Investigating Psychological Parameters of Effective Teaching in a Diverse Classroom Situation: The Case of the Higher Teachers' Training College Maroua, Cameroon

Raymond Ajongakoh Bella

Department of Sciences of Education, Higher Teachers' Training College Maroua, University of Maroua, Po Box 55, Cameroon

Abstract

It is unfortunate that the significance of teaching is not usually apparent in most classrooms because teachers are not quite clear of what their priorities in class are. It seems that most teachers lose sight of what constitutes the concept of teaching, what it involves and the characteristics of the educational context where teaching occur (Tchombe,2009). This study intends to carry out a systematic justification of what constitutes effective teaching in a diverse classroom situation typical of the Higher Teachers' Training College Maroua, of the Far North Region of Cameroon. Through this study, teaching will be conceptualized and the constituents of effective teaching behaviors will be identified. In today's classrooms most teachers do not share an identity with many of their students. One measure of effective teaching is the ability to work effectively with students of different ethnic backgrounds while integrating the strategies of equity and excellence, Larke, P. (1992)). These strategies of equity and excellence require that male and female students, exceptional students, and those from diverse cultural, social, racial, religious and ethnic groups as exemplified by the higher teachers' training college of the University of Maroua, all experience an equal opportunity in school. This means that all students must develop more positive attitudes towards cultural, racial, ethnic and religious groups. Effective teachers encourage positive attitudes towards multicultural groups by empowering all students, many of whom come from victimized groups (Banks, 1994), teaching them decision-making skills, and encouraging cross-cultural learning. Effective teachers utilize the beliefs and values of the students' culture rather than the dominant culture as the foundation of teaching. Effective teachers in culturally diverse classrooms have high expectations for their students. To assist culturally diverse students in reaching these high expectations, these teachers modify their instructional strategies, classroom organization and whatever it takes to ensure with multicultural students.

Keywords: Effective Teaching, Psychological parameters, Diverse Classroom, Multicultural, Conceptualizing.

1. Introduction

In addition to a strong academic content, many effective teachers of multicultural students provide them a basis for exploring and understanding the issues they face such as prejudice, oppression, and bigotry. Recognizing the uniqueness and also the similarities that exist between teachers and students is what connects and binds them together. It is central to effective teachers to develop and create an atmosphere of respect where they can share parts of themselves. In order for teachers to be effective with students who do not share their identity, it is important to determine the traits and skills of effective teachers. Teachers must be sensitive to all the students' needs and treat them equally. Effective teachers do not only believe that all students can achieve, but make special efforts in communicating this believe to their students in order to be successful and provide all students with equal opportunities to learn.

Teaching knowledge utilization or transfer of training is a major challenge for teachers and the teaching profession at large. Most of us can remember our exceptional or favourite teachers. We can remember their teaching techniques or what they did in class that made them special. We can remember characteristics such as friendliness, good management skills, knowledge of subject matter, teachers who were academically demanding yet whose classes were interesting and funny. Do we believe that teaching requires the same sophisticated levels of knowledge and complex choices made by other professionals like engineers, attorneys, physicians and psychologists?

2. Defining Teaching

The teaching profession cannot rely on guesswork. Teachers as professionals need to have scientific knowledge and a keen sense of applications are required for making well-informed professional decisions about teaching. In this light, this paper focuses on:
- What the concept of teaching is all about

- The way teaching is characterised
- The nature and some characteristics of teaching
- Types of teaching
- Theoretical perspectives of teaching
- Teaching as a polymorphous activity
- Psychological parameters of teaching
- Classification of teaching methods

The concept of teaching and its definition

Teaching has been variously defined. From a lay perspective, it is simply transferring information to learners. Farrant (1982:168) defines it as the process that facilitates learning. For Kneiler (1972), teaching is an intentional activity that aims to bring about learning. To Nsamenang (2004), teaching is the facilitation of Learning. Teaching is the process of imparting knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. According to Robertson (1987), teaching means action undertaken by one person with the intention of bringing about learning in another. Teaching is seen here as action that enables the student to perform the task of learning. The focus of teaching is not on learning but on the tasks and activities of the students.

