



What are the useful teaching strategies to facilitate students' learning in a Foundation year (higher education) contextual studies art classroom?

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Abstract

This research paper is based on an interview based case study of experienced and novice Foundation year teachers in an Art and Design DAI (Degree Awarding Institution) in Pakistan. Foundation year is the base of any art and design undergraduate program as it not only enable students' with tools, techniques and skill of making art but it also empowers them to become critical thinkers and independent learners. The aim of this study is to generate effective teaching strategies, tools, and techniques that might better facilitate foundation year students' learning needs and provide teachers with ideas and strategies to become facilitators. Specifically, this study focuses on strategies that are useful for motivating students to become proactive learners; for engaging students effectively whereby their learning goes beyond classroom walls and for building better teacher-student relationships. Furthermore, the analysis of the findings of the study has also been used to assess the researcher's own teaching practice in a foundation course dealing with Critical and Contextual Studies. This process specifically involved looking at the role of the teacher as a moderator. The self-reflective analysis of the researcher's teaching led to the development of an assessment tool and recommendation for effective student-engagement that might be used by other teachers.

Keywords: Teaching strategies, Student-learning needs, Post-adolescents learning needs, Self-reflective analysis, Art education, Foundation year, Student engagement, Student motivation, Video Self-Confrontation (VSC)

INTRODUCTION

The researcher have taught contextual studies course to foundation year art students for more than six years, at two higher education institutions in Lahore. Pakistan. But when she first started to teach and was a novice teacher she felt excited as well as pressured at the same time to perform well, in terms of conducting the class, coordinating all logistics and looking around for interesting things that can be added to the course to make it more educational as well as fun. At the beginning of her teaching career she got a great opportunity to co-teach a contextual studies course in foundation year with one of the most senior and experienced teacher of the department, who was also the dean of the department at the time. Teaching with her was a great learning experience in itself and it motivated the researcher to constantly try to learn and improve herself as a teacher, which then brought her to this research topic. The course structure was such that, one part of it was lecture-based where the senior co-teacher or sometimes guest speakers' gave a lecture and the second part of it was discussion session on a topic relevant to the lecture, that the researcher used to conduct with students. The second part/ discussion had been added to the course to encourage students to learn through dialogue and to give them an opportunity to express their opinion. It aim of this was to help students to become self-reflective and proactive learners.

As a teacher the research has been very self-reflective and has been working on improving the weak areas of her teaching, so for that she listed out few things that she felt needed improvement, such as, understanding students learning styles, effective teaching strategies to facilitate their learning needs, student engagement strategies, teaching strategies for student motivation in the class, importance of dialogue and discussion, also other tools and techniques to add to her teaching methods and philosophy.

The constant urge to become a good teacher and to understand each of her student's learning needs was connected her personal childhood school life experience where she had to face extreme bias and was penalized by few of her teachers. The researcher was an average student during her school days, because she did not find anything interesting in what her teachers used to teach and none of her teachers ever made an effort to engage her in the class. So later in life she realized that every student needs individual time and attention, guidance and

nurturing from their teachers to become a good/ well performing student. As she believed that at that time if she would have had anyone to guide her in the right direction it would have changed her entire school life and learning experience.

The research paper is mainly focused on theory subjects/ contextual studies for foundation year art students but most of the strategies and techniques are relevant for both theory and studio courses.

The researcher is using the term “*contextual studies*” instead of theory course because it is based on the “*constructivist theory of teaching and learning*”. That is when teachers facilitate students to construct the meaning of what they learn in the class based on their own real-life experiences.

This research paper would benefit novice teachers who are beginning their teaching careers in a smooth transition from being a student to a professional educator.

It would provide them with an understanding of post-adolescent learning styles and teaching strategies that they can use to facilitate their students’ learning. It might also benefit art teachers who teach Kindergarten up to grade 12 (K-12) as few motivation and engagement strategies are relevant to all age.

