

Toward a More Reflective Teaching Practice: Revisiting Excellence in Teaching

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Excellence in teaching has always been a demanding and absorbing concern in institutions of higher learning. Earlier studies, which are numerous, have often dealt with the measurement of teacher qualities but have largely failed to explain the phenomenon of excellence in practice. This study focused on the outstanding professional teachers' candid revelations of their subjective experiences of becoming and being excellent in their craft. Findings of the study indicated that love is the touchstone of excellence in teaching: that is, loving the students, loving knowledge and loving the teaching process.

Key Words: excellence in teaching, teacher of excellence, reflections in practice yardstick of excellence

Though there is a wealth of articles written by education scholars whose thoughts are in the process of converging to subsume the nature of the excellence in teaching, there has been very little empirical research done on the phenomenon. However, many studies pertain to teacher excellence, because its specific attributes seem to submit easier to measurement.

While not directly and categorically accounted for in different studies in education, the terms *teacher of excellence* and *excellence in teaching* are often found in the more conventional denotations of "effective teaching" and "efficacious teachers" (Anderson, 1990; McNeil & Weils, 1990; Ornstein, 1995; Lefrancois, 1997; Santrock, 2001).

Excellence has an elusive quality, yet it is recognizable and its indicators are simply not quantifiable as most educators probably recognize (Young, 1988). Rinne (1997), for his part, explains that "excellence" refers to the teaching act itself, inferred from the behavior of a teacher while

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teaching a class. A potential of every college teacher, excellence is an ongoing goal that must be pursued daily in everything and in every moment (Bogue & Saunders, 1992; Davenport & Hayward, 2004; Palerm-Ferri, 2004). It is usually defined on the basis of judgment made by students, peers and faculty members themselves about performance (Kreber, 2002).

The difficulty in understanding the idea of 'excellence in teaching' has been a consuming task of education scholars, given that even the best institutions have no definition of what it is (McLean, 2001; Gibbs, 1995). As a result, there is still a lack of understanding about the fundamental nature of excellence in teaching (Issler, 1983).

In discussing the different ways by which higher education instructors can engage in teaching Kreber (2002) suggests that scholars of teaching differ from excellent teachers and expert teachers in that scholars of teaching share their knowledge and advance the knowledge of teaching and learning in the way they can be peer-reviewed.

A good teacher is not afraid to reveal pertinent information to students about himself or herself to show them that he or she is human like them.(Straw, 2003), but partnering with students requires that the teacher is not controlling or manipulating (Koegel, 2002), and inspires learning by being a learner (Licklider, 2004). Geringer (2003)

posits that teachers who are enthusiastic about their subjects, and who are steeped in their disciplines and professional training as teachers and leaders make students interested in learning. While this is true, however, the teachers' ability to relate effectively with students and their warmth and caring for the students are personal qualities which have defied accurate measurement (Henson & Eller, 1999). A teacher is often referred to as an artist and a scientist (Eisner, 2000; Sprinthall, Sprinthall & Oja, 1998; Burden & Byrd, 1994), through wisely chosen scientific methods for improved teaching practices.

Hare (2000) avers that the philosophical reflections of teachers depend on the conception of their tasks which can be a basis of a philosophy of teaching, hence teaching excellence is passionate and highly personal (Kraft, 2000).

Because reality is defined in terms of the individual's private experience, it is also private (Lefrancois, 1997). Flowerday and Schraw (2000) found in their phenomenological study that practicing teachers possess a variety of beliefs about classroom activities and spend a great deal of time thinking about the implementation and consequences of choices.

The Present Study

This research was undertaken firstly, to portray the outstanding professional teachers' reflections and articulations on their subjective experience of becoming teachers of excellence. Secondly, the researcher was also interested in isolating data that would serve as basis for evolving a comprehensive definition of excellence in teaching.

The study focused on reflections on practice and what the participant teachers considered as yardsticks of excellence. An integrated meaning of the participants' responses resulted in the formulation of the essence of excellence in teaching.

Method

Methodological Foundation of the Study

This study utilized the psychological phenomenology, a non-philosophical approach to describing a phenomenon (Husserl, 1989), based on individual experiences. The central tenets of this thinking are: to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it (Moustakas,

1994). From the individual descriptions, general or universal meanings are derived, in other words, the essence of structures of experience (Moustakas, 1994; Meriam, 1998). The result of this research was to define excellence in teaching which required description with words and imagery, hence the use of the qualitative method of phenomenology.

