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THE USE OF TEACHING METHODS AT HIGHER SECONDARY LEVEL IN BANGLADESH

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Abstract: The study mainly dealt with the various teaching methods used for teaching students at higher secondary level. Sixty college students studying in Pabna sadar upazila were interviewed about their perceptions of best and effective teaching methods and the reason for that. Most of the students rated lecture method as the best teaching method. Reasons included; teacher provides all knowledge related to topic, time saving, students attentively listen lecture and take notes etc. The group discussion was rated as the second best method of teaching because of; more participation of students, the learning is more effective, the students don't have to rely on rote learning, and this method develops creativity among students. Students' perception and ratings about the interesting and effective teaching methods is a way to suggest improvements in teaching/ learning process.

Introduction

To teach successfully, one must plan successfully. Successful planning means knowing how to facilitate a positive learning experience for all students. The teacher uses his/her best professional judgment to decide which method; strategy and techniques will work best for a particular situation.¹ Teaching and learning are the two sides of a coin.² The most accepted criterion for measuring good teaching is the amount of student learning that occurs. There are consistently high correlations between students' ratings of the "amount learned" in the course and their overall ratings of the teacher and the course. Those who learned more gave their teachers higher ratings.³ This same criterion was also put forth by Thomas Angelo, when he said; teaching in the absence of learning is just talking.⁴ A teacher's effectiveness is again about student learning. The literature on teaching is crammed full of well researched ways that teachers can present content and skills that will enhance the opportunities for students to learn.

It is equally filled with suggestions of what not to do in the classroom. However, there is no rule book on which teaching methods match up best to which skills and/or content that is being taught. Students often have little expertise in knowing if the method selected by an individual instructor was the best teaching method or just "a method" or simply the method with which the teacher was most comfortable.⁵ Research indicates that students are the most qualified sources to report on the extent to which the learning experience was productive, informative, satisfying, or worthwhile. While opinions on these matters are not direct measures of instructor or course effectiveness, they are legitimate indicators of student satisfaction, and there is substantial research linking student satisfaction to effective teaching.⁶ A meta-analysis of 41 research studies provides the strongest evidence for the validity of student ratings since these studies investigated the relationship between student ratings and student learning.⁷ Many researchers have focused on whether or not students are legitimate judges of teaching effectiveness. Though caveats abound, the general sense is that students are both rational and reliable sources of evidence while in class; students are exposed to all sorts of instructional experiences (lectures, instructional materials and aids, readings, exams). They are in effect experimental consumers able to discern quality, relevance, usefulness, and instructor interaction with students.⁸ The students can answer questions about the quality of lectures, the value of readings and assignments and the clarity of the instructor's explanations.

Different methods of teaching mathematics have been proposed by different educators and the knowledge of these methods may help in working out a better teaching strategy. It is not appropriate for a teacher to commit to one particular method. A teacher should adopt a teaching approach after considering the nature of the pupil, their interests and maturity and the resources available. Every method has certain merits and few demerits and it is the work of a teacher to decide which method is best for the students.

Methodology

Six colleges were selected through purposive sampling from the Pabna Sadar Upazila. Sixty students studying at H.S.C level from each college were selected through convenient sampling to seek their opinion about the most effective teaching methods (as perceived by them) used by their teachers, and the reasons for highly rating a particular teaching method. Total sixty students were interviewed. They were asked to rate different methods of teaching used by their teachers on a scale of 1- 5, one being the least important and 5 being the most important teaching method. The results of the study were compiled and analyzed by percentage method.

Objectives of the Study

- To find out the various teaching methods used by college teachers to teach higher secondary level

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- To explore the opinion of students about the teaching method they perceived as the most interesting and best teaching method.

