

Successful Teaching from the Viewpoint of Islam

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Received: May 14, 2015

Accepted: August 27, 2015

ABSTRACT

Being a teacher is from the affairs playing an important role in human's life. Teachers determine the life path and future course of the students through a massive impact on them. If the teacher could be able to take step according to the society's culture in his/ her teaching, he/ she will take a significant step in their bliss.

Teaching characteristics are included in the matters requiring a significant attention. This paper aims to examine the teaching characteristics from the viewpoint of Shahid Sani and then to get familiar with them as more and better as possible and to access some criteria for teachers' teaching and evaluating them. Shahid Sani has explained and described these characteristics in three categories related to the teacher, the student and the lesson's session; and it is necessary to be aware of them in our Iranian – Islamic society, and it can also provide necessities of reaching a successful teaching.

KEYWORDS: learning, teaching, teacher, teaching characteristics, Shahid Sani

1- INTRODUCTION

Being a teacher is a great prophecy; whenever we want to choose something and depute someone to handle a part of our life, we would not be calm unless we are sure about the abilities and capabilities of that person or that thing.

We discuss about the characteristics of everything with each other; in fact, it is better for our humanity to deal with the teaching's characteristics and discuss and think about them significantly and indeed we must attempt to improve and amplify the characteristics of this holy profession wherever and in all situations we are whether in our words or our actions.

2- Problem's Definition and Expression

The teacher is the main administrant of education; he necessitates himself to recognize the skills and attitudes related to efflorescence of humans' entity; and humans' life and mind is the major thing which must be realizable for him. Howsoever the teacher thinks about humans, he attempts to educate them as well; therefore, the education matter and the teaching characteristics of the teacher will be different in different academies according to anthropology theories.

In all of mentioned theories and points related to the teaching characteristics, a good teacher may not be the person who follows the dictated and determined methods; but a good teacher is an artist who himself fined the effective means of growing his students and provides the ways of implementing it. To reach this goal, he uses the methods compatible with all the means he is dealing with, all the aims he is following, and the students he is working with deserve those methods; and the methods must be compatible with the philosophies he believes in them and also compatible with the time and place conditions which he is working in. Sometimes, he may choose methods which he himself does not believe in them and he knows that it is a bad method, but it has been the only thing he could do and pass away an emergency situation.

Improving the teachers' performance requires the improvement of quality of the characteristics which are mentioned as "teaching characteristics"; and the reason is that teaching is not just a skill which is obtained and completed through training, practice and correct implementation, but it is a profession (Carr, 2006, p 171).

3- Problem's Necessity and Importance

Undoubtedly, human force and particularly the teacher are from the most important factors forming educational environments. The teacher directs the students in correct path through realizing their talents, interests and abilities. Of course, such a role depends on the teacher's beliefs and knowledge. Teacher's behavior is very significant in the teaching process. His behavior and actions must be so great and good that be accepted as the pattern by his students (Shabani, 2001, p 19). Teaching is the mutual interaction or behavior of the student and the teacher based on teacher's regular and targeted design in order to change the student's behavior. This definition determines two particular characteristics for teaching: the first one is the mutual interaction or relationship between the teacher and student and the second one is the targeted activities of the teacher (Seyf, 1989, p 15).

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to investigate teaching characteristics from the viewpoint of Shahid Sani and also to access some criteria for teachers' teaching and evaluating them.

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4- Teaching Characteristics

Teaching characteristics are the set of principles and considerations which are considered by the teacher in his teaching in order for the teaching process to be effective as more as possible. Nowadays, it is not easy to mention the characteristics of teaching and teacher, because different societies with different viewpoints expect the teacher, and along with the modern developments they generally have modern expectations from the teacher and education and their expectations must be met.

4-1- Education

Life and education are two interdependent concepts for human. Maybe they have been synonyms because without one of them, the other is not possible. As far as the human is alive, he needs education; and he is educated in order to be able to live; because we say to live and our mean is to be compatible with the social and natural environment and unlike the other animals, human takes the power of this compatibility from nature lesser, and he requires learning from the others more.

Each educational system defines the education according to its favorable values. That is why the education has no united definition respected by all the people, but there are several definitions which each of them includes a determined value system in some way. The reasonableness of any definition of education is derived from the reasonableness of its underlying fundamental values and norms (Baqeri, 2010, page 99).

The word education includes growing something from some situation to another one in order for it to be completed and perfected. Also about the human, education only means along with perfection of him and reaching the situation of divine caliph; and since the humans must reach their real perfection in order to reach the divine caliph position, they require education because it is the only factor which takes human to the ultimate perfection (Sharafi, 2009, page 18).

In expressing the importance of education, it is enough to know that the realization of human essence depends on it, and the care which is bestowed to the humankind as the education is the necessary condition for human to reach the human perfection stage.

