

# Higher Education System in India Needs Effective Teachers

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For India to get transformed into a developed nation by 2020, Education is an important component. Our education policy should ensure that India is transformed into a developed Nation... Good teachers could generate enlightened minds and instill confidence and will power in students to help them realize their dreams and transform India into a developed nation.

## A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (Goel & Goel, 2010)

It is rightly said that an effective teacher is the one whose effectiveness in the classroom is translated to his students' achievement in society. Such a teacher has several specific characteristics that contribute directly to effective teaching. To be effective certain effective teaching methods can be cultivated in a teacher and also unwanted ones can be eradicated by him, as detailed out under with reference to each aspect:

### Qualities as a Person

A teacher through his pleasing manners and positive approach towards work makes not only an impression on administrators, colleagues, students and parents but also helps in appropriately shaping his/her students' behavior. Often a student links the preference of a particular subject to a teacher and the way the subject is taught. A teacher who exudes enthusiasm and competence for a content to be taught may transfer those feelings to the students. In addition, how a teacher relates to the pupils has an impact on the students' experience in the class. A teacher who is always enthusiastic transfers his energy to the students and enables them to learn better. Personality is one of the first sets of characteristics to be looked for in an effective teacher.

#### A. To be Cultivated

- Assume responsibility for the classroom and the students' success
- Use personal experiences as examples in teaching
- Understand feelings of students
- Communicate clearly

- Admit mistakes and correct them immediately
- Display a sense of humour
- Dress appropriately according to the position
- Maintain confidential trust and respect
- Be flexible and spontaneous
- Be responsive to situations and students' needs
- Enjoy teaching and expect students to enjoy learning
- Look for the win-win solution in conflict situations
- Listen attentively to students' questions and comments.
- Respond to students with respect, even in difficult situations
- Communicate high expectations consistently
- Conduct one-on-one conversations with students
- Treat students equally and fairly
- Have positive dialogue and interaction with students outside the classroom
- Invest time with individual students or small groups of students outside the classroom
- Maintain a professional manner at all times
- Address students by name
- Speak in an appropriate tone and volume
- Work actively with students

#### B. To be Eradicated

- To believe that teaching is just a job
- Arrive late for the class on a regular basis
- Have classroom discipline problems
- Insensitivity to a students' feelings
- Expression of bias (positive or negative) with regard to students

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- Work on paperwork during class rather than working with students
- Have parents complaining about what is going on in the classroom
- Use inappropriate language
- Demeaning or ridiculing students
- Exhibition of defensive behaviour for no apparent reason
- Be confrontational with students
- Lack of conflict resolution skills
- Not accepting responsibility for what occurs in the classroom

### **Managing and Organizing the Classroom**

A classroom is “the mirror holding to one’s teaching” (West, 2009). Typically, a well-organized classroom has various instructional organizers such as rules posted on the walls. A teacher’s effective plan for the environment, both the organization of the classroom and of students, allows the classroom to provide a better space for student and teacher interaction. A classroom should be well-equipped with books and other sources of information so that the students can easily access them. An effective teacher makes the best use of the space in the classroom by arranging the furniture properly so that he/she can approach the individual students when needed.

#### **A. To be Cultivated**

- Position chairs in groups or around tables to promote interaction
- Manage classroom procedures to facilitate smooth transitions, instructional groups, procurement of materials and supplies, and supervision of volunteers and para-professionals in the classroom
- Manage students’ behaviour through clear expectations and firm and consistent responses to students’ actions
- Maintain a physical environment where instructional materials are well-equipped.
- Cover walls with students’ work, students-made signs, memos, and calendars of events
- Emphasize students addressing one another in a

positive and respectful manner

- Encourage interactions and allow conversations about activities or tasks
- Maximize the physical aspect of the environment
- Manage emergency situations as they occur
- Maintain acceptable personal work space
- Establish routines for the running of the classroom and the handling of routine student needs
- Provide positive reinforcement and feedback
- Discipline students with dignity and respect
- Show evidence of established student routines for responsibilities and student leadership
- Exhibit consistency in management style
- Post rules and regulations, and appropriate safety procedures

