

The Subjectiveness of What Perfect Teacher is or How to Diffuse the Myth of Perfection in Teaching

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Abstract:

This article covers the multifaceted role of teachers outlining the essential qualities ordinary teachers have to possess to facilitate more successful teaching. It also represents the multiple viewpoints of what successful mentor means as well as the contradictions to initial requirements as an average mentore in retrospect to the past centuries. The comparison between past and current teaching methodologies and behavior is referred to how the profession evaluated throughout the centuries. The last point of the article is to emphasize the importance of being aware that being a “perfect teacher” is an extremely subjective title.

Keywords: “perfect teacher”, historical mentors, psychology, teaching surveys, world-wide mentors, modern teaching methodology, conservative teaching, experience, mental health.

Introduction

In retrospect to the times of Ancient Greece the word ‘teacher’ referred to a person “guiding by the hand”. Since then numerous changes have been implemented in the meaning of the word “teacher” itself. Current realities, teachers have to face, encounter a wide spectrum of qualities apart from basic patience and clear language for knowledge distribution.

Based on historical chronicles, world-wide known Confucius, Aristotle and Einstein are recognized as the greatest mentors of all times owing to the merits of their scientific path. Hence, numerous questions about “What and who deserves to be considered as a perfect teacher?” and “What are the methods of obtaining this title?” have always been on the agenda in the world of mentors.

However, taking into consideration all the listed requirements of a perfect educator, it could barely be said that one exists. This article enlightens the statement of impossibility of a perfect teacher being and the factors facilitating this theory.

Literature review

In one of the official reports, the well-known JBCN International School has announced that “... *a good teacher is someone who helps us become a good human being...*” [9]. Talking about the greatest teachers, the majority of philosophers refer to Confucius, whose philosophy contributed to the spiritual development of China and East Asia. Although, his contributions radically influenced the idea of "teaching" in the region, some still question his title of "greatest teacher." Experts around the world argue that there are mentors, who have favored the practical aspects of teaching while facilitating scientific advancements.

Ju"rgen Renn in his article “Einstein as a Missionary of Science” [10] outlines that the grandeur of Einstein himself is not only in being the popularizer of science, but also carrying his own political views, and most importantly interpreting science as an integral part of culture and community. In contrast with Confucius, whose implementation turned the lives of a certain part of the world population, Einstein surpassed his knowledge influencing the comparatively vast amount of human beings on the global scale.

Analyses and Results

To summarize, “the greatness” of a mentor is a subjective concept that varies based on a realm. Referring to the quote of William Arthur Ward [11] : *"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires."*, it is very true that modern teachers should comprise remarkable supporters, psychologists and contributors to the students' choices or motivation.

The statement is eponymous with the book of Tara Beteille and David K. Evans, runs as follows: **“Successful teachers, successful students”** [12]. In other words, it can be interpreted that *“the more successful students are produced, the better the teacher is.”* So which of them overshadows the determination of “the best teacher”: high results or general mental support?

- Primarily, as it mentioned in the survey of Sarah Mead held in WHITBY School in 2022 the "one size fits all" [13] approach doesn't work in education, as it assumes all students learn in the same ways. Learners vary in the speed and level of comprehension, the willingness to follow the educational path and the amount of effort each puts for goal achievement. Hence, whereas one mentor can be considered the best one by some, they will be blamed by the others (less successful learners) for their failures. Consequently, should this mentor be named great or irresponsible?

Secondly, constant pressure and punishments are used to be the main attributes of what less successful students gain on a regular basis. There is no surprise that in the 21st century some may assume that the role of psychologist and supporter does make a great teacher apart from providing knowledge.

Discussion

It is truly a frequent case when parents do not pay enough attention to the desires or efforts of their own children, prioritizing “what should be done” over “what is preferred to be done”. This circumstance is a trigger for some discouraged or unheard learner to find a shoulder to cry in the person of a teacher. However, apart from learners themselves parents do evaluate and divide teachers into worthy and not.

Even though a mentor can personify the idol for a student (as a supporter or leader), the authority of the same teacher could be questioned by the parents, as their children do trust and rely on teachers, rather than on their own family. So whose privilege is it to determine whether the teacher is perfect or not?

Experience over modern vibe

The research book of June 2016 held by Tara Kini and Anna Podolsky [2], shows numerous statistics, where certain types of teachers are preferable over the others. For example, according to the survey of 2007, it can be seen that teachers with experience of over 20 years are more effective than the others with no experience at all.