Teaching can also be referred to as undertaking certain ethical tasks or activities, the intention of which is to induce learning. The ability to teach should be judged on the basis of student learning. Yet successful teaching cannot be reduced to a set of general rules, or a prescribed pattern of behavior. Teaching has to make distinction, translation, and observation into useful concepts, encouraging flamboyant initiative or ability of the student. Nsamenang (2004) posits the teaching – learning transaction entails the nature and process of transmitting or facilitating and acquiring knowledge and skills. This process determines how knowledge can be generated or created and controlled.

Teaching is the process of carrying out those activities that experience has shown to be effective in getting students to learn. Teaching is viewed here as that which results in learning. Tchombe (2009), states that teaching requires an understanding of learning processes. Adding that in the act of teaching the teacher is directly or indirectly managing learning, attention, skills, motivation, thinking skills, memory, learning skills, interactive skills etc. This is again in line with Vygotsky's theory of social interaction of the individual with the society where he highlighted the important role teacher's play in a child's learning and cognition. This means that teachers can provide intellectual scaffolding to help students learn and progress through the different stages of development by building on students' experiences and providing challenging tasks.

The process of teaching in the classroom includes: choosing subject matter, lesson planning, using different methods and strategies, classroom management and evaluating students. Teaching could be defined as the interaction of a student and a teacher over a subject. There may be one student or several in a class. The student can be young or old, bright or below average, normal or abnormal, highly motivated or turned off, rich or poor, male or female. The subject can be easy and straight- forward or difficult and complex. The teacher may not be necessarily present. Teaching takes place somewhere, in some specific context. Teaching involves a teacher, trying to teach someone something somewhere; there would be no teaching if there are no teachers. Therefore, teaching is the facilitation of learning. There must be a medium, a subject about which there can be structured and sustained dialogue. Summarily, teaching is a systematic presentation of facts, ideas, skills and techniques to students.

Teaching cannot be characterized independently of learning. It is important to know what learning is to understand teaching. Teaching is not an insignificant, an irrelevant, a paper shuffling kind of job. As a teacher, you will have a rare privilege and responsibility; you can affect and change the lives of children. How can one best prepare to be a good and committed teacher? What does it take to be an effective teacher? Are there implications for the type of courses you should pursue in your academic curriculum? It is the basic nature of the job to guide academic learning.

Teaching involves more than knowing the subject matter. This is so because subject matter is constantly changing following changes in the society. This could further be explained by the fact that each generation seem to present different developmental needs and creating different developmental task for the developing person. Tchombe (2009) points out that there is a shift of responsibility from 'teacheability' to 'learnability'.   Teaching is part of education in that it takes place mainly in formal education settings.

However, there is also so much teaching that goes on in the cultural context that is not structured like in formal education setting. While Vygotsky emphasized the importance of social interaction, including teaching,

in facilitating development, it is worth mentioning that children are also capable of actively participating in solving problems by themselves. Nsamenang (2004) points out that children learning largely through involvement in on-going cultural and economic activities without or with minimal instruction but the encouragement of parents and support of siblings, mentors and peers. This group can as well be regarded as teachers in the teaching and learning process. Regardless of the views on formal or informal education, it is vital to note, however, that teaching and learning do not occur only in schools. They virtually occur everywhere, in family homes public places as well as schools.

Education is the major concern of many agencies, institutions, groups and individuals. However, these various interested parties often do not share the same conception or beliefs about what education is or should be. This brings us to examine the following questions: what do we teach? How do we teach and how should we teach? The process is not simple because teachers frequently teach the way they themselves were taught. The teaching process involves different activities and skills. These include discussing, demonstrating, guiding, directing, planning lessons, managing the classroom, evaluating students, selecting subject matter and using specific methods (Tchombe, 2009). Teachers should therefore create an enabling environment that will ensure effective transition and linkage and help students through the use of worthwhile strategies to learn with efficacious skills.

A strategy refers to a plan and series of activities used to facilitate a particular kind of learning, the choice of which should be intentional. In view of this, teaching can be seen as activities done before, during and after interaction with learners in order to enable learning to take place (Tambo 2005). Better teaching will result when teachers begin to get a better grasp of how learning occurs. As teachers, we will become more effective when we consciously choose to employ teaching strategies and broaden our scope of strategies and become more skilled in using these strategies. Strategies provide useful conceptual framework for organizing instructions.