Reason for Uses of Different Teaching Method

Most of the students rated lecture method as the best teaching method. Reasons included; teacher provides all knowledge related to topic, it is time saving method; students listen lecture attentively and take notes etc. The group discussion was rated as the second best method of teaching because of; more participation of students, the learning is more effective, the students don't have to rely on rote learning, and this method develops creativity among students etc. Students' perception and ratings about the interesting and effective teaching methods is a way to suggest improvements in teaching/ learning process

A. Lecture Method

The lecture method is the most widely used form of presentation. Every teacher has to know how to develop and present a lecture. They also must understand the scopes and limitations of this method

- Lectures are used to introduce new topics, summarizing ideas, showing relationships between theory and practice, reemphasizing main points, etc.
- This method is adaptable to many different settings (small or large groups).
- It may be used to introduce a unit or a complete course.
- Finally, lectures can be effectively combined with other teaching methods to give added meaning and direction.

The teaching lecture is favored by most teachers because it allows some active participation by the students. The success of the teaching lecture depends upon the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the class.⁹ However in this method the feedback is not very obvious and thus the teacher must develop a keen perception for subtle responses from the class-facial expressions, manner of taking notes, and apparent interest or disinterest in the lesson. The successful teacher will be able to interpret the meaning of these reactions and adjust the lesson accordingly.

Preparing the Teaching Lecture Planning

The following four steps are followed in the planning phase of preparation:

- Establishing the objective and desired outcomes;
- Researching the subject;
- Organizing the material; and
- Planning productive classroom activities.

In all stages of preparing for the teaching lecture, the teacher should support any point to be covered with meaningful examples, comparisons, statistics, or testimony. While developing the lesson, the teacher also should strongly consider the use of examples and personal experiences related to the subject of the lesson.

Rehearsing

After completing the preliminary planning and writing of the lesson plan, the teacher should rehearse the lecture to build self-confidence. It helps to smooth out the use notes, visual aids, and other instructional devices.

Delivering a Lecture Suitable Language

In the teaching lecture, simple rather than complex words should be used whenever possible. The teacher should not use substandard English. If the subject matter includes technical terms, the teacher should clearly define each one so that no student is in doubt about its meaning. Whenever possible, the teacher should use specific rather than general words.

Tone and Pace

Another way the teacher can add life to the lecture is to vary his or her tone of voice and pace of speaking. In addition, using sentences of different length also helps. To ensure clarity and variety, the teacher should normally use sentences of short and medium length.

Use of Notes

For a teacher notes are a must because they help keep the lecture on track. The teacher should use them modestly and should make no effort to hide them from the students. Notes may be written legibly or typed, and they should be placed where they can be consulted easily.

B. Group discussion

- More participation of students.
- Students listen to other's opinion & express their opinion.
- Discuss with teachers the points that were missed during discussion.
- Students learn on their own & find out key points.
- Students exchange their ideas.
- Students get point of view of all and not only those who always speak.
- After discussion when students give their presentation, teacher corrects their mistakes.
- Students can make their own notes.
- The learning is more effective.

- They don't have to rely on rote learning.
- Develops creativity among students.
- It evokes thinking among students.
- Students have time for preparation of topic.
- Students should have material and knowledge before discussion. Suggestion
- Only those students participate who have confidence rest do not participate.
- Concepts become clear after discussion.
- Every student gives his/ her opinion.

C . Individual presentation

- A presentation involves motivating listeners to accept a new idea, alter an existing opinion, or act on a given premise
- Students first thoroughly understand the topic before giving presentation i.e. mastery on topic.
- It increases confidence among students.
- Good way to learn for only one student who is presenting.
- Students search lot of books to collect material
- Teacher's supervision is important

D. Assignment

- It enhances the ability of research on any topic as the students search topic from different books, websites etc.
- Active learning

E. Seminars

- Give Chance to meet other people of same profession.
- Motivate and make student active in learning.
- Interested method.

F. Workshops

- Give Chance to meet other people of same profession.

G. Conferences

- Give Chance to meet other people of same profession.
- Networking with other institutions and professionals.

H. Brain storming

- More interesting
- More informative
- Gain knowledge
- Learning is effective

- More participation of students
- Students give their opinion
- Active learning
- Creative thinking is encouraged.
- Students think beyond their knowledge.
- Every one gets the chance to express their thoughts.
- Simple topics can be learnt through different angles.

I. Role play

- Interesting method
- Creative thinking is encouraged.
- Students think beyond their knowledge.
- Students enjoy the situation
- Active learning
- Easy to learn

J. Case study

- Active learning
- Creative thinking is encouraged.
- Students think beyond their knowledge.

