My Experiences in the Lives of Students
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ARTICLE INFO
Keywords: Higher Studies, My Experience, Teacher, Students And Subjective

ABSTRACT
This paper examines my role as a teacher in educating students who have no idea what Sociology is and preparing them for their higher studies. Understanding my purpose as a teacher and what motivated me to become a teacher/educator in order to assist students in developing their strategic approach to the upcoming board examination, as well as what the subjective is all about. This article demonstrates how my experience has shaped my students and me into my better selves, as well as what is possible if we all strive to do the shame.
INTRODUCTION

My work as a teacher is the best job in the world. It all began in 2009 when I faced an interview for my second Master’s Degree in Journalism and Mass Communication at Tripura University. Among the panel of seated teachers, they gazed at my mark-sheet and, among one of them, confronted me that you will be a fine teacher if you could take up the profession in teaching, he is none other than now retired S. P. Mandal, Asst. Director (News) in Doordarshan. At the time, it was a leap of faith. Since then, the thought has been haunting me for years and years till today. As Michael Stuhlbarg quoted, “The bitterest truth is better than the sweetest lies.”

I began my career as a Higher Secondary School Teacher in Sociology in a private institution in my hometown from 1st June 2012, at Saint Paul’s School, A. D. Nagar, Agartala, Affiliated to CISCE (Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations), New Delhi. The Council conducts examinations for class XII is called ISC (Indian School Certificate). It was my first job. Although I had not planned at the time cause for the past years, I was preparing for civil services examination for both Centre and State, now it has become my life’s work, and I love my job and consider myself to have the best job in the world. At the initial stages of my work it has been challenging, rewarding, and inspirational. I have seen school kids grow up to become a part of their life with them and considered myself very opportunistic to take good care as if these students were my own. It has impacted my life to be a profound way of learning through my interactions and adventures with students to date.

Other challenges I have faced over the years involve the depth and seriousness of the relationships with the students I work with. Having altruism with outstanding commitment and passion for my work allowed me to be involved with students and families beyond the confinement of my workplace. I look at each student as my own and make no apologies when I see students or families in need. I firmly believe that I am an early childhood educator and a mentor, and I take responsibility quite seriously. As Zig Ziglar quoted in empowering education, “If you are not willing to learn, no one can help you. If you are determined to learn, no one can stop you.” Ultimately, what matters is to maintain a good relationship with students and parents and keep the lines of communication open. Suppose we interpret actions subjectively with a theoretical perspective on our shared social reality, which is socially created. Through a sociological lens, we need to analyze how people interact and how people interpret those symbols in daily interactions. Herbert Blumer (1986, p. 2) in his book, Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method stated that “Meaning is either taken for granted and thus pushed aside as unimportant or it is regarded as a mere neutral link between the factors responsible for human behaviour and this behaviour as the product of such factors.” This meaning what we understand has strongly influenced what we “see” and “how” we respond to situations. On the other hand, Berger & Luckmann (1991, p. 33), in The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge, stated that knowledge guides to conduct in the reality of everyday life, “The world of everyday life is not only taken for granted as reality by the ordinary members of
society in the subjectively expressive conduct of their lives. It is a world that originates in their thoughts and actions. It is maintained as real by these.” Thus, our acquired knowledge in the construction of reality directly or indirectly can be influenced by our symbolic interactions. My experiences in this area have almost always ended up being positive.

Terry Bussey has clearly stated in his article, “My experiences in the lives of children,” that, first, we must enter this field of work with an open mind and be prepared to grow, learn, and stretch our imagination. As a result of my experiences, I believed that the vocation I chose as an educator would not lead to tremendous riches or great fame, but it might reach the heart and soul of every pupil abundantly. I believe that the more you teach, the more you learn, and the more you know, the more you can teach. Dr. Seuss (1978, p. 35), in his book “I Can Read with My Eyes Shut!”, was also known as Theodor Seuss Geisel, said, “The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.”

One of the other methods I applied is that since most of the students are tribal from various socio-religious and economic backgrounds, I ask myself how to build their personalities in a short spend of two years. So, I begin their journey right away after completing the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE –Class X) or other board examinations. I asked every student to present themselves in front of their friends; yes, to some, it’s challenging. But, I do this method to help the students build their personalities and break free from Glossophobia. Over two years, I could do over five to six times to assist self-presentation in their respective classrooms.