2.1 The way teaching is characterised
According to Hirst, (1978) teaching can be characterised in two ways:
- Firstly, in a wider context, that is an enterprise whereby the teacher functions at a general level, which does not only entail such teaching activities as sharpening of pencils, opening windows, etc.
- Secondly, teaching is an activity aimed at bringing about learning. Therefore, there are specific teaching activities which may not form part of the teaching enterprise. It is essentially important that the teaching enterprise should include specific teaching activities based on what is being taught and the objectives which determine the teaching abilities to be employed.

2.2 The nature and some characteristics of teaching
Teaching is a broad concept and can be described as:
- Goal directed activity
- Respecting the ability of the learner
- Raising questions about objectives, content and method
- Incorporating the principles of clarity, responsibility, and patience which are some of the constituents of effective teaching
- Focusing on patterns of learning, since patterns of teaching interact with pupils and learning
- Providing varieties in what is learnt

The teacher's main function therefore is to focus on patterns of learning and the ways in which patterns of teaching may interact with patterns of learning. Thus the organisation of the classroom activities is very important.

The teaching process involves implementing the chosen strategies and terminates with an evaluation of set goals. Teaching is an activity that involves the teacher, pupils, goals, instruction and evaluative procedures. Such an understanding of the teaching process leads to decisions relating to:
- Instructional strategies and the use of teaching aids
- Classroom management
- Pupil's participation
- Evaluation

The task of teaching includes getting pupils to attend, observe, associate, discriminate, identify, remember and reason. This is so because what they learn differs in character, concepts, beliefs, skill, attitudes and habit.

3.   Types of Teaching

There exist three types of teaching namely; collective group, individual teaching and indirect teaching. Direct teaching is common to *collective* and *individual* teaching.

3.1 Collective Teaching

This is an approach that has a long history since the 19th century. Large numbers of pupils, all sitting in rows, were taught by a single teacher in a large hall. This pattern, still exists in most of our Cameroonian schools, particularly with large class size phenomenon that is plaguing most school systems in the African continent. This strategy is good because it encourages a more active learning situation with learners/teacher and learner/learner interactions. This approach, if well managed with good teaching strategies provides opportunities for social interactions and cooperative learning.

3.2 Individual Teaching

This approach simply refers to when teachers allow pupils to work on their own and are supervised by teachers. This could be done through chalkboard work or individual seatwork. This approach lacks the basics of emotional and social development. Based on observations the knowledge to be transmitted, demands that we understand clearly the modus operandi.

3.3 Indirect Teaching

Indirect teaching occurs through group work, displays, centres of interest, projects and through the use of questioning strategy.

Throughout the 1980s, many studies were conducted and previous studies synthesized in an attempt to determine what differentiates effective or good teaching from ineffective or poor teaching. The primary goal of the effective teaching research team, as this body of research came to be called, was to delineate the characteristics of effective teachers. From teachers' perspectives, the definition of teaching includes: self-examination, guidance, sharing information as well as drudgery and disappointment.

Many have held the view that, teachers help students examine themselves; therefore, much of what the teacher does cannot be seen or heard. At the core of teaching is the sense of bringing to the learners what they need to know, to advance their self-examination. This means that, we must explore the outer reaches of ourselves in order to understand what is within. Teaching is guiding. This view is argued on the basis that, the teacher, besides being a partner is also a guide. Teaching is a high calling in education, as the Latin indicates, we "lead out" (educare) and, in so doing, we guide, facilitate, hold, and light candles as we journey forth, with and besides our students. Furthermore, teaching is sharing information. It is believed that, the pleasure of sharing knowledge puts teachers in a position to receive the affection and respect of students. Hence, teachers are role models. While some teachers feel so positive about what they do and offer inspiring comments about their profession, others feel that teaching has its negative side as well; heavy workloads, a lot of paperwork and low pay have discouraged some who teach.