Furthermore, Mid-career and senior teachers who are teaching since a very long time and also are active practitioners in their fields may also benefit from this research paper, as sometimes being occupied with both teaching and practice, leaves them no time to revisit the reason they became educators in the first place. So this may act as a tool to reconnect them to the passion and curiosity they first had when they became teachers, that may have forgotten over years, that what makes them curious and what motivates them to continue teaching, especially, when their art practice is going well. Researcher believes that to be a good educator one must remember the reasons for coming in teaching profession.

“The best teachers are those who show you where to look, but don’t tell you what to see”.

Alexandra K. Trenfor

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this part of the research paper the researcher has discussed the scholarly literature relevant to the study that other authors, teachers, researchers and experts in the field from around the world have written.

The review of the literature helped the researcher to draw connections between her research questions and research methodology. There are 7 themes that have been discussed in the paper which are as following, “teaching strategies in art education”, “student learning in art education”, “adolescents and adult learning” to understand how post-adolescents learn, “qualitative research”, “data collection” methods i.e.: interview, self-reflective analysis through video recording which will help the researcher to conduct this research, “art education in Pakistan” and “foundation year in an art college in Pakistan”.

The researcher was able to gain very insightful information from the scholarly material as discussed below.

To captivate the interest of the students the teacher have to pay close attention to the content to which the students respond the most as it will help in improvising methods better and will provide room and flexibility for changing the strategies to accommodate students’ need.

Repetition is necessary for the brain to better store the information and makes it more effective to remember things and in the same way emphasizing on the important information is necessary for brain to analyze and understand it properly. Sometimes the content may seem very easy and obvious to teachers but it is not necessary that it is also clear to students so it is crucial to repeat and emphasize on important information.

Willis, J. talks about the impact on students if the teacher starts their class with humor either by telling a joke or by showing a funny image. It makes students more engaged and helps them associate with information positively “*The experience of laughing together helps build community*”. (Willis, J., 2006, p.42)

Students are most engaged when they learn through sensory experiences with prospects to interact hands-on with materials that are also relevant to their lives along with their learning in class.

It is important to give freedom to students to learn at their own speed and employ multiple teaching strategies to provide a hook for them, whenever possible.

Nurture students’ by avoiding directed lecture and by providing students with an opportunity and environment to engage in problem-solving activities.

A creative and exciting curriculum always capture students’ focus and they are happy and satisfied which a teacher can comprehend as students’ will be more responsive.

Sometimes the teacher needs to demonstrate and explain how to line up the process to help students to make their own judgments. However, there should be room left for students to discover and enquire as it makes them more engaged with the work.

Students will value few empathetic words from the teacher in stressful situations caused by many factors including confusion, environmental reasons, physical reasons, etc. the students will have a better emotional value of what they are learning and it will also get stored in their long-term memory.

Students should know about the teacher's' expectation for grading, fairness in evaluation, and the teacher being approachable and receptive to their ideas, as this will give students the confidence to be creative and take risks. This also helps in building students' trust on the teacher. *"Before students can focus on academics, they must feel physically safe and emotionally secure."* (Willis, J., 2006, p.64)

A student should know that when they work hard they would succeed. This sense of achieving something by trying is a very big key factor in achieving student motivation.

Good connection between teachers and students becomes a positive influence in their lives especially when talking about adolescents. *"An important way to help teens through this period of flux is to provide them with a sense of community and to help them build their stores of self-confidence."* (Willis, J., 2006, p.67)

Efland talks about the importance of open-ended and thought- provoking questions that the teacher should ask to encourage students to question what they hear or read, to encourage them to make connections between what they learn in one course to other courses as well as with the world. This will teach them about meaning making by drawing linkage of any artwork to its context, as understanding the context of a work is as important as work itself.

