

# 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.



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.

## TASK : 2

### QUESTIONNAIRE ON TEACHER BEHAVIOUR

1. A student interrupts a teacher in the midst of a fluent lecture with a question. Four types of reactions are listed below. Indicate which of them facilitate learning and which of them hinder learning. Use symbols. + +,+,- and -- as appropriate.

----- (a) The teacher shouts him down.

----- (b) He politely expresses his resentment at the interruption and promises to answer the question at the end.

----- (c) He answers the question immediately.

----- (d) He rebounds the question to the whole class and asks for the right answer.

2. In response to a question from the teacher, a student gives a wrong answer. How would you react? Put a tick mark.

----- (a) You are not fit to be a medical student. You had better take up poultry-farming .....(Or similar comment)

----- (b) It seems you had been sleeping. Please listen to my class from now on.

----- (c) Perhaps I did not make myself clear on that point, Let me try again.

----- (d) Any other .....

3. A student asks you a question and you don't know the answer. How would you react? Put a tick mark.

----- (a) Look at him with resentment and say "Please don't interrupt"

----- (b) I don't know the answer. I shall refer and tell you in the next class.

----- (c) I don't know the answer. Can anybody in the class help us?

----- (d) Any other.....

4. There is lot of noise in the class and you are not able to continue with your lecture.

How would you react?

----- (a) Stop the lecture and get out.

----- (b) Pick out a harmless fellow and ask him to get out.

----- (c) Threaten them with dire consequences in the examination.

----- (d) Any other - specify.

#### TASK - 4

Classify the following teachers according to the Two Dimensions.

**Teacher A:** a person with a number of years of teaching to his credit. He prepares for any teaching session well.

His voice is clear and heard well. He likes to teach. His presentation is very interesting and his explanations are very clear. When students invite him for a party he does not go. He does not mix with the students. He is impatient and Hyper critical of pupils and loses temper.

**Teacher B:** a very senior person. He plans for all his teaching sessions. His teaching sessions are extremely stimulating. He is punctual. One day a student raised a question. The teacher was unable to answer that question. He asked whether any one in the class knew the answer. As no one knew the answer he promised the student he will find the answer and in the next class he gave the answer to the question. Took part enthusiastically in all activities of students.

**Teacher C:** is a teacher who has put in about 5 year teaching the subject. He does not prepare for the class. After he enters the class, he takes out his notes and goes on reading from it. His voice is monotonous. He does not clarify any point. He yawns twice while reading. When the students get fidgety and rub their shoes he looks up and shouts at them and picks upon a student and asks him to get out of the class.

**Teacher D:** a middle aged person very well groomed. He prepares well for the classes. His teaching sessions are clear. Repeatedly snubbed certain students. But when some students of the Fair sex approached him with doubts he explained things with obvious pleasure. In fact he used to help them in the university examination by giving some answers to the questions when he was an invigilator.

## **TASK : 1**

### **Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan)**

#### **INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP TASK**

Step 1. Describe the occasion/incident when you were taught by a teacher.

Step 2. Exactly what did the teacher do to teach you ?

Step 3. Was it effective or ineffective in your opinion ?

Step 4. Give your reasons for saying so.

## 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 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

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\* Source : The chronicle of Higher Education, April 13, 1987, P.A.13.

# 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.

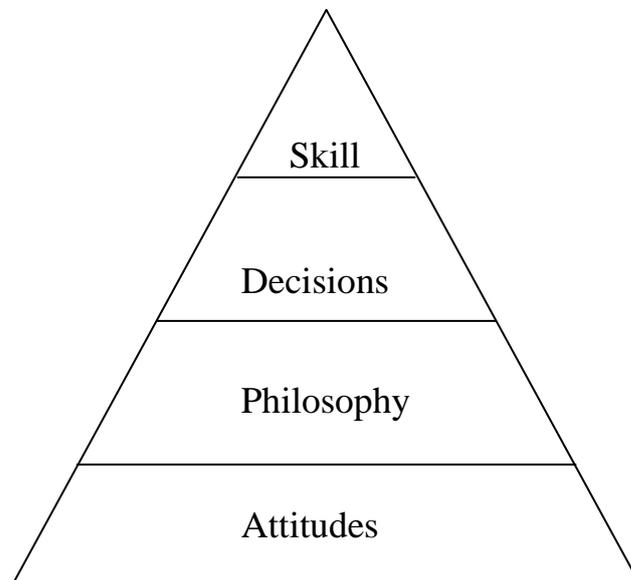
**Second step:** Gather information, to compare your understanding how you teach with feedback of others. **Get feedback from students and peers.** Gather information from different observers on different occasions about how teaching affected them and about alternative ways of accomplishing the objectives.

**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.**