

QUALITIES OF A 'GOOD' TEACHER

We begin with the following premises :

- 1) Good teachers are made, not born. (There is no gene for good teaching !)
- 2) No matter how effective you are as a teacher, you can become a better teacher.

"What all the great teachers appear to have in common is love of their subject, an obvious satisfaction in arousing this love in their students, and an ability to convince them that what they are being taught is deadly serious".

According to Joseph Lowman, effectiveness of college teaching can be judged on two dimensions. First dimension, **INTELLECTUAL EXCITEMENT**, is how well the instructor presents material. This is judged by the skills exhibited in the classroom. The instructor's presentation may vary from "vague and dull" through "reasonably clear and interesting" to "extremely clear and exciting". Clarity (vague Vs clear) is related to **WHAT** one presents. Dull Vs exciting relates to the Emotional Impact. Positive emotional impact depends on the **WAY** in which the material is presented by the teacher.

The second dimension, **INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP**, is how well the instructor fosters interpersonal relationship with students. This can vary from "cold, distant, highly controlling, unpredictable" to "extremely warm, open, highly student centered and predictable". This depends on his behaviour not only in the classroom, but more on his behaviour out side the classroom. Good interpersonal relationship is built up by avoiding stimulation of negative emotions in the student, notably excessive anxiety and anger towards teacher and by promoting positive emotions- by showing that the teacher/instructor **RESPECTS** the student and sees him as **CAPABLE** of performing well.

This IPR can be broken down into behaviours that communicate **Interpersonal** concern and those that skillfully **motivate** students.

The behaviours that communicate Interpersonal concern are: Caring, Available, Friendly, Accessible, Approachable, Interested, Respectful, Understanding, Personable. The Interpersonal behaviours that motivate students are: Helpful, Encouraging, challenging, Fair, Demanding, Patient, Motivating.

Instructors could be classified on these two dimensions. In Table 1.1 is shown the classification into the four categories taking the extremes of the characteristics.

TABLE 1-1
TYPES OF TEACHERS

	Motivating	Concerned			
Dimension II Interpersonal Relationship	High		Socratics		Complete Masters
	Low		Inadequate		Intellectual authorities
		Not			
		Concerned			
	Motivating		Low	High	
			(Vague Dull	----- -----	Extremely clear Exciting)
			Dimension I Intellectual Excitement		

There is yet another dimension on which exemplary teachers are described. They are described as "**dedicated**" and committed.

Teaching is a profession. Ralph W. Tyler as early as 1951 in an article discussed the essential characteristics of a profession. There are two essential characteristics of a profession. The first is the existence of Code of Ethics. This ethical code commits the members of the profession to certain social values above the selfish ones of income, power and prestige. In the case of a Teacher the code of ethics commits the members of the teaching profession to dedicate themselves to help the students learn, to help students grow into useful citizens. Furthermore a profession establishes some form of group discipline in support of these values. The second essential characteristic is practice of a profession is based on Principles.

Many CEO's were asked to name the qualities they expect in their employees. The replies were collected and tabulated. The first two were Integrity and Honesty in that order.

Integrity is a firm adherence to a code of conduct; especially moral values. Without integrity a professional is a danger to society. To decide whether a particular conduct is ethical or not ask yourself four questions.

1. Is my intended act consistent with the Law of the land ?
2. Is what I am going to do the fair thing ?
3. If I were to seek counsel from someone with no vested interest, would the person advise me that it was the right thing to do ?
4. Would it embarrass me if the news of what I intend doing broke out ?

It is possible to improve yourself as a teacher only when you critically observe others when they teach and critically evaluate your performance and try to improve.

REMEMBER

The purpose of teaching is to facilitate learning. Good teaching is teaching that brings about effective learning.

Always assume that a teaching activity is ineffective unless there is evidence to the contrary.

HOW TO BECOME A GOOD TEACHER

Teaching involves a knowledge base and a performance dimension.

Knowledge base is derived by reading.

Performance dimension will improve like any other performance with appropriate practice.

Appropriate Practice consists of

- * Observation of other teachers
- * Reading about Teaching performance
- * Obtaining feedback about one's teaching

You must observe others teach preferably the same subject/topic as you teach. That will give you new ideas about how to open and close lessons, how to question or not to question students, how to keep alive the interest of students, how to explain a particularly difficult point. Teaching is one profession where it is almost impossible to observe other professionals. Observing other teachers teach is a very valuable experience towards becoming a good teacher.

Reading about educational material. All of us read about our subject. Reading educational material will help dispel many myths we have and give us many ideas that we as teachers can try. Reading gives a knowledge base on which our practices must depend.

The third essential for improvement is to seek feedback. We can get this from persons who observe our teaching. It can also be obtained by self-study of recordings of our own teaching- audio or video recordings.

Teachers can form self-study groups- to provide feedback to one another or to have the opportunity to observe other professionals.

