

Summaries of Five Teaching Perspectives

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Transmission: *Effective teaching requires a substantial commitment to the content or subject matter.* Good teachers have mastery of the subject matter or content. It is a teacher's primary responsibility to represent the content accurately and efficiently for learners. It is the learner's responsibility to learn that content in its authorized or legitimate forms. Good teachers take learners systematically through sets of tasks that lead to content mastery. Such teachers provide clear objectives, adjust the pace of lecturing, make efficient use of class time, clarify misunderstandings, answer questions, provide timely feedback, correct errors, provide reviews, summarize what has been presented, direct students to appropriate resources, set high standards for achievement and develop objective means of assessing learning. Good teachers are enthusiastic about their content and convey that enthusiasm to their students, and for many learners, they are memorable presenters of their content.

Apprenticeship: *Effective teaching is a process of enculturating students into a set of social norms and ways of working.* Good teachers are highly skilled at what they teach. Whether in classrooms or at work sites, they are recognized for their expertise. Teachers must reveal the inner workings of skilled performance and must now translate it into accessible language and an ordered set of tasks. Learning tasks usually proceed from simple to complex, allowing for different points of observation and entry depending upon the learner's capability. Good teachers know what their learners can do on their own and what they can do with guidance and direction; namely, engaging learners' within their 'zone of development'. As learners mature and become more competent, the teacher's role changes, and over time, teachers offer less direction and give more responsibility as they progress from dependent learners to independent workers.

Developmental: *Effective teaching must be planned and conducted "from the learner's point of view".* Good teachers must understand how their learners think and reason about the content. The primary goal is to help learners develop increasingly complex and sophisticated cognitive structures for comprehending the content. The key to changing those structures lies in a combination of two skills: (a) effective questioning that challenges learners to move from relatively simple to more complex forms of thinking, and (b) 'bridging knowledge' which provides examples that are meaningful to the learner. Questions, problems, cases, and examples form the bridges that teachers use to transport learners from simpler ways of thinking and reasoning to new, more complex and sophisticated forms of reasoning and problem solving. Good teachers work hard to adapt their knowledge to each learner's level of understanding and ways of thinking.

Nurturing: *Effective teaching assumes that long-term, hard, persistent effort to achieve comes from the heart, as well as the head.* People are motivated and productive learners when they are working on issues or problems without fear of failure. Learners are nurtured by knowing that (a) they can succeed at learning if they give it a good try; (b) their achievement is a product of their own effort and ability, rather than the benevolence of a teacher; and (c) their efforts to learn will be supported by their teacher and their peers. The more pressure to achieve, and the more difficult the material, the more important it is that there be such support for learning. Good teachers promote a climate of caring and trust, helping people set challenging but achievable goals, and providing encouragement and support, along with clear expectations and reasonable goals for all learners. They do not sacrifice self-efficacy or self-esteem for achievement. Therefore, the assessment of learning considers individual growth or progress as well as absolute achievement.

Social Reform: *Effective teaching seeks to change society in substantive ways.* From this point of view, the object of teaching is the collective rather than the individual. Good teachers awaken students to the values and ideologies that are embedded in texts and common practices within their discipline. Good teachers challenge the status quo and encourage students to consider the how learners are positioned and constructed in particular discourses and practices. To do so, common practices are analyzed and deconstructed for the ways in which they reproduce and maintain conditions deemed unacceptable. Class discussion is focused less on how knowledge has been created, and more by whom and for what purposes. Texts are interrogated for what is said and what is not said; what is included and what is excluded; who is represented and who is omitted from the dominant discourses within a field of study or practice. Students are encouraged to take a critical stance to give them power to take social action to improve their own lives; critical deconstruction, though central to this view, is not an end in itself.