Abstract

This paper describes how undergraduate students in their junior and senior year seeking a bachelor's degree at a regionally accredited university perceive their professors' instructional attributes and behaviors. The examination concentrated on two critical zones of discernment concerning professors' instructional practices. Participants were asked what teaching attributes contributed to their academic success, and teaching attributes did not contribute to their academic success. The paper is derived from a study that sought to identify any obstacles faced by the participating undergraduate students and their faculty as indicators of how to mitigate such obstacles.

The study included a review of an extensive collection of research on student perspectives and how those perspectives may reflect on the evaluation of the adequacy of various teaching techniques and academic practices. The study found that the instructional attributes that participating students reported that they value include: agreeableness (concern and regard for students), accommodation (accessibility), and receptiveness to others' conclusions (support of class inquiries and exchange), yet all instructors do not exhibit each of these attributes.

The study identified the positive teaching characteristics of professors in one setting and how these professors interact with their students in a manner that captures students' attention and promotes teaching and learning in the classroom. It also suggests attributes that professors in this setting and discipline may wish to elevate to better connect with students in the classroom.

Introduction

In a perfect world, faculty would exhibit outstanding teaching attributes regardless of topic of instruction or student population. In reality, educators differ starting with one instructive

foundation then on to the next. For instance, some universities and many colleges require that faculty have acquired the minimum of a master's degree in their subject area, while others may require a terminal degree, such as doctoral degree. This typically changes as indicated by accreditation requirements. In more profession-driven higher education programs, there might also be some industry-specific stipulations. For instance, faculty may need at least 10 years of industry experience in addition to meeting degree requirements. While faculty qualifications are vetted, there are no guarantees that credentialed faculty are good teachers with instructional attributes and behaviors that resonate with students.

In view of research on college instruction and learning led by Chickering and Gamson (1987), a good teacher:

> (1) empowers contacts amongst undergraduate students and personnel; (2) creates correspondence and collaboration amongst undergraduate students; (3) utilizes dynamic learning procedures; (4) gives relevant criticism; (5) utilizes class time efficiently; (6) imparts elevated requirements; and (7) regards assorted abilities and methods for learning. (p. 43)

Suggestions of good educational approaches include: freshman courses on imperative subjects educated by senior faculty; learning gatherings of five to seven undergraduate students who meet routinely amid class to tackle issues set forth by the teacher; faculty knowledge, understanding, and utilization of organized activities, exchanges, group tasks, and autonomous investigation; and computer-aided approaches. Faculty in higher education may have broad teaching knowledge but may still lack high quality teaching skills depending on where, when, and how they were trained to teach, if they even were.

A “good teacher” is characterized as one that can hold undergraduate students’ attention and convey the course material in a fascinating and connecting way, while meeting all course goals and objectives. In his article “A Good Teacher,” Drazen (2006) stated that he was lucky to have good teachers in secondary school, as well as in college and beyond. “In school, the moving figure was a teacher of an electrical building, who showed me to utilize my thinking capacity to take care of issues and how to utilize the answers for enhancing our comprehension of physical procedures” (Drazen, 2006, p. 13). This is an example of what a student saw as powerful and fundamental for their learning, and what the student could potentially take away from a class with a good educator. Further:

> I discovered that on the off chance that I didn’t comprehend the issue, I couldn’t locate a genuine answer for it. In medicinal school, I was sufficiently fortunate to examine with a teacher of physiology who showed me that the scan for truth implied amassing an understanding that would let one reason from perceptions to main drivers. Every one of these instructors was supporting in that they requested the best from us and would not make due with less; they had the blessing to propel their undergraduate students. (Drazen, 2006, p. 1,374)

Drazen (2006) made a strong case of how great instructors can impact their students. The way that Drazen (2006) made the association between inspiration and powerful instructing is

Author’s Quality Teaching Attributes (QTA) Model

The researcher created the five categories based on the outcome from the data with the exception of one category: Generativity. Generativity is a term coined by psychologist Erik Erikson in 1950 and has to do with transferability of knowledge and experience to the next generation. According to McLeod (2013):