List A

TEACHER BEHAVIOURS

1. Partial

Repeatedly slighted a pupil

2. Autocratic

Intolerant of pupils' ideas

3. Aloof

Stiff and formal in relations with pupils

4. Restricted

Recognized only academic accomplishments of pupils; no concern for personal problems

5. Harsh

Hypercritical; fault-finding

6. Dull

Uninteresting, monotonous explanations

7. Stereotyped

Used routine procedures without variation in instruction

8. Apathetic

Seemed listless; languid; lacked enthusiasm

9. Unimpressive

Mumbled; inaudible speech; limited expression; disagreeable voice tone; poor inflection

10. Evading

Avoiding responsibility; disinclined to make decisions

Fair

Treated all pupils approximately equally

Democratic

Exchanged ideas with pupils

Responsive

Approachable to all pupils

Understanding

Showed awareness of a pupils' personal emotional problems and needs

Kindly

Gave a pupil a deserved compliment

Stimulating

Highly interesting presentation; got and held attention without being flashy

Original

Used what seemed to be original and relatively unique devices to aid
Tried new materials or methods

Alert

Appeared buoyant; wide-awake; enthusiastic about activity of the moment

Attractive

Plainly audible speech; good expression; agreeable voice tone; good inflection

Responsible

Assumed responsibility; made decisions as required

No insistence on either individual or group standards

Cursory

11. Erratic

Impulsive; uncontrolled; temperamental; unsteady

Inconsistent

12. Excitable

Easily disturbed and upset; flustered by classroom situation

13. Uncertain

Seemed unsure of self; faltering, hesitant

14. Disorganised

No plan for classwork

Unprepared Objectives not apparent; undecided as to next step

15. Inflexible

Rigid in conforming to routine

16. Pessimistic

Depressed; unhappy

17. Immature

Self-pitying; complaining; demanding
Boastful; conceited

18. Narrow

Presentation strongly suggested limited back-ground in subject or material; lack of scholarship

Did not depart from text

Called attention to standards of quality

Thorough

Steady

Calm; controlled

Stable, consistent predictable

Poised

Seemed at ease at all times

Confident

Seemed sure of self; self-confident in relations with pupils

Systematic

Evidence of a planned though flexible procedure

Well prepared
Objectives apparent

Adaptable

Flexible in adapting explanations

Optimistic

Cheerful; good-natured

Integrated

Maintained class as center of activity; kept self out of spotlight; referred to class's activities, not own

Broad

Presentation suggested good background in subject; good scholarship suggested

Drew examples and explanation from various sources and related fields

List B

Miami - Dade's

Characteristics of Excellence in Teachers

1. Are enthusiastic about their work
2. Set challenging performance goals for themselves
3. Set challenging performance goals for students
4. Are committed to education as a profession
5. Project a positive attitude about student's ability to learn
6. Display behaviour consistent with professional standards
7. See students as individuals operating in a broader perspective beyond the classroom.
8. Treat students with respect
9. Are available to students
10. Listen attentively to what students say
11. Are responsive to students needs
12. Give corrective feedback promptly to students
13. Are fair in their evaluation of students progress
14. Presents ideas clearly
15. Respect diverse talents
16. Create a climate conducive to learning
17. Work collaboratively with Colleagues
18. Are knowledgeable about their work
19. Integrate current subject matter into their work
20. Provide perspectives that include respect for diverse views.
21. Do their work in a well -prepared manner
22. Do their work in a well- organised manner.
23. Are knowledgeable about how students learn.
24. Provide students with alternative ways of learning.
25. Stimulate intellectual curiosity
26. Encourage independent thinking
27. Provide cooperative learning opportunities for students
28. Encourage students to be analytical listeners
29. Give consideration to feedback from Students and others.
30. Provide clear and substantial evidence That students have learned

IMPROVING TEACHING !

A FIVE STEP PROCESS

Faculty should systematically approach the process of implementing changes in how they teach. They must view the process as an ongoing one. They must make choices because it fits the way they teach, what they teach and in the setting in which they teach.

The following **five step process** is recommended.

First step: Faculty members must develop **instructional awareness**. What are the instructional strategies, techniques and practices they use in teaching. What are the assumptions about teaching and learning implied in the use of these. They must understand how and why they teach as they do. This instructional awareness is developed by

- (1) Using checklists to guide self-observation and personal reflection on practice
- (2) Review of videotaped samples of teaching
- (3) Reading about teaching and learning to stimulate thought and reflection
- (4) Review of course materials.

Self-discoveries must be free of judgements.

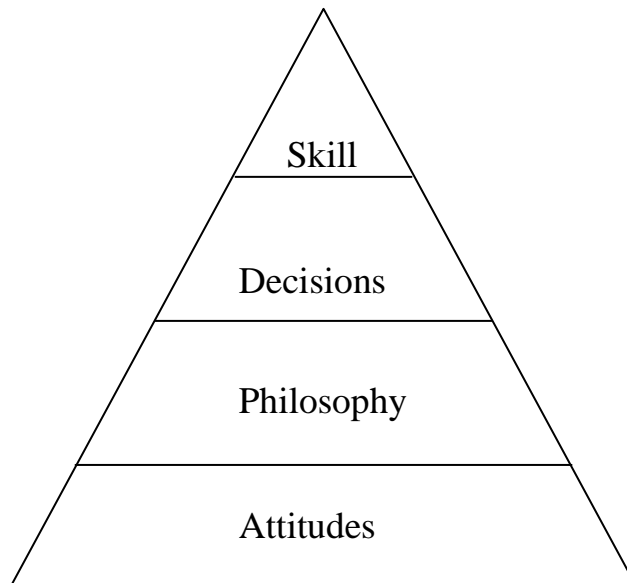
Second step: Gather information, to compare your understanding how you teach with feedback of others. **Get feedback from students and peers.** Gather information from different observers on different occasions about how teaching affected them and about alternative ways of accomplishing the objectives.

Third step: Decide what to change and how to change it. Don't change all at once. Change little by little.

Fourth step: Implement the changes decided upon. Change gradually, systematically and whole heartedly.

The Fifth step is to determine the impact of the changes by assessment --- self-assessment, feedback from colleagues and feedback from students.

View teaching as multidimensional as shown below



It is easy to change at the skill level. To change attitudes- attitudes towards teaching, towards students is much more difficult. In the long run it is this change in attitudes that will bring about improvement in teaching.

Effective Instruction results from continuing care, concern and commitment.