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CREATIVE TEACHERS AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES THAT MOTIVATE LEARNERS TO LEARN *

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Abstract

The paper aims at discussing how creative teachers and effective teaching strategies motivate learners to learn. The naissance of active learning where learners have to be active during the teaching learning process, has altered the subject and the center of the teaching learning processes from teachers to students. The teaching learning process is contextual and the emphasis is to fulfill learners' needs. This teaching mode requires active participation of learners. The active learning mode requires creative teacher and effective teaching strategies so the teaching learning is able to transform knowledge into effective learning tasks and activities. The learning tasks and activities are designed to enable learners to experience the practical application of the knowledge they have learned. The design of instruction that motivates learners to learn is also presented and discussed.

Key words: creative teacher, effective teaching strategies, motivating learners

Introduction

Conducting active learning has been a dream of every professional teacher at every level of education. The introduction of active learning alters the role of a teacher during the teaching learning process. If the conventional teaching strategies put emphasis on the teacher, active learning puts more emphasis on the active participation of learners and the ability of teachers to involve learners' environment as a source of learning. This implies that active learning intends to contextualize instructional materials and the learners are placed as the center of the teaching learning process. The placement of learners as the center of teaching in the Student Centered Learning (SCL) Method and active learning model has brought

about a better motivation for learners to learn because every student is motivated and engaged in every steps of the teaching process.

Activating and motivating learners during the teaching learning process are among the roles of a teacher in active learning mode. Activating learners indicates that learners are not only assigned to receive or listen to what a teacher has explained but they must be involved in asking or answering questions, working in groups, assisting other learners, and demonstrating critical and creative thinking. Since the teaching is expected to motivate learners it is necessary to consider the techniques employed in the teaching learning process.

It is not recommended to a teacher to transmit knowledge or information only but the teaching must put more emphasis on the development of the student skills (Ragains, 1995; Lasley et al. 2002). This indicates that more tasks and activities for students must be designed and planned properly to allow them to practice what they can apply in their daily lives as the results of learning. This kind of teaching model requires creative teachers and suitable or effective teaching strategies.

Creative Teacher

The results of conventional learning have been the memorization of theory or conceptual knowledge. The teaching process puts more emphasis on the transmission of the knowledge and the teaching processes are heavily dependent on the textbook which do not touch the real needs of learners. Materials in the textbook are designed for pedagogical purposes. This kind of situation drives learners to be passive and consequently the teaching learning process is monotonous. On the other hand, active learning requires teacher to be creative not only in the teaching process but also prior to teaching where a teacher can prepare authentic materials to motivate learners to learn. It has been noted in the teaching learning process that authentic materials is preferred over created materials because the authentic materials fulfils real needs of the learners (Richard, 2002; Harmer, 2007).

Creativity in teaching learning process can be seen as teacher effort to facilitate learning to achieve teaching goals. Creative teachers use everything that he possesses to actualize

active learning to motivate learners such as thought, fact, and ideas or even the combination of thought, fact and ideas. Creativity of a teacher can be seen in his performance during the teaching learning process and in his daily activities. Creative teachers are able to perform his teaching learning process effectively by combining various contextual instructional materials, instructional strategies, instructional media and real-life experiences. Richard (2002) and Moore (2005) argue that the ability of a teacher to prepare such teaching models has a positive effect on learner motivation because real needs and interest of learners are fulfilled and the learners themselves are engaged in the teaching learning process. This implies that teacher creativities are directly related to the way they serve learners as the results of learners' needs analysis.

Teacher creativity is essential to facilitate effective learning. Halliwell (1993) suggests creativity as part of normality as part of everyday actions and ideas. This kind of creativity is necessary to facilitate effective teaching in the daily teaching learning process where a teacher is able to overcome common problems faced by learners, such as being frightened to ask question or to do presentation, being shy to discuss within group, being hesitated to play role, and being afraid of making mistakes. Creative teachers are able to design joyful teaching where complex things can be explained in simple ways or uninterested learners become interested in the teaching process, or even able to find out acceptable examples to clarify unclear topic for learners.

In sum, creative teachers provide as much space as possible for learners in the instructional design to develop the students' particular framework of understanding. Effective teaching strategies are continuously investigated and the results of the investigation are employed to achieve the maximum performance of the learners both in and out of classroom activities. Effective teachers keep students involved in their lesson and master a variety of effective teaching strategies (Moore, 2005; DBE2, 2010).

Effective Teaching Strategies

Researchers have conducted quite a view studies to find out effective teaching strategies. The research on effective teaching strategies mostly took students as the sample. Students' evaluation on their teachers has brought about significant changes in teaching purpose and teaching methodology. Ory's (1984) findings for example suggest that faculty members have to further develop and improve the teaching skill. In relation to the decision making on the purpose of instruction, Scriven (1995) argues that students rating are among significant factors to consider. For administration purpose, Fanklin (2001) and Kulik (2000) indicate that students' ratings assist the administrators to design both summative and formative assessments, to provide teaching awards, and to assign teachers to particular course. More importantly, Braskamp (2000) highlights the use of the results of the assessment to develop and improve the teaching effectiveness. These results indicate that there are some important components to be considered to hold effective teaching.

