



Qualities of Effective Teaching

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The Issue

- Professors are not teachers
- Many professors feel ill prepared (Dedman & Preach, 2004; Mertz & McNeely, 1990)
- Part-time faculty are less likely to know proper pedagogy and how to accommodate students (Dedman & Perch, 2004)

70%

of all faculty
positions are
non-tenure*

~50%

of all classes
are being taught
by part-time
faculty*

*(Alsop, 2018; Carpenter et al., 2016; Trautman, 2008)

Current Action

- Professor mentorship (Kemp & O'Keefe, 2003)
- Professor orientation into teaching (Dedman & Perch, 2004)
- Institution providing professional development and supports (Ambrosino & Peel, 2011)
- Graduate teaching programs
 - Teaching and Learning Seminar, trained in cooperative learning (Weber et al., 2007)
 - GK-12, teaching science in K-12 schools (Trautman, 2008)
- Takes time, takes money, requires resources

Components of Effective Teaching

Cognitive (or Rhetorical)

- Professor's Knowledge
- Classroom management
- Utilizing Technology
- Organization
- Effective Presentation of Content Material
- Communication

Affective (or Relational)

- Student-Teacher Relationship
- Caring
- Understanding
- Approachability

Research Design

- Student Evaluations, Likert-Type Scales
- Ranking pre-selected qualities
 - Budgeting fictional money to buy pre-selected qualities
- Describing 'ideal' professor
- Thematic analysis of open-ended student responses
 - Positive Qualities and Areas of Improvement

Current Study

- In-person post-secondary classes
- No use of pre-selected traits
- Thematic Analysis of open-ended responses called “narratives”
- Coded positive and negative qualities
- Research Questions:
 - 1: What are the qualities of effective teachers and effective teaching?
 - 2: What are the qualities of ineffective teachers and ineffective teaching?
 - 3: How do these qualities materialize within the college classroom?

Participants

- Spring 2011 (n=21); Spring 2012 (n=20); Fall 2013 (n=20); Fall 2014 (n=22)
- Approximately 20-25% male on any given semester
- Predominantly Junior and Senior Psychology Majors
- 143 narratives used of 166 narrative collected

“You are to provide two examples (one positive and one negative) of a college faculty behavior that you have experienced. Describe a time when someone in this job position (college faculty) was unusually effective and a time when someone in this position was unusually ineffective – these may be two different people... Focus your attention on any specific behavior(s) that they engaged in that made you draw this conclusion. Each example should be about 1 – 2 paragraphs. When you write, consider the following: What were the circumstances leading up to the incident? Relate specifically what the individual did (what behaviors they engaged in or failed to engage in) that made you think of them as a good, average, or poor worker. What were the consequences of this incident?”

Results

Table 3.
Representation of Themes in Student Narratives

Theme	Effective	Ineffective	Total
Cognitive			
Delivery			
Explicit	37	24	61
Implicit	4	1	5
Support			
Explicit	34	16	50
Implicit	1	3	4
Organization			
Explicit	11	20	31
Implicit	3	2	5
Knowledge			
Explicit	9	4	13
Implicit	4	0	4
Clarity			
Explicit	6	18	24
Implicit	2	0	2

Most Cited Cognitive

Positive

Negative

Effective Delivery

Ineffective Delivery

Supportive

Disorganization

Organization

Confusion

Results

Table 3.
Representation of Themes in Student Narratives

Theme	Effective	Ineffective	Total
Affective			
Environment			
Explicit	22	30	52
Implicit	1	1	2
Fairness			
Explicit	16	29	45
Implicit	0	0	0
Student Interest			
Explicit	14	8	22
Implicit	6	2	8
Professionalism			
Explicit	11	30	41
Implicit	2	0	2
Consideration			
Explicit	9	5	14
Implicit	0	1	1
Respectful			
Explicit	6	19	25
Implicit	3	0	3

Most Cited Affective

Positive

Negative

Positive Environment Negative Environment

Fairness

Unprofessionalism

Increase Student
Interest

Unfairness

Effective Delivery and Ineffective Delivery

“He utilized various types of media, including PowerPoint along with short video clips, the projector, and the board.”

“On the first day of class, this professor told students to write down the ways that they earned best (PowerPoint, videos, group work, handouts, etc.) and then based their lectures around what students wanted.”

“She used many visuals and drew diagrams on the board to help illustrate what was going on.”

“Notes were presented in slides that the professor went over so quickly it was hard to retain much information.”

“Death by PowerPoint was the method of teaching for 3 hours a night.”

“The instructor would simply go through the PowerPoint, and then proceed to go over problems in the book without adequately explaining the material...”

“He taught the class as a full lecture using the blackboard. His writing was often illegible and he did not keep his drawn diagrams organized on the board...This was frustrating because I could not control his poor handwriting or fast paced manner of speaking...”