Rating of Various Teaching Methods

Rating was done on a scale of 1-5, 1 – being the least interesting and 5 being the most interesting teaching method as indicated in the table.

Teaching method	1	2	3	4	5	No. Students
	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %	60
Lecture	9(15.00)	5 (8.33)	2(3.33)	21(35.00)	23(34.33)	60
Group discussion	9(15.00)	6(10.00)	15(25.00)	10(16.67)	20(33.33)	60
Individual presentation	14(23.33)	13(21.67)	6(10.00)	15(25.00)	12(20.00)	60
Assignments	6(10.00)	14(23.33)	24(40.00)	10(16.67)	6(10.00)	60
Seminars	13(21.67)	14(23.33)	11(18.33)	15(25.00)	7(11.67)	60
Workshop	7(11.67)	14(23.33)	14(23.33)	15(25.00)	10(16.67)	60
Conferences	7(11.67)	14(23.33)	15(25.00)	11(18.33)	13(21.67)	60
Brainstorming	7(11.67)	11(18.33)	15(25.00)	22(36.67)	5(8.33)	60
Role play	6(10.00)	15(25.00)	9(15.00)	21(35.00)	9(15.00)	60
Case study	9(15.00)	8(13.33)	15(25.00)	14(23.33)	14(23.33)	60

Discussion

Making Teaching Methods More Interesting

Higher education faculty strives to become more effective teachers so that students can learn better, and many explore methods to improve their teaching practice. Depending on the nature of subject, number of students, and the facilities available, there are different methods teachers are using in

the classroom. Below are given various methods and certain tips and techniques for improving these methods.

Lecture Method

A lecture is a talk or verbal presentation given by a lecturer, trainer or speaker to an audience. With all the advancement of training systems and computer technology, lecture method is still a backbone widely used in teaching and training at higher level of education. This method is economical, can be used for a large number of students, material can be covered in a structured manner and the teacher has a great control of time and material. Students provide evidence that students may place greater emphasis on lecture material than on textbooks.¹⁰ Lecturing is not simply a matter of standing in front of a class and reciting what you know. The classroom lecture is a special form of communication in which voice, gesture, movement, facial expression, and eye contact can either complement or detract from the content. Common Teaching Methods" stated strengths of lecture method that it presents factual material in direct, logical manner, contains experience which inspires, stimulates thinking to open discussion, and useful for large groups.¹¹ Our findings also revealed that most of the students considered lecture as best method because according to opinion of students; it creates new ideas, it is good for large class, develops creativity among students, teacher is experienced and has mastery on subject, explain all points and can answer all questions by students. With planning and effective presentation techniques, the lecture can be a highly effective and interactive method for transferring knowledge to students. Lecture gives the pupils training in listening and taking rapid notes.¹²

Tips and Techniques for Improving Lecture Method

- Lecture material should be stimulating and thought provoking.
- Information should be delivered dramatically by using example to make it memorable.
- The teacher needs to use questions throughout the lecture to involve students in the learning process and to check their comprehension.
- Reinforce learning by using visual supports like transparencies, flip charts, whiteboard/ black board etc.
- Teacher should take feedback of students to improve lecture method.

Discussion

It is a free verbal exchange of ideas between group members or teacher and students. For effective discussion the students should have prior knowledge and information about the topic to be discussed. Strengths of class discussion as; pools ideas and experiences from group and allows everyone to participate in an active process. A problem, an issue, a situation in which

there is a difference of opinion, is suitable for discussion method of teaching.¹³ Our study also revealed that the students rated group discussion (class discussion) as the second best method by giving reasons that; it has more participation of students, the learning is more effective, the students don't have to rely on rote learning, every student give his/ her opinion, and this method develops creativity among students.

