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GAP ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE AND EXPECTATIONS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MBA EDUCATION IN INDIA

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Abstract

Understanding students' viewpoints on teaching effectiveness within an academic system is one of the most important pre-requisite for creating a great learning organization. Teaching is a complex activity that should be measured on multiple dimensions using a combination of measuring techniques. The present study assumes that students are the best brand ambassadors of any management institute. The primary objective was to gain a deeper understanding of the relationships and the gaps between expectations of students entering MBA, their experiences at the end of first year and their teachers' perceptions. The data were collected from MBA students and teachers in Nasik city. The results suggest that though faculty perceived to have delivered their best it did not reach students in same perspective. There was significant gap between students' expectations and experiences and also between teachers' perception and students' experiences for all areas of teaching effectiveness. To reduce the gap, teachers need to be flexible in terms of incorporating students' expectations and feedback into teaching learning process



Keywords

Expectations, Experiences, Gap, MBA, Students, Teachers, Nasik

1. Introduction

Experience is that what we personally encounter and live through, the things that happen to us. On the contrary expectation is what we would like to happen. A huge gap between experience and expectation often leads to high dissatisfaction with regard to that factor.

The most important product of an educational institution are qualified and satisfied students. Faculty is the key element in the process of transforming a student's life. Understanding students' viewpoints on teaching effectiveness is important towards creating learning organization. Students' expectations of faculty conditions the learning environment, their motivation to learn and their attitude. Thus their opinions can be considered as a quality index of educational institutions.

Higher education is an important investment in human resources which provides the knowledge, attitudes and skills required for students. It plays a very critical role in the development of societies (Snelgrove H, et al., 2009). Management education particularly MBA (Masters in Business Administration) in India has been facing criticism over last few decades (Jaipuria S, 2014). Some of the critical issues faced by MBA program can be briefed as

- high cost of education resulting burden on parents and students,
- despite high cost there are little returns from the program- growing unemployment among management students, due to
- lack of quality assurance system, quality faculty members, indigenous content in curriculum and practical orientation

Over and again it has been argued that programs offered by management institutes are not aligned to real problems of the industry.

Moreover the changes at global level have further added to the challenges of management institutes all over. To keep pace with demands of present time, management education system in India needs extensive transformation. What is needed is through ground work, an all inclusive analysis that would explore each aspect of this education system before incorporating major changes.



1.1 Significance of the Study in the Context of Current Status

All these combined together, has brought greater focus on faculty and teaching effectiveness within management education. The profession of teaching has evolved over years. Teaching being an art and profession is highly human oriented. Consequently evaluation of teacher's performance and effectiveness becomes imperative. Teaching is a complex activity that should be measured on multiple dimensions using a combination of measuring techniques. Recently for making hiring decisions teachers' actual performance is measured on contemporary measures rather than traditional measures

Teacher's effectiveness cannot be predicted only on the basis of performance appraisals by seniors or self appraisal by faculty themselves. The need is to combine information from multiple measures into an accurate overall rating of teaching effectiveness. New assessments instruments are needed to tell whether teacher possess the classroom teaching skills to be effective with their students.

The city of Nasik has also witnessed a tremendous growth in the number of management institutes functioning under Savitribai Phule Pune University. This growth has only come with multiple set of challenges like faculty shortage, lack of admissions, quality input and output, industry academia gap and employability of MBA students.

Thus under the context, where management education was under the radar of criticism, every possible measure was needed to overshadow the negative influences. The present study assumes that students are the best brand ambassadors of any management institute and hence aims to explore improvement in the given context from students perspective, with special reference to Nasik city. Determining findings of the study will prove to be supportive and beneficial to decision makers and faculty from management institutes. It will also help identify gaps between students' expectations, students' experience and faculty perceptions, thereby better understand what constitutes to effective teaching.

2. Review of Literature

A wide body of research shows that teachers are the main factor related to student's achievement (Anderson, L.W., 2004) and satisfaction.

A study titled 'The Long-Term Impacts of Teachers: Teacher Value-Added and Student Outcomes in Adulthood' indicated that highly effective teachers have long-term impacts on students. They increase students' lifetime income and standard of living (Chetty R, et al., 2011).



