolios and observation (Brooks and Brooks, 1999).

Teaching methods are best articulated by answering the questions "What is the purpose of education?" and "What are the best ways of achieving these purposes?" for much of pre-history, education methods were largely informal, and consisted of children imitating or modeling the behaviour of that of their elders, learning through observation and play. In this sense, the children are the students, and the elder is the teacher', a teacher creates the course materials to be taught and then enforces it. Pedagogy is a different way by which a teacher can teach. It is the art or science of being a teacher, generally referring to strategies of instruction or style of instruction. Resources that help teachers teach better are typically, a lesson plan, or practical skill involving learning and thinking skills. A curriculum is often set by the Government with precise standards. These standards can change frequently, depending on what the government states.

Traditional method of teaching is when a teacher directs students to learn through memorization and recitation techniques thereby not developing their critical thinking problem solving and decision making skills, while modern or constructivist approach to teaching involves a more interacting, student-based of teaching. Here, the students learn through group participation.

#8 Informal instruction: Informal instruction is, as the name suggests, much less formal. Good teachers know their students. If you have been teaching a particular group of students for some time, you probably already know quite a bit about their interests, ability levels, and learning styles. If the group of students is new to you, you can make a point of asking them, individually or in a group, about their interests and academic strengths. Depending on the age of the children, they may also be able to write about this, or answer some form of questionnaire about their hobbies, interests, previous instruction, strengths, and weaknesses. Students generally enjoy talking about themselves and having their teacher get to know them well, as it makes them feel special, as well as directing you in choosing your teaching methods.

Once you have assessed your students, you need to plan for different teaching methods. Direct instruction is the most common form of instruction. This is the lecturing method of teaching. Many teachers use this teaching method almost exclusively, as it is considered the simplest, and you can cover large amounts of material in a short period of time. However, this is not the most effective teaching method to reach all students, especially younger ones, who often need a more engaging, hands-on strategy in order to learn effectively. In addition, it is hard for teachers to tailor instruction to students at different levels.

#9 Inquiry-based learning: Inquiry-based learning is a teaching method which is rapidly gaining popularity in the western world. Based on the scientific method, this teaching method can be used for virtually all subjects. Using inquiry-based learning takes a lot of time, energy, and planning, but it is often very effective. Students practice problem solving and critical thinking skills to arrive at a conclusion. This teaching method is extremely student-centered and student-directed, and can be modified for students at any level, reaching them where they are. Teachers will generally need to start by modeling the process to the students.

#10 Cooperative learning: Cooperative learning is another teaching method that is considered highly effective when done correctly. With cooperative learning, students are put in small groups to work together. They are usually not grouped by ability, but put in a group with children at a variety of levels. The students are then given tasks to accomplish together. Teachers may need to monitor these groups carefully, to make sure they are staying on task and that all students are participating. This form of instruction also lends itself well to differentiation, because the teacher can assign specific tasks to children at different ability levels.

One more common teaching method is to teach information processing strategies. While it is often advisable to have students really understand the teaching methods and not just memorize facts, there are some cases when facts need to be memorized. Facts and concepts may also need to be grouped or organized in order to facilitate better understanding. Teachers can use various teaching methods to help students with memorization, or they can use graphic organizers, mind maps, story webs, or other ways to represent information visually.

There are many, many more teaching methods, but these are the most common. If the teacher finds the best teaching method for a particular group of students, the students are likely to learn more quickly and be more engaged. In addition, using a variety of teaching methods will keep children from being bored, and help them encounter the information in new and exciting ways.

Conclusion

Education is, indeed, a process of human enlightenment and empowerment. It is not a product to be sold and bought in the academic market. In the name of high surrounding words like globalization, professionalization, commercialization and privatization, we are tending to convert educational process into a market process. School can never be a factory and teachers can never be technocrats. Likewise, students cannot be treated as finished products. It is high time that interface between commitment

among teachers and their performance is empirically tested, analyzed and explained. It is indeed, the need of the hour. There has to be a humanistic approach to the teaching-learning process. Education is vital to the pace of the social, political and economic development of any nation, so effective teaching is very essential. Effective teaching is important because teaching is based on helping children progress from one level to another in a more sociable interactive environment and to get the approach right to get students to be independent learners (Muijus and Reynolds, 2001) [3]. Effectiveness does not mean being perfect or giving a wonderful performance, but bringing out the best in students. Teachers are to imbibe high level of commitment to learning, and the society should learn that the teachers are not a special brand of workers or employees but it is the most respected and revered section of the population. Only then, we will be able to achieve the goals of education and make our nation a true leader of the academic world.

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