

Qualities of Effective Teachers: students' Perspectives

Dr. A. Clement, Mr. Roland Rencewigg

Career Development Centre, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai

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ABSTRACT: Teachers play an indispensable role in the lives of students by equipping them with the knowledge and skills required for career and life. No one can deny the role of the teachers -school or college - in shaping students' lives. Hence, this paper tries to identify the praiseworthy qualities of teachers that are commended by the students through a survey. It has been identified that students expect their teachers to be innovative, patient, professional, and confident along with other qualities. Subject knowledge, sense of humour and method of teaching are considered some of the inspiring traits of a teacher. Many participants have pointed out that teachers need to be friendly in their approach so that students do not feel intimidated by their teachers' presence. Being aggressive, arrogant and short-tempered is considered a negative trait of a teacher.

Key Words: Teachers, effective teachers, positive traits of teachers, negative traits of teachers

I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers are one of the most important members of the society and in fact, every successful professional today learnt the art in schools and colleges. The foundation of any subject is strongly laid in educational institutions and teachers play the crucial role. Teachers are role models and sources of inspiration in many aspects. Effective teachers offer many benefits to students with respect to thought-provoking environments, structure and stability, feedback and goal setting, knowledge and skills, analysis of weaknesses, conditions of curiosity, hands-on training, teamwork opportunities, and education as per individual's needs (Stuart Pearson, n.d). Though parents are more interconnected with their children's character shaping, teachers' role in a child's life is undeniable. According to historian Henry Adams (1907), "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops". Effective teaching can be defined in many ways including teacher behaviour (warmth, civility, clarity), teacher knowledge (of subject matter, of students), teacher beliefs are elements of effective

teaching (Good T.L., Wiley C.R.H., Florez I.R. (2009).

According to a study (Burroughs N. et al. (2019), five factors are related with superior student attainment: teacher experience (measured by years of teaching), teacher professional knowledge (measured by education and self-reported preparation to teach mathematics), and teacher provision of opportunity to learn (measured by time on mathematics and content coverage). Robert J Walker (n.d) has listed twelve important characteristics of most memorable teachers in his work which includes being prepared, sense of humour, positive attitude, creativity, impartiality, compassion etc. The research investigated the perception of personal and professional characteristics of teachers among high school students. The teenage students appreciate diverse qualities of teachers like: calm, tolerance, presence of sense of humour, friendly, a well prepared teacher (Lupascu et al., 2014).

Moreno Rubio (2009) accentuates that effective teachers have the skills to motivate students to reach their fullest potential on learning through their professional and personal skills. As reported by a research work, knowledge of subject, enthusiasm and communication skills are the most enviable features of a good teacher. There was no disparity of viewpoints based on cultural background, gender or discipline - medicine and dentistry ((Singh et al., 2013).

Research Questions:

1. What are the qualities of effective teachers according to students?
2. What are the negative qualities of teachers?
3. What are the students' expectations with respect to effective teachers?

Research Methodology:

A Likert scale questionnaire was sent to more than 200 students of II year and III-year students of an engineering college through Google Form. The questionnaire had five options to choose from i.e. Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree,

Disagree and No Comments. 124 students responded to the questionnaire. Along with the questionnaire, some questions were asked and the summary of the responses is given.

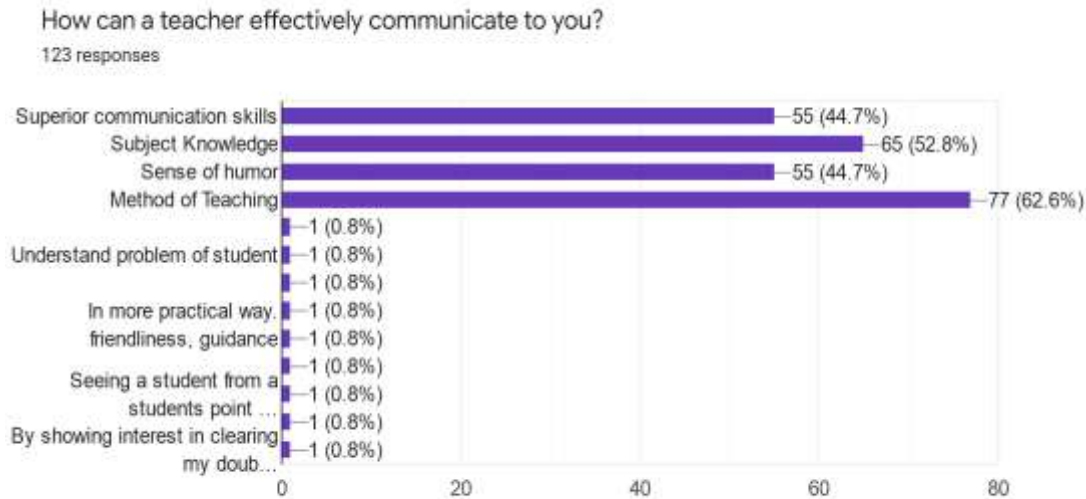
91.9% of respondents were of 17- 20 age group and 8.1% of participants were of 21-25 age group. 68.5% of participants were male and the rest were female. The participation in this research study was voluntary. The participants had the

choice not to participate. Their responses are confidential and identifying information was not collected such as names, email address or IP address. The results of this study were used for scholarly purposes only. Additionally, the responses were combined with those of many others and summarized in a report to further protect anonymity of the participants.