A study on teacher effectiveness and student achievement found that student achievement was positively related to effectiveness of successive teachers, stability of the teaching staff and quality of teaching processes (Ronald H. Heck, 2009).

Findings from the evidence-based research indicate that what matters most is quality teachers and teaching, supported by strategic teacher professional development. That is, the quality of teaching and learning provision are by far the most salient influences on students' cognitive, affective (Aldridge, S. and Rowley, J., 1998) , and behavioural outcomes, regardless of their gender or backgrounds (Rowe K J, 2003).

2.1 Factors of Faculty Effectiveness

In general, evaluation is the systematic and objective process of determination of merit, worth, or value. Without such a process, there is no way to distinguish the worthwhile from the worthless (Scriven, M., 1991).

Research literature and sources have enumerated multiple factors of faculty effectiveness in academics. According to Harry Wong, there are three main characteristics of an effective teacher, having positive expectations for student success, excellent classroom management and designing interactive lessons. Stronge (2002) in his book *Qualities of Effective Teachers* has defined five specific, critical areas of teacher effectiveness as teacher as an individual, classroom management and organization, organizing for instruction, implementing instruction and monitoring students' progress and potential. Berk (2005) mentions twelve potential sources of evidence of teaching effectiveness as (a) student ratings, (b) peer ratings, (c) self-evaluation, (d) videos, (e) student interviews, (f) alumni ratings, (g) employer ratings, (h) administrator ratings, (i) teaching scholarship, (j) teaching awards, (k) learning outcome measures, and (l) teaching portfolio (Berk R A., 2005).

According to the 'Psychological foundations of learning-Four Aces of Teaching' (Walls, 1999) as cited in Bulger et al. 2002, the four aces of effective teaching are outcomes, clarity, engagement and enthusiasm. Other studies indicate that teacher preparation, knowledge of teaching and learning, subject matter knowledge, experience and the combined set of qualifications measured by teacher licensure are all leading factors in teacher effectiveness. Further research studies have found that common teacher processes that have a positive association with improved student achievement (Frome, et al., 2005) include the use of a variety of instructional practices, a teacher's expectations for student achievement (Cohen,1998), a



teacher's use of high-order thinking skills in discussion and assignments and content focused professional development for teachers (Goe, L., 2007) (Kane, et al., 2008).

McKeachie (1997) noted that student ratings are the single most valid source of data on teaching effectiveness (McKeachie WJ., 1979). Student ratings is a necessary source of evidence and an essential component any faculty evaluation system, for both formative and summative decisions, but not a sufficient source for the latter (Berk R A., 2005). Student evaluation of teaching ratings are used to evaluate faculty's teaching effectiveness based on a widespread belief that students learn more from highly rated professors (Rowe K J, 2003). However study of meta-analysis of all multi section studies revealed no significant correlations between the students' ratings and learning(White & Gonzalez, 2016).

2.2 Problem Statement

“If faculty members and students do not agree on what constitutes to effective teaching then it can have negative impact on students' outcome and learning.”

2.3 Research Questions

Teachers may put in their best to create a positive teaching learning environment but did it match with what students expected? Students enter the course with some expectations, over the academic year what faculty delivers frames students' actual experience. While faculty perceives to have delivered their best it may not reach the students in same perspective.

Specifically, the study addressed the following research questions:

- 1) Is there significant difference between students' expectations and students' experience?
- 2) Is there significant difference between what teachers perceived to have delivered and what students have received (experienced)?

2.4 Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of the present research study was to gain a deeper understanding of the relationships and the gaps between the expectations of students entering MBA, their experience at the end first year and their teachers' perceptions.

The most effective way to achieve this objectives was to survey both students and their teachers. The paper is presented with a view to suggest an improvement on closing the gap so as to enhance students' satisfaction level.

2.5 Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

A conceptual framework helps researchers to identify research variables and further clarify relationships among the variables of the study. A conceptual model based on review of literature was developed to guide the research study, as shown in figure 1 below.

