

Teaching Instructional Planning and Evaluation at Different Faculties-a must or an option

Lia Todua-Ph.D.

Caucasus University-Tbilisi, 77 Kostava st.

Summary

The present work deals with one of the most important aspects in modern pedagogy-training prospective teachers and lecturers of any specialty.

Although most teachers are equipped with special knowledge they have to impart, they often lack skills and expertise essential for instructors.

This unfavorable trend is caused by the fact that no faculties at Georgian universities except the faculty of Humanities have pedagogical subjects on the curriculum; Subjects like Instructional Planning and Evaluation are paid inadequate attention at.

This course of lectures aims to highlight the issues which are the bases of preparing a specialist of any sphere, educating pupils at schools, teaching any subject-curriculum development, syllabus design, testing and evaluation, etc. Being a confident and competent teacher invariably means being able to plan the process of teaching effectively, to conduct testing and evaluating processes adequately, to select appropriate teaching materials, having the skills essential for teachers. Any teacher should be aware of the modern methods of teaching - as these methods are constantly being updated, more and more changes are introduced in the sphere.

Keywords- *instructional planning and evaluation, curriculum, syllabus, testing, planning, universities, faculties, teaching methodology, evaluation*

In the modern world where professionalism is greatly valued, the demand on highly-qualified teachers of any sphere is increasing substantially, more and more experienced instructors are needed at schools and universities. Although most teachers are equipped with special knowledge they have to impart, they often lack skills and expertise essential for instructors.

This unfavorable trend is caused by the fact that no faculties at Georgian universities except the faculty of Humanities have pedagogical subjects on the curriculum; even the latter have omitted such subjects due to different considerations. Subjects like Instructional Planning and Evaluation are paid inadequate attention at. When entering the classroom teachers in most cases have neither special trainings nor independently acquired skills and knowledge essential for instructors. They mainly rely on the model of teaching familiar to them (the way they were educated, trained, taught). They have to gain these skills “on the move”, erring, blundering, trying to find a way out on their own and in many cases quitting teaching in the end in despair.

Nowadays teaching process requires absolutely new approaches, designing syllabuses requires special knowledge, conducting lectures and lessons, planning teaching process require intricate skills, complicated evaluation system is a daunting challenge for many teachers.

This trend indicates that teaching Instructional Planning and Evaluation has become essential for students of any specialty. As one of the main criteria of compiling a curriculum is students' needs analysis, very few students especially of non-humanities claim that they will be teachers, but later when many of them become professionals in their sphere they are invited to different schools, colleges and universities or they realize that teaching is their calling.

Students and pupils demand from their lectures and teachers formidable competence and performance and it especially concerns not only what is taught, but how it is taught. Thus awareness of modern teaching methodology is extremely important. Even the most prominent specialist may seem incompetent to students if teaching irrelevantly. Many scholars of different fields –Economics, Physics, History, etc have not even basic knowledge of students' psychology, pedagogical trends and principles. Teaching is a process which must have long-lasting effects and

errors made by teachers may have a harmful impact on a person's mental well-being, professional life and personality later.

Teachers should have their philosophy of teaching, know what their model, principles, aims and objectives are and whether they correspond to contemporary pedagogical trends or not. How to act, speak, communicate with students are vital skills and habits.

This course of lectures aims to highlight the issues which are the bases of preparing a specialist of any sphere, educating pupils at schools, teaching any subject-curriculum development, syllabus design, testing and evaluation, etc. Being a confident and competent teacher invariably means being able to plan the process of teaching effectively, to conduct testing and evaluating processes adequately, to select appropriate teaching materials, having the other skills essential for teachers. Any teacher should be aware of the modern methods of teaching - as these methods are constantly being updated, more and more changes are introduced in the sphere.

The course of Instructional Planning and Evaluation covers the following topics:

- Basics of curriculum/ curriculum development
- Basics of syllabus design / types of syllabuses
- Unit plan/lesson plan
- Effective teachers/teacher evaluation
- Alternative teaching modes
- Types of learners
- Evaluating learners' skills and knowledge
- Grading systems
- Testing
- Types of tests
- Introduction to program and classroom evaluation
- Novelties in pedagogy

Why curriculum awareness?

Curriculum is an overall plan or model of teaching a particular subject, educating pupils at primary and secondary schools, training a future specialist of a definite sphere at colleges, universities, etc. Social and economic development of any society, world trends such as globalization inevitably cause amendments in the curriculum, as some subjects become less important, some subjects acquire more significance.

Teachers have to know what a curriculum as a phenomenon is, how and why it has to be developed, what the curriculum of the faculty they are teaching at is, so as to understand where they stand and to see the whole "jigsaw", it helps to avoid certain thematic overlapping and to adequately plan the syllabus, to realize how socio-economic trends in the society dictate alterations of the curriculum and eventually in the classroom.

Different philosophies form the basis of various curricula and teachers should be aware to which group they adhere. Getting acquainted with a brief history of a curriculum development shows a perfect picture of how educational system has been formed and molded through centuries.

Syllabus design is an Achilles heel for most teachers and it will remain so without proper trainings and instructions. Types of syllabuses, its samples, the role of a syllabus- this is a brief list of items which must be covered.

