

We all want to be not “just” teachers, but we want to be effective teachers. What teacher behaviors and practices often led to effective instruction?
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Effective Instruction
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## Outline

### Basic Thoughts

I. When we see a teacher engaged in effective teaching, are we most often seeing **art** (the person is employing a unique, individualistic approach) or **science** (the person is following well-established educational principles)? In other words, do you believe

- Effective teachers are born, or
- Effective teachers are made.

II. Effective Instruction (also be called Best Practices) may be most simply defined as teacher behaviors and practices which enhance the learning of all students:

- Note – the definition is “behaviors” and “practices” **plural**; effective teachers do not believe one size (one approach) fits all.
- Note – the definition is **all** students; effective teachers do not believe their effective teaching skills are limited because of a student’s social class, academic ability, gender, or race.
- Note – the definition focuses on **student learning**; effectiveness isn’t defined by how hard the teacher tries or how friendly the teacher is, but rather on how well the students achieve.

III. The Three Key Elements of Effective Instruction might be grouped as follows:

- Effective Teacher Frame of Mind
- Effective Teacher Planning
- Effective Teacher Delivery

Let’s now look at each of these 3 grouped areas

**A. Effective Teacher FRAME OF MIND** – most effective teachers approach the teaching-learning task with a common set of internalized views of the nature of the work that lies ahead. This frame of mind is considered by most professional educators as the foundation of effective teaching.

Many individuals who seek to enter a teacher preparation program have already internalized a number of these views. These views include:

**Teacher Dispositions** – Effective teachers believe **all children can learn**, see learners as valued individuals, and respond to each individual child in different ways. While this emotion is grounded in “liking children”, it goes beyond it. Many people, including politicians and parents, see teacher expectations as the key to achievement – example, [Pygmalion in the Classroom](#))

**Constructivist View of Students** – Effective teachers believe that learners play an active role in learning by making personal interpretations of their experiences. Thus, effective teachers believe good teaching involves helping students develop their metacognitive powers . . . help students learn to think about their thinking . . . think about how they are learning . . .

**Active Teaching** - Effective teachers believe that as a teacher they must get directly involved in leading the class and personally overseeing learning activities. They have goals for their students that extend beyond completing the day-to-day lessons. Effective teachers believe their teaching matters.

**B. Effective Teacher PLANNING** – most effective teachers engage extensive thinking about their lessons and programs before they delivery them. The time spent in planning most often exceeds the time spent in actual delivery.

Elements of planning include:

**Specify Learning Intentions or Objectives**

- Cognitive Domain - what do I want the learners to know
- Psychomotor Domain – what skills do I expect the learners to develop
- Affective Domain – what appreciations and dispositions do I want learners to develop

**Match Lessons to Learner Characteristics**

- consider difficulty level of new material vis-à-vis the ability levels found in the classroom
- consider the students' prior knowledge
- consider the current interests of learner

**Perform Task Analysis –**

- **Scope** - break the program or lesson into smaller components . . . how much time do I initially allocate to each component, build in time to make adjustments (it may go faster or slower than you planned)
- **Sequence** - determine best starting point and order for instruction . . . what do I start with, how do I develop the idea, how do I close . . . how will I stimulate and maintain interest
- **Structure** - decide which approaches or combination of approaches to use . . . direct instruction, discussion, cooperative learning (aka group work), independent problem solving, a competition, a game
- **Space** - decide how to set up the room to maximize learning and manage students
- **Stuff** - determine support materials needed

**C. Effective Teacher DELIVERY** – teacher delivery is what most non-professionals call teaching . . . it is what the students see. There are many workable examples in the text and you will discover others as you take your methods courses.