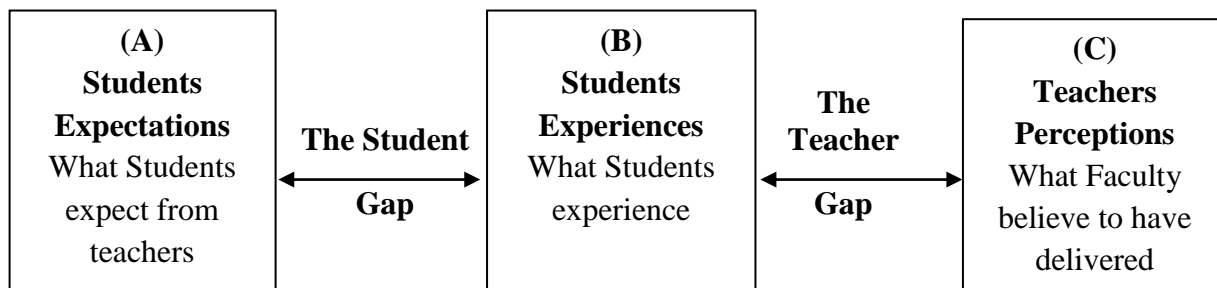


Figure 1: *Conceptual model of Teaching Effectiveness of Faculty in Management Education*

Educational institutes today operate in a challenging environment, with students expectations increasing each year. Students keep wanting more and unfortunately, most institutes are not able to meet those expectations. There is a wide gap between what students want and what they actually experience during their tenure. This Expectation–Experience gap termed as the ‘Student Gap’ in this study, greatly leads to disconnect and dissatisfaction of students.

Also there can be a gap between what teachers believe to have delivered and what students have actually experienced. This Delivered–Experienced gap, termed as the ‘Teacher Gap’ leads to greater misperceptions on teachers’ behalf.

Factors leading to gaps may be seen as a change in both, the teachers themselves and in the student experiencing a possible change in the student-teacher relationship as a consequence.

2.6 Hypotheses

A hypothesis is a more specific statement and predictive statement; as such it is different from research question. The purpose of framing hypotheses is to make a prediction of expected results given the research problem and circumstances. A hypothesis is a researcher’s educated guess as to what should happen in a particular situation.

H1: In MBA education, there will be a gap between students’ expectations from teachers and students’ actual experiences during the academic year

H2: In MBA education, there will be a gap between what teachers perceive to have delivered and what students have actually experienced during the academic year.



3. Methodology

Research is a logical and systematic search for new and useful information on a particular topic. Methodology implies more than simply the methods used to collect data. A research method is a systematic plan for conducting research.

3.1 Type of Research

Longitudinal and Quantitative in nature

A quantitative research breaks down a phenomena into measurable categories that can be applied to all of the subjects or wider and similar situations (Winter G., 2000).

3.2 Participants

The study population for this study consisted of

- Students: MBA first students were surveyed twice, at the beginning of the year and then again at the end of the year to determine their expectations and actual experiences respectively
- Faculty members: SP Pune University approved teachers preference was given to PhD holders; inclusion criterion was minimum two years of experience, guest faculty were excluded from the study.

3.3 Sampling

Simple random sampling was carried out to cover a sample of 215 students and 70 faculty members of management institutes in Nasik

3.4 Data Collection Instrument

The choice of data collection instrument influences the quality of data being collected; hence this decision must be taken meticulously. To address the research objective, Management Faculty Effectiveness Scale was developed based on review of literature and focusing on the objectives of the research study. At the beginning of the year questionnaire was administered to students to know their expectations, while at the end of the year same questions were repeated so that students actual experiences over the year can be measured. Faculty group was surveyed at the end of the year to gain an insight into what they perceived to have delivered during the academic year. Respondents were asked to express their perceptions on five point Likert scale. Questionnaire was developed to investigate faculty effectiveness on three areas:



- Organizing and planning strategies are a critical component of effective teaching. The impact of Organizing and planning is tremendous on student learning. Preparation and planning also help minimize classroom discipline issues and assists in classroom management.
- Instructional strategies means effectively conveying the message in creative and understandable terms so students can gain from the given information and assists teachers to achieve specific learning objectives.
- Assessment strategies are a central element in the overall quality of teaching and learning and can take many forms, including formative and summative assessments.

Data Analysis: Data were analyzed by SPSS using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and analytical statistics a) a Paired t-test to compare mean scores of students' expectations and experience and to test hypothesis H1 and b) an Independent t-test to compare means of teachers' perception and students' experience and to test hypothesis H2.