Dufrenne (1973, p.335) maintained that "every complete perception involves the grasping of meaning, and that perception engages one in action or reflection, and its integration in the course of one's life." An existentialist, Sartre (in Sadovnik, Cookson & Semel, 1994) believed that existence precedes essence, that is, people must create themselves and thus create their own meaning. This is done through the choices people make in their lives.

Elton's (1998) individual level of classifier's dimension of teaching excellence aided in the attempt to describe the phenomenon.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Criterion sampling or purposeful sampling was utilized. Thirteen out of the 40 potential participants who were declared outstanding teachers by the METROBANK Foundation Incorporated, a self-help stakeholder of quality education in the country, agreed to take part in the study. There were ten female and three male participants. Their age ranged from early 50's to early 70's, were all holders of a doctorate degree and all except one had an academic rank of Full Professor. Of the 13 participants, five of the females had an Education degree, one was a Doctor of Medicine, one a professional nurse, one a literature major, one a zoologist and another a chemist. For the males there was a zoologist, a sociologist, and an economist. At the time of writing, nine of the 13 were still in academe, while four had retired.

Data Generation

An in-depth interview of the 13 outstanding teacher awardees, describing their experience of the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998; Streubert & Carpenter, 1999) was the main research tool in this study. The interviews were conducted between November 2003 to April 2004. The participants were contacted through telephone to find out if they were willing to participate in the study. Informed consent to record was obtained before the actual interview commenced. The in-depth interviews varied from one hour to one and a half hours. The participants were interviewed in succession, were made to fill up a personal profile sheet and provided with the

following interview questions:

Table 1. *Categories of questions in the semi-structured Interview Guide*

<p><i>1. Reflection on Practice</i></p> <p>What is your philosophy of teaching?</p> <p>How do you describe your manner of relating with your students?</p> <p>What is difficult/easy about being a teacher of excellence?</p>
<p><i>2. Teacher's Yardstick of Excellence</i></p> <p>What does excellence in teaching mean to you?</p> <p>What is your standard of excellence in teaching?</p> <p>What essential qualities does a teacher of excellence have?</p> <p>Describe one person who exemplifies "excellence in teaching".</p>

Treatment of Data

Transcriptions of tape recorded interviews were examined using the methodological steps of Colaizzi (in Creswell, 1998), to understand the subjective feeling of the participants. Initial codes were provided in the marginal notes. Significant statements were extracted from each description, phrases and sentences that directly pertain to excellence in teaching, the investigated phenomenon.

Then, meanings were formulated from each of the significant statements. Clusters of themes were then organized from the aggregate formulated meanings. This allowed for the emergence of themes common to all of the subjects' descriptions of the phenomenon.. The clusters of meaning were constantly checked against the original descriptions to validate them and note discrepancies between clusters. An exhaustive description of the phenomenon of excellence in teaching results from the integration of the above results, which represents an unequivocal statement of the essential structure of the phenomenon of excellence in teaching. A final validating step was achieved by returning to the subjects and asking if the descriptions formulated validated the original experience.

The method of analyzing the significant statements of the teachers in regard to the teachers of excellence was modeled after Beijaard's (2000) three categories of teacher's professional identity that were slightly modified. The teacher as a subject matter expert became *Subject Matter Competence*, because not all subject matter experts are excellent teachers; the teacher as a pedagogical expert became *Andragogical Behavior*, because college teachers deal with adult learners;

and the teacher as a didactical expert became *Didactic Processes* because excellent teachers tend to use teaching processes far beyond those prescribed. However, despite these changes in the nomenclature of categories this researcher remained true to the said author's inclusive characteristics of the three concepts. The option was motivated by the researcher's conformity with Beijaard' idea that these are common concepts that indicate what a teacher should know and be able to do. The results of the analysis of the significant statements relative to *teachers of excellence* and the outcome of the data analysis for *excellence in teaching* using Colaizzi's method formed the vital sources from which an encompassing and effusive definition of excellence in teaching was drawn.

