UNDERSTANDING TEACHING

C. Ramakrishnan

Assistant Professor of English,
Rajapalayam Rajus College, Rajapalayam, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

Teaching subject is different from teaching a language. Likewise teaching understanding is different from understanding teaching. Teaching understanding is students related. It is the role of a teacher to make the students to understand what is taught. At the same time understanding teaching is somewhat different from this. It is related to a teacher who understands what is teaching. In the present world teaching is not teaching related instead it appears training related. Students are trained to know their subjects without understanding what they are studying. Teachers motivate students to complete their papers rather than understand the importance of the subjects. It is the response of teachers to make the students to realize why they are sitting in the class rooms. A teacher should understand what teaching is because teaching is not merely explaining subjects. Moreover English Language Teaching is to motivate the students to develop the skills what is hidden in them. Understanding teaching means teaching of prose for vocabulary development, poetry for creativity, drama for conversation, and grammar for understanding language. Students should be encouraged to use language instead of listening to the explanation. Language teachers should make the class room students centered for developing the language skills of the students. Through this only a teacher can develop ready to go anywhere attitude skill of the students.

Introduction

Great teaching is defined as that which leads to improved student progress. It can be defined effective teaching as that which leads to improved student achievement using outcomes that matter to their future success. Defining effective teaching is not easy. The research keeps coming back to this critical point: student progress is the yardstick by which teacher quality should be assessed. Ultimately, for a judgment about whether teaching is effective, to be seen as trustworthy, it must be checked against the progress being made by students. The six components of great teaching currently use a number of frameworks that describe the core elements of effective teaching. The problem is that these attributes are so broadly defined that they can be open to wide and different interpretation whether high quality teaching has been observed in the classroom. It is important to understand these limitations when making assessments about teaching quality. Below it is listed six common components suggested that teachers should consider when assessing teaching quality. t is listed the approaches, skills and knowledge in order of how strong the evidence is in showing that focusing on them can improve student outcomes. This should be seen as offering a 'starter kit' for thinking about effective pedagogy. Good quality teaching will likely involve a combination of these attributes manifested at different times; the very best teachers are those that demonstrate all of these features.

1. Content Knowledge

The most effective teachers have deep knowledge of the subjects they teach, and when teachers' knowledge falls below a certain level it is a significant impediment to students' learning. As well as a strong understanding of the material being taught, teachers must also understand the ways students think about the content, be able to evaluate the thinking behind students' own methods, and identify students' common misconceptions.

2. Quality of instruction

It includes elements such as effective questioning and use of assessment by the teachers. Specific practices, like reviewing previous learning, providing model responses for students, giving adequate time for practice to embed skills securely Executive Summary 3 and progressively introducing new learning (scaffolding) are also elements of high quality instruction.

3. Classroom climate

It covers quality of interactions between teachers and students, and teacher expectations: the need to create a classroom that is constantly demanding more, but still recognising students' self-worth. It also involves attributing student success to effort rather than ability and valuing resilience to failure (grit).

4. Classroom management

A teacher's abilities to make efficient use of lesson time, to coordinate classroom resources and space, and to manage students' behaviour with clear rules that are consistently enforced, are all relevant to maximising the learning that can take place. These environmental factors are necessary for good learning rather than its direct components.

5. Teacher beliefs

It includes why teachers adopt particular practices, the purposes they aim to achieve, and their theories about what learning is and how it happens and their conceptual

models of the nature and role of teaching in the learning process all seem to be important.

6. Professional Behaviours

Behaviours exhibited by teachers such as reflecting on and developing professional practice, participation in professional development, supporting colleagues, and liaising and communicating with parents.

Understanding What Students Learn

This paper is about how classroom activities shape the ways in which students' minds interpret and process their experience. The model allows us to predict, from an analysis of detailed recordings of individual student experiences, exactly which concepts and principles1 each student will learn and remember (Nuthall, 1999b, 1999c; Nuthall & Alton-Lee, 1993). The central purpose of this chapter is to identify how the processes that lie behind the knowledge acquisition themselves are acquired and develop in students' minds. A second, related purpose is to clarify the way teacher actions relate to student learning through student experience. There is evidence that what teachers intend and believe to happen in their classrooms is frequently not what students' experience (Cobb, Perlwitz & Underwood-Gregg, 1998; Erickson, 1996; Yair, 2000). Students' classroom experience is shaped by many factors in addition to teacher organization and management of classroom activities. Through a close look at individual student experience, this chapter provides an empirically based conceptual analysis of the complex inter-relations between teacher actions (together with activities that the teacher designs) and student learning.

The Shaping of Cognitive Processes through Internationalization

According to Vygotsky (1978), and other sociocultural theorists (e.g., Arievitch & van der Veer, 1995; Lawrence & Valsiner, 1993), the higher mental processes (involved in learning from experience) are generated through the internalisation of culturally structured social activities. If this is true of the culturally structured social activities that make up classroom life, then what is the nature of these activities and what determines how students experience them? What sense can we make of the process of internalization in the context of classroom activities? Cognitive processes are not just skills that can be taught and acquired in the same way as learning to ride a bicycle or print the letters of the alphabet (Bransford, Sherwood, Vye & Reisser, 1986). Students acquire cognitive processes as part of acquiring the culture of the society in which they live, progressively, through constant guided participation in the activities and

