



Volume: 2, Issue: 5, 188-190
May 2015
www.allsubjectjournal.com
e-ISSN: 2349-4182
p-ISSN: 2349-5979
Impact Factor: 3.762

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Outstanding teachers... who are they?

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Abstract

Teachers are considered the molders of the young minds, therefore it essential to know if what are the qualities that the teacher must possess. This descriptive study was conducted to find out who are outstanding teachers in Region VI based on the criteria of Metro Bank Foundation in regards to: (1) Personal qualities, (2) Pedagogical knowledge, (3) Teaching competencies in terms of general knowledge and mastery of knowledge, teaching skills, classroom management, evaluation skill, professional development and credentialing, and beliefs about teaching, teacher's roles and expectations. The respondents were the elementary, secondary and tertiary teachers in Region VI who were awarded as outstanding teachers. Qualitative analysis of data was employed in the analysis of matrices. The findings revealed that generally, outstanding teachers shared common traits such as loving, kind, enthusiastic, committed and dedicated to work. Their fellow teachers see them as cooperative, responsible, dependable hardworking, having great deal of creativity and initiative, helpful, pleasant, presentable, and were generally in harmony with school personnel and people in the community. They were knowledgeable and used array of teaching approaches, strategies, and techniques. They used group activities like cooperative learning, practical work approach, and interactive learning. They used variety of instructional aids and devices. Guide questions, directions and others to make the lesson clear were utilized to ensure that students are on the right track, focused and are progressing smoothly. Their mastery of the lessons enabled them to deliver the lessons clearly and smoothly to the learners. They exhibited strong classroom management skills by preparing materials, teaching aids, board work, test, and activity procedures before the class starts. They moved around the classroom during classes and find out how learners progress in their work. Formal and informal evaluations were used and type of questioning as well. Most of the outstanding teachers were female, aging 40 years old and above and 18 years and above in the service. They had received commendations and recognitions from the school/division, regional, and national award giving entity and some of them had undertaken two (2) researches and innovative endeavor, had attended several seminars and conferences related to their job and most of them had published books, journals, and modules. They believed that teaching is the one of the noblest profession and teacher is one of the noblest human beings. They also believed that teaching is a missionary pursuit.

Keywords: Outstanding Teachers

1. Introduction

Success begins with a dream, with vision of the future that welcomes every talent, every skill and every ideal of a dreamer. Teacher helps plant the seed of dream, water it with enthusiasm, nurture it with encouragement and cultivate it through teacher's fine example of fairy determination.

So when yesterday's dream becomes today's reality, and yesterday's determination becomes today's success it is only fitting that tribute be given to the mentor who lighted the way (www.mbfoundationorganization.org/ph/prog).

According to Zulueta and Guimbatan (2002), the most important variable in the learner's educational environment is the teacher, for he/she motivates, guides, and directs the learner's quest for quality education. The quality of education cannot rise above the quality of teachers. In the hand of uncommitted and ineffective teachers, the best curriculum is doomed to fall. That is why there is a need for highly committed and dedicated, effective and outstanding teacher who are aware of their responsibility to deliver quality education for the young under their care.

Who are then are "outstanding teachers"? Various authors and researchers painted different pictures of outstanding teachers. To some, outstanding teachers are those who possess exquisite art and skill in teaching to mold the heart and mind of the learner (Boiser, 2000). They are masters of their craft, and are genuinely concerned with the total growth of their students, teach them to think, touch their hearts, and inspire them to reach their peak, and achieve their goals. There are challenges that may confront them, but being sensitive and conscientious, they are aware that the improvement they observe in their student is in itself

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gratifying, and fulfilling. These teachers leave indelible imprints in the hearts and minds of the learners that can withstand passage of time (Reyes, 2002). Outstanding teachers share some common traits but in practice those traits are exhibited in unique, personal ways.

Pedagogical knowledge is also important for a teacher to provide the learner with opportunities to relate new knowledge to the previous learning, experiences that will help them develop a more accurate understanding of how the world works, and an opportunity to observe and imitate things through exposure by using technological aids and devices. Cases of outstanding teachers in Region VI were analyzed in terms of their personal qualities, pedagogical knowledge, teaching competencies and beliefs about teaching, teacher's roles and expectations, and professional development and credentialing.

2. Research Elaborations

The study aimed at finding out who are outstanding teachers with consideration on their personal qualities, pedagogical knowledge, teaching competencies and beliefs about teaching, teacher's roles and expectations, and professional development and credentialing.

Likewise, the present study utilized the qualitative research. The respondents of the study were the ten (10) identified outstanding teachers based on the criteria of the Metro Bank Foundation.

This study would serve as framework in designing programs or strategies on teacher's enhancement. Further, it will serve as inspiration for teachers to emulate their personal qualities, pedagogical knowledge, teaching competencies, professional development, beliefs about teaching and teacher's roles and expectations. It would make students more aware of their role in making their teachers outstanding by supporting the programs and projects that would boost teacher's morale towards excellent performance.

This study attempted to establish the profile of "outstanding teachers" in region VI with regards to personal qualities, pedagogical knowledge, teaching competencies in terms of general knowledge and mastery of subject matter, teaching skills, classroom management, and evaluation skills, and beliefs about teaching, teacher's roles and expectations, and professional development and credentialing.

Evaluation form was used as criterion-reference to analyze the personal qualities, pedagogical knowledge, teaching competencies in terms of general knowledge and mastery of subject matter, skills in classroom management and evaluation skills. Actual observation and interview were employed to gather qualitative data. The result of the observation and interview was analyzed, categorized and synthesized to come up with representative profile of outstanding teachers.

