Student Evaluation of Teachers

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[Abstract] Little has been written about what students in general and students in Japan in particular think constitutes good and bad teaching. There has been much written about what academics believe makes a good teacher, but this survey of college students reveals that these perceptions are not always the same. Forty-eight students completed an open-ended questionnaire on a variety of questions related to their experiences of high school education. The results showed that students put far more importance on the personality of the teacher, especially kindness/caring and humour than does most of the literature on the subject. In terms of actual teaching, students value teachers who can make classes interesting and the content understandable. Students also regard teacher enthusiasm for their subject as being important, as well as expert knowledge and intelligence. That the students should feel able to ask a teacher for clarification should they not understand the class and for the teacher to be approachable was also an attribute of a good teacher. Students' descriptions of bad teachers and bad teaching were in many ways the mirror opposites of what makes up good teaching. The biggest problems students face are classes that are boring/uninteresting, or those that are pitched above the students level, and therefore incomprehensible. Students also dislike teachers who have a tendency to get angry, or who are unfair, or who look down on students.

[Keywords] good teaching, kindness, interesting classes

In the last thirty years, student evaluation of teachers has become a common and essential part of education in North America, Europe and Australia (Abrami et al. 1990, Aleamon 1987, Centra & Gauhatz 2000, Greenwald 1997, Marsh 1984, Wilson 1999, Peterson et al., 2000). Because of the impact of these evaluations on teachers' chances of promotion it has become a very contentious subject. At the heart of this problem is the argument that students cannot accurately evaluate a teacher's ability to teach, as they themselves have not been trained as teachers. Whilst students may not be able to pinpoint what is going wrong in terms of the mechanics of the class, they can alert the teacher to the fact that they are having problems understanding the class, and also indicate whether the class is holding their interest.

Teachers are also concerned that student ratings may exert an undue influence on teachers in terms of how they grade, with teachers issuing 'inflated grades' in the hope that they themselves will be judged more favourably (Chambers and Schmitt 2002). The debate on the fairness of student evaluations still rages on although most research indicates that the fears of teachers are largely unfounded, and that students do evaluate teachers reliably, regardless of how they themselves are graded.

The advantage of seeking student feedback, however, is that it is the students who witness and experience what a teacher does week in week out, and as such they are in an unrivalled position to know how they feel about the subject. Inspectors who visit classes for short-term evaluations do not know what goes on in the classroom on a weekly basis. It is quite possible, if not probable, that they witness atypical classes, as the teacher will prepare the classes more thoroughly than might usually be the case, and perhaps change his/her attitude towards the students when another adult is in the classroom. In terms of reliability therefore, student feedback is better.

There is another important point, which is not given enough attention. Whilst much has been written on what constitutes good teaching from the viewpoint of educators and academics (McEwan 2002, Stephenson 2001, Young and Shaw 1999, Kreber and Cranton 2000, Lecouter & Delfabbro 2001, Goodwin & Stephens 1993), comparatively little has been written on what students believe makes teachers and their teaching, good.
As the consumers of education, students are those who are best able to measure the impact that teachers make on them. What an adult expert thinks is excellent teaching may not necessarily fit students’ criteria. Centra (1975 cited by Petersen), ‘showed that adults are very poor raters of even college-age student views, let alone those of children and adolescents.’ It is also possible that academics are more concerned with those things that can more easily be measured, rather than those in the affective domain that are less easily quantified. When students are asked to fill in questionnaires on evaluating teachers, they are rating statements chosen by others, so it is possible that their own beliefs are not represented.

Over the years I have been struck at how an individual’s favourite teacher and best subject have been the same. This anecdotal evidence suggests that the influence a teacher has on a student’s future is quite profound. It also stands to reason that seeking students’ opinions is beneficial not only in so far as they can indicate to a teacher if they understand what is going in class, but also as it gives the students a voice in their own education.

The concern with student ratings then, is more with how they are used, (in terms of administration and promotion) rather than on their value as a form of feedback for enabling a teacher to improve their performance. Whether student evaluations should be used for such matters as promotion is a vexing issue, but as a diagnostic tool for teachers to improve their own teaching, student feedback would seem to be an invaluable resource.

It is also the case, as Alemoni reports (1987), that most research and use of the student rating forms has occurred at the college and university level, and it is possible therefore, that the needs of students at high school level are different, as the needs and expectations of students will change as they mature.