Effective teaching has been defined differently by different authors. Effective teaching is defined as teaching which produces beneficial and purposeful students learning through the use of appropriate procedure (Centra, 1993). While Braskamp and Ory (1994) define effective teaching as the creation of situation in which appropriate learning occurs; shaping those situations is what successful teachers have learned to do effectively. The two definitions indicate that effective teaching requires effective teaching strategies. Effective teaching strategies help learners to apply, analyze, and synthesize, to create new knowledge, and solve new problems.

It has been noted that there are some effective teaching strategies in different field of studies. The strategies, in general, put emphasis on the possibility to apply what have been learned to real practice to fulfill needs of learners and other stakeholders. Among those strategies are practical examples, show and tell, case studies, guided design projects, open-ended labs, the flowchart technique, open-ended quizzes, brainstorming, question-and-answer method, software, teaching improvement, and fast feedback form for engineering (Lacey, et, al. 1995). For active teaching at higher education, among effective models are cooperative learning, problem based learning, direct instruction, (DBE2, 2010).

Transformative pedagogy has brought new horizons in teaching learning process where there must be balance between cognitive skills and emotional skill. Emotional intelligence is the ability to think constructively

and to act responsibly. Nelson and Low (2005) note that learners who are emotionally intelligent are skilled in interpersonal communication, self-management, goal achievement, and demonstrate personal responsibility in completing assignment and working effectively. By keeping the balance in the teaching learning process the results of teaching is not only developing the cognitive skill but also the psychomotor skill. Lasley, et al. (2002) strongly recommend that the development of the cognitive and psychomotor skills helps learner to apply the knowledge the learners have previously learned.

In order to get the best of the teaching learning, Ramsdan (2012) highlights six principles of effective teaching in higher education. The first is interest and explanation. This principle is to emphasize that it is the job of every teacher to make the subject interesting. A teacher must be able attract the students attention on the subject so that the students are motivated to participate in. In other words the student curiosity is built up on the subject. The curiosity can be built up when a teacher can explain things or topics in each subject clearly and a teacher remembers to clarify the reasons why a particular fact or skill is essential for understanding the whole. The second is concern and respect for students and student learning. It is generally believed in conventional teaching that teacher is considered as the sole source of knowledge and more ironically a teacher is an expert and students are not. On the contrary, in effective teaching, a teacher must be interested in what students know and don't know, a teacher must be generous, a teacher

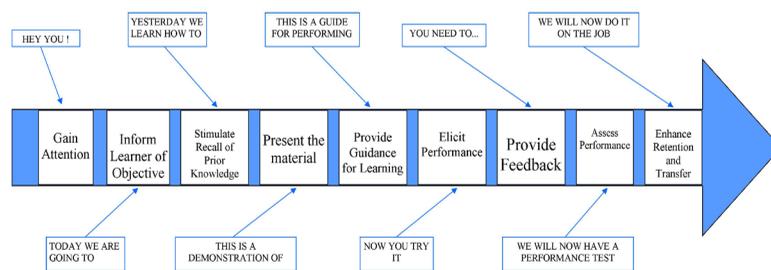
must be able to make it easy for learners to master ideas and fact, and more importantly, a teacher must make effort to make the difficult parts easy. The third is appropriate assessment and feedback. A teacher must be able to design proper assessments where the assessment matches to the material to be learned. When feedback is given, the feedback must be related to what students still need to study to get it right. The fourth is clear goal and intellectual challenge. A teacher must formulate teaching goals clearly. Clear statements of what is to be learned encourage a good fit between student effort and course goals. The fifth is independence, control and engagement. Teaching learning process has to get students engaged with content in a way that enables them to reach understanding. The teaching process must provide learners enough space to learn at their own pace and in their own sequence. Learners need to feel in control over what they're doing, as well as feeling that a teacher is directing the learners. There must be balance for learning well and for enjoying the learning itself. The last one is learning from students. To learn from learners is compliment to the first five principles. Even though the first five principles are necessary but it is not sufficient for good teaching in higher education without learning from learners. Effective teaching means seeing the relation between teaching, learning and content as problematic, uncertain and relative. It involves constantly trying to find out how teaching affects learning, and adapting it in the light of the evidence a teacher collects.

Designing instruction that motivate learners to learn

Accomplishing instructional purposes needs effective teaching strategies. To choose effective teaching strategies it is important for a teacher to consider the content of the instructional materials and the achievement of the purposes and objectives of the teaching. Moore (2005) highlights the factors to choose best strategies for effective teaching process as; students' needs, students' age, students intellectual's ability, students' physical and mental characteristics, students' attention spans, the lesson purpose, and contents to be taught. Taking these factors into account assure the choice of effective strategies that best serve the teaching situation. Consequently, motivation of learners to learn will arouse since the instructional materials and the selected strategies meet their needs and suit their learning styles.

