

- Lecture one: Teaching and Learning

1. Introduction:

Teaching a language entails a thorough mastery, for any teacher of whatever rank, of the systemic language which is known as the lexico-morpho-phonological-syntactic aspects of the language. Once obtained, this mastery, added to a professional knowledge, easily helps the teacher cope with the unexpected all academically and pedagogically.

2. Defining teaching:

Teaching, as cited in most of dictionaries, is defined concisely as follows:

- The activities of educating or instructing; activities that impart knowledge or skill.
- The profession of a teacher.
- A doctrine that is taught.

According to Merriam Webster Encyclopaedia, teaching is the Profession of those who give instruction, especially in an elementary or secondary school or a university.

The teaching profession is a relatively new one, but sometime ago it occurred only in people's homes where children were given morals by their parents and elder show to behave and what to think in different life's situation. The mosque, the church and other religious settings were used by sages to teach children as well as adults how to behave and what to believe. In the 19th century, as society became more industrialized, the concept of schooling became more universal. In industrialized nations today, most teachers are university graduates. Teacher-training programs usually include both general and specialized academic, cultural, or vocational courses; the study of educational principles; and a series of professional courses combined with practical experience in a typical school

setting. Most countries also require professional certification following formal training. (Adrian Underhill 1985)

According to Edmund Amidon(1969:98) "Teaching is an interactive process, primarily involving class room talk which takes place between teacher and pupil and occurs during certain definable activity."

Brubacher says," Teaching is an arrangement and manipulation of a situation in which an individual will seek to overcome and from which he will learn in the course of doing so."

Skinner says "Teaching is the arrangement of contingencies of reinforcement."

Ryans says "Teaching is concerned with the activities which are concerned with the guidance or direction of the learning of others."

At last according to the Cambridge International Dictionary of English, teaching is defined as "the process of giving knowledge, instruction or training to someone". Generally speaking, teaching is frequently defined as the process of arranging conditions under which the learner changes his ways consciously in the direction of his own goals. It is often regarded as an art rather than a science.

3. Characteristics of Good Teaching

Actually the prerequisites a teacher should have before tackling the job of teaching are, most definitely, warmth, humour and the ability to care about people. Added to this is the planning of lectures, hard work and self-discipline. What has increasingly become important, on a worthier side, is that teachers should imperatively have a minimum professional knowledge of instruction and pedagogy in order to articulate the most important standards of the teaching job and substantively update and refine their own assumptions and beliefs about teaching. What is more, research has identified that teachers must have a thorough catch up in many areas of professional knowledge. Actually, they need to know about the curriculum materials and programmes appropriate for their subject so as to teach certain learners some particular concepts, the characteristics and cultural backgrounds of learners, and most of all, the goals

and the purposes of teaching. In this regard Brown and McInryre(cited in Williams and Burden 2000) reported that a good teacher should :

- Create a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere in the classroom
- Retain control in the classroom
- Present work in an interesting and motivating way
- Provide conditions so that learners understand the work
- Make clear what learners are to do and achieve
- Judge what can be expected of a learner
- Help learners with difficulties
- Encourage learners to raise their expectations of themselves
- Develop personal mature relationship with learners
- Demonstrate personal talent or knowledge

4. Defining learning:

Learning is the noun from the verb to learn/learnt, learned/ learnt, Learned. It is defined in the Sage's English dictionary and Thesaurus as follow:

- The cognitive process of acquiring skill or knowledge.
- Getting to know or becoming aware of, usually accidentally.
- Committing to memory; learning by heart.
- Profound scholarly knowledge.
- modification of a behavioural tendency by experience (as exposure to conditioning)

Learning is the acquisition of new words, syntactic structures and new concepts. It is essential to humans in order to become literate, well educated behaving with moral values and leading to an ethical form of life in their communities. All human and some animals have got the ability to learn.

Learning is not compulsory; it is

contextual. It does not happen all at once, but builds upon and is shaped by what we previously acquired. To that end, learning may be viewed as a process, rather than a collection of factual and procedural knowledge. Learning is based on experience. In the past, learning was seen as an observable and measurable change in behaviour that is the result of an experience, but can it be successful unless it is undergone by valid not vapid teaching strategies or so to speak, of strategies of modern current learning process. . (Richard and Lockhart:1994)

5. The Current Learning Process

It is now, widely known, that new learning is based over the foundation of our own earlier learning. New things become clear and understandable to us if we use appropriately the already acquired knowledge and experience. Furthermore, evidence indicates that teaching has become an active thinking and decision-making process in which the teacher is constantly assessing what the learners already know, what they need to know, and how to provide for successful learning. In the same line of thought Kolb defines learning as the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of knowledge (1984:38) He underlies four characteristics of experiential learning :

- Learning is conceived as a process, not as a series of outcomes.
- This process is continuous, and grounded on the learner's own experience.
- It involves bringing out the learner's existing beliefs and theories, testing them against new experiences and insights, and reintegrating the new, more refined ideas that evolve through this process of examination and reflection.
- It is a process of ongoing adaptation to an environment which is constantly changing. (ibid)