Results

Reflections on Practice

Philosophy of Teaching

The 13 teachers' responses to questions relative to their philosophy of teaching led to the categorization of their philosophy of teaching into the following themes: (a) *involvement with the learner*. (b) *beliefs held*; c) *methods* and (d) *desired outcomes*

Involvement with learners. The female teachers' concern with effecting special and intense engagement in the actions of teaching-learning between teacher and students are typified by the following comments:

"Learning is something that is coming from within and the teacher is only a facilitator."

"Teaching is one that is stimulating and encouraging learning."

In contrast to that of the female teachers, the male teachers' philosophies of teaching were more affectionate. The male teachers indicated an emphasis on the interpersonal nature of teaching and of selfless giving of oneself in the teaching and learning situation, as expressed in the following comments:

"The more you give students, the more it will come back."

"It's love, when you give love, it's reciprocated."

"A teacher who is very giving inspires the same amount of giving."

Beliefs held. A belief is an aspect of the teacher's philosophy of teaching. A male teacher believed that teaching

is a two-way system. On the other hand, the female teachers conveyed optimism as essential to helping students. The following statements embodied these beliefs :

“Every student has a potential.”

“They are like sleeping children that have to be awoken”

“They have the right to knowledge.”

Methods. The teachers used instructional processes to meet their instructional objectives. One teacher-scientist, a sociologist and a statistician gave their philosophy of teaching:

“Tie reality with the abstract part of science.”

“Teaching is to draw out.”

“It’s a constructivist orientation to teaching, with a learner centered methodology.”

Desired outcomes. The teachers set the intended consequences of the teaching-learning process which were embodied in the following teacher’s beliefs about teaching:

“ Teach to teach mind, touch heart and transform lives.’

“Understand themselves more than they understand the subject matter.”

“Develop his ability to seek learning beyond the minimum that is discussed in the classroom.”

“Developing the skills of self-appreciation and awareness of the world.”

Relating with students

The combined significant statements of the female and male teachers’ manner of relating with students showed that its general goal was to facilitate learning through being accessible, and sometimes, having fun with them imply their mature affection for the students, and how they value them.

“I’m available to them after class.”

“I’m more formal in the classroom. But my relationship is not as formal. I believe that teaching should be fun. So I find that the students laugh and have a good time in my class”

The statements of both the female and male teachers were noted to have very fine distinctions. For example, the female teachers being friendly and treating students with respect harmonized with the male teachers treating students as equals and not looking down on them. The female teachers consistently identified students as their children, while the male teachers characterized their relating with students as being father to them. Both sexes were for making students toe

the line as expressed by the female teachers being firm and expecting them to be disciplined which found correspondence with the male teachers’ not encouraging familiarity with students.

Yardstick of Excellence in Teaching

All the teachers indicated a rigid standard relative to the qualities and actions of a teacher in a teaching-learning situation to describe excellence in teaching. For them it is not only the transfer of knowledge but in the lasting influence on the student’s learning life as well, and in drawing out the best in them. It is also demonstrated in the thorough preparedness of the teacher and in a kind of respectful interaction between the students and the teacher. A female teacher said in her introspection:

“Well, it’s the driving force in my life. I think if I do less than my own sense of excellence, I would know that I am cutting corners. I’m being mediocre. But that’s not in my nature to just do things, to just get by. I don’t believe in that. I believe in making my life harder, so that the results are more gratifying. If it did not have any pleasure for me, why would I do it? And my pleasures are not very easy.”

The teachers believed that excellence in teaching is gauged by how a teacher sets an example and is able to excite the students for learning. It is indicated by the impact of the physical presence of the teacher on the way students learn and fulfill their potential. A successful teaching-learning process involves the expertise of a teacher but more so in a generous giving of oneself to students. As detailed by a teacher:

“Standard of excellence in teaching is . . . when I see my students happily absorbed in learning. And I never liked a teacher who is inert. I’m a mobile person. I am very expressive. I expect them to be the same. What really perturbs me in a class and which tells me I’m failing is when I use the eye contact. They have to be with me.”

Qualities of the Teacher of Excellence

Subject Matter Competence. The teachers regarded scholarship and being looked up to as one of the indicators of subject matter competence. A female statistics teacher articulated on how she felt about this collegial faith in her worth as a subject matter expert:

“Well, you have to compete with yourself. You are not satisfied with what you

are, you have to grow. You're not competing anymore with other people. Sometimes I get to a point where I say, 'maybe I have reached the stature as they have. But, perhaps, where I am now is the best place to be.'