John Goodlad, an educational researcher, says*, "Teaching functions in a context where the teacher's beliefs/expectations are those of a profession but where the realities tend to constrain, likening actual practice more to trade. By its very nature, a profession involves both considerable autonomy in decision making and knowledge and skills developed before entry and then honed in practice"* (Goodlad, 1984). This view was corroborated by another study carried out by Petrovich who says, the teaching profession stifles the creative energy of its teachers, often causing feelings of despair within the ranks. Teachers are not treated professionally, nor are they allowed to devote their time to the task of teaching. As a result of continued pressure by bureaucrats within the school system, school administrators and the general public, as well as increasing workloads and low pay, teachers are embittered and apathetic towards their careers. These personal definitions of teaching corroborate what effective teaching research clearly shows, teaching is a complex craft, one class never being quite the same as another (Sizer 1984). Classrooms are workplaces, complex and dynamic workplaces that require management by an executive of considerable talent (Berliner, 1989).

4.   Is teaching an art or science?

The debate as to whether teaching is an art or science has dragged on for long. Exploiting the characteristics of both the artist teacher and scientist teacher illuminates what constitutes characteristics of effective teaching, our main target as far as this work is concerned.

The characteristics of an effective teacher include:

- Improvisation of techniques and methods
- Motivation and Pacing
- Activities based on student behavior
- Intuitiveness
- Evaluation of skills
- Organization of materials
- Assertive discipline
- Classroom management
- Integration of all aspects of teaching
- Clarification of objectives
- Focus on objectives/Realization of objectives
- Encouragement of students to attain competency goals.

4.1 Effective Teaching

An effective teacher combines the best of human relations, intuition, sound judgment, knowledge of subject matter, and knowledge of how people learn, all in one simultaneous act. Effective teachers make the very difficult task of teaching appear so easy. They are able to teach all kinds of children so effectively that children, in fact, do learn. Teaching effectiveness is dependent upon the interaction between the instructor's subject-matter knowledge and teaching (pedagogical) ability. The following scenarios illustrate the nature of the complex interaction between these two critical variables:

1) An individual may possess a substantial amount of subject-matter knowledge, yet be unable to design and implement instructional methods to enhance student learning due to a lack of pedagogical ability.

2) Conversely, an individual may possess some generic pedagogical skills, yet have limited subject-matter knowledge and again be predisposed to ineffective teaching.

These scenarios indicate that it is impossible to be an effective teacher without being competent in both subject-matter knowledge and pedagogical ability. Consequently, subject-matter knowledge remains a necessary prerequisite for effective teaching, and not the sole determinant. Most research literature on "teacher effectiveness" (Brophy and Good, 1986, Walls, 1994, Rosenshine & Furst, 1973 emphasize on "process-product" research. In other words, when a teacher does this (process), it results in this sort of student achievement (product). When a teacher causes this to happen (process), it results in student learning (product).

Rosenshine and Furst (1973) concluded that the five most important teacher-effectiveness variables are:

- Clarity
- Variability
- Enthusiasm
- Task oriented and/or Businesslike behaviors, and
- Student opportunity to learn criterion material.

Brophy & Good (1986) summarized the strong elements under different headings. They also found increased support for such process variables as "time on task". Walls, (1999) summarized the most prevalent recommendations from the teaching-effectiveness research literature. They are the strongest links between what teachers can do and the learning that students achieve. The four components represent a consolidated way of thinking about the "process" of teaching as it influences "product" (student learning). They could be considered as catalysts for learning. Student learning is better, faster, and/or more long-lasting when teachers are able to play the Four Aces. The four components are:

Outcomes

The first component of Effective Teaching concerns the utilization of an outcomes-based instructional orientation. Outcomes enable students to focus their attention on clear learning goals. These outcomes inform students of where they are going and how they will get there. Outcomes also provide the teacher with a framework for designing and delivering the course content. Furthermore, outcomes enable teachers to assess student learning as a measure of their own instructional effectiveness. More effective teachers use designated outcomes as a basis for the establishment of curricular alignment. Curricular alignment is the degree to which the employed instructional methods and assessment techniques enable the student to acquire and/or demonstrate the desired outcomes.

