Journal of Advances and Scholarly Researches in Allied Education
Vol. 13, Issue No. 1, April-2017, ISSN 2230-7540

An Analytic-Evaluative Study of Class Room Teaching of Effective Education Teacher

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Designation

Abstract – This qualitative research study identified criteria for teacher quality preferences as perceived by current and past stu¬dents. A two-question, open-ended survey asking what qualities learners liked most and least in a teacher/presenter was given to two groups: students (Group A) from medicine, dentistry, and related residency programs; and dentists and physicians (Group B) who had graduated at least three years previously and who attended a minimum of two days of continuing education courses in lecture format each year. A total of 300 subjects provided 2,295 written responses. Descriptive words within the responses were coded and grouped according to similar relationships, resulting in the emergence of twenty-one defined categories that were fur¬ther refined into three core categories: personality, process, and performance. Results showed that the two groups appear to have different preferences in teacher/presenter characteristics. For Group A (students), the categories of content design, content orga¬nization, and content development were at the forefront of their preferences. Group B (professionals) overwhelmingly favored elements of speaker self-confidence and expertise. Both groups highly valued expertise and speaking style. These findings can be used to develop curriculum, enhance faculty members' teaching skills, and plan continuing education programs.

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INTRODUCTION

Effective education refers to the degree to which schools are successful in accomplishing their educational objectives. The findings of numerous studies have shown that teachers play a key role in shaping effective education. The differences in achievement between students who spend a year in a class with a highly effective teacher as opposed to a highly ineffective teacher are startling. Marzano (2003) synthesized 35 years of research on effective schools and found the following results. Consider the following case: a student attends an average school and has an average teacher for two years. At the end of these two years, the student's achievement will be at the 50th percentile. If the same student attends an ineffective school and has an ineffective teacher, the student's achievement will have drop to the 3rd percentile after two years. If the student attends an effective school but has an ineffective teacher, his or her achievement after two years will have dropped to the 37th percentile. An individual teacher can produce powerful gains in student learning.

Effective teaching and learning cannot take place in poorly managed classrooms. Effective classroom management strategies (hereafter abbreviated to CMS) support and facilitate effective teaching and learning. Effective classroom management is generally based on the principle of establishing a positive classroom environment encompassing effective teacher-student relationships. Evertson and Weinstein (2006) define classroom management as "the actions teachers take to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning". This definition concentrates on the responsibility of the teacher and relates the use of classroom management strategies to multiple learning goals for students.

Following this definition, effective CMS seem to focus on preventive rather than reactive classroom management procedures. An example of a widely used – and generally effective – preventive strategy among teachers in primary education is that classroom rules are negotiated instead of imposed. Teachers, however, also frequently use reactive strategies (Shook, 2012), whereas it is unclear whether these strategies effectively change student behaviour. This may be caused by a lack of knowledge about the effectiveness of preventive strategies (e.g., Peters, 2012), or by a lack of belief in their effectiveness.

Teachers do not always believe in the effectiveness of particular strategies despite ample empirical evidence that the strategy has been implemented successfully in many classrooms. One example is that beginning teachers are generally advised to be as strict as possible in the first week of their internship and then slowly to become less authoritarian, whereas first establishing positive teacher-student relationships has

been proven far more effective in regulating student behavior.

Evidently, mastering effective CMS is a basic competence for all teachers ("Wet op de beroepen in het onderwijs", freely translated as "Professions in Education Act"). Klamer-Hoogma (2012) stresses that good teachers need to master a broad range of CMS, and that teacher training programs should provide student teachers with a large "toolbox" of CMS from which they can pick and apply particular strategies when necessary. Which strategies should (at least) be part of this so-called toolbox in current educational settings is still unclear. The reason for this is that the books that are used in teacher training programs generally refer to studies that were conducted decades ago or used anecdotal evidence rather than empirical evidence. However, daily practice in education has changed rapidly. It is increasingly characterized by student-centred approaches to learning (as opposed to teacher-centred), with a large emphasis on students' metacognitive skills and cooperative learning. Moreover, more and more technology is finding its way into classrooms, for example, the use of interactive whiteboards, tablets, and laptops. These changes presumably have had a large impact on the demands placed on teachers' classroom management skills (e.g., rules and procedures to facilitate cooperative learning). Although, to the best of our knowledge, no studies have been conducted to explicitly compare the effectiveness of particular CMS in more traditional versus more modern classrooms, an up-to-date overview of studies conducted in the last decade is expected to provide insight into which CMS have been proven (still) to be effective in modern classrooms.

