Sharing of Some Personal Thoughts on Teaching

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Agenda

• Introduction
• Teaching in action
• Teaching activities
• Teaching effectiveness
• My fundamental beliefs in teaching
• Some (in)effective approaches
• Conclusions
Introduction

• Teaching is very rocky.
  – Discouragement
  – Frustration
  – Unpredictable teaching outcomes
  – Inconsistency in teaching performance

• Teaching is very complex.
  – Mastering of subject materials
  – Subject delivery
  – Interaction with students
  – No two classes are the same.

Introduction

• Teaching is very personal and therefore very “risky,” because it exposes
  – our knowledge in the subject area,
  – our interests in the subject area,
  – our abilities as teachers,
  – our aspiration as teachers,
  – our personalities and characters, and
  – our values and judgment.
Teaching in action

• Teaching informs, communicates, models, inspires, and divides.
• Emphases in different stages:
  – Knowledge base
  – Communication and modeling
  – Inspiration and integration

Teaching activities

• Pre-classes preparation
  – Syllabus development and planning (scope and depth of teaching, strategies)
  – Continuous assessment weightings
  – Pace and course schedule
  – Textbook decision
• Classes in progress
  – Setting the expectations and standards
  – Knowing the students
  – Classroom teaching
Teaching activities

- Out-of-classroom help
- Sensitive and adapt to students’ progress
- Guided study and exploration (projects)

• Post-classes actions
  - Course evaluation and review
  - Improvements and syllabus update to be made next time
  - Developing new courses

Teaching effectiveness

• Am I an effective teacher?
  - Am I explaining the subject materials clearly?
  - Am I delivering an appropriate amount and depth of the subject materials?
  - Are my assessments effective in helping students understand the subject materials?
  - Have students acquired basic understanding of the subject materials?
  - Are students more interested in the subject area after taking the course?
Teaching effectiveness

- External factors:
  - Subject contents: foundational subjects vs. our expert areas.
  - Program levels: MSc vs. BAC and BScIT vs. HDIS
  - Identity: Our own students vs. others
  - Scale: Small classes vs. large classes
- Effective in teaching small MSc classes and my expert areas
- Effective in teaching

Teaching effectiveness

- SFQ and my own surveys
- Talking to students throughout the course
- Class attendance
- Class participation
- My own reflection
My fundamental beliefs

• My students are my students (if I refuse to compromise my role).
• My students are likable (if I choose to).
• My students can be motivated (if I am motivated and persevere).
• My students are capable of mastering the subject materials (if I teach effectively).
• My students are my partners in teaching (if I allow them to be).
• I am solely responsible for my students’ learning outcomes.

Some (in)effective approaches

• Stick to the teaching schedule and the rhythm of teaching.
  – Slow-start and quick-end?
  – Slow-start and accelerates gradually?
  – Level-off?
• Direct students’ learning via assessments
  – Coursework (assignments, projects, tests, laboratories) and final examinations
  – Beware of the project topics and assessments
  – Why not open-book tests and examinations?
Some (in)effective approaches

• Take up your own tutorials.

• Teacher-student interaction
  – Give our attention to individual students.
  – Facilitate students’ active participation.
  – Create problems and controversies.

• Student-student interaction
  – Facilitate students’ learning from each other through study groups.
  – Ask students to present solutions to assignment problems.
  – Group discussions for MSc subjects.

Some (in)effective approaches

• Be a little creative in the delivery

• Transparent teaching
  – No information hiding
  – Explain rationales.
  – Open-book examination
  – Cultivate a people-engaging atmosphere.

• Grow and trim your courses
  – In terms of content and experiences
  – Students are more equipped.
  – Some domain knowledge undergoes dramatic changes.
Conclusions

• Teaching rightfully demands our full dedication.
• Teaching is not a job, but a commitment in
  – teaching our students regardless, and teaching
    ourselves.
  – A commitment does not allow giving-up.
• Our passion for teaching matters most.
  – “We all live under the same sky, but we don’t
    have the same horizon.” Konrad Adenauer
• Ultimate destiny: retire IN our teaching.