#### **B. To be Eradicated**

- Arrange desks and chairs in rows facing forward (without regrouping)
- Display inconsistencies in enforcing rules
- Not prepared with responses to common issues
- Use strictly commercial posters to decorate walls
- List rules and consequences for negative behaviours (teacher-formulated)
- Rank student progress on charts for all to view
- Emphasize facts and correct answers
- Assign one task to be completed by all students
- Not clear about expectations of students
- Allow students’ disengagement from learning
- Be unavailable outside the class for students
- Complain inappropriately about all the administrative details that must be done before class begins
- An unsafe environment or equipment
- An unclean or disorderly classroom
- Use of many discipline referrals

- Make up rules and consequences or punishment according to unpredictable mood
- Not starting class immediately, wasting time in taking roll calls or other activities

#### **Having a Sense of Professionalism**

As is rightly said a good teacher is a “beloved master of his craft who inspires students to excel” (Venkatasubramaniam, 2004). An effective teacher often communicates with students, colleagues, parents and administrators and consistently demonstrates respect, accessibility, and expertise. Finally, an observer who knows from all sources that this person truly makes a difference in the classroom can sense the presence of an effective teacher. Such a teacher is easily recognized through his/her effective teaching methods, efficient classroom management and positive approach towards his/her work and duties. It would be very appropriate to quote Dr Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, “A university is essentially a cooperation of teacher and students, and the relation between two is of sacred importance” (Kanniappan, 2007). A true teacher is a master of teaching and also leads to the all-round development of the students.

##### ***A. To be Cultivated***

- Practice honest two-way communication between teacher and administrators
- Communicate with families of students
- Maintain accurate records
- Reflect on teaching, personally and with peers
- Attend grade-level meetings and be a team player
- Attend and participate in faculty and other school committee meetings
- Perform assigned duties
- Volunteer to assist others
- Seek community involvement
- Contact central office personnel for technical support when needed
- Treat colleagues with respect and cordiality
- Work collaboratively with faculty and staff
- Attend professional development opportunities

like conferences, graduate classes, workshops, etc

- Maintain current teaching certification
- Submit required reports on time and that too accurately
- Submit lesson plans and assessment documents on time
- Submit grades on time
- Maintain a calendar of report deadlines
- Keep an accurate and complete grade book

##### ***B. To be Eradicated***

- Give negative feedback routinely at meetings
- Display unwillingness to contribute to the mission and vision of the institute
- Refuse to meet with parents or guardians and colleagues outside of contract hours
- Do the minimum required to maintain certification or emergency certification status
- Submit reports late
- Submit grades late
- Write inaccurate or unclear reports of the conference or the seminar
- Do not update grade book or keep it inaccurate

#### **Planning Instructional Methodology**

A well-crafted instructional method incorporating required objectives and activities is a must for effective teaching. It hardly matters where or how the teachers plan and organize for instruction, the result of effective work is seen as a magic created in the classroom. Further, a variety of effective activities designed as the follow-up catering to different learning styles and needs of the students, give the evidence of a teacher's mastery on designing instructional methodology. However, sometimes a pre-planned instructional method is required to be modified at the spontaneous demand of moment in the classroom and it is where a teacher's efficiency is tested.

##### ***A. To be Cultivated***

- Lesson plans are written for each working day
- Let students know the daily plan by giving

them an agenda of objectives and activities

- Make available students' assessment and diagnostic data
- Include assessment data and pretest results with lesson plans
- Make available students' work samples and consider them when writing lesson plans
- Align lesson plans with division curriculum guides
- Align teacher-developed assessments with curriculum guides
- Have clearly stated objectives in lesson plans
- Include use of available materials in lesson plans
- Include activities and strategies to engage students of various ability levels in lesson plans
- Address different learning modalities and styles in lesson plans
- Include required accommodations for students with special needs in lesson plans
- Include pacing information in lesson plans
- Locate lesson plans for a substitute or an emergency in an easily accessible area of the classroom containing all necessary information

#### ***B. To be Eradicated***

- Non-availability of lesson plans
- Non-availability of students' assessment and diagnostic data
- No connection between assessment data and lesson plans is evident
- No provision of differentiated instruction
- Select activities that are unrelated to the learning objective
- No plans for or anticipation of potential problems
- Lesson plans mainly consisting of text or worksheets
- Students not engaged in learning
- Lesson plans do not address different learning styles of students

- Lesson plans do not reflect accommodations for students with special needs
- Fast pace in teaching not keeping in mind students' response
- Lesson plans are disjointed
- Lesson plans are short and do not allow for smooth transitions between activities
- Poor or inconsistent student achievement is the prevalent pattern
- Non-availability of emergency lesson plans
- Non-availability of materials for substitutes