"Individuals are inclined to experience their own lives as the unfolding of a story, and that story cannot be told in isolation from the environment in which it takes place, so that in understanding oneself, one also learns about the people, objects, and events that make up one's social world". (Efland, 2002 p.9)

Barkley, E. F. talks about the teaching approaches that require students to be active learners tend to make students more engaged. *"When students are engaged, they exceed expectations and go beyond what is required"*. (Barkley, E. F., 2009). When a student is engaged then they become active learners in the class. The teacher should provide them with high-quality feedback and assessment which will engage students' to critically analyze their own work on the basis of what feedback they got, which will then empower them to become partners in their learning process.

Pichert, J. W. talks about teachers and especially the ones involved in the curriculum development should keep in mind that, *"Developers of adult learning programs cannot afford to be a mechanism in their approach. They must be consistently innovative and adaptive."* (Pichert, J. W., 1986, p.604)

Vandal, S. H. in her article talks about how Art education in Pakistan is still something very new so it is not embedded in the education system yet, especially; it is missing in the primary and secondary levels.

There is a huge difference between education offered in public and private schools in Pakistan. Public schools that have low fees only offers education in Urdu Language, it being the mother tongue of the country, whereas all the private schools are English Medium but their fees are very high which is not affordable for many. Sajida Vandal in her article said that around 85% percent schools in the country are public schools that follow syllabi prescribed by the Federal Government, that doesn't have any art education in it due to which students are deprived of visual esthetical value and there is no concept of music in these schools. However, some teachers themselves take an initiative to teach drawing and coloring to students in these schools but it cannot be institutionalized, as it is not part of the syllabi.

"The National Policy for school education (government schools) is somewhat silent on art education and strong on character building and moral improvement." (Vandal, S. H., p.1). 10% of the private school in the urban area follow the government school syllabi and take the examination. They charge more than government school but less than Private English medium schools and their aim is not to education students in a wholesome way but to train student to pass government examination. However, a lot of educationist and art educators have presented recommendations to government to make art education an essential part of syllabi and suggestions to train teachers. Therefore, they are hopeful for art education to become a part of Federal government syllabi.

Foundation Year programs philosophies in Art College around the world is very different from one another but there are few common things that are believed to be fundamentals of a good foundation year program for the institutions all over the world.

Salazar, S. M. in her article said that is it beneficial for students of foundation year to have a basic connection and relationship with their teachers and teachers should act as their mentors throughout the foundation year. The importance of making theory relevant to learners and students' should be given a platform to learn through dialogue. As the author observed classes for her research she says that she witnessed that the most engaged and happy students were in the classes where teachers involved them into conversations that were beyond art making. *"Structuring the creative process, facilitating dialogue, orchestrating the physical space and modeling."* (Salazar, S. M., 2013, p.246). The author also said that: *"Certainly, both skill and meaning making will play important roles in contemporary curricula."* (Salazar, S. M., 2013, p.256)

The undergraduate foundation year programs for art and design students are mostly based on U.S. education system. As they said that if you walk into any arts foundation year studio in U.S. their curriculum is organized on basic visual elements i.e.: line, shape, color, pattern, etc., however, they are divided into courses titles like 2D or drawing etc. but they the basis are these basic visual elements. However, most of the U.S. education system is actually based on Bauhaus's philosophy that was offered at German Bauhaus School of Art and Design

(1919-1933). It is the pioneer of foundation year program but that was later amended and re-conceptualized so much that it has changed majorly. The foundation curriculum in U.S has been receiving serious attention since 1970 and has increased in the last decade.

METHODOLOGY

Design of study

The researcher has kept the names of the participant and the institutions anonymous to respect their privacy. The research was conducted at one of the top Art and Design Higher Education, Degree Awarding Institution (DAI) that is a medium sized private university in Lahore, Pakistan. The institution is Pakistan's Liberal Arts University, which has many other departments, such as, School of Education, Institute of Psychology, School of Media & Communication, School of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences, School of Computer & I.T and School of Architecture.