Despite the limitations of students’ feedback, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. In the words of Wilson, ‘the views of students may be prejudiced, mistaken, superficial, immature, but whatever their validity, they exist and exert a powerful influence on the effectiveness of the course.’

I. Subjects

The participants in this study were 48 first-year Japanese university students in a nursing college. Only one respondent was male. That those taking part were university students is an important factor, as there would seem to be differences in terms of what students of different ages expect from their teachers. At younger ages, some research has suggested that personality is a more pertinent factor in good teaching than teaching techniques. Peterson (2000), in research on elementary high school students’ views, argues that students are capable of distinguishing between a teacher they like and a teacher who improves their learning. ‘Student surveys are not merely popularity contests; students distinguish between merely liking a teacher and one who enables their learning. While students can distinguish between a teacher who supports learning and one who treats them well, this study suggests that the former is more important to older students and the latter is more important to younger ones.’ (p. 148)

The limitations of the research include the fact that as the responses were written in English, some aspects might have been difficult for students to express, and that the sample size was relatively small.

II. Method

The students were asked to fill in a questionnaire asking about their feelings towards subjects and teachers at high school. The questions asked were,

What was your favourite subject?
What did you think of the teacher of that class? Why?
What was your best subject at high school?
What did you think of the teacher of that class? Why?
What was your worst subject at high school? Why?
What did you think of the teacher of that class? Why?
Think of the teachers you have liked most. Why did you like them? What did they have in common?
Think of the best teachers you have had. What made them good? What did they have in common?
Think of the teachers you disliked. Why didn’t you like them? What did they have in common?

The responses to these questions have been categorised into four areas. Those that relate to the teachers’ personality for what students feel are good and bad teachers, and in terms of what students feel to be good and bad teaching behaviours.
There is inevitably an element of subjectivity in interpreting these comments, but on the whole it was not problematical. As one might expect, a student tends to like or dislike a teacher or subject either because of their relationship with the teacher, or because of how the subject is taught (although this is not always the case). It was, however, clear what students believe constitute good and bad teachers, and good and bad teaching.

As this was an open-ended questionnaire, some students would give, for example, four different reasons why they liked a teacher, whereas another would only give one. Consequently, the responses are recorded only in terms of how often an attribute or teaching style was referred to, and therefore the results should not be interpreted as being anything more than suggestive.

III. Results

Influence of the teacher on students’ best and worst subjects

The link between the students’ favourite teacher and their best subject was not as pronounced as anticipated. Of the 48 students in this survey, 10 students indicated that their favourite teacher was also the teacher of their best subject. It cannot be said with any certainty if it was this liking of the teacher that inspired the student to be good at the subject, but it is a possible hypothesis.

A more intriguing finding was the link between a student’s least popular teacher and the student’s worst subject. In 19 cases the teacher that a student least liked was also the teacher of their worst subject. Again, the reason for this link can only be speculation. It might be because the student was poor at the subject that they disliked the teacher, but it is just as conceivable that the teacher turned the student away from the subject. McEwan quotes Sanders and Rivers (1996, p. xiii), who found that ‘most depressing of all is that ineffective teachers damage students and diminish learning’ and Stronge (2002, p. 18), who suggests that, ‘less effective teachers may actually extinguish students’ interest in the subject’. Whatever the reason for these correlations, they seem to be more than coincidental.

Good teaching

What makes a good teacher?

In the questionnaire the students were asked to describe their favourite teacher and best teacher separately, (if they were not the same), and as would be expected, favourite teachers related more to the teacher’s personality traits, whereas the best teacher was more often described in terms of how he/she taught, in addition to having the same personality traits.

For the following section the traits and behaviours of the students’ favourite and best teachers have been combined.

Kindness/Caring

Not surprisingly, the most common response to this question was that a teacher should be ‘kind’ (28 mentions). This in itself is hardly surprising, and is often taken as a ‘given’ in academic work, but to these students this is the key element. Hadley & Hadley (1996) in a survey of 165 Japanese students found that kindness was regarded as the most important attribute of a good teacher. In research in America, Peterson (2000, p. 148) was seemingly surprised when his research at high schools revealed ‘an unexpectedly strong sentiment on the part of students for caring and respectful treatment of pupils’.

Most rating forms do not use such terminology as kindness, perhaps because it is so difficult to define, but when given free expression it is the quality that students seem to value above all others.

