Effective Teaching

Education is the forefront of our society. We help students develop skills which can be used in the classroom and their lives. As instructors, we are not only compelled, but required to follow guidelines that outline how to treat our students accordingly. How we act, react, and instruct daily; our students carry with them outside of the classroom, changing them for better or worse. The Disposition of Learners, the Model Code of Ethics, and various skills and traits educators gather over the years are what define the effectiveness of a teacher.

As educators, we are taught about the Professional Dispositions of Learners. These dispositions, which play a vital role in our careers, flow into our daily lives. Each disposition is useful in a variety of ways in the classroom and around the school. While I was in school, these dispositions affected me without me knowing. Once I learned of them, I reflected on past experiences and realized I had seen them first hand countless times from my teachers. At the beginning of high school, I was a lazy kid and decided that two years of Algebra was necessary. My second year of Algebra, my teacher called me in during lunch to have a conference with me. He told me he knew I was capable of so much more but that I wasn’t applying myself. He was recommending that I take Geometry as a summer class at the college and go into Algebra 2/Trigonometry as a junior (High Expectations, Professional Dispositions of Learners). It was an unexpected surprise, his expectations for me were much higher than my own. Unfortunately, the college had no geometry classes over the summer, but I never forgot how smart I felt after that conference and how my expectations of myself were changed. Throughout high school, I continued to learn more about life from how the teachers reacted and talked with students. In one class particularly, I began to understand the respect for diversity of others, fairness, and professional conduct that teachers have to face each day. A student, well known for being loud and causing issues, shorted an outlet with a paper clip, getting electrocuted in the process. The class was not a fan of the student. I sat in the front with two others, and we asked about the trouble maker and why he, the teacher, would not simply kick the student out. The teacher told us everyone has the opportunity to learn, the boy might not have the best home life and may only know how to get attention by lashing out. A few weeks later, the teacher gave us an experiment that changed copper pennies to silver. We were actually dissolving the copper and leaving only the zinc on the penny. The troubled student loved the project and helped out wherever he could. I later saw him in a technology class with me, where he excelled (Fairness, Professional Dispositions of Learners).

Seeing the Model Code of Ethics being applied to classroom practice brings to mind one specific time that, to this day, still amazes me. My first semester of college, my history teacher, an average height, jovial, older gentleman was punched in the face. A Doctor that loved what he did; he enjoyed explaining in detail historical facts and when they occurred. My teacher’s passion for his calling was such that, he didn’t need to tell the class to be quiet, everyone loved learning history from him. This older gentle-man was punched, in class, by one of his students. Luckily, other students were there to halt the student and lead him out of the class. The teacher, picked up his glasses, placed them back on his face, made a joke and went about his class. He kept calm under duress, and handled the situation professionally (Model Code of Ethics). He held no ill will toward the student, however, the student dropped the class because his grade was faltering. We never learned who the student was, only that it happened a semester before we had been there. When I think of the code of Ethics for Educators, I think of how he remained professional, even after being attacked and kept his composure, not responding angrily or out of revenge.

Being an effective teacher and having good classroom management requires experience. What may work for one teacher could be catastrophic for another. I think that one of the most effective attributes that helps with managing a class is passion. Alongside patience, a teacher can turn a group of students that find a subject boring and detestable, into a classroom of passionate listeners. However, these cannot be the only tools in their bag. There must be determination, an open-door policy about situations, and willingness to listen. All students learn differently, and must be taught with that in mind. As students mature, they could grow to be our equals, or even betters, but like us, they will continue to learn throughout their lives. An effective skill to learn for teachers is that, no matter how much they know, there will always be someone that knows more and they may even be a student. Humility is a tough lesson to learn, but instructors learn it through experience. Classroom management is also difficult to grasp. Personally, I can be timid at times, but I feel I will be like my history teacher, I will not have to command respect. The classroom cannot be seen as a controlled state, more as a room that is open for debate.

An effective teacher takes time to develop. No one walks into a classroom prepared for every outcome. Keeping the Code of Ethics even under stressful situations can be tough, but it teaches the students that it is possible to be calm under duress. Having expectations for students and guiding them to develop their skills, being fair and treating them with respect whether they are diverse or not, is the role we instructor’s play. We are the educators of the future.

Sources

1. Professional Dispositions of Learners, <https://students.gcu.edu/Documents/15GCU0264-COEProDisposition-120115_v1.pdf>
2. Model Code of Ethics, https://www.nasdtec.net/page/MCEE\_Doc