The researcher was working at this institution at the time when this research was conducted. The first interviewee "participant A" for this research was a Professor, who was the most senior faculty member in the department and has been teaching for over 30 years in the field, dean of the department and the researcher's co-teacher at the time when this research was conducted. The second interviewee "participant B" was an Associate Professor who was also the Coordinator of foundation year at the time and has been teaching for over 20 years. He has taught studio courses in foundation year and also has designed the foundation year program structure at the department understudy and another institution of Pakistan. The third interviewee "participant C" was Associate Professor, who has taught studio courses in foundation year in past, also has been part of designing the foundation year program structure and is one of the pioneers of the department, she has been teaching for over 15 years. The fourth interviewee "participant D" became an Assistant Professor recently but has teaching experience of more than 9 years, at the time she was teaching theory course to foundation year students

The reason the researcher chose these 4 participants was that, two of them were teaching theory courses to foundation year students, other two had been involved with foundation year program closely for many years. Plus, the researcher wanted to get her data from people with very different experience levels.

The researcher also did a self-reflective analysis by using a rubric that she developed on the basis of the scholarly literature she read along with the findings of this research. She made videos of 4 of her classes that were evaluated through the rubric. This is a very important part of this research for her because the reason to choose this research topic was to improve her teaching methodologies and strategies.

Students were not interviewed, as the purpose of the study was to find teaching strategies and ways to facilitate student learning in an art classroom, which is not for any particular group of students but for teachers who teach in any higher education institution in Pakistan as well as around the world. Also, the content of the course was not discussed for this research paper, as it was not relevant for this aspect of the research.

Research methods

The researcher conducted one-to-one semi-structured informal interview session with participant A and participant D, but half of the interviews with participants B and C were done as a group interview and the other half was conducted with individual participants, one to one interview. *"The group interview is essentially a qualitative data-gathering technique that relies upon the systematic questioning of several individuals simultaneously in a formal or informal setting."* (Fontana, A. & Prokos, A. H., 2007, p.29).

Researcher required qualitative data so she believes that her interview methods helped her to get in-depth information. After transcribing the data she summarized the content of the interviews but she did not consider speech and discourse analysis.

Researcher audio recorded all the interviews and also took field notes during the interviews that were later transcribed.

All the 4 interviewees had taught the researcher during her undergraduate program so she has also used her own observation from memory about them from a student's' view.

The researcher has also video recorded 4 of her classes for the second part of her findings that were self-case study. Video Self-Confrontation (VSC) as being a new method being only one decade old there are still some hesitations and considerations about it being a useful and right method for research. However, the researcher believes that it is important for an educator to become self-reflective in order to improve and to become accelerative in their teaching practice.

"The main purpose of VSC (Video Self-Confrontation) in higher education is to improve teaching-learning processes. Faculty's commitment to this purpose is determined by many factors, such as their perception and attitudes towards the research/ teaching dichotomy and

the university's reward system; their motivation and concepts of self-efficacy and self-fulfillment; and their attribution mechanisms of success or failure in teaching. All these factors greatly influence their readiness to be motivated in VSC processes and the effectiveness of their VSC uses. VSC is a powerful technique, which has a great potential in facilitating behavioral changes. It can cause harm or be wasted if not used properly. Suggestions for optimal uses are presented."

(Perlberg, A., 1983, p. 633)

FINDINGS

Teaching strategies

As the researcher, this part of the findings is the most beneficial part for her as it provides her with teaching strategies that have been tried and tested over years by educators.

First of all, the teacher should have good energy in the class, which sometimes might be at the cost of another important thing, but it is something a teacher must do.

Students need to learn how to be students in the class and become proactive learners in their learning process which can be done by handing them responsibilities in the class, such as, giving them the responsibility to teach each other in the class or to teach the entire class.