> During middle adulthood (ages 40 to 65), we establish our careers, settle down within a relationship, begin our own families and develop a sense of being a part of the bigger picture. We give back to society through raising our children, being productive at work, and becoming involved in community activities and organizations. By failing to achieve these objectives, we become stagnant and feel unproductive. Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of care. (p. 4)

The researcher created Figure 3 to illustrate the quality teaching attributes of good professors in accordance to the student perceptions in this study. The researcher coded the categories of the quality teaching in the following manner: (R) Relationship Skills, (E) Emotional State, (G) Generativity (Erikson, 1950), (S) Self-awareness, (C) Competence.

The study can be applied to various educational sectors and may be useful for improving broader higher education functions and practices. Students are able to learn more efficiently when their teachers fulfill their expectations, and teachers will also feel more satisfied upon seeing their students working hard and being dedicated to their learning. This will have an overall positive impact on students and teachers in a variety of disciplines across higher education. It may also influence other institutions to carry out similar research.

This research was carried out as a mean to identify student expectations and needs of their professors. The questions asked in this study were open-ended in order to achieve honest and accurate results. The results, though obtained from a small sample, are transferable to the broader population. Previous research has demonstrated that students recognize almost immediately whether their instructor qualifies for their attention, has the capacity to be in charge of and engage the class, motivate them to study, and in the end, be a role model for those who would like to become educators or future industry professionals. The qualities identified from

earlier research speak of classroom and behavioral control in certain situations and the abilities to: clarify different perspective to enhance student comprehension, inspire the best residing within each student, captivate students and encourage freedom of thought and discussion, and finally, help students bridge the gap between theoretical material and real-world application. Students seek out high quality, that is effective and "good" instructors when they are able to, given they are not simply assigned certain courses in their academic programs, which sometimes they are. The teacher is given a chance to deliver. If the high-performance delivery does not occur in the classroom, students' attitude toward that teacher will change. This may also influence student behavior in the classroom, as students may develop less serious behavior toward the subject as well as toward the instructor.

References

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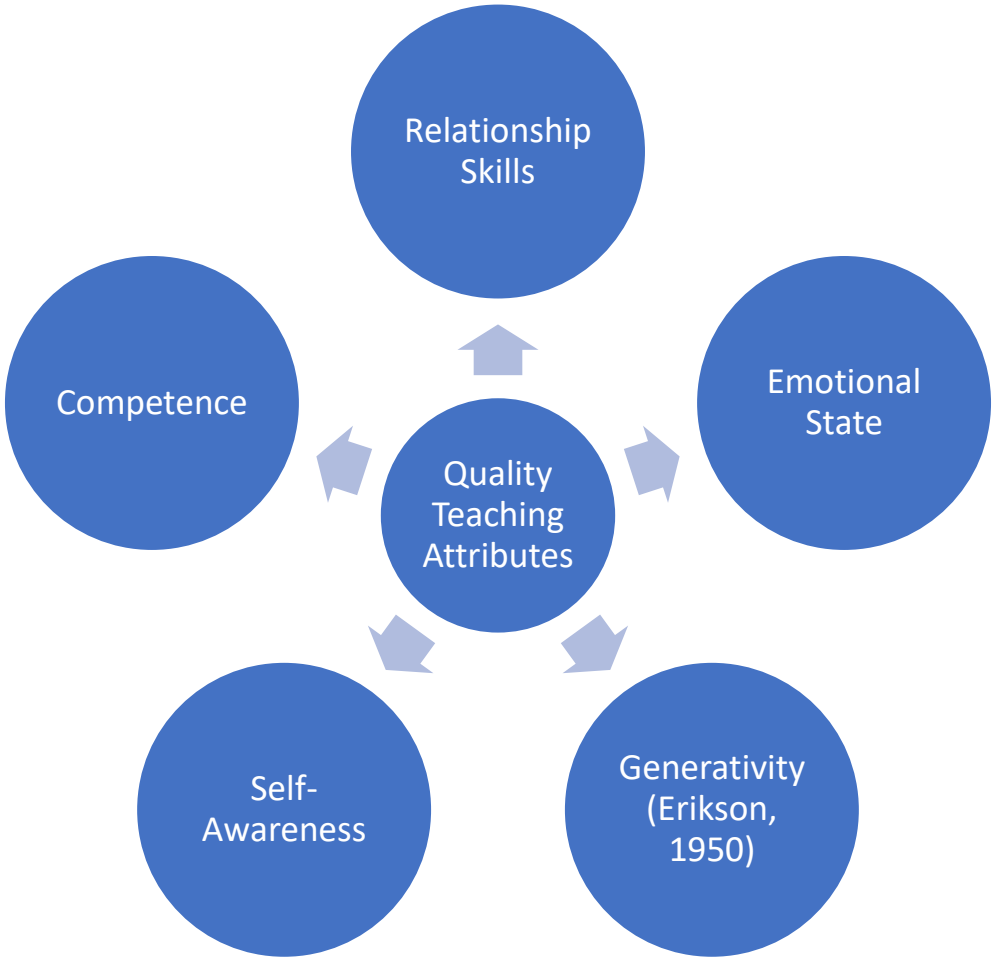