Clarity

This involves the clarity of instruction. More effective teachers typically provide students with highly explicit

directions and explanations concerning the course organization and content. When delivering instruction, nothing should be left to chance. If students are not meeting your expectations your methods of delivery may lack the required degree of clarity. When a teacher tells, shows, and makes the message available from alternate perspectives to alternate senses, that teacher is engaged in effective instructional practice.

Furthermore, the course should be structured in a way that affords students the opportunity to make connections between the new material that is being presented and the concepts that they have already learned. This instructional strategy is referred to as curricular scaffolding. When a teacher helps students connect new information with what they already know, the teacher is assisting these students in accurate organization of information.

Engagement

This principle suggests that students learn by doing. The formal lecture represents an archaic, retrogressive, and anachronistic model defined by instructor as deliverer and student as receiver. This model exemplifies one-way communication and perpetuates an incomplete model of education. More effective teachers utilize instructional strategies that engage students repeatedly throughout the entire lesson. This engagement should begin early in the lesson and continue throughout the lesson introduction, body and closure. As a general rule, a teacher who aspires to be effective should limit a lecture to no more than thirty minutes before employing a learning activity that actively engages all students (Wall & Cather, 1987). These engagement activities are intended to facilitate the development of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that previously identified lesson outcomes.

Enthusiasm

Teaching is enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is contagious, "if you hate to teach it, your students will hate to learn it." Conversely, if you love to teach it, your students may very well love to learn it. More effective teachers display a high level of enthusiasm that reflects their professional competence and confidence. Teachers can begin to establish a positive learning environment by showing their passion for the subject matter, using student names, reinforcing students' participation during class, and being active in moving among the students. The most critical component for fostering classroom enthusiasm, however, is student success. Accordingly, it is the teacher's responsibility to establish a classroom environment that allows for a high degree of student achievement. Ultimately, high levels of student achievement serve as a powerful motivator for both student and teacher. In order to optimize student learning, teachers should plan to integrate the four components of effective teaching throughout each lesson. These components need to be fully implemented in all the sections that constitute an effective lesson. The different sections of a lesson are:

- Instant Activity
- Lesson Objectives
- Advance Organizer
- Lesson Body
- Lesson Closure

An instant activity is an educational intervention that is used to engage students immediately upon entering the classroom. To achieve success with an instant activity, the tasks should be clear, simple, and based on students' prior knowledge and/or skills. An instant activity could serve as a review of previous course material, a preview of upcoming information, and a management technique for organizing the class.

After the completion of instant activities, the teacher should present daily objectives (outcomes) in terms of student performance. These outcomes inform students of what they should know or be able to do at the completion of the lesson. Teachers can subsequently assess student achievement of the stated objectives as an indicator of student learning and their own instructional effectiveness. For daily objectives to be utilized effectively, they should be clear, measurable, and directly related to the desired course competencies. An effective advance organizer clarifies the scope and sequence of a lesson for the teacher and student by providing an overview of the lesson content. Such an organizer assists students in structuring their thinking, class notes, and out-of-class study. An advance organizer can be a topical outline, diagram or concept map.

As far as the lesson body is concerned, the teacher provides information to the students and assists in their construction of functional knowledge structures. During the lesson body, information should be presented enthusiastically and clearly. Furthermore, the lesson should build upon students' prior knowledge and activities engage the students repeated. The material presented and assigned activities should serve as a means for students to achieve the daily lesson objectives. To accomplish this, teachers should design learning activities and distribute them throughout the lesson body.

A closure is a vital part of an effective lesson and can serve as the time to reiterate the lesson objectives, clarify the organization of the lesson, summarize the lesson body, check for student understanding, and preview

the upcoming lesson. Many teachers usually sacrifice this portion of the lesson due to time constraints. A closure maximizes student engagement time through the use of a variety of reflective activities, thereby bringing a lesson full circle. A teacher's primary responsibility is to facilitate learning. The four components (Aces) of Effective Teaching (outcomes, clarity, engagement, and enthusiasm) assist in bringing order out of potential chaos. If systematically implemented, the components can enhance student learning and be used as a vehicle for continual self-examination to improve one's instructional effectiveness.