The philosopher Bertrand Russell, writing in the 1930’s also regarded ‘kindliness’ as the most important aspect of all. Cited by Hare (2002, p. 494–5) he wrote that ‘much the most important of all qualifications in a teacher is the feeling of spontaneous affection toward those whom he teaches’. He continued to say ‘natural affection, or vital warmth, prompts the teacher to treat each child with reverence, developing a relationship of friendliness rather than hostility as the students begin to realise that their teacher is working with them, in a spirit of enquiry to achieve a common purpose, and helping them flourish as human beings.’

By analysing students’ responses it is possible to illustrate what behaviours constitute kindness. Some are more general in terms of daily interactions and others in terms of behaviours in class. It should be possible for teachers, once aware of such actions, to put greater
emphasis upon them in their own teaching.

General attributes of kind teachers included the following.

- Caring about students; wanting them to succeed
- Thinking about the students’ position (workload, level of understanding etc)
- Working hard for the benefit of the students
- Giving up free time for the benefit of students (attending school events, extra help etc.)
- Thinking well of students
- Trusting students
- Making sure students are happy
- Being interested in students’ opinions

Stronge (2000, p. 14) believes the role of caring, means, ‘bringing out the best in students through affirmation and encouragement’. This attitude would seem to be invaluable. Particularly when students are younger, but perhaps at all ages, students need to build confidence that they are good at any subject. Conversely, negative feedback from a teacher can make a student believe that they are poor at a subject. Stronge expands (p. 30) on this point saying,

‘Effective teachers believe in their students and expect all of them to learn, regardless of their skill levels and starting points. Moreover, effective teachers believe that students can learn’; therefore, the students do learn. Unfortunately, this self-fulfilling prophecy works both ways. For example if a teacher believes that students are low performing, unreachable, and unable to learn, the students perform poorly, seem unreachable, and do not learn. (p. 30)’

Stephenson (2001, p. 2) also emphasises how damaging it is for students to get negative feedback, ‘...when students truly believe that they have little or no ability in an academic (or any other) domain, they tend to assume this deficiency is stable over a long period of time and largely changeable. They are inclined to stop trying and to give up - a phenomenon known as learned helplessness.’ As all teachers know it is very easy to pigeon-hole students according to ability, and to expect lower standards from less able students, or poor behaviour etc. and as a consequence, students ‘live down’ to this perception.

One of the traits of bad teachers, according to this survey, is that teachers are guilty of favouritism towards the more gifted students, and those students who are not in this category feel this neglect keenly. Givvin (2001, p. 324) expands on this point, ‘initial perceptions can also bias what teachers see and how they interpret student behaviour. For instance, a teacher who believes that a student is lazy may not notice when the students exerts considerable effort. Thus, unless teachers make a conscious effort to reassess their judgements of students, their expectations and perceptions of students may not adjust as a consequence of changes in students’ behaviours over time or differences across situations.’

To help ourselves as teachers and to help students achieve more, it is vital that students can make fresh starts. This point also illustrates how important ‘formative’ evaluation is. If a student receives only ‘summative’ feedback, with no indication of what to do to improve, it is hardly surprising if they ‘give up’ on a subject in which they do not do well. Although it is very demanding for a teacher to prepare individual formative feedback for students, not only does it enable a student to know what they are doing wrong and how to improve, but it also shows that the teacher is concerned about them as an individual.

In terms of classroom teaching actions, the following were mentioned.

- Approachability
- Not being critical of students’ mistakes so that students are not too frightened to ask questions
- Rephrasing when students didn’t understand an explanation
- Helping with problems of non-academic nature
- Being able to trust the teacher
- Encouraging students
- Appreciating students’ efforts
- Attending school functions

These are clearly important elements in good teaching. As can be seen in the actions of poor teachers, students need to feel able to question the teacher if they are unsure of what to do or if they do not understand. Talking to students is also the simplest way of obtaining feedback on whether the students are following what is being taught.

If a teacher is critical of students when responding to questions it is inevitable that the students will cease to ask them. Russell notes, ‘if the student’s own emerging independence is to be nurtured, criticism by the teacher must never be carried to such lengths as timidity in self-
expression’. Irony and sarcasm were mentioned as
teacher behaviours that they did not like.

Another interesting result of this survey was that
students were appreciative of teachers who ‘pushed’
them. They valued teachers who demanded high stan-
dards and were critical of those who were too lax or
who could not control a noisy class.