Teaching evaluation is a necessary process in any educational setting. There are a number of tools or instruments available that are used to assess the level of effectiveness of instructors. These mechanisms can be categorized into three major areas: student ratings, peer reviews, and self-evaluations. The most often used measurement has been the student rating of instruction or student evaluation, as it is more commonly known. Students' rating of instruction has been a highly debated subject, but it is generally believed that student evaluations are reliable and often one of the best methods for obtaining measurements of the quality of classroom instruction. Thus, it is not surprising that, for the past three decades, student evaluation—typically involving a rating scale that addresses various dimensions of the instructional process and presentation style—has been the primary strategy used for measuring the effectiveness of teaching that occurs in classroom-based courses.

Evaluations can be used for formative and summative purposes as originally proposed and described by Scriven. Formative evaluations of teaching are used to review, train, and improve existing faculty. Summative evaluations are used to make decisions about promotions, tenure, awards, or merit pay increases. Whereas formative results are designed to improve the teaching process as a continuous feedback mechanism, summative results can be a determinant of a faculty member's progress to achieving his or her goal. The educational literature describes desirable and undesirable teacher attributes that affect classroom teaching. These attributes include personality traits, instructional organization, and the instructor's ability to make the subject useful. Studies of both faculty members' and students' perceptions of effective teachers and effective teaching yielded characteristics that included the following: caring, encouraging, approachable, enthusiastic, respectful, knowledgeable, empathetic, passionate, and having a sense of humor. A teacher who develops a clearly defined, well-organized topic is typically considered to be helpful in the learning process. An energetic instructor who can simplify complex topics, while appearing completely in control of the class, is perceived to be more effective than instructors who do not exhibit these characteristics. An educator who is easily understood, stays focused on the learning objectives, and interacts directly with the students is perceived to create a better environment for the retention of knowledge than instructors who do not.

Studies indicate that preferred teacher characteristics, as perceived by students, are related to the assessment of teaching effectiveness. For example, a study on personality types of beginning health occupations education teachers noted eighteen competencies relating to teaching effectiveness.35 When analyzing the competency statements, fifteen of the eighteen competencies found in teachers were similar to fourteen of the preferred teacher characteristics identified in our study. Because the measurement of teaching effectiveness is, in part, derived from student perceptions, the research suggests that institutions relying on students' ratings of instruction as a tool for measuring teaching effectiveness should consider designing the teacher evaluation form based on current student preferences of teacher characteristics.

ROLE OF TEACHER IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TO ENHANCE LEARNING

India has one of the largest networks of schools in the world. During the last five decades the system has grown manifold in size both in terms of institutions and enrolment. Some say, that the nature of Indian education system shifted from an elite system to a system of mass education. For instance, the number of primary schools was around 200,000 in 1950, which is at present more than 600,000. If one were to take into consideration the number of alternate schools that have sprung up in recent years, and include the upper primary and secondary schools, the network consists of more than a million schools.