5. Teaching in a Diverse Classroom

Having a diverse group of students simply means recognizing that all the people are unique in their own way. Their differences could consist of their reading level, athletic ability, cultural background, personality, religious beliefs, and the list goes on. In the Higher Teachers' Training College Maroua, there is and has always been diversity in the classroom as far as culture, ethnicity, language, religion and even socioeconomic background of the students is concerned. This diversity has rendered many teachers ineffective. In order to remedy the situation, teachers should value diversity and they need to model this attitude to their students. When people appreciate and value diversity, they recognize and respect the fact that people are different and this is generally a good thing. For example, when attempting to solve a problem, it is better to assemble a diverse team with many skills and many different ways of approaching the problem than it is to assemble a team that has all their strength concentrated in one area.

5.1 What can teachers do to encourage, value, and promote diversity?

Teachers must provide students with an environment that is conducive to learning. If for any reason a student feels uncomfortable, unsafe, or not respected, then their chances of success in that class drastically decrease. Teachers already have a number of roles in the classroom; yet, valuing diversity is one of the most important he/she must fulfill. Teachers can do a few things to create an environment where each student feels valued and respected. These include:

- Take time to learn about your students' background, interests, and learning style.
- Allow time for the students to learn about each other and again an appreciation for the diversity they bring to the classroom. They need to be reminded how boring life would be if we were all alike and there were no differences among us to make each person unique.
- Remind them that everyone has strengths and weaknesses, and that; they should take advantage of the strengths of team members in order to produce the best possible result.
- Bring in different people to the class as resources that students might be able to connect with.
- Never tolerate bullying, teasing, and any other type of behaviour that puts down individual or group personality in the classroom. Implements a "zero tolerance" for anything that is disrespectful, hurtful, or intolerant of diversity.

Knowing who your students are, as a group and as individuals, is an important part of effective teaching. In recent years, the variety of students is far greater and their needs are very different than in the past. To facilitate the learning process of students with a variety of backgrounds and needs, the following points are important:

- Treat all students as individuals with unique strengths, weaknesses, and needs rather than as generalized representatives of particular racial, ethnic or cultural groups.
- Employ a variety of teaching styles to respond to the needs of diverse learners.
- Create an open classroom that values the experiences and perspectives of all students.

In many countries the world over, diversity in both higher and college education today is common place. Such diversity cuts across several aspects. For instance, older students now make up more than half of the student population in higher education. Nationally, women account for about 53% of the total student population; the presence of minority groups among students is the order of the day. Furthermore, students with learning or physical disabilities are being identified more frequently, reason why the concept of inclusive education is making headline news nowadays.

5.2 Proposed learning styles in a diverse classroom

There are as many theories on learning styles as there are writers on the subject. However, in the most basic form, there are three main learning styles (Eddy, 1999). These are:

Auditory learners prefer to receive ideas and information by hearing them. These students may struggle with reading and writing, but excel at memorizing spoken words. They often benefit from discussion-based

classes and the opportunity to give oral presentations.

Visual learners prefer to receive information by seeing it. They are less likely to speak in class than their auditory peers, and generally use few words when they venture to speak. Outlines, graphs, maps and pictures are useful and helpful to them.

Kinesthetic (Tactile learners) prefer to learn by touching and moving. They learn best when allowed to explore and experience their environment. They are labeled 'hyperactive' because they move around a great deal. Understanding learning styles can help teachers create more inclusive classrooms where everyone has a chance to succeed. Students from different cultures, backgrounds and educational environments learn in distinctly different ways. Some students will have unique challenges that make learning in a traditional classroom difficult. They include visual or hearing impairments, Attention Deficit Disorder, Mobility Challenges, Chronic illness, and learning disabilities. There are many possible accommodations that can help to create a productive learning environment for these students.