rituals that make up daily a new life. Through participation, they internalize the goals and purposes, the behaviors, and the knowledge and thinking processes involved in the activities. There is general evidence to support Vygotsky's theory. Higher education is related to significant changes in the development of cognitive processes. Children of comparable age who have spent a year in school instead of kindergarten or preschool show significant advantages in a variety of memory tasks (Morrison, Smith & Dow-Ehrensberger, 1995; Varnhagen, Morrison & Everall, 1994). They use more formal and systematic memory search procedures without prompting and are better at evaluating what they know and do not know (Kreutzer, Leonard & Flavell, 1975; Sharp, Cole & Lave, 1979). Cole argues, on the basis of a series of cross-cultural studies of children's development, that school, unlike other social institutions, requires the systematic and managed use of cognitive activities (Cole, 1996). What is unknown is how participation in school activities shapes the way the child interprets, thinks about and uses experience (Nuthall, 2000a, 2000b). The process by which social activities become mental processes is referred to as interiorisation or internalization (Lawrence & Valsiner, 1993; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). According to Vygotsky, internalization involves the progressive shifting of control of an activity from the outside material world to the internal world of the mind. Elaborating on the ideas of Vygotsky, Gal'perin suggested that internalisation proceeds through a series of stages (Haenen, 1996, 2001). Initially, an activity is carried out largely through trial and error, or under the direct control of an adult or more experienced participant. Later on, control of the activity is shifted from physical to verbal or symbolic feedback. Words or symbols used to describe and explain the activity come to stand for the activity itself. Verbal instructions, and still later self-talk, come to control the activity. In the final stage, management of the activity and its verbal representation disappear into the unconscious.

The activity can be carried out mentally and the result produced without any awareness of the steps involved. It is only when the activity strikes an unexpected problem that it will re-emerge into consciousness (Vygotsky, 1981). Tharp and Gallimore have provided an abbreviated account of these "stages of the zone of proximal development" (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988, p. 33). Vygotsky was careful to point out that the structure of the external activity is radically changed as it is internalised. This sociocultural account of internalisation is not substantially different from the outline that Piaget provided in his later studies of children's understanding and management of their physical world

(Piaget, 1962, 1978). According to Piaget, as children become familiar with an activity, they experiment with variations on the activity and build up a mental image of the process of carrying out the activity and its variations. The mental image is created by a mental imitation that involves all essential aspects of imitating the activity except physically carrying it out. The mental imitation can then be used to play and replay the activity in the mind in order to try out variations and predict their outcomes internally. Vygotsky also sees imitation as central to the internalisation of higher mental processes (Vygotsky, 1982), but differs from Piaget in regard to the role that culture and social interaction play in the process. Most of Piaget's experiments involved individual children interacting with, and learning to understand and manage the natural world. Vygotsky and his followers focused on the individual being drawn into and learning to participate in social activities (cf. , Rogoff, 1994, 1996). Even when the individual is interacting with the natural world the interaction is mediated by artefacts, such as language, scientific concepts and mathematical symbol systems that embody a specific cultural history (Vygotsky, 1978, 1981). Vygotsky's own work focused on the role of signs and symbols, especially the role of language in the development of cognitive self-management (i.e., giving instructions to one's self). Leont'ev (1981) expanded this work by developing the concept of "activity" as the major mediator of cognitive processes.

According to Leont'ev (1978), internalization occurs because of the circular structure of an activity. "The psychic reflection of the object world is generated directly not by external forces … but by those processes through which the subject enters into practical contact with the object world. " (Leont'ev, 1978, p. 53). If these views of the role of internalisation in cognitive development are right, then the internalisation of routine classroom activities, including the talk accompanying them, is likely to be the prime mediator in shaping and developing how students engage with classroom experience (Arievitch & van der Veer, 1995; Wells, 2002b).

Conclusion

It is understood from the paper that understanding teaching is the most important thing for a teacher before teaching English as a second language. A class room should be planned students centered and activity based rather teachers centered and subject based. The aim of teaching English language is to make the learners to use the language after understanding it. It is the role of a teacher to decide the purpose of teaching English language.

References

1. Alton-Lee, A. G., Nuthall, G. A., & Patrick, J. (1987). Take your brown hand off my book: Racism in the classroom. *SET. Research Information for Teachers*, *1*(8). Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research. Print.
2. Dayton, T. (2005). *The living stage: A step-by-step guide to psychodrama, sociometry and experiential group therapy.* Deerfield Beach, FL: HCI. Print.
3. Kaur, B. (2004). 'Keeping the infants of coolies out of harm's way': Raj, Church and infant education in India, 1830–51. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, *5*(2), 221–235. Print.
4. Kaur, B., Boyask, R., Quinlivan, K. , & McPhail, J. (2008). Searching for equity and social justice: Diverse learners in Aotearoa New Zealand. In G. Wan (Ed.), *The education of diverse populations: A global perspective* (pp. 227–251). The Netherlands: Springer Science and Business Media. Print.
5. MacLure, M. (2003). *Discourse in educational and social research*. Buckingham: Open University Press. Print.
6. May, H. (2005). *School beginnings: A nineteenth century colonial story.* Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research. Print.
7. Nasaw, D. (1979). *Schooled to order: A social history of public schooling in the United States.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Print.
8. Nuthall, G. (2002). The cultural myths and the realities of teaching and learning. *New Zealand Annual Review of Education*, *11*, 5–30. Print.
9. Nuthall, G. A. (2004). Relating classroom teaching to student learning: A critical analysis of why research has failed to bridge the theory-practice gap. *Harvard Educational Review, 74*(3), 273–306. Print.
10. Nuthall, G. A., & Alton-Lee, A. G. (1990). Research on teaching and learning: Thirty years of change. *Elementary School Journal, 90*(5), 547–570. Print.
11. Quinlivan, K., Boyask, R., & Kaur, B. (2009). *Educational enactments in a globalised world: Intercultural conversations.* Rotterdam/Taipei: Sense Publishers. Print.
12. Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). *Thought and language.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Print.