

Mastery over the subject

Helping students learn subject matter involves more than the delivery of facts and information. The goal of teaching is to assist students in developing intellectual resources to enable them to participate in, not merely to know about, the major domains of human thought and inquiry.

These include the past and its relation to the present; the natural world; the ideas, beliefs, and values of our own and other peoples; the dimensions of space and quantity; aesthetics and representation; and so on.

Understanding entails being able to use intellectual ideas and skills as tools to gain control over everyday, real-world problems. Students should see themselves, either alone or in cooperation with others, as capable of figuring things out—of using mathematics to define and reason through a problem; of tracking down the origins of current social policy; of interpreting a poem or story, of understanding how physical forces operate; of recreating in writing a feeling, idea, or experience.

They should both be able and inclined to challenge the claims in a politician's speech, to make sense of and criticize presentations of statistical information, and to write an effective letter to the editor. A conceptual mastery of subject matter and the capacity to be critical of knowledge itself can empower students to be effective actors in their environment.

Of course, nothing is ever simple in education. The answer is that teachers - whether they are subject specialists or generalists - need a wide range of different skills and attitudes if they are to assist their students achieve high outcomes. These should include relationships with students, subject matter knowledge and also an understanding of pedagogical processes to develop the understanding that is required. Should a teacher fail to have any of these, then it is likely that the learning in the classroom will not be as successful. However, it would be foolish to isolate one of these skills to the exclusion of all others: teaching, like most people-centred professions, requires a range of abilities and skills that the practitioner carefully weaves together, in such a way as to provide the most meaningful experience possible.

Interacting with Students

Educators must be able to positively interact with all students. This includes difficult students, students who work below grade-level and students whose personalities just grate on a teacher. Teachers must put aside their prejudices and feelings in order to treat all students with respect, provide them with equal opportunities for learning and make them feel confident.

Create a Learning Environment

Creating a safe learning environment that is conducive to learning is essential. Educators must set high expectations for student performance and behavior. All rules must be enforced consistently and fairly. Students should not have to worry about being bullied in the classroom and should feel comfortable when speaking up.

Good at Lesson Plan Design

All educators must be capable of designing lesson plans to meet student needs and cover the standards. This requires knowing how to choose and create instructional materials to accommodate students at different levels. It also requires creating a scope and sequence that provides students with enough time to master the standards.

Able to Employ Varied Teaching Strategies

Best practices and other appropriate teaching strategies allow competent educators to effectively teach the curriculum. Competent educators may lecture, but they also incorporate a variety of strategies, including non-traditional teaching strategies, to help students with multiple learning styles learn and stay engaged. Educators also attend regular professional development sessions to learn new strategies and the latest best practices.

Communicating the subject

Teachers can model what effective communication looks like to students. We believe that modelling, thinking aloud and unpacking the thinking processes that are required to convey the content effectively will enable students to process and internalize the targeted subject matter.

If students can replicate this, they can then clearly articulate their own perspectives of what they are learning, their own logical reasoning and thinking processes. This makes thinking visible. It's even more important now with the emphasis on more knowledge-building, inquiry-based and problem-solving approaches—so rote learning will not do. Students need to learn how to work through their problems and articulate their reasons for why they have adopted a certain approach, and justify arguments put forth.

When we talk about literacy in the subjects, it is the ability to use language appropriately, meaningfully and precisely in a given subject area. It requires the teacher to be proficient in the language and subject knowledge. Subject teachers have to be conscious of how they construct meaningful dialogue with their students, how they can facilitate thinking and understanding of content through interactional modes of language use in the classroom. We are helping teachers with their classroom talk, interaction with students and questioning strategies.

When teaching, you have to help the students formulate very clear and precise explanations that address the specific demands of the questions. And what is tough is where students have to present scientific and logical reasoning, argument and justification to show the logical connection of the evidence and claims. All these skills become very critical: How you formulate your explanations, how you evaluate your explanations as new data/evidence comes in as part of the process of scientific inquiry.

So you can't talk about effective communication in a vacuum. It has to be in a specific context with a clear outcome. By modelling effective communication as a Science teacher, your students will become aware of the norms and conventions of reading, writing, talking and thinking like a

scientist. There's now a greater awareness and attention on the part of the teachers as to what is involved because they want to help students, especially those who are weaker in English.

Following are some of the communication skills that a teacher must possess so that they interact properly with the students –

Positive Motivation

This is one of the important things that a teacher must possess. In a class, students always have different kinds of taste and preferences over subjects. So it is the job of the teacher to create enthusiasm and interest in the minds of the students towards a subject. It is also a teachers role to remove any fear and inhibitions that a student may have towards a subject.

Effective Body Language

This is the most powerful communication skill that a teacher must possess. Good presentation skills include a powerful body language supported by verbal skills. This can create a long lasting impression in the minds of the students. Thus, a teachers lectures will inevitably become more interactive and interesting for the students. Besides, a teacher should maintain the volume, tone and rhythm of their voice during a lecture.

Sense of Humor

The importance of this factor has been regularly underestimated. A good sense of humor keeps the students active and interested in the teachers class. A teacher who is dour and lacks humor doesnt contribute to the overall well being of the students.

Understanding the Students

Teachers should encourage students to communicate openly. There should be emphasis on cultivating a dialogue rather than a monologue. So while solving any kind of problems in the classroom, it is always wise to hear the opinions of the students also.

Team Formation

This is a good method where you can divide the classroom into small teams and ask them to solve different problems or complete assignments. This practice will increase not only the interaction among the students but also among the teacher and students.

Technical Skills

It is also important that teachers should be up to date with all the latest teaching aids like computers, video conferencing and especially the use of internet. This will also help the students to keep up their interest in the learning process.

Students are the future of every nation. That is why the role of teachers is so important to the society. It is through a teacher that generations of youngsters are deeply influenced. Overall improvement in a student can be expected when communication skills for teachers is given due importance. Thus, it is important that communication skills become an important ingredient of a teacher's professional competency.