The teachers considered the ability to create knowledge, the ability to inquire, and preparedness as essential qualities. A female literature teacher said:

"Teacher of excellence means. . . the teacher has done all her preparation for the classroom process. The teacher is also prepared for the processes that may go beyond the classroom"

Another female teacher opined:

" A teacher of excellence is somebody who is not satisfied with what he/she has.. My concept of a good teacher is that he/she never ceases to grow, to develop himself or herself. So by continuously growing, students will grow with him or her."

Andragogical Behavior. The female teachers associated excellence with values the practitioners should possess and live by in their daily tour of duty, through adhering to the ethics of conduct, passion for excellence, and generosity in sharing knowledge with students. Teachers of excellence likewise convey in their classroom behavior that they are on the side of the students and are skillful in using interpersonal strategies for a smooth relation with students.

The participants constantly cited humor as a vehicle for connecting with students inside the classroom. A teacher of Zoology talked of her natural flair for causing laughter to win students' attention:

"Many of my students remarked that the reason why they like me is I have a sense of humor. And what I can say is, I don't really go out of my way to make jokes . . . strategies like that. Suddenly before you know it you have said something that makes them laugh without you intending to crack a joke"

A male teacher used humor to bring students to a point where they could connect with him mind to mind before he would start a lesson. In preparation for the actual lesson, he would create a psychological moment of readiness for them through humor. He explained:

I crack jokes . . . the Filipino way. I make fun of myself and also make fun of my students, although that's not politically correct. But they know I'm just kidding. It's probably a gift because nobody complains that "I'm the

butt of the joke." It's not really making fun of them but making fun of the situation. . . of course they laugh."

Didactic Processes. The participants maintained that facilitation of learning should result in change as indicated by the students being happily absorbed in learning. An excellent teacher's teaching methodology would invariably leave the students with a sense of awe and wonder. A male participant made an interesting observation.

"I think one of the things I noticed about excellent teachers is the sense of effortlessness. A professional is able to make difficult things look effortless. So I think an excellent teacher, a professional teacher is one who would talk about difficult concepts, philosophical or theological concept and empower the students when it was not that difficult. Learning becomes a painless effort."

An analysis of the significant statements of the female and male respondents in regard to their meaning of teachers of excellence show that for Subject Matter Competence (SMC) subject matter expertise, preparedness and a depth in one's teaching performance are indispensable to being excellent. For the Andragogical Behavior (AB), the requisites are sensitiveness to students' individual needs, passion for knowledge and courage in the face of obstacles, having a fulfilled personal life, constant self-reflection and a profound influence on the lives of students. In regard to Didactic Processes (DP), the essential characteristics are in the teacher's clear goals, excellent communication skills, flexibility, high standards in one's own performance, being an exemplar and being in the forefront of knowledge.

Although there were slight conflicts in some statements, common meanings were found on subject matter mastery, on being caring of students, on being cognizant of student differences and the lasting effect on the development of the learner, ideas constantly mentioned by both the female and male participants.

Highlighting Excellence in Teaching

Both male and female teachers have equated excellence in teaching to the total professional development of the teacher. They agreed that by observing teachers in their actual teaching transactions excellence in teaching could be recognized and identified. One of the male teachers made a comprehensive, simultaneous description of the dimensions of excellence:

"Excellence is not a personal thing, it's an interactive

Table 2. *Common Themes from Significant Statement : Teacher of Excellence*

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1. Subject Matter Competence (SMC)
 - a. The teacher possesses a high level of subject matter competence and expertise through formal studies and relevant professional experiences.
 - b. Being prepared is indicated by the teacher's effortless presentation of the lesson.
 - c. Depth is noticeable in the work of a person of excellence, a kind of intensity and joy in teaching.
 2. Andragogical Behavior (AB)
 - a. The teacher is being so sensitive to the needs of the students indicates a sense of responsibility and caring attitude for the students.
 - b. Teacher has passion for knowledge and courage in the face of obstacles.
 - c. The teacher has a fulfilled personal life and maintains deep friendship.
 - d. Teacher constantly self-reflect on the extent of her own capabilities and limitations
 - e. Teacher's attention to students' individual differences suggests empathy and respect for them.
 - f. Teacher's actions and personality have profound influence on the lives of the students.
 3. Didactic Processes (DP)
 - a. Teacher sets clear goals by specifying the process students have to follow to accomplish them.
 - b. Effective communication, sense of humor and enthusiasm help in making lesson delivery enjoyable for the students.
 - c. Teacher's flexibility and innovation in the use of teaching methodology and materials are responses to the needs of the teaching situation.
 - d. Facilitation of learning is evident in the learners being engrossed in the learning process.
 - e. Teacher exacts very high standard for their own performance and are hardworking as indicated by their excellent work habits and attitudes.
 - f. Teacher shows appropriate modeling and precision in the execution of the teaching task.
 - g. The teacher's role as a creator of knowledge by being actively involved in research is indicated by his ability to inquire.
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Table 3. *Comprehensive Description of Excellence in Teaching*