Traditionally, school education acquired immense importance in the post-Independence period and with the consequent expansion of the system, the role of the school teacher also underwent a significant transformation. An important consequence of the expanding system of schools, with ever increasing enrolment and acquiring of mass character, has been the increase in complexity of school management. The changing pace of technology development like ICT and knowledge revolution has made the job of the teacher more demanding. They are required and should be encouraged to assume the new roles and responsibilities for ICT to improve the quality of education and access to education by learners in an informal and non-formal education setting. (Govinda, 2002). The system demands new knowledge and skills from the teacher and head teachers. It also demands greater capability at the school level to respond to the emerging diversity in the student population and among those entering the teaching profession. In effect, changes in the characteristics of the system have made the role of the school teacher even more critical than what it was earlier. Has the State, which is the main provider of education in the country, responded to the changed reality? Has the teacher become more empowered? Have adequate efforts been made to equip the teacher to face the emerging challenges? What is the current reality with respect to status, roles and functions of the teacher and the head teachers in India? And how can we come out from this challenge? These are few issues which need attention especially now when the country is moving towards becoming a knowledge centre and quality education has become determinate in such process.

AN OVERVIEW OF TEACHER MANAGERIAL FUNCTION IN THE CLASS ROOM

Historically, most of teachers restricted their role to teaching. The different government organizations and departments provided a guide line for the role and responsibility of the teacher. The teacher plays multiple roles in the school. The role of teacher is assessed in terms of his/her attendance in the class, completion of the course and interpersonal relation in the school. Till now, hardly any indicator is developed to assess the performance of teacher on the basis of learning achievement of the student.

The critical managerial functions of a teacher in elementary education are similar to those in other sectors. These are:

(i) Administration. Administration refers to the direction, control, management and organization of human and material resources for educational growth and development.

(ii) Personnel management. Planning and managing human resources is personnel management. It includes recruitment, transfer and redeployment; promotional opportunities and performance appraisal systems, grievance redressal mechanisms and professional development issues.

(iii) Planning. Planning is a systematic exercise of determining a future course of action in accordance with identified objectives, needs, priorities and existing/likely capacities, within a given time frame, reflecting cost-effective choices.

(iv) Financial management. Financial management refers to mobilization, deployment and efficient use of financial resources as per stated objectives and strategies.

(v) Supervision, monitoring and support. Monitoring and facilitation of teaching-learning processes, and other school development activities, for enhancing their quality through suitable tools, methods and mechanisms. The focus is on school, because this is the unit where primary learning takes place, and any effort to improve the quality of processes should ultimately be reflected here.

(vi) Information management and communication. Management of information as an institutional resource is “Information Management”. It includes aspects of collection, processing, dissemination and use of information.

“Communication” refers to the process of exchange of information and feedback. Management processes are not always clearly defined and are applied in unambiguous terms. It is common to come across a varied understanding of the same function by different organizations/units/ persons in the same sector. The perception also depends, to a large extent, on the way the particular organization/unit/person handles the function at its level. This study has tried to understand and assess the processes against commonly defined functions. The processes have been defined from the perspective of quality, effectiveness and efficiency. The stakeholders’ perspective is also in-built in these definitions.

Unlike business operations, where standardized procedures based on uniform interpretations of guiding principles are more common, the guiding principles of management functions in education could be interpreted effectively in more than one way. The strength of a particular choice for a process in educational management also lies in whether the sequence brings about a change in totality as well as at different steps. The effectiveness is, thus, linked not only to the quality of output/ outcome, but also to the quality and impact of individual activities.

TEACHERS AS LEARNING SPECIALISTS

We view teaching as a knowledge-rich profession with teachers as 'learning specialists.' As professionals in their field, teachers can be expected to process and evaluate new knowledge relevant for their core professional practice and to regularly update their knowledge base to improve their practice and to meet new teaching demands. By investigating the knowledge underlying effective teaching and learning, we are studying how to improve teacher quality. Teacher quality itself is an important factor in determining gains in student achievement. In fact, the main motive for investigating teacher knowledge is to improve student outcomes. On the other hand, to improve teacher quality, it is crucial to understand what teacher professionalism involves. Thus, this study focuses on teacher knowledge as a key factor in teacher professionalism. In other words, the two main themes underlying the study of teacher knowledge are improving student outcomes and teacher professionalism.

How to recognise an expert teacher? What does teacher professionalism involve?

Literature highlights many features that characterise expert teachers, which include extensive pedagogical content knowledge, better problem solving strategies, better adaptation for diverse learners, better decision making, better perception of classroom events, greater sensitivity to context, and greater respect for students.