On the other hand, not to forget, I do keep a note to complete the syllabus at the prescribed time frame. Moreover, before every examination, I give a presentation beforehand to prepare and speak about the topic in front of their classmates, teachers, and juniors to motivate them. As a result, I believe the students will build their personality and have the courage to speak in public and help them use the microphone with the speaker they have not been doing in their life. Through this action, I firmly believe that supporting the students will become responsible and tolerant adults when they pass out and are ready to face the social world.

The gaining significance in social sciences became progressively tricky for teacher preparation to keep pace and teaching competence. As an educator in the area, we are to be competent in our teaching area rather than for high academic qualification; much of the learning of educational principles tended to become out-of-date and second-hand over time. In this regard, some students do not prefer to come to school to attend classes and remain absent over a period of time. Sometimes, I ask myself, I (as an educator/teacher/promoter), is/are the reason or the system compels them to do so. There is a time conciliation was given to parents-students to help understand a situation which everyone faces differently as students, parents, and teachers.

Kendall (2011, p. 126), “How do we know how to interact in a given situation? What rules do we follow?” let’s try to understand these conceptual senses of questions as Ethnomethodologists. “The term ‘ethnomethodology’ thus
refers to the study of a particular subject matter: the body of common-sense knowledge and the range of procedures and considerations by means of which the ordinary members of society make sense of, find their way about in, and act on the circumstances in which they find themselves” (Heritage, 1991, p. 4). This implication will not be the best way to teach and direct them. But sometimes, I believe that different things work out for different situations in a different way, depending on relativity of time. Though the time I spend in school lasts for five years, I feel like I have worked over a century. I would like to highlight some of the things I have learned a thing or two. These are some of the few things I have experienced success with over the years.

Firstly, it is important to like and love the students like our own children. It may sound simple and obvious, but I believe that experiences with students will be significantly diminished if you do not truly enjoy and appreciate them and recognize what makes them special and unique. Different students will have a diverse backgrounds, but as a teacher, if we make them believe that they are impressive, then everything in the social world is possible. Again that’s not to say you can never have a bad day; it’s equally essential for the student to know that we have those too. Here what is important is that the students which whom we are engaged should genuinely recognize our work with them as more than just a job. I have seen in some classrooms the environment changes when the teacher enters the classes, and this has to do with the relationship between the students and teachers.

Secondly, I felt it is essential to touch the students either good or bad. But sadly, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (No 35 of 2009) (26 August 2009) prohibits physical punishment and mental harassment. Sometimes due to this Act, the teacher’s fear towards the children lingers in the mindset that it is unhealthy. However, I believe one crucial concept is that boys, in particular, can grow up knowing that it’s okay to hug and be hugged and show emotion and even cry sometimes. A motivational short film, ‘Start With The Boys’ by Vinil Mathew starring Madhuri Dixit, stated that “we teach our ‘tough boys’ not to cry, but instead we should teach them not to make women in their lives cry.”

Thirdly, a good sense of humour is essential. As a teacher, we need to lighten up. Due to ongoing classes, students are tired in the classroom. I understand their mental state of nature, and I used classroom icebreakers before I began the course. If we look at the world which surrounds us as a severe place, I was supposedly filled with stress, anger, and fear. Students should not feel it. Sometimes in the classroom, I make the students act like an actor who is related to the subject; it was fun and enjoyable. After completing the syllabus in the verse of revision, when I come back to the same topic which I make them act, they could recollect faster than traditional class teaching. Through this method has helped to rescue me in many ways, given me a purpose and perspective on my work, and also made others comfortable around me. Till to this day, a few things have echoed into my ears is that the students’ laughter in the classroom, I feel joy and happy even though I may be having a hard time and seeing them laugh. I
thought they all had their complete freedom and joyfulness. It makes the classroom more comfortable than any other place in the world.

Most of the famous educators, inspirational, and motivational tell us through time and time is the crucial factors which help us reveal our true nature of being a person of who we ought to be. John F. Kennedy spoke his famous words, “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” As an educator, to inspire the students, we need to reach every corner of society to change the mindset. Therefore, I urge everyone to join hands and work together. I truly believed with Malala Yousafzai, “One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world.” In India, 5 September every year has been celebrated as Teachers’ Day to mark the birth anniversary of India’s second President, Dr. Sarvpalli Radhakrishnan. He believed that “teachers should be the best minds in the country” and “The true teachers are those who help us think for ourselves.” Abdul Kalam quotes, “The best brains of the nation may be found on the last benches of the classroom.” I genuinely believe too that brilliance can’t be proven by a single report card and, as said by Albert Einstein, that “imagination is more important than knowledge.”