Humour/Making the class fun

The next most mentioned attribute of good teachers
was ‘humour’ (26 mentions) or the ability to make classes
‘fun’. Although this might seem a rather trivial aspect of
being a good teacher, in terms of empathy, it shows that
the teacher is concerned about the students. It also
shows that the teacher is aware of students as individu-
als. Hadley & Hadley (1996) found that Japanese stu-
dents value this highly, as did Cothran (2003), with
American high school students. He found that students
were more likely to ‘go along’ with other demands/
requests of the teacher if the lesson was fun. Medgyes
(2002, p. 5) points out that among other things humour,

- Brings students closer together
- Releases tension
- Generates a happy classroom
- Enhances motivation
- Develops creative thinking

According to the students in this study, teachers tell-
ing anecdotes from their own lives and about their own
experiences enrich the classroom and can create a
positive feeling towards the subject being studied. Had-
ley and Hadley (1996) believe that story telling is particu-
lar feature of the ‘kohai-sempai’ relationship, though it
might also be the mere fact that the teacher wishes to
tell the students about his/her own life, which shows
that the teacher treats the students with respect and
consequently this is appreciated. Cothran (2003), in a
survey of high school students in America, quotes a
student giving the following advice to teachers, ‘let them
know you’re a real person’. Teachers often feel it is
important to create social distance between themselves
and their students, but Cothran (2003) found that stu-
dents felt this to be a negative state of affairs and more
likely to lead to discipline problems.

Enthusiasm for the subject

The third most mentioned quality (15 mentions) of a
good teacher was that they should be ‘enthusiastic about
the subject’. In this choice, the students are in agreement
with what academics feel makes a good university
teacher. The importance of enthusiasm cannot be over-
stated, as it is also very likely that ‘interesting classes’
do depend to some extent on the teacher being enthusias-
tic. Students can sense when a teacher is ‘going through
the motions’ and are not really interested in teaching.
Cothran (2003, p. 439) quotes an American high school
student as saying, ‘I feel—‘if the teacher doesn’t want to
be there, they’re just there because they need a job then
I’m not gonna put any effort in either’. This attitude
shows that having enthusiasm is a part of showing
respect for students.

Expert knowledge/Being clever

The fourth most common feature of a good teacher
was having ‘expert knowledge’ (14 mentions). Students
are evidently aware of when they feel the teacher knows
the subject and when they don’t. Young and Shaw (1999)
found when 912 university students rated 25 descriptions
of effective teachers; subject matter knowledge was
regarded as the most important. This criteria is perhaps
not quite so essential for teachers at high school or
elementary school, but it is clear that students do feel it
to be important.

What teaching behaviours make a class good?
Making the class interesting

This was mentioned 15 times. In part this relates to
‘being enthusiastic about the subject’ but can also be
broken down into more tangible components.

According to the students making a class interesting
includes the following.

- Individualistic/memorable style of teaching

This is perhaps the one aspect students mentioned
that it is difficult for teachers to ‘do’ anything about. It
is difficult for a teacher to be something that they are
not, but the other aspects mentioned are rectifiable.

- Making the class seem relevant

By relating the content of the class to the students’
reality, students will be able to see why they are learn-
ing about it. Too often students cannot see ‘why’ they
need to learn about some aspect of a subject, but the
better teachers are able to make their students see the
relevance. By being aware of the age and interests of
students teachers should be able to achieve this. Often
the use of practical examples that connect with a stu-
dents’ everyday life will illustrate the point clearly.

- Asking questions to students so that all stu-
dents are involved in the class

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Questioning is generally regarded as a critical component of teaching and learning. Not only does it provide the teacher with immediate feedback on whether or not students understand the class, but it also encourages students to pay attention as they might be called upon to respond. In the words of Stronge (2002, p. 46), ‘questions are most valuable when they receive responses—correct or incorrect—because responses encourage student engagement: demonstrate understanding or misconception, and further discussion. Questions should be considered carefully and prepared in advance of a lesson to ensure that they support the goals that emphasize the key points, along with maintaining appropriate levels of difficulty and complexity.’ By engaging students in an interactive process, it is thought that students learning will be enhanced. It should also help stop students falling asleep.