Besides, and above all, the current process of learning often involves five steps: doing something, recalling what happened, reflecting on that, drawing conclusions to inform and preparing for future practical experience. This is, in

fact, a cycle which goes around as the learning process evolves and traces out the way of giving learners

opportunities to do things themselves. However, a teacher may attain significant results if he worries less about teaching techniques and tries to make the enabling of learning his/her main concern. Hereby, In such learning process, because learners are intelligent, fully functioning humans, not simply receptacles for passed-on knowledge, it is acceptable for them to make mistakes, to try things out and get things wrong and learn from that. This learning process also requires teachers who have been trained to set up the development of learner centred classes. These teachers have distinct teaching qualities as opposed to those of the traditional learning process

6. Lecture:

The method of the lecture has been, for so long, the strategy with which teachers in schools and universities dispensed knowledge using in their classrooms, the strategies, techniques and instructions of the adopted and advocated approach. Though nowadays many strategies have proliferated and are put into practice and examined in different teaching settings all around the world, the lecture still remains the mostly used important way to vehicle knowledge. It is then undeniable and true that it is still represented as having plenty of advantages in the sense it provides a way to communicate a large amount of knowledge to a big number of learners. But the least that can be said, in terms of drawbacks, is that not all learners get involved in the process. Moreover, what is assumed to turn to be negative is the fact that learners' feedback cannot be counted on by teachers to reflect on their classroom practices because simply within a lecture most of the learners (important ratio) get disengaged and therefore quickly forget the elements that make out the lecture. Paradoxically, when used in conjunction with active learning teaching strategies, the traditional lecture can be an effective way to achieve instructional goals. .

7. Active Learning :

Active Learning means that the learner actively takes part in the process of lecture delivering rather than sitting and listening to the instructor without having a role to fulfil. Research shows that active learning helps the learner to reach higher spheres of knowledge and increases his content acquisition and mastery of information

that tend to make him develop higher order cognitive skills such as problem solving and critical thinking.

One among the outstanding ways of active learning is collaborative or Cooperative Learning. The principles of cooperative and collaborative learning are to set learners to work together in small groups to perform tasks, with specific inputs leading to a learning situation and having a common learning goal. This quite often helps learners to launch in special discussions which help them broaden their knowledge in learning and motivate them to hear their own voices when developing their own views about various topics. Another area of learning which has become a buzz word is critical thinking, which is a collection of mental activities that include the ability to intuit, clarify, and judge. Actually critical thinking has become significant in academics due to being significant in learning. Good teachers put in practice critical thinking at every stage of the learning process of application. The key is that the teachers who foster critical thinking foster reflection in learners by asking questions that stimulate thinking essential to the construction of knowledge. According to Beyer(1995) Critical thinking means making clear, reasoned judgments. While in the process of critical thinking, your thought should be reasoned and well thought out and judged.

In the same stand of critical thinking experiential Learning as a consolidating process to critical thinking is an undeniably important learning strategy which has currently evoked the assumption that people learn more by doing things themselves rather than being told about them(Knowles &Swason, 2005). Hence, it is also important to recognize learner's experience and integrate this experience into group learning situations, so learners learn from each other. New learning is, therefore, constructed over the foundations of our own earlier learning.

As soon as you begin to engage in the kind of reflective process the teacher

will notice that there are aspects of his teaching that he would like to change, and alternative courses of action that are open to him. D.A. Kolb, who has studied the theory and origins of experiential learning, believes that this pattern of examining and modifying your existing beliefs and habits leads to the most effective learning. Kolb

defines experimental learning as „the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience“ (Kolb 1984 p38). Key characteristics are:

- Learning is conceived as a process, not as a series of outcomes.
- This process is continuous, and grounded in the learner’s own experience.
- It involves bringing out the learner’s existing beliefs and theories, testing them against new experiences and insights, and reintegrating the new, more refined ideas that evolve through this process of examination and reflection.

It is a process of ongoing adaptation to an environment which is constantly We make use of whatever knowledge and experience we already have in order to help us learn and understand new things. In this line of thought, Jim Scriviner(1998:4) highlights that

Students may bring pen and paper to the lesson. But they also bring a whole range of other less visible things to class: their needs, their wishes, their life experience, their memories, their worries, their fears, their moods, etc.(ibid)

Hereby, giving learners opportunities to do things themselves maybe of a great importance and of course, in this way, the enabling of learning can pave out the road to better teaching if the teacher worries less about teaching techniques. As for the teacher again, it is incessantly important to help the learners to become more aware about how they are learning, to reflect on this

and to explore what procedures, materials, techniques or approaches would help them learn more effectively. This actually and evidently traces out the premises of learner development in processing various and

valid areas in a well-rounded pedagogical foreign language learning setting. Meaningfully, evidence indicates that in a growing recognition of this concept, learners are allowed to make mistakes, to try things out, get things wrong, and learn from that. What the teacher should know is that the more he does himself, the less space there will be for the learners to do things.

Another strategy of learning is teaching with Cases - Case studies present learners with real-life problems and enable them to apply what they have learned in the classroom to real life situations. This seldom gives rise to a continuous interaction with the social life's issues. Cases also encourage students to develop logical problem solving skills. However, thanks to this, they define problems, analyse possible alternative actions and provide solutions with a rationale for their choices. In most cases, all members are present during each class and can provide different styles of interaction as well as different viewpoints depending on the prevailing teaching styles which stand on specific inputs of specific approaches..