Sometimes shock students with difficult questions, which they have to answer and sometimes be gentler with students and let them just, listen, absorb and understand as they learn through both these strategies. As through answering those difficult questions they learn that it is okay to speak up and even if the answer is wrong still it is okay and they would not be pinned down or insulted which gives them the confidence to speak up and encourage them to participate. Then in such discussion sometimes very personal things also come up but the student then knows that even if she/he shares it with their class fellows and teacher it is okay. It sometimes also helps student reveal her/ his rebellious side that may sometimes be exactly the thing that will help them make their work.

It is very important that students should learn to respect the difference of opinion and diversity in their class so they can apply that to their real life as well.

Students need to discover themselves, they need to learn to be self-reflective and in order to help them explore themselves or to reveal their true selves it is very important for a teacher to facilitate them to do so. Therefore, a teacher should ask them such questions in which they have to find answers to exploring their innermost feelings. As most of these students have never been asked any questions in which they got a chance to examine their belief system.

"It's because they themselves never asked themselves that why? So I think that finding answers to whys can be done in different ways through stories that they have to make up or through narratives that are parallel narratives. I find switching narratives is sometimes good, like somebody starting something and somebody else completing it because it forces you to see that other people think differently from you and that you have attached part of yourself to something that was originally not part of you."

(Participant A)

Make students work in groups, as it is one of the best ways to learn multiple things, such as, responsibility as other group members are depending on them to do their part, they also learn to empathize with their group fellows, they learn to work as a team, they mostly learn to sort out their differences. They also learn to help each other especially someone who is lacking behind. Other than making them work in groups as a team it is also important to help them become a part of a larger group, in which they may be working as individuals but they should feel that they are responsible for any good or bad that happens in the group as they are part of it.

So to bring them together as a group participant A has suggested strategies, such as:

"There have to be moments of lightness, there has to be sharing of humor, there has to be a desire for the group to get to know one another, through the work and apart from the work, so the class, the project should be such that they are able to, you can step away from that, and student themselves can discuss or argue or share so that they assist one another in that learning process and after the class is over or even between class or during discussion there should be a moment in which they can express their personalities. Of course that's happening in the work a lot of the time but there should be other ways of doing it because they have all kinds of interest and during the conversations if someone is able to express their interest whether it's in music or whether it is in looking after parrots or whether it is going for walks in the mountains, whatever it is, everybody has got some peculiar interest or the other."

(Participant A)

Setting up work ethics for each course of foundation year because of multiple reasons, such as, most of the students have only done art related activities as a hobby and they have never taken it as a serious business but when they come to the institution then they realize that it is no more a pass time. It is professionally demanding, for seven straight hours and they become physically and mentally exhausted. So at first they are unable to keep their focus so a teacher needs to help them learn, how to stay focused, how to stick with their idea, how to manage time and especially how to see an idea to the resolution. As the work ethic they develop in foundation year are the ones that determine their attitudes towards other three years that they are going to study. *“So that’s something I think is part and parcel of teaching these students is the instilment of these values and ethics that they are going to be using as an artist forever.”* (Participant D)

To teach them time management the strategy is to divide the studio projects into small parts that way it gives students a chance to do the given task within the given time. They also get time to step back and look at their own work before they present it to the teacher.

Traveling with students is a very good experience for them and it really helps in terms of making their energies high and in opening up to their class fellows as well as their teacher. Traveling together always have its own advantage and builds a good relationship between students and teachers even if it is only a day’s trip.

Contextual studies/ Theory subjects

Theory/ contextual studies courses have vast importance in foundation year as said by all the interviewees. They said that knowing history and history of cultures is most important especially for foundation year students for widening their view about themselves and to have a well-rounded personality and in order to do that they need to learn about the world; history, geography, cultural patterns, norms, global issues, etc. which can be done through lectures, showing visuals, and readings. Sometimes students do not want to read but being a teacher one must ensure that they read even if it has to be forceful or supervised because making theory interesting does not mean that there should be no reading and writing in the course.