Excellence in teaching as conceived by the outstanding teachers is not merely scholarship in an area of knowledge. There is that voluntary reaching out of the teacher in a loving act of giving oneself to the students, sharing generously his passion for knowledge and really leaving a profound and lasting influence on the lives of the students. The teacher's sensitiveness to the individual needs of students is a kind of attentiveness to them as persons of worth. The learner's absorption in learning leading them to become learners for life occurs mainly as the effect of the teacher's modeling in a caring, and inspiring execution of the teaching tasks.

thing. Sometimes it can be a political thing and you have to know that sometimes you will not be appreciated by people in power who define excellence in another way. Excellence is simply the ability to know, to love knowing and to share that knowledge and it is returned to you, reciprocated to you by the impact on students' lives... it is like an ideal that we all strive for."

Three themes clusters emerged from the teachers' descriptions of excellence: scholarship, relating behavior and loyalty to the profession from where the formulated aggregate

meanings of excellence in teaching were drawn. The teacher exhibits a high degree of scholarship, shown in his being very expressive, enthusiastic, well prepared, is systematic, inspiring and creative. Second, excellence in teaching is inferred in the kind of relating behavior the teacher has with students, like being caring, patient, accessible, motivating, being an exemplar, and flexible. Third, excellence in teaching is apparent in the teacher's resolute loyalty to the profession as shown in being courageous, committed, ethical and dedicated.

The male teachers' use of the terms "depth in the work of

the teacher” and “skilled ways in doing inferences” is related to the scholarship aspect of teachers. Their zest for the practice of the profession are described in terms of being creative, enthusiastic, well prepared, inspiring, inspired, dedicated and committed to the teaching profession. Being humorous differed the male teachers from the female teachers, but similar to them in being caring and systematic.

Discussion

The Teachers' Philosophy of Teaching

Each philosophy of teaching of the thirteen participants exemplifies a critical rationale behind teaching behaviors, beliefs about the learners and attention to instructional methods. A teacher's philosophy of teaching evolves from a range of reflections and insights about students and the learning process, which guides them to motivate students, convey concepts and assist students overcome difficulty in learning (Kreber, 2002; Pike & Bradley, 1997).

Achieving the intended consequences of the teaching-learning process was also a concern of the teachers. As explained by Schonwetter, Sokal, Friesen and Taylor (2002), these beliefs provide insights on just how these teachers teach and how they impact on student learning. The teachers found it important to think of methods that would facilitate the achievement of instructional objectives. Ornstein and Hunkins (1993) assert that a philosophy of teaching affords the teachers a method to deal with their personal system of beliefs and values and formulate a framework for making decisions for the teaching process.

The differences in the teachers' belief system obviously cause variation in the teachers' conception of the instructional process. Jackson (in Sadovnik, Cookson, & Semel, 1994) suggests philosophical viewpoints on teaching practices namely, the mimetic tradition where the purpose of education is to transmit knowledge to students; and the transformative tradition where the purpose of education is to change the student intellectually creatively, spiritually and emotionally.

Relating with Students

The school and its familiar rooms, corridors and corners are seats of events that involve close encounters between the teacher and the students. The teacher's demeanor with students usually triggers the kind of atmosphere in the relationship, which can be characterized by cordiality at best,

or a mistrust of the teacher at worst.