Below is an example of methods considerations when using a lecture-practice approach:

**Anticipatory Set** - (get the learners focused) . . . demonstrate enthusiasm and excitement yourself about the material; create an advanced organizer for yourself and students; state objective/purpose or create a mystery to be solved

**Instruction** - (convey information to learners) . . .

- use marker expressions (write this down; pay close attention to this when you read about it later; this next idea is important)
- give demonstrations or use examples (connect the examples to the point you are making)
- check often for student understanding (question, monitor, re-teach, summarize)

**Guided Practice** – (learners work under your supervision) . . .

- monitor – recheck that individual learners know what they are doing before they are on their own
- pacing – move at a brisk pace with high level of success

**Independent Practice** – (learners work on their own) .

- **Seatwork** - done in class, turned in at the end of the period
- **Homework** - most effective for high school students, then middle school pupils, then elementary age youngsters.  
Avoid excessively long homework assignments . . . rule of thumb, 10 minutes multiplied by your grade level.

Should parents be encouraged to help?

## Other Instructional Thoughts:

**I. Effective Teacher QUESTIONING Techniques - Effective Teachers ask a variety of questions, some questions are lower level questions (students will know the answers with a minimum of reflection) and some are higher level questions (students will have to think more deeply to achieve answers). It is not an issue of “easy” or “hard” . . . it is the complexity of the answer sought. Bloom’s Taxonomy (see chapter on assessment) revised in 2001 by Anderson and Krathwohl suggests six categories of question types that help us think about our questioning techniques. Below is an example using the six categories of the Cognitive Process Dimension while conducting a discussion about the play “Hamlet.”**

- Remember (recognize details, recall specific facts) – “What is the name of Hamlet’s girlfriend?” “Who wrote Hamlet?” “What word, taken from this play, do we use today to describe a poor actor?”
- Understand (infer, classify, interpret, summarize, explain) – “What did Hamlet mean when he said “To Be or Not to Be?”
- Apply (implement, know how and when to apply information) – “We have learned about rhyming couplets. Find three examples of rhyming couplets used by Shakespeare and explain how he uses them.”
- Analyze (organize, compare/contrast) – “Find evidence in Act II to support the statement that Hamlet was a coward. In Act III, find evidence Hamlet was NOT a coward.”
- Evaluate (judge against criteria) – “If Hamlet’s girlfriend, Ophelia, had not died, how might the outcome have been affected?”
- Create (make a new way) – “Pretend I am Polonius and I have just given you the advice I gave to my son Laertes . . . tell me what you think and feel about this fatherly advice based on 1) the soundness of the advice itself, 2) my tone of voice, 3) on what you believe to be my motivation for giving you this advice, and/or 4) my actions involving you.”

**II. Effective Teacher REFLECTION Techniques** Effective Teachers are also observing . . . monitoring . . . reflecting on . . . their own practices as they teach. They often use journals, scripting or frequency counts to study their own instruction. For example, here are a few questions effective teachers might ask themselves about their own behaviors as they conduct class discussions:

Who is doing most of the talking . . . my students or myself? (look for the amount of teacher talk versus student talk; as the class discusses, are students responding to you and/or to each other)

How much **wait time** do I give to students as they think about the answer to a question

Whom am I calling on most? (look for **bias** – students you like, students you don't like, boys more than girls, white students more than Latino students)

What kinds of questions am I asking? (look for questions representing different complexity levels)

How am I responding to **learner initiated questions**? Do I ignore them? Nourish them? Incorporate them? Let them get me off task?

How am I responding to student answers? Potential responses to student answers include:

- Praise;
- Acceptance;
- Modification - Remediation;
- Modification - Probe Deeper;
- Criticism.

How am I doing in terms of clarity?

- Am I sending confusing messages . . . messages that are ambiguous, vague, imprecise
- Is my verbal style appropriate (tone and rate)
- Is my nonverbal style appropriate (eye contact, body posture, hand gestures)
- Am I open to providing further explanations and defining confusing terms

### **III. CLOSING THOUGHTS ON BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER.**

**The Beeghly College of Education believes that effective teaching can be achieved by its graduates if they follow the professional principles embodied in the teacher education program's conceptual framework . . . [Reflection in Action](#).**

**Don't expect to be an expert in all aspects of effective teaching right away . . . [it takes time](#).**

**Don't expect to become an expert just by putting in more years on the job . . . [time alone is not enough](#).**