Last but not least, I love my work and look forward to every day for improvement. More than anything else, my work inspired me and motivated me to move forward. We become the idols of the children who trust and depend upon. We also bring joy, love, laughter, fun, discoveries, imagination, both big and small, that students make every day. Being with the students feels like reconnecting back to my childhood. They say that students choose to surround themselves with the things they like, bringing them joy and happiness. I, too, feel like it happened to think the world would be better if we all learned to do the same. I would end by saying, “I feel to have the best job in the world.”

LITERATURE REVIEW

I love the job and found out to be the best job in the world, and this could not have been without challenges. One particular challenge in the school where I worked was that most of the students came from far and wide from different villages in Tripura to get the best education in town; the parents have high hopes for their children to be educated and to become somebody when they completed their educational requirements and hoped to get admitted to higher level. In my experiences with the children, there was a void among them that is hard to fill in without proper guidance, support, mentor, and education as a teacher and educator children need in the field of an academic and social world where the children lived in a social reality. Alfred Schutz (1967, p. 133) clearly stated that “not all evidences are signs, but all signs are evidences.” What we see and perceive is not what it appears to be. He makes these objectivations have in common because they exist only due to rational beings’ actions. Well, the students are being exposed to the social world without proper guidance under their parents or guardians or self, it has become to the light that students staying in their rented house with no supervision but struggle. It becomes hard to persuade them to become someone or somebody until they work in their lives. Emile Durkheim (2005, p. 183) tries to characterize altruism in nature, “We
actually see the individual in all these cases seek to strip himself of his being in order to be engulfed in something which he regards as his true essence.” Here, as a teacher, we are supposed to mould and guide them in the best way possible.

METHODOLOGY
This paper examines my role as a teacher in educating students who have no idea what Sociology is and preparing them for their higher studies. Understanding my purpose as a teacher and what motivated me to become a teacher/educator in order to assist students in developing their strategic approach to the upcoming board examination, as well as what the subjective is all about.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
In The New Times, June 01, 2016, published by Julius Bizimungu, “How to help slow learners cope in class,” gives importance to the teachers for the needs of the students a chance at learning to cope up with the mainstream classrooms. Alex Mushumba, the headteacher of Martyrs Secondary School in Remera, Kigali, commented how teachers face the challenge in varying ability levels from the students, “If a student is a particularly slow learner, this can present a problem for the teacher as he must allow him time to grasp the material without slowing the progress of the rest of the class. If your current student load contains a child who needs a little extra help or perhaps just extra time, how we deal with the students and his needs could play an important part in determining how academically successful the child ultimately ends up becoming.” Therefore, as a teacher, I find it hard to help those who want to be educated but are not able to cope with the rest of the students. Keeping in mind to help them in every aspect, I started to apply the methodology of a ‘class-test.’ I made sure that every topic I had completed in lieu of the materials prior prepared for them. When I began ‘class-test’ initially, students felt it was a waste of time; as days passed by and also reminded this class-test will help them to be prepared for your final examination (Indian School Certificate Examination). So, I continued class-test and waited patiently for over a year. To my surprise, most of the slow learner students cope with mainstream students. Their confidence level rises, and notice most of the students do better in their ISC examination as comprises their Class X examinations. Though some part parents/guardians also play an essential part in the students’ life, in some cases, more than the parents, the teacher plays the guidance role in mentoring them too. Through this method, I believed I could motivate the younger generation to help those who believe to be weak, break out the fear, and help along to uplift themselves. There are other issues and challenges which are building blocks for the teacher and parents. It was learned that a handful number of students, either big or small stayed in a rented house
without any supervision from their parents. This made it difficult for the teacher to motivate at some point in time.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I love my work and look forward to every day for improvement. More than anything else, my work inspired me and motivated me to move forward. We become the idols of the children who trust and depend upon. We also bring joy, love, laughter, fun, discoveries, imagination, both big and small, that students make every day. Being with the students feels like reconnecting back to my childhood. They say that students choose to surround themselves with the things they like, bringing them joy and happiness. I, too, feel like it happened to think the world would be better if we all learned to do the same. I would end by saying, “I feel to have the best job in the world.”

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations, so it is necessary to carry out further research related to the topic My Experiences in the Lives of Students in order to perfect this research and increase the reader's insight.

REFERENCES