Dealing with students requires good teachers to exercise the greatest form of artistry that they can muster in order to touch each one of the students in a meaningful way. However, Leiberman and Miller (in Sadovnik, Cookson & Semel, 1994) unearthed the problematic bind teachers may find themselves in when they teach students and at the same time deal with their differences. Warm and accepting teachers can make their personality work as an aid to teaching while being tolerant of human differences is never an easy task (Cirone, 2001; Ornstein, 1995)

An element of dealing with students consistently referred to by the male teachers is the use of humor. Vaillant (in Bee, 1987) describes humor as an overt expression of ideas and feelings but without unpleasant effects on others. Being successful with the use of humor, therefore, is a special ability only a few teachers perhaps can do with aplomb. It has been found in studies that the use of humor has positively and consistently improved the students' attention and interest, relieve stress and creates a healthy learning environment (Gage & Berliner, 1998; White, 2001; Smith & Smith, 1991; Kher, Molstad & Donahue, 1999). The teachers' use of humor signifies an expansive understanding of themselves, of the teaching process, and of student psychology.

Making oneself available to the students sometimes poses complications and presents issues on familiarity between a teacher and students. Lowman (1995) thinks that college teachers are actually trying to maintain an interpersonal distance between them and the students but some choose to maximize the distance by being formal, while others minimize it by treating students almost as equals.

Viewpoints on the Teacher of Excellence

The teachers put less emphasis on subject matter expertise as a measure of a teacher's competence. Their minimal emphasis on subject expertise finds support in Winch and Gingell's (1999) critique that in itself subject expertise does not guarantee good teaching, nor is it a sufficient condition for good teaching. However, the outstanding teachers regard the possession of advance degrees and continuous updating as necessary to maintain subject matter competence. Licklider (2004) embraces the idea that good teachers cannot continue to inspire learning without being a lifetime learner.

The teacher of excellence follows a lifestyle that exemplifies what he or she teaches, are great thinkers themselves and urge students to think critically (Issler, 1983).

The teachers consistently referred to the value of commitment as a characteristic of the teacher of excellence. It has been noted that all of them have stayed long in teaching which may be an expression of unwillingness to change careers (Fresko, Kfir & Nasser, 1997).

Viewpoints on Excellence in Teaching

The extensive number of articles to elucidate excellence in teaching compensates for the sparse number of database studies to bring sense out of something recognizable but difficult to describe. Elton (1998) says that the multidimensionality of the concept of 'teaching excellence' is the root cause of the difficulty to arrive at a single description.

The characteristics of teaching that are recognizable from the formulated meanings were also similar in many ways to Lowman's (1995) descriptors of effective college teaching. Except for some fine mismatching in the manner excellence in teaching is described, its defining features are basically the same for both the male and the female teachers.

Sadovnik, Cookson and Semel. (1994) list the most important role of the teacher; the caring, empathetic, well-rounded, person that can act as a role model to students, parents and other professionals. Self-consciousness, on the other hand, is both healthy and necessary in professional development, being conscious of one's own teaching, to be "reflective" and sensitive to one's own use of the science and art of excellent classroom management (Rinne, 1997).

Conclusions

In this study, four critical elements are uncovered in the participant teachers' philosophy of teaching. The participants who are teacher exemplars in their own right have differences in their belief systems. Collectively viewed, these philosophies emphasized the role of the teacher as a facilitator of learning, and the helping nature of teaching. They include a conception of how chosen methods would bring about gainful outcome from the teaching-learning process.

Although subject matter expertise is essential to one's excellence, it has been revealed to be of consequence only within the purview of the quality of the teacher's relationship with students, with himself/herself and with others and his particular way with teaching methodologies.

This phenomenological investigation afforded an effusive definition of excellence in teaching. The ultimate and singular quality that is called excellence in teaching is all

about loving, that is, loving the students, loving the teaching process and loving knowledge, which is concurred with in general by the participants in this study.

It has been made clear in this study that subjective data on excellence in teaching can be brought to the level of conscious restructuring and analyzing for it to be understood and described. The study has chronicled and painted to a satisfactory extent the ways in which the outstanding teachers live their lives, which cannot be expected to be meaningful when the quantitative method is used. However, this research does not claim to have thoroughly transported the notion of excellence in teaching from being obscurely or partially understood to that of being a clear concept. This points to the absence of a theory of excellence. Therefore, research opportunities relevant to excellence in teaching are boundless because quantitative research and the endless stream of articles on the same phenomenon promised only a plethora of results that are anything but fractious.

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