#### **Achieving Instructional Goals**

A combination of good classroom management, good organization, effective planning and the desirable personal characteristics of a teacher lead to effective teaching. An effective teacher enlivens his/her teaching method by giving examples from real life experiences to make an authentic connection with the content being taught. An effective teacher facilitates the classroom like "a symphony conductor who brings out the best performance from each musician to make a beautiful sound" (Snaith et al., 2007). Also teaching is made more effective when the environment of the classroom is made conducive for the students so that they can learn well. An effective teacher builds rapport with the students to make them feel at ease while interacting with him/her. It has been rightly said that implementing instruction is like "the opening night at the theater where all the behind-the-scenes work is hidden and only the magic is seen by the audience" (Stronge, 2013). A good teacher is one who teaches effortlessly and encourages his/her students for their growth and development.

#### ***A. To be Cultivated***

- Use student questions to guide the lesson
- Use pre-assessments to guide instruction
- Develop elements of an effective lesson
- Use established routines to capture more class time
- Incorporate higher-order thinking strategies
- Use a variety of activities and strategies to engage students

- Monitor students' engagement in all activities and strategies
- Has high numbers of students actively engaged in the class continuously
- Adjust the delivery and pacing of the lesson in response to students' cues
- Effectively use the entire classroom by active movements
- Have student-centered classroom rather than teacher-centered classroom
- Provide verbal, nonverbal and written feedback
- Design and base assignments on objectives
- Assist students in planning for homework assignments

#### ***B. To be Eradicated***

- Experience student behaviour problems time and again
- Have unengaged students like bored, off-task, asleep, etc
- Have poor student performance in class and on assessments
- Give vague instructions for seatwork, projects, and activities
- Be unresponsive to students' cues
- Lack variety in instructional methods
- Have difficulty in individualizing instruction
- Use outdated material or terminology
- Fail to implement changes needed as pointed out by peers or supervisors
- Tell students to "know the material"
- Not applying current strategies or best practices
- Not having command over language
- Slowly transit between activities or lessons

#### **Tracking Students' Ability and Progress**

An effective teacher keeps a track of each student's performance in the class. He/she uses different types of formal and informal methods to nurture skills and talents in the students. Also such a teacher takes remedial classes of the students

who find any difficulty in grasping knowledge or acquiring skill. Also time-to-time communication with the parents and all concerned teachers should be carried out effectively to fill the gaps if any. Monitoring of students' progress and potential need not be solely the responsibility of a teacher; indeed, an effective teacher facilitates students' understanding of how to assess their own performance, that is, "assists them in meta-cognition" (Alexander, 2006). And such an effort not only improves his efficiency but also his personality.

#### ***A. To be Cultivated***

- Enable students to track their own performances
- Grade homework
- Give oral and written feedback
- Document students' progress and achievement
- Make instructional decisions based on student-achievement's data analysis
- Move around in the room to assist students and express praise or appreciation
- Give pretests and graphs results
- Consider multiple assessments to determine whether a student has mastered a skill
- Keep a log of parent communication
- Use students' intervention plans and maintain records of the plan's implementation
- Record team conference or teacher conference with students
- Give assessments on a regular basis
- Practice differentiated instruction based on assessment analysis
- Exercise testing accommodations for students with special needs
- Maintain copies of all correspondence concerning students' progress
- Hold teacher-parent-student conferences and meetings
- Produce class newsletters
- Invite parents and guests to special class events

- Maintain class web page featuring students' work, homework, assignments, etc
- Communicate with informal progress reports
- Use appropriate and clear language in communication
- Participate in Individualized Education Program Meetings (IEPMs) for students with special needs

**B. To be Eradicated**

- Not monitoring students' progress
- Not keeping a communication log
- Have no record of conferences with students or parents and guardians
- Use extremes in grading— high failure rates or unrealistically high percentage of excellent grades
- Fail to re-teach after assessments to correct gaps in student learning
- Offer little or no variety of assessments
- Ignore testing accommodations for students with special needs
- Not documenting or holding few parent communications
- Use vague, technical, or inappropriate language in communication
- Not participating in or attending IEPMs for students with special needs

To conclude, if a teacher acts upon the aforementioned suggestions, he can definitely tread on the path of transforming India into a developed nation, a nation of our dreams— “a nation not in creation but a nation that creates” ( Prasad, 2006).

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Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.

*Aristotle*