- Teaching about life not just the subject
- Teaching in different styles

Teaching in different styles is bound to create more interest than always teaching the same way. Students have different learning styles, and a variety of styles is more likely to help a mix of student styles. As Stronge (2002) says, ‘effective teachers routinely combine instructional techniques that involve individual, small-group, and whole-class instruction.’ It would seem that typically most teachers will adapt a ‘lecture style’ approach, but this is not without its critics. Stronge (2002, p. 44) says of this style, ‘it often overloads and overwhelsms students with data, making it likely that they will confuse the facts presented’. Due to class sizes of forty or more, a lecture style or having students work individually is more easily managed than pair or group work, but the students in this survey seem to prefer a more inter-active approach to learning, as the following list indicates.

- Giving students the chance to do things by themselves
- Allowing students the opportunity to ask questions
- Challenging students to think and develop their own view
- Doing group work so that students can discuss and argue with each other
- Free exchanges of opinion
- Teachers and students studying together

There is also the possibility that students can learn from one another. What a teacher may not be able to explain to a student, another student might be able to do. If students are mature enough to work in groups, they also give both the teacher and student the opportunity to ask questions in a less intimidating atmosphere than in front of a whole class.

- Interesting content

Although teachers may not feel it is their responsibility to entertain students, if they present the lesson in a novel way, or include some memorable aspect, students are more likely to remember whatever the key points might be. Story-telling, humour, questioning, student participation will all make the class seem more interesting, even if the content itself is dry.

Making the class easy to understand

This was mentioned 9 times and in some ways follows on from making the class interesting, as by making a class interesting to students it will also be understandable. Pitching a class at an appropriate level is obviously a key element to teaching from all perspectives, and yet in response to the question of ‘what makes a bad teacher’ it is clear that this is a common failing.

As mentioned earlier, testing plays an important part in teaching. The purpose of tests (or quizzes) is to enable the teacher to find out how much of what is being ‘taught’ is actually being understood.

Stronge (2002, p. 55) says of effective teachers, ‘they monitor student progress informally through such techniques as scanning and circulating around the room, or simply talking to individuals or small groups of students about specific tasks or activities. These teachers make notes about difficulties they observe and spend time thinking about how they can better reach students.’

Clarity of explanation/Rephrasing

Six students mentioned clarity of explanation. This goes in tandem with making the class easy to understand. One individual mentioned ‘making the lesson relevant’ which indicates that teachers should try to relate abstract ideas to the reality of the students. According to Horan (1991 cited in Hatvai et al. (2001, p. 70)) exemplar teachers, ‘make course content relevant to students by giving examples and connecting course goals to the expectations and experiences of their students.’ Five students noted the importance of teachers being able to re-explain something in a different way, as being an example of good teaching. Having many examples to illustrate theoretical points in particular should benefit
student comprehension.

**Bad teaching**

Little research, if any, has been done specifically on what makes a bad teacher. By implication, those aspects that are contrary to ‘good teaching’ are poor, but again, there are some interesting revelations from the students.

**What teaching behaviours make a class bad?**

**Boring classes**

The biggest problem according to 25 students was boring classes. Five described this, as ‘the class was sleepy’. Whilst this might be due to such outside influences as the weather, or having a class following lunch or a sport’s class, getting students to get out of their seats and to move around might prevent sleepiness which is not teaching induced.

Some specific entries that can be categorised under this heading are related to teaching styles. Six students complained that such teachers ‘just wrote on the blackboard’, another six that the teacher ‘only read the textbook’ and another six that they only ‘learnt things by heart’. Not only would these teaching styles seem to negatively affect student motivation, but also they are not conducive to effective learning.

Howard and Henney (1998) say of university students that they ‘learn more when they take an active role in their learning seeing themselves as engaged participants in their education rather than passive participants of knowledge from experts’. This point is borne out by the comments of the students here.

**Classes were too difficult/Could not understand the teacher**

This is not a surprising complaint, with 16 mentions of this problem. Included in the comments was the difficulty students had in understanding the teacher’s explanations. According to Stronge (2002, p. 4), research has shown that ‘students taught by teachers with greater verbal ability learn more than those taught by teachers with lower verbal ability’. To compensate for this, if teachers prepare their explanations, illustrative examples and instructions before the class, they may find that their students are better able to grasp what they are saying.

**What makes a bad teacher?**

Teacher was always angry/Too strict

Students make the distinction between being strict, which is perceived as a good teaching attribute, and ‘too strict’, which is seen as being unreasonable. Most commonly referred to instances are those in which the teacher does not even listen to a student’s point of view, but immediately assumes that the student is guilty of some misdemeanour. One student in describing the way good teachers rebuke students summed this up very succinctly in saying, ‘when they told us off it was to make us great, not to release their stress’.