3. Results

Outstanding teachers in common have things in common; they are good persons imbued with loving, caring, motherly, friendly, understanding, and approachable as shown by their love for children/students and special or innate liking for their jobs. They demonstrated their love for pupils/students by being gentle and motherly. Their co-teachers viewed them as patient, hardworking, resourceful, cooperative, responsible, committed, helpful, dynamic, committed and dedicated professionals. They have great confidence in themselves and appear pleasant and presentable. They have patience and high tolerance.

The findings of the present study was supported by Strom (1998) that a good teacher is a good person who likes life, is at peace with oneself, and enjoys being with other people.

Outstanding teachers also use variety of techniques, approaches, and strategies to make the lesson more interesting and meaningful. Group work, cooperative learning, practical work, games and contests, lecture in expository approach, problem solving, question and answer, demonstration and other interactive approaches were employed. These teachers also encouraged their pupils /students to participate in class activities through words and tapings pupil/student's hand. They also guide the learners before starting the task and encouraged students to ask questions for clarifications.

Solis (1998), said that teachers should possess pedagogical knowledge and skills when they apply the principles of teaching in their decision-making regarding what to teach, how much to teach, and what consideration should be given to the characteristics and needs of the learners.

Results also showed that these teachers have a high degree of general knowledge and mastery of subject matter as indicated by spontaneous explanation of the lesson without reading from their references. They are also asking analytical questions using highest order thinking skills. The teachers also have routine activities, maintain student's attention, prevent class disruptions and execute time management. It was also observed that teachers in this study do a lot of formal and informal evaluation through assessment of students' responses and giving immediate feedback, reinforcement of correct responses, assessment of students' output whether individual or group activities. Very noticeable to these teachers are the provision of consultation time, remedial teaching and the like which help the students with peculiar needs.

According to Rabus (1995), the teachers' effectiveness in instruction depends on their knowledge of methods and techniques. In like manner Correy and Correy (1981), emphasized that, to be an effective teacher one must not only know what to teach but how to teach, that is, he/she knows the variety of methods in teaching, classroom management and counseling,

Teachers in this study were observed to possess thorough knowledge of the criteria of good teaching in the subject they taught, various strategies and techniques of teaching as well as in evaluating the teaching-learning process. They were also guided by a lesson plan in presenting the lesson to maximize the benefits and accomplishment of a one-hour period instruction; classes start with greetings and prayer and in the elementary level it is followed by energizer to enable to prepare the mind and body of the individual learner. These opening activities were followed by grill or review of the previous lesson. Presentation of the lessons comes in many forms: use of colored visual aids and materials, and hands-on or "learning by doing". When it comes to asking questions, teachers in this study ask questions that need high order thinking skills with proper timing, sequencing and phrasing. They also employed teaching skills that suit to the need, interest experiences and maturity of the learners. They employed teaching skills which is in line with Bruner's theory of cognitive development without neglecting the encouragement of students' curiosity and desire to explore.

Competent teachers use varied instructional devices and materials to clarify concepts, sustain students' attention, and encourage their participation, induce reflective thinking and tests students' comprehension. (Torralba, 1987). That is why these teachers use varied, colorful teaching materials to clarify

concepts, sustains' attention and encourage participation, induce reflective thinking and tests students comprehension. Classroom management is also a task done by teachers. It expedites as well as keeps classroom operations in order. It likewise motivates the student to perform well, underscoring the facts that a well managed classroom is conducive to intellectual growth and development. Pescos (1999) revealed that outstanding teacher maintained an organized and discipline classroom. They are patient but firm in giving decisions.

Evaluation is an integral part of instruction no matter how brief or informal. It would determine whether the learners have achieved the lesson's objective and behave as they are expected. Evaluation is one as assessment of pupils'/students' comprehension of the lesson and the progress they are making the task at hand. Teachers reinforce, encourage, guide and correct as well as confirm that indeed the pupil/student are right or progressing or in the right track. Evaluation is done both in formal or informal way. Teachers who are committed to excellent instruction use evaluation in several ways: to diagnose students' readiness; to individualize learning; to ascertain the interim progress; to decide when tutoring or re-teaching; to assess the outcome of instruction, (Kindwater, Wilen and Isher, 1992).

Outstanding teachers give importance to continuing professional growth to stay on top of their career and they can update and upgrade in their professional development through participation in seminars, workshops, conferences, conduct of research, and implementation of innovation, as a proof, they had received several awards for exemplary performance.

4. Conclusions

Outstanding teachers were imbued with positive character traits to make students inspired, encouraged, feel loved, accepted and respected, and also earn for them recognition, respect, cooperation, and friendship of their peers. They also exhibited a strong mastery of subject matter, expound on them spontaneously, confidently and clearly using a variety of media, and instructional aids. They related lessons to other fields of knowledge, and applied them to daily life situations. They displayed wide array of pedagogical know-how using them skillfully to cater to student's needs, multiple intelligence and individual capacities to learn and grow. They showed that they know the art, the science and the mission of teaching. They also possessed more adequate classroom management skills to make the discussions and interactions spontaneous, interesting and enjoyable, and as a consequence, lesson was learned meaningfully. The employed both formal and informal evaluations to monitor the progress and difficulties of the learners and institute interventions to maximize learning. They also provided time for consultation to install safety nets for effective learning. And finally, teachers' qualities influenced the learners to come their way through various beliefs, roles, and expectations that they play in their life. Their professional development and credentialing helped them a lot in the success of their teaching career.

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