3.5 Reliability

It is a property not of the instrument but of the instrument when administered to a certain sample under certain conditions (Polit & Beck, 2004). Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency and is considered to be a measure of scale reliability. Cronbach's alpha value for The Management Faculty Effectiveness Scale was higher than 0.72, which was considered reliable for present study.

4. Results

Of total 215 student participant included in the present study, 61% were female and 39% male. Mean age of the students was 20 years and had entered MBA after graduating from different streams like engineering, commerce and pharmacy. 69% surveyed teachers were female, 46% were PhD holders and 21% had more than 10 years of teaching experience.

Maximum students (91%) highly valued capability to teach in a manner that improved their test taking ability. Student respondents expected teachers to be cooperative and supportive of their learning and help them become confident independent learners. From students' perspective communicating a clear plan and objectives for the lesson at the start of the session was an highly expected attribute of teacher's planning skills (88%), followed by demonstration of maturity and calmness in reacting to unexpected student behavior for classroom management (89%). Table 1 below displays the factors of least and most significant gaps from students'

perspective. Least gap between expectationa and experience was observed for teachers‘ organizing and planning strategies.

Table 1: Comparision of mean scores of Students ‘ Expectations and Students ‘ Experiences

Particulars		Expectation (what Students expected) (A)	Experienced (what Students perceived) (B)	Student’s Expectation Gap (A) – (B)
Organizing Strategies				
Planning	communicate a clear plan and objectives at the start of the lesson	4.3	3.9	0.4
	structure the lesson to use the time available well	4.1	3.5	0.6
Classroom Management	have well-articulated rules and procedures for general classroom behavior	4	3	1
	demonstrate maturity and calmness in reacting to unexpected student behavior	4.2	2.8	1.4
Instructing Strategies:				
Instructional Strategies:	use of variety of activities/ learning methods	4.4	3.4	1
	teach in a manner that improves students test taking ability	4.5	3.2	1.3
Cooperative learning Strategies	support students in their learning and help them become confident independent learners	4.1	2.9	1.2
	involve, listen and respond to all students in class	3.9	2.9	1
Assessing Strategies:				
Assessment Parameters	make a fair and reasonable evaluation, depending on students’ ability	4.4	2.6	1.8
	focus upon understanding, skills acquired and applications in real-life settings	4	2.8	1.2
Assessment methodology	establishes expectations for student's learning at the start and how learning will be demonstrated	4	2.91	1.09
	gives feedback using a combination of formative and summative assessment methods	4.1	2.7	1.4

4.1 Gap Analysis:- The Student's Expectation Gap

To answer the first research question, students' perception, feelings and experiences were taken into account.

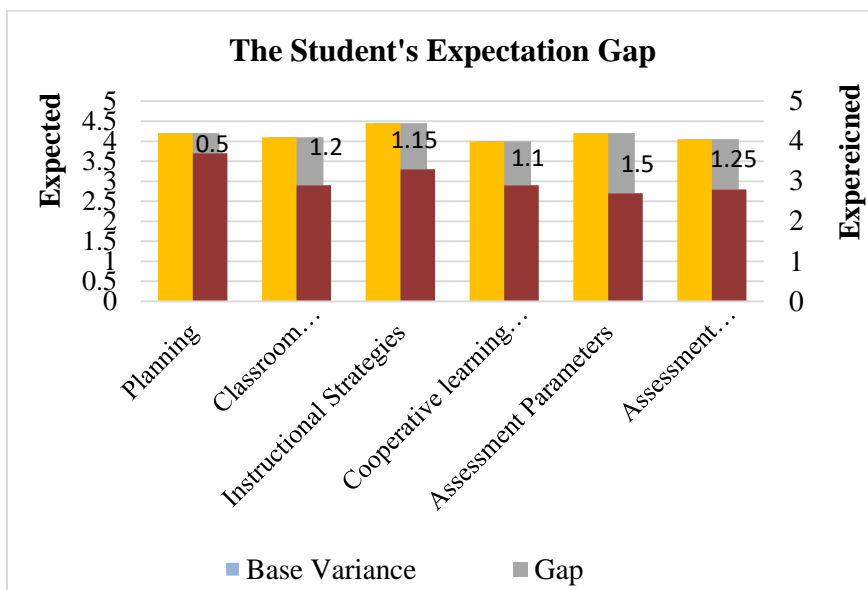


Figure 2: Gap between Students' Expectations and Experiences

The findings of current study showed a significant gap for all areas of teaching effectiveness. Overall gap related to instructional strategies appeared to matter most to students, this meant that teaching methodology did not meet students' expectations particularly in terms of improving their test taking ability. Another gap of concern was the assessment parameters where expectation to making fair and reasonable evaluation depending on students' ability was not being met. Further students also felt that their teachers' classroom management strategies lacked demonstration of required calmness in reacting to unexpected student behavior.