It is clarified that experienced teachers are able to provide better results and possess a broader spectrum of knowledge than “new-born” teachers do. They do accumulate the methods of tackling problematic students or disabled ones, aware of what should be done to reach set purposes, literally making the teacher “profi”, as this way has been passed by them an incredible number of times. It can be more visible in comparison to new teachers, who still haven’t faced the issues and realities of teaching getting bewildered when the case the chrome across is out of the ordinary.

Assuming from above-mentioned data, it can be concluded that experienced mentors surpass and defeat youngsters in terms of successful teaching, however, another piece of data in the same report of CALDER studies in 2006-2008 confirms that exactly the first few years of working bring teachers the power to be even with those who have more than 20 years under their belt. Consequently, the preferences of young teachers on the board do increase that can be fairly expected, due to couple of reasons:

First, Just graduated teachers have recently passed through the same educational process as their students are only going to take up during their last years in high school or at university; hence, the actual mistakes and issues of current learners could be shared directly.

Second, “Experienced in learning” teachers could provide necessary tips for the younger generation to “survive” in the school life pace, opposite to old generation of teachers, whose educational syllabus and style of learning deferred drastically and has altered throughout the decades.

Third, due to the narrow age gap between young teachers and high school students, both sides do have a common vibe and realm of interest to share. As it is shown in the article of Rouze Resalatiti “Talking about Young Teachers being as Class Teachers and Cultivating Students’ Professional Interest” [8] within the new-comers educational process doesn’t feel the same way, as with elderly experienced teachers; conservative methods are away and a fresh look at the situation steps in. For example, more interactive activities are implemented as well as routine tasks are substituted for the same with games involvement, which urges students to classes attendance.

Consequently, both points boost the willingness of students to be involved in the modern way of studies implied by teachers- newcomers. Another question floating in the survey “Whether it is up to experienced teachers to be granted as “the best” or fresh ones with modern educational programs?”

Teamwork

Ever since nursery, each student undergoes the experience of working in a team or pair, sharing responsibilities with teammates to complement particular tasks or achieve a desirable result. Lonely players tend to rely on themselves only, neglecting the others, whose abilities and collective efforts can bring the victory. With that being said, without being a team player, one would probably fail being a successful teacher.

Once new teachers begin their careers, the most frequent misconception is the slogan “I will be the best teacher ever.” Although, whatever qualities are in use, they provide only a half of expected success; another half belongs to the students’ will and tenacity (as a part of a team player). Since even the greatest teacher can fail in terms of gathering 100% of perfect results, won’t they be considered as less qualified and far from perfection?

Although, without being biased, it could be clear that the described mentor deserves the title of the greatest, people all over the globe are biased to judge, hence, the level of perfectionism is up to the society judgements.

Personal survey

Apart from reviewing the survey of international educational establishments, the teaching career pushed the author forward to the survey related to the students of my own guidance. Over 100 students participated in an anonymous questionnaire to provide a description to only 2 questions in it:

- The pros and cons of your mentor's methods.
- The pros and cons of the classes you are taking.

Except for 90% of positive comments such as "My mentor has a great sense of humor" or "I do like classical musical accompaniment during classes" provided by students, the other 10% came out with the contradictions of cons in learning.

As an example, two identical, yet opposite comments ran as follows:

"The classes are too short" and "The time classes are too long"

Obviously, the difference in how much information students can handle as well as perseverance serves as a matter of branching off in replies, that is quite adequate due to the variety of learners' preferences and minds.

However, the obstacle related to how to tackle the issue is still on. Since the time of classes is set in any educational syllabus, it is not of the competence of an ordinary teacher to flex it. Even if it could be possible to alter, there is no right way to take up, as preferences of students differ significantly: enlarging or reducing the duration of the classes?

Another similar comment sounded like "I face the hardships in speaking part. There is too much speaking during the classes" and "There is too little speaking. I have trouble speaking and need it to be improved". Albeit, both of the answers were produced by the students of the same class, who got the same time and practice of speaking, they found this aspect totally different. And once again the teacher is unable to decide which side to pick.

As a result, none of the requests could be accomplished, which means that the teacher still has shortages in classes for both types of students, where the mentor herself remains with own imperfections in the educational process. This point, faced by each educator at least once a life, does prove the subjectivity of "perfect teaching".

Conclusion

Throughout the years numerous requirements have been accounted to fill the whole picture of a mentor. As a great deal of surveys from all over the world show that endless conditions such as experience, fresh minds, psychological methods or successful results hold an ordinary human away from obtaining the title.

The only perfect teacher can't be picked unanimously by the world society, however it is up to each student to emphasize the one, who contributed to the success or vital experience not only in the sphere of teaching, but in general life circumstances.

Perfect teacher doesn't personify a unique human, but impersonates through numerous mentors, being unique subjectively for particular students, as each learner keeps their own image of a perfect teacher in mind.

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