Syllabus as a contract between a teacher and an educational institution, between a teacher and a student must be a thorough model of what and how an instructor aims it achieve. Thus a syllabus design is the first step in fulfilling a teacher's duties. Students must be introduced to syllabus patterns and practiced to design them. Syllabuses as nothing else in teaching reveal a teacher's philosophy and a model of teaching. By means of a syllabus a teacher present him/herself in an "attractive" way as the first impression is vital.

Many teachers and lecturers face the problem of inability to plan a lesson or a lecture properly, thus their performance lacks the brilliance they covet to achieve. There are plentiful tips for teachers on how to plan lessons and without such recommendations it is extremely difficult to attain the teacher's goal. Before any lesson teachers must plan the process, procedures and activities of the lesson, i.e. be certain about what sort of work will be used for achieving definite aims and objectives, which material to present if any and so on. The lesson plan enables the teacher to be thoroughly prepared. During the preparation the teacher will choose teaching aids, visual materials, and all the technical equipments for the lesson. But at the lesson itself the teacher should be punctual concerning the plan, if the process of teaching requires changes of the plan the teacher should be flexible and alter it according to the situation during the lesson.

Very often teachers mistakenly conclude that teaching means conducting conventional lessons or lectures and later they realize that following the tracked path for years makes them unbearably boring for students. Thus students should be taught what they can do except standard lessons and lectures, what activities can be planned inside and outside the classroom.

Testing and evaluation merit special care. And although testing and evaluation play a crucial role in teaching, teachers often have a superficial knowledge of its system. Special trainings in this aspect, concentrating on practical issues, must focus on

- Testing technique and administration
- Test construction/ types of tests
- Forms of assessment and evaluation

As teachers often use inadequate methods of testing, testing conducted by them becomes unreliable and invalid, so testing does not reveal the students' knowledge which any testing aims at. It is a must for teachers to know principles and rules of testing. How to evaluate students effectively i.e. objectively? - this is a dilemma for teachers. In post-soviet countries dramatic changes having been introduced for the last two decades urged educational institutions to thoroughly renew their systems of evaluation, hence a lot still remains terra incognita in this aspect of teaching and would-be teachers must be clearly explained and properly trained how to assess students' knowledge and skills.

What are different modes, practices, philosophies of teaching? To which group to adhere: humanism or dictatorship? How to become excellent teachers? What is the main essence of efficient teaching?

A teacher in the contemporary world is no longer a knows-all-teaches-all; the traditional scenario of educating has become out-of-date and has to be updated. As the old-fashioned model of instructing is being reexamined, prospective and acting teachers must be introduced to the renovated model more vividly. As very often teachers are expected to work in a new mode, but rarely told what is required and they have to make intelligent guesses about these "great expectations".

One of the most perilous territories in teaching is communicating with students and in order to avoid complications, misunderstanding and conflicts teachers must know learners' psychology, what types of learners may enter the classroom; there are various types of classifications in this respect and getting acquainted with such studies facilitates instructors' work immensely.

What teachers should do and what they should not do – all instructors must be aware of this, because very often when surfing through the list of teachers' dos and don'ts even greatly experienced teachers realize that their approaches, methods and techniques are not sometimes appropriate and relevant.

Constant changes in an educational system alter the notion what the right sources, i.e. textbook(s) and other teaching materials are and it is a must for teachers to know how to choose an appropriate book for the course. There are special criteria for defining to which textbook or other source of information to give preference.

Will it ever come in handy if future teachers know how classroom, program and teacher evaluations are organized at educational institutions? The answer can be positive, as if they do not become administrative workers of schools and universities, this sort of competence will

significantly assist them in performing their work-conducting classroom activities, planning the program efficiently and acting as exemplary teachers.

Books and journals on teaching methodology, internet sites abound with tips of teacher behavior, attitudes, rapport with students and the more would-be teachers know in this respect the better. Plethora of activities can be conducted for training them.

This course can be scheduled after the agreement with senior students of different specialties, i.e. enrolling those who express their wish to become teachers. Hence, lectures can be delivered to students of different specialties at the same time. It especially concerns students of non-humanities, as faculties of humanities frequently have subjects like psychology, education, pedagogy on their curricula.

The course as most courses of lectures delivered at universities must be a combination of theory and practice and the popular saying that “An ounce of practice is more than a pound of theory” works here too. Students attending this course must act as teachers “staging” and performing extracts from lectures and lessons, prepare a portfolio of syllabuses, lesson plans, tests, etc., check and evaluate written tasks, participate in task-based activities and so on.

The course should be scheduled so that students will get acquainted with all aspects of pedagogy. The course must embrace an overview of the modern trends in educational system.

If the group of students represents different specialties the lecturer’s task will be to generalize experiences and specifics of teaching different subjects and to use examples of teaching various subjects for illustrating.

Experienced teachers, teacher trainers and lecturers can be invited to such lectures in order to share their experience with students.

In conclusion, it is recommended that universities should introduce the course of lectures on Instructional Planning and Evaluation to their curricula or organize this sort of trainings for graduates beginning their teaching careers or teachers who feel that they lack brilliance in their practice of teaching.

References

1. Kelly, A. V. *The Curriculum. Theory and practice*, London: Paul Chapman, 1999
2. Nunan, D. *Syllabus Design*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000
3. Heaton J. *Types of Tests*: London: Longman, 1990

Article received: 2008-09-10