**Favouritism/Lack of fairness**

Students are acutely aware of what they perceive to be a teacher’s bias in favour of ‘better’ students. As mentioned before the danger of a teacher having low expectations of lesser students is likely to crystallize their difficulties and to make them feel inadequate in the subject. If a teacher keeps a record by marking the register every time they ask a student to answer a question they are likely to avoid the risk of teaching to favoured students.

Students are also keenly aware of ‘double standards’ in which the teacher’s response to a student is dependent upon who asks the question, rather than the question itself. Lack of constancy over time is another issue that students feel makes a bad teacher (Cothran et al. 2003). They are obviously aware of what occurred before, and if the response is different to a previous situation, they lose confidence in the teacher and believe that the teacher is unfair. At younger ages particularly, students might not be able to overcome such slight, imagined or otherwise, and a seemingly innocuous occurrence could turn a student against a teacher, and perhaps even the subject too.

**Indifference to students/Looking down on students**

This again emphasises how important the basic human relationship between the teacher and the student is. That a teacher should respect the student is imperative. Peterson et al. (2000, p. 150), note how important this aspect is; ‘student views of the teacher are important for perceptions within a school system and as accurate indicators of performance. Our advice to teachers is to be concerned with relations to students as important people. While this can be difficult with large classes, or multiple classes with large numbers of students during the day, these characteristics are important
for student judgement about teacher quality. This last point is central as teachers may often feel ‘too busy’ to devote the time to students that they need. As the role of record keeping and reports grows, so the most fundamental relationship in teaching gets squeezed. Having time for students and treating them with care and dignity is of paramount importance in the eyes of students. If teachers do this, then they may find that students’ performance in class also improves, as well as their own rapport with the students.

IV. Conclusion

The opinions of the students show that a pre-requisite of good teaching is that the teacher has a kind and respectful attitude towards the students. Students are also aware that these alone do not make a teacher good, but if they are in place, then students will be receptive to the teacher. In the classroom, students share the most commonly held beliefs of researchers into classroom practice, that classes should be interesting, that the teacher should have good knowledge of their subject and be enthusiastic about their subject.

The biggest problems that teachers seem to have, according to the students, are in pitching the level of the class beyond the ability level of the students, and in not being able to engage the students’ interest. If teachers make a point of obtaining feedback, either through seeking students’ opinions via feedback forms, or by monitoring class activities, they should soon become aware of this problem. To improve the interest level of the class, teachers could experiment with different styles of teaching, which involve the students in actively taking part. Students are also appreciative of teachers telling interesting anecdotes, and of the use of humour in the class.

The students in this study were asked to think about high school teachers, but some elements of good teaching would seem to true for all ages. In concluding a review of the literature on exemplary university teachers, Hatvia et al. (2001, p. 701) concluded, ‘in sum, “teachers are well prepared and organised, present the material clearly, stimulate students’ interest, engagement, and motivation in studying the material through their enthusiasm/expressiveness, have positive rapport with students, show high expectations of them, encourage them, and generally maintain a positive classroom environment.’

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【要旨】 学術的な視点での望ましい教師の要素に関する出版物は多くあるが、一般的な学生に対しての教授法の考え方に関する出版物は少数である。本研究では 48 名の大学生を対象に望ましい教師および望ましくない教師に関して様々な質問を自由回答式質問紙を用いて調査を行なった。その結果、学生は、講義の主題よりむしろ教師の人間性を重視し、特に教師の親切さや学生に対する熱心さ、ユーモアといった要素を重視する傾向にあった。実践的な教授法においては、学生は、教師が興味深くまた理解しやすい内容の講義を提供することに価値を置いていることが明らかになった。学生は教師が自身の専門分野に強い関心があり、それにその分野に卓越した知識を習得していること、知性的であることを望ましいと考えていった。また、学生は教師への近づきやすさ・質問のしやすさも望ましい教師の必要な要素としていた。学生が記述した望ましくない教師および教授法は、望ましい教師の回答に比べ多岐にわたった。代表的なものは、講義が退屈であること、興味が薄れないこと、難易度が高いこと、そして包括的ではないことであった。学生の好まない教師の要素は、怒りやすい、公平ではない、そして学生を見下すといった行動を伴う教師であった。このことから既存の望ましい教師の要素と学生が望ましいと考える教師の認識は常に一致するわけではないことが明らかになった。