Table 2: Comparison of mean scores of Teachers' Perceptions and Students' Experiences

Particulars	Delivered (what teachers delivered) (C)	Experienced (what students experienced) (B)	Teacher's Perception Gap (C) – (B)
Organizing Strategies:			
1) Planning	4.3	3.7	0.6
2) Classroom Management	4.15	3.2	0.95
Instructing Strategies:			
3) Instructional Strategies	4.2	3.45	0.75

4) Cooperative learning Strategies	4.05	3.1	0.95
Assessing Strategies:			
Assessment Parameters	4.4	3.25	1.15
Assessment methodology	4.05	3.1	0.95

Maximum teachers (90%) judged their assessment strategies to be fair and reasonable such that students' evaluation were made depending on their ability and focusing upon application of knowledge and skills to real life applications. However students' experience differed from their teachers perception on this factor. Second most prominent ability reported by teachers was their organizing and planning strategy, to which even students agreed to large extend. Teachers also believed their classroom management strategies to be the best to which students disagreed to some extend.

4.2 Gap Analysis:- The Teacher Gap

To answer the second research question whether is there difference between what teachers perceived to have delivered and what students experienced to have received, teachers' perception were taken into account.

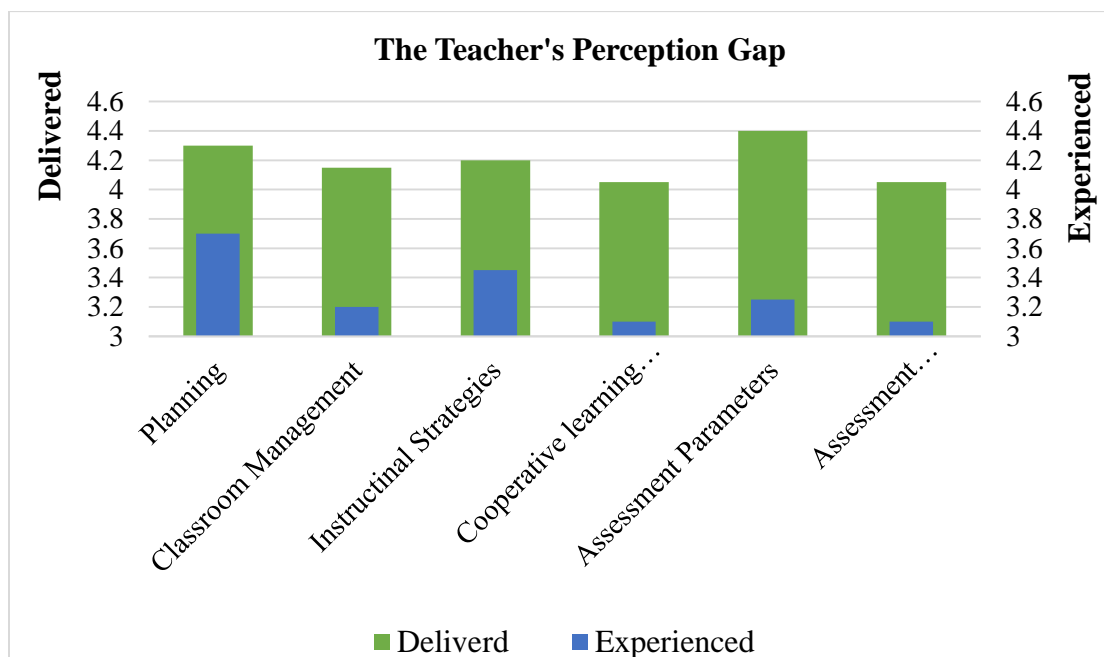


Figure 3: Gap between Teacher's Perception and Students' Experiences



A substantial gap for all areas meant that faculty's teaching effectiveness was lower than what students expected. Highest gap were derived for assessment parameters adopted by teachers, that is teachers believed to have made a fair and reasonable evaluation depending on students' ability but students experience did not match with it. Also where teachers believed to have focused more upon understanding, skills and applications in real-life settings while assessing; what students experienced was much lower than that. Teachers' perception regarding inclusion of cooperative learning strategies in class instructions and having well-articulated norms for classroom behavior did not match with students' actual experiences.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