Tips and techniques for improving discussion method

- The teacher should spend sufficient time in preparing the process and steps of discussion.
- Different aspects of the topic and the parameters should be selected for the focused discussion.
- Sufficient time should be allotted to discuss all the issues. At the same time students should know the time limit to reach a conclusion.
- The teacher in the beginning should introduce the topic, the purpose of discussion, and the students participating in discussion.
- Before the start of discussion, background information about the topic should be provided.
- There is a need to include questions to provide direction.
- Relaxed environment should be created to foster the process of discussion.
- Teacher after opening the discussion should play the role of a facilitator involving every one and at the end should summarize the discussion.
- Encourage students listen other's point of view and then evaluate their own.
- Teacher should give value to all students' opinions and try not to allow his/her own difference of opinion, prevent communication and debate.

Role Play

Role play occurs when participants take on differentiated roles in a simulation. These may be highly prescribed, including biographical details, and even personality, attitudes and beliefs; or loosely indicated by an outline of the function or task. These techniques have already demonstrated their applicability to a wide range of learners, subjects and levels.¹⁴ It is a memorable and enjoyable learning method. To gain maximum benefits from this method, the incidents selected for enactment should be as realistic as the situation allows.

Tips and techniques

Before the role play, the teacher should brief participants about the roles they will play, give them time for preparation, confirm confidentiality of role play, and ask participants to behave naturally.

- Teacher should select & brief observers about their roles.
- During the role play, the teacher must keep quiet, listen & take notes, avoid cutting role play short, but give time warning if previously agreed. The teacher should be prepared for some action if participants dry up and can intervene as a last resort.
- After the role play, the teacher thanks participants, ask for feed back from lead participants, take comments from observers, ask other participants to comment,
- The teacher should use role names not those of participants, summarize, drawing out learning points, leaving the participants with positive comments and feelings.

Case Study

Primarily developed in business and law contexts, case method teaching can be productively used in liberal arts, engineering, and education. This method is basically used to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as to present students with real-life situations. The students are presented with a record set of circumstances based on actual event or an imaginary situation and they are asked:

1. to diagnose particular problem(s) only.
2. to diagnose problem(s) & provide solution(s).
3. to give reasons & implications of action after providing both problem & solution.

It is a time consuming method and sometimes the case does not actually provide real experience. It could be in-conclusive, and insufficient information can lead to inappropriate results. At the end, the students want to know the right answer by the teacher. The role of the teacher in conducting the case study should be to:

- read the case and determine the key problems faced by the decision maker,
- determine the data required to analyze the problems and for a synthesis into solutions,
- develop, analyze, and compare alternative solutions, and recommend a course of action.

Tips and techniques

- Cases should be brief, well-written, reflect real issues, and open to a number of conflicting responses.
- Students should work in group to prepare a written report and/or a formal presentation of the case.

Brainstorming

It is a loosely structured form of discussion for generating ideas without participants embroiled in unproductive analysis. It is a very useful technique for problem solving, decision making, creative thinking and team building. It develops listening skills.

Tips and techniques

Ground rules for running brainstorming session include:

- There should be no criticism and the wild ideas should be encouraged and recorded without evaluation.
- Emphasis should be placed on quantity of ideas and not the quality.
- There is a need of equal participation of members.
- It can be unfocused so teacher should know how to control discussion and facilitate issues.
- It works well in small group

Assignment method

Written assignments help in organization of knowledge, assimilation of facts and better preparation of examinations. It emphasizes on individual pupil work and the method that helps both teaching and learning processes.¹⁵

Tips and techniques

- Teacher should describe the parameters of the topic of assignment.
- Fully explain assignments so that students know how to best prepare.

Give assignments and exams that recognize students' diverse backgrounds and special interests. For example, a faculty member teaching a course on medical and health training offered students

a variety of topics for their term papers, including one on alternative healing belief systems. A faculty member in the social sciences gave students an assignment asking them to compare female-only, male-only, and male-female work groups."

Conclusion

Most of the students rated lecture method as the best teaching method. The group discussion was rated as the second best method. Case study was rated as the third, Conference method was rated as the 4th, Individual presentation method was rated as the 5th, Workshop method was rated as the 6th, Role Play method was rated as the 7th, Seminar method was rated as the 8th, Assignment method was rated as the 9th, best method and Brain Storming method was the rated as the last score. Teachers need to repeatedly assure students throughout the semester that the ratings will be used for productive changes in teaching/ learning process and that there will be no chance of retribution to the students.

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