Planning instruction is important for teachers. Good instructional materials are able to gain and maintain learner attention and to arouse motivation to learn. It is noted that interesting instructional materials are the ones which are planned not too long and contain various attractive activities. Let's take an example of a 50 minutes teaching (for a one credit unit course), Moore (2005) suggests the time allotment as follows; Overview of topic (10 minutes), show a film (20 minutes), discussion of film (20 minutes), Demonstration (5 minutes), and Wrap up and review (5 minutes). It implies that effective teaching involves learners from the opening to the closing sections and the teacher keeps the activities done based on the time allocated.

Regarding the design of instruction, Gagne's design (1985) is still adopted by teachers worldwide. According to Gagne, there are nine events that are needed for effective instructional design. The nine events can be diagrammed as follows:



Gagne's Nine Steps of Instruction

The first step is to gain attention. In this step a teacher introduces a problem or a new situation by using an "interest device" that grabs the learner's attention. The device can be in the form of Storytelling, Demonstrations, Presenting a problem to be solved, Doing some-

thing the wrong way (the instruction would then show how to do it the right way), and why it is important. In other instructional term this first step is known pre-class or apperception.

The second step is to inform learner of objective. In this step a teacher informs the objective of the teaching that allows the learners to organize their thoughts and around what they are about to see, to hear, and/or do. It is also important for a teacher to describe the goal of a lesson, state what the learners will be able to accomplish and how they will be able to use the knowledge. This implies that by knowing the learning outcomes the learner will be able to pay attention to the particular explanation and therefore arouse their attention and instill their motivation.

The third step is to stimulate recall of prior knowledge. In this step learners are allowed to build on their previous knowledge or skills. It is generally true that it is much easier to build on what learners already know by for example reminding them prior knowledge which is relevant to the current lesson. This step also allows teachers to provide the learners with a framework that helps them to learn and remember. Part of stimulating recall is having the learners take notes and drawing mind maps.

The fourth step is to present the material. In this step a teacher is able to put teaching instructional materials into smaller part to avoid memory overload. A teacher must be able to use the whole information to help learner to recall the information. The best way to put the instructional materials to a smaller part is to organize the part based on the level of difficulty. This kind of instructional materials organization helps teacher to select which part is to be taught first and which part is next. By so

doing, the learners is able to go through from the simple instructional material to a more complex one.

The fifth step is to provide guidance for learning. In this step a teacher must provide clear instruction and clear concept. The clear instruction prevents the learners of losing time in understanding of what to do during the teaching process. The clear concept helps learners to transfer the theory into practical knowledge. Hence, the teaching process avoids boredom and frustration.

The sixth step is to elicit performance. In this step a teacher must provide exercises for practicing what they have just learned. This can be done by letting the learner do something individually or in small group from what they have just learned. This can be in line with what Albert Bandura (Gagne, 1995) argues that observation learning may or may not involve imitation. For example if you see someone driving in front of you hit a pothole, and then you swerve to miss it—you learned from observational learning, not imitation (if you learned from imitation then you would also hit the pothole).

The seventh step is to provide feedback. In this step a teacher shows correctness of the learner's response, analyzes learner's behavior. This can be a test, quiz, or verbal comments. The feedback needs to be specific, not, "you are doing a good job", a teacher must tell them "why" they are doing a good job or provide specific guidance.

The eighth step is to assess performance. In this step a teacher must test learners to determine if the lesson has been learned. The results of assessment can also give general progress information. The last step is to enhance retention and transfer. In this step a teacher must inform the learner about similar problem situations, provide additional practice, put the learner in a transfer situation, and review the lesson.

To support the implementation of the above

nine steps an effective lesson plan is compulsory. A lesson plan is used as guide in a teaching learning process. Creative teachers prepare lesson plan by formulating appropriate and clearly written objectives which is defined as a description of a learning outcome. According to Farrel (2001), the ability to formulate clear learning objective helps teachers to state precisely what learners want to learn, help teacher to guide the selection of appropriate activities, and help teacher to provide overall lesson focus and direction.

Conclusion

1. Creative teachers are those who are able to create effective teaching. The role of creative teachers is started from the preparation of the teaching up to the assessment of the achievement. The preparation section, in the prior teaching phase, a creative teacher analyzes what the learners' needs and the results of the need analysis are used to formulate instructional goal and design instructional materials in a lesson plan.
2. Effective instructional materials contain tasks and activities that promote not only cognitive skills but also psychomotor skills.
3. None of teaching strategies is perfect in itself. In order to conduct an effective teaching, creative teacher chooses a variety of effective learning strategies that underpin each other to activate learners, to engage learners and to instill motivation to learn. Effective strategies are those that can transfer knowledge into practical application.
4. Motivation is important to bring about successful learning. Creative teachers, well-designed instructional materials, and effective learning strategies are among important factors that motivate learners to learn.

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