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**LESSON TWO : WHA IS TEACHING ?**

Varied descriptions of *teaching* are available ranging from idealistic descriptions of teaching to very specific task descriptions of what it involves. Teaching is described as an interactive process between the teacher and the students under certain conditions for facilitating effective construction of knowledge by students. It is also defined as a process to influence learners so as to 'impinge on them through their perceptual and cognitive processes'. It is in this sense that teaching can be said to be 'educating' a person. Education, no doubt, is a broader process of leading to individual development and social progress. However, teaching is central to education in attaining its purpose; that is, teaching is the instrument through which individuals are educated. Teaching is always intended to lead to some learning. Without learning teaching is incomplete.

**1.Definitions of the Concept of Teaching**

In education, *teaching* is the concerted sharing of knowledge and experience, which is usually organized within a discipline and, more generally, the provision of stimulus to the psychological and intellectual growth of a person by another person or artifact. *Teaching* is an activity aimed at bringing about meaningful learning through a method that is morally and pedagogically acceptable. It involves a teacher, a learner, content in form of knowledge facts information and skill to be imparted a deliberate intention on the part of the learners to learn, and finally a method that respects the learners’ cognitive integrity and freedom of choice. To teach simply means to educate, impart knowledge or skill; give instruction, inform, enlighten, discipline, drill, school, indoctrinate; and coach to help to learn.

* Morse and Wingo (1968) saw that teaching is "understanding and *guiding* of children as individual and as groups. It means the providing of *learning experiences* that will enable  
  each learner *to grow* continuously and sequentially towards his dealt role in society".
* Lawrence (1966) also viewed teaching as *a complex process* to be studied entirely in a "live" situation. In other words teaching is a series of events where teacher attempts to change the behavior of the students along the intended direction. In the process of teaching  
  teacher and student act as two poles interacting with each other through the path of curriculum to achieve the predetermined objectives i.e. to promote the learning of students.
* Flanders (1976) defined teaching as a "*reciprocal contact"* between student and teacher whereas Haugh and Duncan (1970) remarked that teaching is a complex process which includes four phases - (a) curriculum planning phase, (b) an instructing phase, (c) a measuring phase, and (d) an evaluative phase.

**2.Components of Teaching**

Teaching is *a process* that involves *three* main elements: the teacher, the learner, and the object of knowledge:

1. *The teacher*  (also called a school teacher or, in some contexts, an educator) is a person who helps others to acquire knowledge, competences or values .He plays a vital and important role of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the teaching in order to provide full learning facilities to the students.
2. *The learner* (student / pupil / apprentice/ trainee) is someone who is learning about a particular subject or how to do something. He is dependent upon the teacher for the learning strategies and the content chosen by the teacher
3. The term ***curriculum*** refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program. In dictionaries, curriculum is often defined as the courses offered by a school, but it is rarely used in such a general sense in schools. Depending on how broadly educators define or employ the term, curriculum typically refers to the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn. The curriculum is a medium of interaction between the students and teachers. So, it is an intervening variable to facilitate learning. There are methods, teaching strategies or techniques of teaching through which various interactions between students and teachers take place.

**3. Teaching Process ( phases)**

Teaching is fundamentally a process, including planning, implementation, evaluation and revision. Planning and teaching a class are familiar ideas to most instructors. More overlooked are the steps of evaluation and revision. Without classroom assessments or some other means of receiving feedback on a regular basis, it is surprisingly easy to misunderstand whether a particular teaching method or strategy has been effective. A teacher can create an environment of mutual trust and respect by relying on students for feedback -- students can be a valuable resource for verifying whether the class pedagogy is (or isn't) working. Self-examination with feedback from your students and the instructor are keys to improving your teaching.

**3.1. PLANNING ( Pre-Active phase)**

There are many different levels of setting goals for teaching, from the scale of an entire semester (syllabus) to a single class (lesson plan). You have the overall task of helping your students learn how to think critically and to understand the basic concepts and tools of your discipline. You should also have more specific day-to-day goals, such as examining the social context of Victorian women writers or demonstrating how to integrate partial differential equations. As a graduate TA you probably will not be responsible for designing an entire course, but you should think about how your day-to-day teaching fits into the larger goals of the course.

**3.2. IMPLEMENTATION (INTERACTIVE PHASE)**

The best plans are meaningless if you don't try them. Although most of the work in teaching comes in planning and preparation, many great ideas are never implemented because it was easier to just keep doing the same thing. Don't be afraid if you have an idea you want to try. If something hasn't been working right, why not change what you are doing and try something new? Unless you are willing to change and experiment, you will find it difficult to improve your teaching skills

**3.3. REVISION**

Revising your pedagogy will help your students learn... and keep you interested. If you keep your focus on student learning, you will find a richer meaning to the typical lecture discussion /test/grade process. Instead of an adversarial relationship, the teaching process encourages a relationship of cooperation and mutual discovery. Ernest Boyer helped redefine the notion of scholarship, in fact, by including the scholarship of teaching as a culminating activity of the research process of discovery, integration, and application of knowledge (Boyer 1990).

**3.4. ASSESSMENT ( Post –Active phase)**

Regular assessment of your students and yourself is critical to your success as a teacher. To really understand whether you are teaching effectively and your students are learning effectively, it is crucial that you actively and regularly assess what your students have learned. If you are able to solicit meaningful feedback from your students and the professor on a regular basis (not just at the end of the semester), you can modify and improve your teaching strategies. Assessments do not need to be overly complex or involved. In fact, the more focused you are in the assessment, the more impact your changes will have.

**4.** **Purpose of Teaching** The aforesaid discussion reveals that the purposes of teaching are as follows:

(a) Teaching is a tri-polar process which purports to develop all round personality of the learner through the curriculum.  
(b) Teaching shapes the behavior of individual in a desired direction.  
(c) Teaching helps the student to adjust in the new environment and to live harmoniously in the new situation.  
(d) Teaching encourages the student to learn and think for themselves to solve the problems.  
(e) Teaching mainly purports to acquaint the students with the content of the subject to be taught.