Supportive and Unsupportive

“My professor also encouraged us to seek help outside of class and emphasized his office hours because he wanted us to take advantage of [them]. He was very approachable and reminded us to never hesitate to ask questions.”

“This particular professor was always understanding of every student’s needs and when a student needed help with a project or homework assignment, she always made herself available outside of class.”

“My professor sat down with me and went over page by page, sentence by sentence my first three assignments showing me my mistakes and providing suggestions for improving my writing...”

“...was non-approachable after class or during lab; they became a brick wall...”

“It was very frustrating because he would brush you off if you came to office hours and take up to a week to answer an email.”

“The professor did not have any office hours and did not respond to emails in a timely fashion.”

Organization and Disorganization

“At the beginning of the summer semester this teacher provided an outline of everything that class was to cover for the entire course. It was fairly detailed and organized by class period. The professor followed the schedule...”

“He was extremely organized and made sure the class knew exactly what we needed and when we needed things by.”

“There was no structure for the class. Most times, the professor admitted to not being prepared with lecture so they would just ‘wing it.’”

“He would lose students’ assignments and papers.”

“He would also forget important assignments and even forgot to print out the final.”

“There was never any structure to her lectures, and she did not thoroughly cover the information that we were supposed to be learning, as laid out in the syllabus.”

Clarity and Confusion

“Students understood the expectations for each class period, had a framework for what they were learning, and were further prepared for the final exam.”

“...She let us know exactly what she wanted us to do on projects and how to act during class in order to get good grades.”

“She also gave us conflicting instructions regarding important matters that would directly affect our final grades.”

“The professor gave us an outline that he ended up changing. There was a lot of confusion in the class on exactly what we needed for our portfolios. Everyone in the class was not on the same page with what we needed.”

“A professor once could not make up their mind on what they expected from students on an assignment. They changed the requirements almost daily, causing students to have to go back and rewrite their paper several times...”

Positive Environment and Negative Environment

“Class participation was encouraged and valued as part of the learning experience throughout the lectures. Students come to class not because of the psychological servitude to tests and attendance but because of the learning environment.”

“The class is an open and comfortable environment which makes learning fluid.”

“...this professor learned everyone’s name in the first five minutes and did not forget them. Not only was that impressive, but that showed me this professor cared enough to want to get to know every student in the class...”

“...the professor’s demeanor made many students uncomfortable in terms of answering questions posed in class. Often, students felt as if they were being interrogated rather than volunteering information they had learned.”

“...scare tactics and ‘weeder’ courses were part of the day-to-day experience...I believe that Dr. X saw his professorship as a gatekeeping role... by systematically exploiting any weakness [that] he saw in a student...Dr. X created an environment so full of fear, stress, and anxiety that it was not conducive [to learning]...”

“...professor frequently reprimanded students in front of the entire class when they responded with a wrong answer...[it] demotivated students to participate in class discussions.”

Fairness and Unfairness

“Exams were always fair as they always covered the material covered in class and never any material that was never discussed.”

“...[the professor] gave us full pages of feedback whenever he handed back our essays, which made it easier to know what his expectations would be for the next essay.”

“...she would give us very difficult and detailed tests, which did not accurately reflect the information learned in class time.”

“...he found out our text came with online homework problems and...he assigned every problem available. This was over 8,000 problems a week. Halfway through the semester when he realized no one was doing the homework because it was 8,000 problems a week for 5% of our grade...he changed homework to be worth 15% of our grade.”

“...professor that never gave the class back any assignments, whether it was a test or a paper; we never received positive or negative feedback...”

Increase Student Interest and Decrease Student Interest

“Her encouragement to study this career using different methods of research and interview allowed me to gain great insight to the field...Today, even more than two years later, I still want to be a guidance counselor.”

“Passion has a way of influencing others that witness and experience the passion in practice... one [of my] professors was able to make me fall in love with a subject matter that I did not care for previously...”

“...this professor made religion fascinating, and he gave us fun activities and discussion to do...This was the course that cemented my decision to double major in philosophy.”

“His lack of interest in the material caused myself and the class to have a lack of interest in the material as well.”

Professionalism and Unprofessionalism

“The professor suspected a student of plagiarism on a paper. He/she withheld giving a grade to the student and instead arranged a meeting to talk with them and express the suspicions. The professor was transparent with the student and explained that the case would be sent to an objective Academic Integrity Office who would determine the outcome. The professor explained that this was in no way a reflection on whether he/she liked or disliked the student, but rather they were obligated to follow the University policy.”

“Even though some students brought up points that went against the professor’s, the professor encouraged everyone to participate in order for a better class discussion.”

“...this professor habitually was late and ended class early, therefore teaching minimal information and setting the students up for much struggling in upper-level biology electives.”

“He sent out a threatening, unprofessional email addressed to the entire class, but in the email also singled out one student in particular for ‘criticizing his teaching ability’ and grading method.”

Effective
Delivery

Supportive

Organization

How can we be effective professors?

Fairness

Increase
Student
Interest

Positive
Environment

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