Figure 2. Quality teaching attributes.

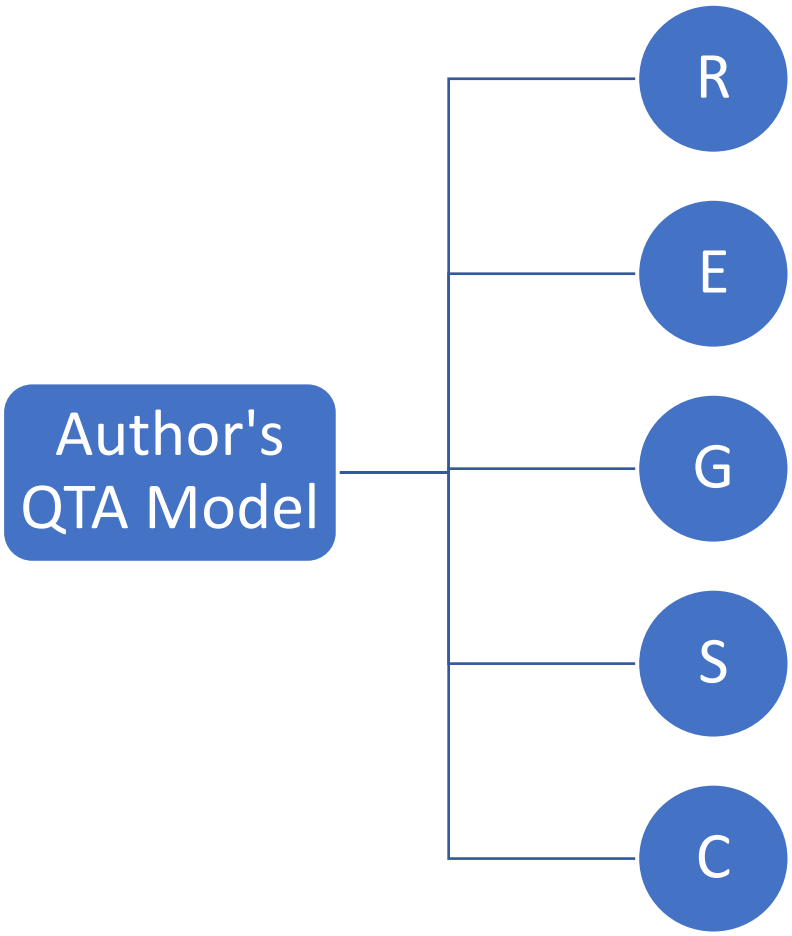


Figure 3. Author's quality teaching attributes (QTA) model.