Teaching beyond Letters

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ABSTRACT

Since the teacher is destined to arouse interest and curiosity among the students, he/she cannot confine himself to a mere translator or interpreter. The teacher must develop a psychological bridging with the students so as to make learning effective and fruitful. So the realm of learning must be expanded from the world of letters to the unexplored areas of education. Thus, in addition to his educational qualifications and excellence, the teacher must be capable of making learning effective with proper use of body posture, expressions, gestures and skills which can attract the students to the content of teaching. The teacher must not ignore the environment, climatic conditions and distinctions which affect the mental and manual configurations of the students. He/she must be flexible enough to organize, depending on the socio-economic factors and barriers which impede effective learning. The words and deeds of a teacher have to be blended with optimism and soft skills which can ensure free flow of knowledge and information for the overall development of the students. He/she has to abstain from the blind following of the theories and must cling to the practical methods depending on his research and analysis of the environment which can inspire and ignite the students to conquer the zeniths and horizons of excellence.

INTRODUCTION

The Gurukula system, which laid the foundation for the teacher-student relationship, is characterized by the complete subjugation of shishya to guru. The fatherly treatment made the student to learn from the words and deeds of the guru. The system gave importance to the theoretical and practical learning along with ideas needed for the successful life of student. Along with the sastras, the guru was destined to concentrate on the mental and manual development of the student. The ‘home away from home’ system helped the student to concentrate more on his studies and accept inspiration from the guru.

Modern education system is indebted to the Gurukula system for the teacher-student relationship. Though there is much change in the method of teaching, the Gurukula system left behind a tradition for the modern education system. The guru played a vital role in moulding an efficient student in the ancient times. But today the teacher is confined himself to a mere instructor in the educational institution. The psychological bond found in the ancient times disappeared as education commercialized.

Since most of the theories of learning are contributed by the west, we may find it unfit in our society. Rural schools which are suffocating with minimum facilities may find it difficult to follow the ideas of the west, which are intended for sophisticated classrooms. The intellectual ratio of the student may vary with respect socio-economic conditions. The urban student differs from the rural student in many aspects. There may be difference in facilities, comfort and infrastructure. So the teacher must be aware of the facilities available to him and have to develop teaching methods depending on the facilities and amenities.

The psychological bond between the student and the teacher helps in the proper dissemination of ideas. It generates the interest towards the subject. It can be noticed that the love and interest towards a subject is depended mainly on the teacher concerned for the subject. So, if the treatment of the teacher makes aversion to the student, naturally he dislikes the subject also.

The teacher must take in to consideration his body posture in the classroom. The appearance must not be a distracting factor which averts the student’s attention from the learning process. He/she must be very careful in dressing and must not be too attractive to call the attention of the students. But he/she has to be tidy enough to impress the students. The personality must reflect so as to get the inspiration for the students. The language can be fluent enough for the students to grab the ideas conveyed. The language must not be an impediment in getting the ideas. So the teacher must concentrate on conveying the content efficiently. There must not be a situation where students appreciate the method of teaching ignoring the content of teaching. The effectiveness of a class depends on injecting the ideas exactly to the students’ memory/ mind so that they can use it for time immemorial. The teacher can make use of lively comparisons and examples which invite the students’ curiosity and interest. It is the duty of the teacher to find the...
examples fitting to the context, which needs home work and preparation. Since the abilities of the student vary, the teacher has to adapt teaching methods digestible to all. The caliber of the student must be taken in to account while taking the class.

Humor is an indispensable part of teaching. Effective humor will invite the interest of the students. It is very useful in the afternoon classes. Humor can be verbal or non verbal. According to Niria Hativa:

“Humor can occur in a lesson in one of two forms: spontaneous and planned. Spontaneous humor is most common in teaching, usually in the shape of funny comments and witty remarks through which the teacher alerts the students to elements that are surprising or different from what they expected” (275).

But the teacher must be very careful in keeping the dignity of teaching and must not dismantle the relationship with the students. Humor must not harm the students directly or indirectly. If the student ever happens to be hurt by a humor from the teacher, he shows an aversion towards the teacher and the subject. The unwanted comments and humor from the students which disrupts the decorum of the classroom must be discouraged. Humor helps in better understanding of the ideas conveyed by the teacher.

Gestures cannot be considered separate from teaching. Proper movement of hands and other body parts makes the classroom lively and the students can move their eyes in all directions and avoid monotonous listening. Gestures must be fitting to the context and content of teaching. Otherwise it will arouse laughter among the students with adverse effects. Words must be tangled with proper gestures, which give life to the words. It can be seen that humor in the mother tongue is more effective than the humor in foreign languages.

The teacher must try to keep the tone of the words intact. The fluctuations in the tone of the words may produce adverse effects. The tone must be matching to the situation. It is very important in teaching literature. Much care must be taken while teaching literature. The tone and intonation of the words are very important in the literary context. It has to be used so as to produce the intended thought of the author. In this method the teacher have to give the exact expression and feeling along with his tone and gestures. This helps the students to make out the exact emotion and feeling in a work of art. Drama can be enacted and different methods can be adopted for different genres. This does not mean the simple paraphrasing of the text. The teacher has to give the ideas which connect the text to the contemporary world. The relevance of the work of art in the modern world can also be illustrated.

Since the teacher learns much from the students, he must not act superior discouraging questions from the students. The teacher has to admit his weakness and the areas unknown to him and must ensure the clarification with proper analysis, research and reference. He can depend on modern technology to clarify his doubts and correct his lapses. He must be brave enough to cater his own ideas collected from the information he gained from his research. Since there is a growing demand for the assistance of modern technology in learning the teacher have to bring the information about the modern learning aids and guide the students towards them. The role of internet and other technology in learning cannot be ignored in the modern world. Alan Pritchard says: “ICT is a powerful tool when it is used as an aid to learning and when it has a supporting, not a central, role in the process of learning” (27).

REFERENCES