5.3 Tips on teaching in a diverse classroom
Students are diverse in their cultures and ethnicity, their experiences, their learning styles and other dimensions. All of these dimensions shape who they are and how they learn. Effective teachers understand this and use a variety of teaching methods to promote effective learning. Below are some tips on how to teach effectively in a diverse learning environment:

- Having a "color-blind" classroom is neither possible nor a good idea. Such a classroom privileges the teacher's perspective and fails to recognize the experiences and needs of the learners.
- Appreciating the individuality of each student is important. While generalizations sensitize us to important differences between groups, each individual student has unique values, perspectives, experiences and needs.
- Articulate early in the course that you are committed to meeting the needs of all students and that you are open to conversations about how to help them learn.
- As teachers, it is important that we recognize our own learning styles and cultural assumptions, because these styles and assumptions influence how we teach and what we expect from our students. Being aware of them allows us to develop a more inclusive teaching style.
- As you plan your course, and each class, prepare multiple examples to illustrate your points. Try to have these examples reflect different cultures, experiences, sexual orientations, gender, to include all students in learning.
- Help students move between abstract, theoretical knowledge and concrete, specific experiences, to expand everyone's learning.
- Be versatile in the use of teaching methods to meet the variety of learning needs.

6. A Multicultural Classroom
A multicultural classroom blends students from various cultures to form a diverse learning environment. Culture is defined by a myriad of things, not just a student's origin country. Age, sex and socioeconomic factors also play a part. Like in the higher teachers' training college Maroua, these combined cultures in a classroom take creativity to manage, but the payoff is worth the effort because each student learns acceptance and the importance of diversity. A teacher in such a classroom should do the following things:

- *Language***:** Language is a large part of a student's culture. It is a student's tool for communicating and interacting with the world at large. The sound and structure of her language gives definition to a student's personality. Preserving these languages in the classroom gives students from various backgrounds the foundation to respect people that speak differently from them and can inspire a student to learn a different language. In the higher teachers' training college of Maroua, there are students of French expression, English and even Arabic as with the case of Chadians. As such, the teacher needs particular expertise to teach effectively.
- *Race and Ethnicity:* Race and ethnic background shape a student's experience of the world. The presence of multiple ethnic backgrounds in the classroom in the higher teachers' training college of Maroua gives the teacher the opportunity to teach students respect for diversity.
- *Socioeconomic level***:** A student's socioeconomic standing has a profound effect on how he/she approaches problem solving and work. A combined class with students from all socioeconomic levels like the case of Maroua, requires a student to learn about others from different economic backgrounds.

To promote tolerance, a teacher can point out what the students have in common, instead of what is different.

- *Birthplace and living situation:* Where a student lives exposes him/her to a specific culture. This culture is reflected in the student's family life, celebrations, religion and art. In our case, we have both Muslims and Christians and this poses a problem as far as effective teaching is concerned. Nonetheless, the concept of cultural relativism if well implemented galvanizes effective teaching.

7. Conclusion

There can be no one best way to teach as good teaching cannot be reduced to a set of rules and regulations. Good teaching would depend on the objectives of the lesson, the characteristics of the students, the teaching strategies used, teacher's skill, the quality of students' prior learning, their studying strategy and many other factors. In a bid to adapt teaching for different learners, teachers must determine how differences in aptitude influence what is taught. The most difficult and important job for teachers is to adapt teaching strategies that take into account student differences, such as, variations in cultural perception and language, individual preferences for learning, and varying socio-economic background.

It is fervently suggested that teachers adapt their teaching to differences by manipulating the organizational structure of the classroom such as varying the materials, creating learning centres, varying reward structures and keeping groupings flexible and short term. They should also vary the level of questioning, encourage students to retry if they are incorrect and not group them on the basis of ability without jeopardizing the needs or self-esteem of individual students.

Although most of our classes are always over crowded, making it difficult for teachers to determine the different learning styles of each learner, teachers should try to employ teaching strategies that will be appropriate for the three types of learning styles: visual, auditory and kinesthetic.

The controversy as to whether teaching is a science or an art continues to be animated in professional circles and other forums. In spite of this argument, it is generally agreed that teaching is not a haphazard activity. Teachers are expected to follow certain principles and procedures in working with students in school settings. Teaching cannot be characterized independently of learning. A teacher is judged by the products of his or her own hands, for a successful teacher makes a successful student. To join the teaching core, therefore, be ready to sacrifice yourself, be ready to learn each day, for a teacher is a student all his life. He is current day by day.

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