Several studies stress the importance of the knowledge teachers hold, highlighting that in addition to assimilating academic knowledge, student teachers also need to incorporate knowledge derived from experiential and practical experiences in the classroom. Research also shows that variations in 'opportunities to learn' in teacher preparation are related to differences in student achievement: teachers from countries that are top performers in PISA and TIMSS tend to have more opportunities to learn content, pedagogical content and general pedagogy.

While teacher knowledge is certainly a component of teacher professionalism, professional competence involves more than just knowledge. Skills, attitudes, and motivational variables also contribute to the mastery of teaching and learning. Blömeke and Delaney (2012) proposed a model that identifies cognitive abilities and affective-motivational characteristics as the two main components of teachers' professional competence

How does Teacher Knowledge Influence Student Outcomes?

Research on the impact of teacher knowledge on student learning outcomes is scarce and the few studies that exist have focused on pedagogical content knowledge or content knowledge. Evidence is beginning to show the following implications:

Implications			Study
Better content knowledge of teachers	→	Higher student achievement	Mathematics teachers
Better pedagogical content knowledge	→	Higher student achievement	Mathematics teachers
Pedagogical content knowledge has more impact on student achievement than content knowledge;			
Only pedagogical content knowledge seems to have an impact on the quality of instruction			
Higher general pedagogical/psychological knowledge	→	Higher quality of instruction according to student perception (e.g. Higher cognitive activation, better instructional pacing, better student-teacher relationships)	Only one study on mathematics teachers

Whereas there is a long history of discussion and debate around the connection between teacher knowledge and quality instruction, there is a lack of empirical research testing this hypothesis or even connecting knowledge to student learning. The studies reviewed show that while much research is still needed to fully support this relationship, as well to test a cross-cultural conceptualization of general pedagogical knowledge, research thus far is beginning to show that teachers' general pedagogical knowledge is relevant to understanding quality teaching as understood by its impact on student learning outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research involves collecting descriptions of events as compared to collecting data elements that can take numerical form; the method thus involves analyses that are nonquantitative. Whereas quantitative research involves concepts of reliability and validity of data, qualitative methodology is explained by such words as "exploration, meaning, thematic, and understanding." Qualitative data involve words; quantitative data involve numbers. However, numerical data can be extracted or can be useful in summarizing the results of a qualitative analysis.

Qualitative data collection methods often include open-ended interviews, direct observation, and written documents such as open-ended question-naires. In our study, the data-gathering was identified as a phenomenology type of qualitative research in which a collected body of knowledge relates several different observations of phenomena to each other. The data-gathering method was chosen to be a written document in the form of an open-ended questionnaire because open-ended, face-to-face interviews carry the potential of the subject feeling pressured, intimidated, or in some way stressed due to the presence of the interviewer. In addition, the time investment required of subjects participating in open-ended interviews was considered to be prohibitive in the conduct of this study.

Unlike quantitative researchers, qualitative researchers cannot determine how many participants are necessary prior to the study. In qualitative research, data analysis is performed simultaneously as data is collected until a saturation occurrence emerges. At this point, the more data that are gathered, the less each additional data point appears different from the previously collected data. Saturation is considered the end point of collecting data. The ultimate purpose of a qualitative type of assessment is to make conclusions that are transferable, using a vast collection of information.

CONCLUSION

The technologies offer vast opportunities for the development of contacts and exchanges with the rest of the world. Incorporating the technologies successful into schools requires careful advanced planning and preparation. Significant financially and human resources are required, with training as an essential component of the process. Redundant and robust systems must be put in place. Innovators have to be prepared to confront bureaucracy and conservative attitudes, including resistance by teachers and other educational staff. The ability of teachers to organize classrooms and manage the behavior of their students is critical to positive educational outcomes. Comprehensive teacher preparation and professional development in effective classroom organization and behavior management is therefore needed to improve outcomes for students in general and special education.

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