Paired sample t-test was used to test hypothesis H1. The results showed a significant difference in the scores for students' expectation ($M=4.17$, $SD=0.16$) and students' experiences ($M=3.05$, $SD=0.37$) conditions; $t(215)=8.22$, $p = 0.05$. Hence null hypothesis was rejected and hypothesis H1 was accepted, proving a significant gap between students' expectations and their experiences.

Also hypothesis H2 was accepted based on the significant results of two sample independent t-test; resulting significant difference between teachers' perceptions ($M=4.19$, $SD=0.10$) and students' experiences ($M=3.30$, $SD=0.28$) conditions; t-value was 8.00 at $p < .05$. The gap between what teachers perceived to have delivered and what students experienced was proven statistically.

5. Discussion

Generally teachers evaluate students' performance and behavior based on criteria established from their expectations. However most times teachers fail to ask students what they expect from the courses and teachers. Most teachers would verify that they entered the field of teaching because of their 'passion for teaching'. But this passion is truly reflected in what and how teachers teach, in their behavior and the motivation and interest that they generate in students. It is unbelievably boring to learn from teachers who do not have interest or liking for that subject. On the other hand it is incredibly inspiring to have a teacher talk about a topic with pure passion and enthusiasm.



5.1 Reducing the Gaps

To reduce the gap, teachers need to be flexible in terms of incorporating students expectations and feedback into teaching. From the finding of this study, it was evident that teachers need to improve their instructional and assessing strategies.

- **Help learn from mistakes:** Teachers can use many assessing methods that focus on continuous assessment to encourage students. To help students learn from their mistakes teachers can review past assessments and identify common mistakes made by students and then plan a class period, where these common mistakes are highlighted, discussed and rationalized.
- **Identify difficult concepts:** While students understand most of the concepts in a subject, there will be some difficult points that each student may have. Teachers should ask students to make a list of those points, compile the list and then, dedicate a class period to explaining and discussing these concepts.
- **Encourage students to apply what they know:** The best learning happens when students apply what they know. Teachers must organise activities that allow students to apply concepts they have learnt. This way abstract concept become concrete and they have a better chance of retaining the concepts for exam purpose.
- **Group Learning:** The best way to assess whether or not one really understands a concept is by trying to teach it to someone else. Teachers can pair students or form small groups and allot a topic each student/group.
- **The goal of cooperative learning** is that teachers must create opportunities to ask and answer questions during class. Using a variety of teaching methods also increases students' involvement.
- **Listening and responding** is yet another way of encouraging student involvement and participation. It is important for teachers to listen fully to students' questions and answers; avoid interrupting.
- **Classroom management skills** can be made more effective only by practice and receiving more feedback by teachers. These include excellent communication skills (both verbal and non-verbal), superior understanding quality (the skill to understand students individually), optimum listening skills and self-confidence.



5.2 Limitations and Scope for Future Study

The study had limitations in terms of sample size and study area, hence the findings cannot be generalized beyond the research area. Further studies are encouraged to overcome this limitation and also investigate into other factors that influence students' experience in a learning environment and revive faith in MBA education.

6. Conclusion

The present study compared students' experiences against their expectations and against teachers' perception of what they delivered, to measure two different gaps, the student gap and the teacher gap. Faculty effectiveness was measured on three areas organizing, instructing and assessing strategies, from both students and teachers perspective. Students entering MBA had high and diverse expectations that did not match with their experiences over the academic year. That is, what teachers' perceived to have delivered was much less than students' expectations' and experiences. Thus if a teacher cannot accommodate for these different aspects of teaching, particularly with expectations of students, then it will be difficult to give students the best learning experience they expect. Teaching is fifty percent knowledge and fifty percent interpersonal skills. Effective teachers will have to find out ways to get more interested in what they are teaching and to make learning more motivating for their students.

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