4-2- Learning

Training is the only means human has and he forms his professional life and makes his future with its help; in fact we have no future without training. Direct training which is also called active teaching or teaching all the class is a method of training in which the teacher presents the lessons and materials to all the class through direct teaching (Moise, Reynolds, 2005, page 23).

Learning is the change in behaviors which is created in human by experience (mutual impact of individual on the environment and environment on the individual) and includes the mental and physical skills and the thinking way. Learning is change in behavior. Learning is obtaining experiences. This kind of learning is specialized to the human.

4-3- Teaching

The word training means that the information is transferred from one person to another one. Through speculating in different verses of the Holy Quran, it becomes clear that no special method of transferring or giving the sciences to another person is considered, but the way of divine inspiration, verbal relationship among the humans, nonverbal relationship between the human and animals are all considered under the title of training concept (Baqeri, 2010, pages 102 – 104).

Teaching refers to the set of targeted activities which are done consciously in a nonrandom or non-accidental way. Activities causing teaching process are based on three basic pillars including the teacher, the student and the teaching materials; and whenever one of these pillars is absent, the teaching action does not occurs because of collapse in the relationship between these three factors.

Teaching is generally used as a synonym for “education”, because any kind of education needs learning by the educating person; but if we speculate in its common usage, we can see that it refers to a special activity which is done by a determined person called “teacher” and its meaning is to motivate and guide and provide the necessary facilities for learning process.

There are three necessary points in the teaching process: it must be targeted, the teaching method must be fitted to the target and aim, and the concepts must be presented or the changing conditions must be provided in the way that the teaching is compatible with the understanding and ability of the students. The scientific and personal characteristics of the teacher, the characteristics of students, plan and structure of the educational system, educational equipment and space are effective in teaching process (Sha'bani, 2001, page 105).

4-4- Teacher

The human force and particularly the teacher are from the most important factors forming the educational environments which appropriately equip the educational environment by identifying facilities and it creates the appropriate educational environment. Undoubtedly, factors such as teacher's personality, his scientific and experimental backgrounds, family and social relationships and backgrounds of the students, scientific backgrounds and individual characteristics of the students, educational principles and regulations and generally, the society which the teacher and the students live influence the teaching quality (Sha'bani, 2011, page 19).

Teachers are the starting point of any educational development. They are the main agents of education because what the students obtain, from characteristics, qualities, and scientific, cultural, social, moral and spiritual merits are under the influence of teachers. Teachers play the central role in the learning – teaching approach because of their attitude about teaching, their beliefs of the educational matters, their knowledge of the subject, their professional skills in adjusting and organizing the curriculum content, their personal characteristics, and their perception of the current conditions. On the other hand, due to the fact that the teacher is one of the rings of the educational system chain and is considered as its most

influential element, any kind of weakness and fatigue on his performance causes the breakup of this chain and failure in achieving the education's goals.

5- Teaching Qualification

Basically, the teacher's behavior is an important tool for education and training. It is a silent tool which is included in his official duty i.e. teaching. In fact, teaching is the same training and training is the same teaching; and it is the mind's work to separate them in order to recognize them.

Once upon a time it was a common idea that anyone who knew something could teach it, that is to say that people considered the knowledge of teacher as the teaching condition. Nowadays, the scholars believe that just having knowledge is not enough for teaching, but there must be the learning conditions. However the skill and proficiency in the field of teaching is considered as one of the most important factors of this job, but doing it is only possible through obtaining some skills in presenting the material which is taught.

The purpose of teacher knowledge is all the knowledge, attitudes and skills which through obtaining them, the teacher may help the physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual development of the learners in the education and training process. Normally, qualification is created in the trainer (teacher) through making him aware of the learning purpose (content), how and form of making others aware of the learning material in the education. Also, it is very important to pay attention to the inner processes of learner when learning (Farahmandian, 2000, page 34).

Teaching profession has obtained particular concept and characteristics over the time. The educational concepts have changed so much that it is not easy to count the teacher characteristics, because different societies with different viewpoints expect the teacher, and along with the modern developments they generally have modern expectations from the teacher and education and their expectations must be met. Also the education and training depend on the social systems and the philosophy ruling these systems.

The teaching method is a set of planned activities which ultimately are used for better learning, not better teaching. Therefore, the teaching methods are tools which are used by the teacher with his innovation and management for a better realization of the desired educational purposes. Although there are positive programs and fixed educational methods, practically, teachers do not exactly follow the theories and educational plans and orders; but each of them manipulates the educational methods according to his personality and social needs.

The best teaching method would be the method which responds to all the difficulties which it imposes to the students; in fact, it must be said that it is not a method, but an art or talent. Each teacher must pay attention to any weakness in understanding and receiving of the student, not as a fault of him, but as a fault in his own teaching, and he must attempt to create the ability of discovering new methods in himself (Miller, 2011, 189 – 190).

A qualified teacher is the master who has learned to use his thoughts, ideas and professional skills in the way that his students discover themselves and become their own pilot. It is the best method which brings their "selfness" to perfection and through this way strengthens their competency and wills to "self-training". Such a teacher takes inspirations from everywhere and everything and creates his required tool from nothing.