Results of the survey:

Questionnaire	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No comments
A teacher needs to be polite and courteous.	47.6%	50%	0%	2.4%	0%
I expect my teacher to look professional.	40.3	46	1.6	5.6	6.5
Patience is one of the most important qualities of a teacher.	61.8	35.8	0	1.6	0.8
He/she must be confident in delivering lectures.	50.8	42.7	0	0.8	5.6
Partiality is a negative quality of a teacher.	74	16.3	1.6	4.1	4.1
Teachers' words are powerful; they can either build or destroy my morale.	58.5	29.3	1.6	6.5	4.1
He/she must be able to control the class.	42.7	49.2	0.8	1.6	5.6
Teachers must be compassionate.	49.2	45.9	0	0.8	4.1
I am motivated by teachers' positive feedback.	69.4	26.6	0.8	3.2	
Teachers must come prepared to the class.	52.4	35.5	2.4	4.8	4.8
Teachers must possess good communication skills.	64.2	26.8	1.6	3.3	4.1
Sense of humour is not necessary for a teacher.	0.8	8.1	59.3	27.6	4.1
Teachers must be interactive during class.	68.3	30.9	0	0	0.8
Teachers must share new information with us.	70.7	29.3	0	0	0
I respect teachers with sound subject knowledge.	50.4	40.7	0.8	4.1	4.1

Question 1: How can a teacher effectively communicate to you?



77% of students cited ‘method of teaching’ as the most important aspect of interaction in classroom. ‘Subject knowledge’ was selected by 65% of respondents. ‘Superior communication skills’ and ‘sense of humour’ were chosen by 55% of students. According to a study (J Adv Med Educ Prof. 2016), a good teaching method permits learners to question their preconceptions and prompts them to learn.

Question 2: What are the important qualities of an effective teacher?

The participants were asked to write the important qualities of an effective teacher and the following qualities have been highlighted by the participants:

Being responsible, being punctual, effective communication, ability to explain complex concepts using simple words, great subject knowledge or expertise, method of teaching, empathy, interacting skills, ability to motivate, being kind, understanding students’ state of mind, being patient, professional demeanour, confidence, enthusiasm, being impartial, approachable, being informative, friendly, being optimistic and humble, ability to provide novel information on recent trends related to subject, being lenient, compassionate attitude, practical knowledge of the subject, class control, not being boastful, the ability to adopt different method teaching as per the topic, being meticulous.

Question 3: How do you define ‘Teacher-Student’ relationship?

Many students have expressed that ‘being friendly’ is the right definition for the teacher-student relationship. This has proven that students expect their teachers to be friendly in their approach and this is more relevant to students in higher education colleges. Students want this relationship because they can interact with their teachers. If there is no rapport between the teacher and the students, then the process of education gets affected. The rapport is enhanced only through proper communication. Some students have pointed out that the students must be able to trust their teachers. It can be construed that students can trust the teachers only when the relationship is friendly. Another student has said that there shouldn’t be any hesitation in asking questions and sharing ideas. A teacher has to be a model of inspiration. Some participants have suggested that it has to be a relationship between the father and the child. Moreover, another comment conveys that a teacher must be a guide to the students with respect to their career path.

Question 4: Mention one negative quality of teachers.

The quality of being ‘partial’ is unanimously considered the most prominent negative quality of teachers. Moreover, aggression and arrogance are chosen as some other detrimental characteristics of teachers. The participants have emphasised that the superior feeling of teachers is a disconcerting trait in classroom. Also, inefficient

teaching method is totally detrimental to students' learning process. Students shun the habit of being insulted in front of their peers. Some respondents have revealed that the lack of seriousness in teaching is deplorable.

II. CONCLUSION:

This study aimed at identifying the qualities of effective teachers as per the students' perspectives. The results of the study corroborate the previous research undertaken by various authors from different countries. Subject knowledge, communication skills, sense of humour etc. are some of the most sought-after traits of effective teachers. Being partial and aggressive are some of the negative qualities which are vehemently detested by the participants. Besides being suitably qualified, teachers need to possess the positive qualities and shun the negative traits highlighted in the research so as to create a better learning environment.

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