

**Course : Educational Psychology**  
**Level : Third Year License**  
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### ***Lecture3: Teaching as a Practical Activity***

In this lecture, the teaching process is to be explained as a practical activity in relation to psychology, which contributes to its understanding.

#### **Definition of Teaching**

Teaching is that process which results in learning. The ability of a teacher to teach can be judged on the basis of students' learning. In this respect, Smith (1969) argues that "*teaching is the process of carrying out those activities that experience has shown to be effective in getting students to learn*". *With experience, teachers know which activities to be selected.*

*While teaching, teachers are faced with issues related to three major elements, which are: discipline, learning structure and motivation.*

- 1. Discipline:** *to teach the learner to be in control of his behavior. It is training him to be well behaved.*
- 2. Learning:** *is acquiring new knowledge and modifying existing knowledge, skill or behavior (cognitive process ).*
- 3. Motivation:** *is a psychological feature, which stimulates the desire or energy in learners towards achieving a certain goal or behave in a certain way*

***The three elements above are closely interrelated and a successful teacher should try to correct his performance and accommodate his role according to these three elements.***

Accordingly, Ferland (1970) claims that "teachers should seek to secure good discipline by good teaching which interests the children and by efficient classroom administration which prevents opportunities for disorder". If the teacher cannot manage

the classroom, secure discipline and foster motivation, learning cannot take place. The lack of one element would affect the remaining elements negatively.

**A. Discipline:** Morison & McIntyre (1969) highlighted three important points in relation to discipline.

**1. The teacher should communicate to the class:** he should know everything that happens in the classroom and should react to what he sees and hears (any kind of misbehavior). If the teacher ignores the minor misbehaviors, they might turn into major and extend to serious problems. By reacting to the misbehaviours (through instruction or commenting), the teacher would stop problems and prevents them from occurring in the first place.

**Example:** if a teacher does not prevent his learners from checking their mobiles during the session, they will gradually message their friends and even receive calls and no discipline can be achieved.

**2- The teacher should move smoothly from one activity to another:**

The teacher should anticipate the termination of each activity and allow a break time before moving on. The teacher should provide instructions for students who are about to finish the activity (*when you finish, read the text on page 11*). In addition, he should have instructions for those students who cannot finish on time (this is going to be a homework for next time). Furthermore, at the beginning of each activity, the teacher should be equipped with necessary books and materials to save time. *In case of having active and slow learners, the teacher can provide active learners with extra activities during the session in order to keep them busy. The teacher can also check students' answers during the waiting time. While in the case of slow students, the correction is done immediately after they finish solving the activity (there is no need to check their answers before correcting on the board).* Interruptions are characteristics of classroom; the teacher must minimize and sometimes avoid them by anticipating problems and not tolerating any distraction from the smooth flow of class activity.

**3- Creating over-permissive situations may lead to disorder and ineffective learning:** this situation is the result of the following:

- 1- Some teachers think that students learn better and feel motivated if they are encouraged to do as they please.
- 2- Teachers may show much tolerance for young students who rather need positive help to find their way through the problems they cannot solve for themselves (This tolerance is more acceptable with mature learners)
- 3- 3- Some teachers think that students cannot be blamed for their misbehaviours. However, this behavior is the product of a certain cause and teachers can improve it by taking the appropriate action.
- 4- Some teachers are uncertain about their authority in relation to students and their learning and adopt the educational policy of laissez-faire.

To summarize, discipline inside the classroom includes direct teacher intervention through comments and instructions (responding to misbehaviours and serious behavior problems) to show the authority of the teacher in the classroom. In addition, the teacher should move from one activity to another smoothly and prevent any distractions, which may interrupt the flow of the class activity. Furthermore, the teacher should avoid the over-permissive situations of laissez-faire and control students' behavior.

### ***B. Learning:***

**Skinner(1968):** "Educators are seldom willing to concede that they are engaged in the control of human behavior" The quote entails that the teacher is actually involved in controlling or modifying the learning process of the learners. A successful teacher is the one who controls his students' learning by effective methods to shape it in the right direction. **How to shape students learning?**

#### ***1- Programmed or Structures Learning***

Teachers should divide learning into the appropriate successive series of steps, which build up into the final complex performance. When the learner succeeds in performance at each step, his learning activity is to be reinforced until he masters the

whole structure without any special difficulty. In this regard, teachers should consider both global and sequential learners.

**Global learners:** *can learn and receive information at once*

**Sequential learner:** *must take the learning process steps gradually with establishing links between the steps.*

If the teacher fails to make the steps of learning small and clear, problems of poor discipline, motivation and learning emerge. However, if the teacher structures the learning task appropriately, he will achieve learning and avoid issues of motivation and discipline and achieves successful teaching.

### **2- Considering Students' Level and Capacity:**

Students should be given tasks they have the means of tackling. Much lack of discipline and lack of interest are the result of setting tasks beyond or beneath students' abilities of the appropriate strategy to tackle the task successfully. *Teacher should never set too difficult or too easy tasks, which might affect motivation and discipline negatively.* Discipline and motivation depend on organizing well-structured learning at the right level of difficulty. The teacher should have knowledge of the resources used and the level of the target students who use them. *Teachers should know students' through their experience or other teachers' experiences to decide about the appropriate type of information, activity or test to be used.*

### **3- Setting High Expectations from your Learners**

Students' learning is affected by their teachers' expectations of them. Teachers' low expectations of their learners will lead to poor learning motivation and discipline. Successful teachers are required to use high expectations as a key element for achieving discipline learning and motivation. However, teachers' high expectations of students might affect them positively and negatively.

- **Positively:** *it makes them work harder to meet the expectation, which guarantees a well learning.*

- **Negatively:** *it results in a huge pressure on learners, which might lead to the failure to meet them.*

## Conclusion

A good teacher should use discipline and motivation as devices to generate success and help learners towards a well structures learning behavior.

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