"Training depends upon a set of factors." The effective activity of a teacher may be the weak point of another teacher or an extremist activity for the third teacher (Ristanovic, Kabaj, 2009, page 4).

Due to these differences, it is an illogical matter to advise specific characteristics for teachers with the claim that they are useful for all teachers and in any class; but we are intended to refer some characteristics for teaching (according to ideas of ShahidSani) which in its turn can be the way of accessing successfulness and perfection for all the teachers.

6- ShahidSani

Sheikh Zeyn Al-Abedin Ebne Nour Al-Din Ali ..., known as ShahidSani was born in a noble family in Geba. He was very intelligent, decent and interested in sciences. Also there were good conditions for his scientific development. When he was only 9 years old, he read all Quran under the observation of his dear father and after that, he learnt literature and jurisprudence techniques and reached ijihad (perfection in religious sciences) level (Mousavian, 1999, pages 49 – 50).

He did not stop under the observation of just one master for a long while; therefore, he accessed the ideas of the contemporary scholars immediately and directly; he has benefited in the presence of many masters both from Shia and Sunni. That is why he was a perfect man. In addition to jurisprudence and principles, he has had knowledge of philosophy and mysticism and medicine and astronomy.

ShahidSani was a very skillful and proficient writer; and through wide scientific information in various sciences particularly in jurisprudence, he could present very worthwhile scientific works in different subjects to the Islamic culture and society in his short lifetime (55 years).

The book "Monyat Al-Morid ..." is from his famous books which deals with principles and duties of teacher and student, principles of debate and writing practice, rituals of judgment, etc. this is the most comprehensive and lengthiest book written in education and training subject by a great Shiite jurist and it is a gateway to the world of education and training. In this book, Shahid Sani presents an educational perfect theory about various cognitive aspects of the teacher and the student's competencies.

Shahid Sani advises that the training must be gradual. Teacher must use various educational materials and benefit from various methods in order to penetrate the student's heart. He recommends the teacher to keep his/ her dignity and beauty. This causes the student learn sciences better and also motivates him to respect to his teacher. Teacher should not ignore the life problems of is students and he must help them in their economic needs as more as possible.

Another characteristic of this book is that Zeyn Al-Din has benefitted from the original Islamic references and important public and special resources to spread his educational ideas. He has used Qazali style more to present the mere

religious education and training and has tried to avoid the influence of Greek and philosophic thoughts of rejecting education and training.

7- Conclusion

Training the others (Teaching) is very important and Shahid Sani has expressed some characteristics for this significant matter in three categories according to verses, hadiths and sayings, including:

- a) Teaching Characteristics Related to the Teacher
- b) Teaching Characteristics Related to the Student
- c) Teaching Characteristics Related to the Course Session

Observing these characteristics by teacher in his teaching is very influential in achieving and realizing them; from them, we can refer to safeguarding and preservation of the scientific knowledge and resources, getting far from material interests, observing the others' rights, warm and friendly behavior with the classmates, being polite and respectful to the others, not to repeat erosive and time wasting questions, not to enter in the dialogue between the teacher and another student, considering teacher as the real and spiritual father and so on (Ameli, 2008, pages 223 – 276).

In the end, this point must be mentioned that the teaching characteristics are not just limited to these cases and there may be many other characteristics which are necessary to be observed in teaching; but our purpose in this chapter is to express the teaching characteristics emphasized by ShahidSani and he has referred them directly or indirectly.

7-1- Teaching Characteristics Related to the Teacher

- a) Adornment to the moral qualities
- b) Complying with the religious duties and rituals
- c) Ambitiousness and getting far from the world's people
- d) Good behaviors and humility
- e) The relationship between knowledge and practice
- f) Qualification and competency for training and teaching
- g) Interest and attachment to the teaching job
- h) Consistency in learning sciences
- i) Attempt in teaching sciences to the others
- j) Not to denounce the sciences which he does not have expertise in them

7-2- Teaching Characteristics Related to the Student

- a) Encouraging learning of sciences
- b) Calling for desirable traits
- c) Helping and accompanying the students
- d) Paying attention to the characteristics, abilities and individual features of each student
- e) Observing equity in compassion to the students
- f) Equity in criticizing the others' words
- g) Preparation and introduction of the competent teachers
- h) Punishment
- i) Guiding the students toward competent teachers

7-3- Teaching Characteristics Related to the Course Session

- a) Intentions and motivations
- b) Reliance
- c) Accepting rights
- d) Trustfulness
- e) Patience and tolerance
- f) Remembrance of God at all times
- g) Appearance beautification
- h) Avoidance of conflict and controversy in discussion
- i) Respect for the student's thoughts and words
- j) Saying "I do not know" if having no knowledge about the issue
- k) Admitting mistakes and errors and correcting them

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