Theory courses should be built in the program and it must be aligned to the structure of the entire foundation year. Participant B’s said that there should be a Head of Academic Studies who can look at the quality of readings and writing happen from 1st up to 8th semester and should also determine the research demands and expected outcomes.

Sometimes a teacher thinks that his/her point is getting across but actually students are unable to understand it for various reasons, i.e., a complicated points, student is not attentive and other such reasons. So to counter that the teacher should really spell that out for them, repeat some points and really stress on the important points as it helps in recapturing their attention.

“Calling theory courses as contextual studies are great as it is the crux of it.” (Participant D). It was interesting that participant D was not familiar with the term contextual studies, as her educational training was in Pakistan and America where this term is not used, but in the United Kingdom it is specifically called contextual studies. The programs structure of department in which the research was conducted was mostly based on American system but teachers are trained in both American and U.K. so the used language is mixture of both. However, after reading about it the researcher realized that the theory courses that are being taught in foundation years at the institution are contextual studies. It is a paradigm that needs to be changed.

Post-adolescents

In foundation year, most of the students who come to the institution are between ages 17 to 19 years so they come under the category of post-adolescents. Being an educator one cannot ignore the age of the students while developing the course outline and devising strategies because in this age mostly students are going through physical and psychological changes that sometimes make them behave in certain extreme ways.

The teachers should not separate these post-adolescent students from the context of their lives because the context plays the most important part in the psychological growth students. As participant B said that post-adolescent of Pakistan do not have the same exposure as the post-adolescents of western countries because there people of this age group are living an independent life, taking responsibilities of managing home, doing part time jobs along their studies to support themselves, etc.

In Pakistani society girls carry more burden than boys of their age by taking responsibilities at home that are assigned by their families however it is still not equivalent exposure as the people of same age in the west. Still, there are some amazing results produced by students over here after some time which participant B have not seen anywhere else.

The most important and first thing for a teacher is to understand that for most of these students it is their first experience of being with people of opposite gender in a situation in which they are not from their family. So as they are not used to working with opposite gender so sometimes they become intimidated, especially boys who wants to show that they are superior or they know more and they always had the sense of entitlement that they did

not work very hard for and they think they have achieved a lot whereas, this is all because they are boys in this society that is why in some cases they do not work as hard as the girls in their class. Although, this is now changing as now some of the girls come from such class backgrounds that they also have a sense of entitlement because of their families. It is important for a teacher to make these students aware of these issues by talking to them about it and telling them that it is sometimes okay to feel intimidated but one has to get passed it and move on from it.

Foundation year teachers should be a little bit light hearted about the way they treat these manifestations of students' behavior towards opposite gender, as a teacher cannot actually tone it down. However the teacher also cannot allow it to take over the academic objective but the teacher has to be little easy going. The teacher actually has to play the part of a moderator for some time till everything is little toned down and these students start getting normalized. This issue is mostly present till the mid of first semester of the foundation year as by the end of the first semester they become friends and the tensions cool down.

As almost everyone has stressed on the point that this is a difficult age for students due to which it become more challenging for a teacher to handle these students. So teachers needs to see what the requirement of each group and then decides how to teach them according to their requirements..

Student engagement

Student engagement is most difficult part of a teacher's job, as it requires interesting content, energetic teacher and fun and engaging teaching strategies, all at the same time. However, it is easier to engage students for short period of time especially in theory courses but keeping them engaged throughout the lecture is very challenging for a teacher.

If the class set up becomes like a school classroom situation then students' interest is immediately lost because they have just come out of the school classroom system and they are no more interested in going back to it. So a teacher should try to make it as less like a typical classroom situation as possible especially in theory courses.

"First thing is to get them excited which is easier said than done, you know because the whole attitude towards learning and gaining of knowledge in our academic environments which is that they have known before in school is that they are more or less pushed into education and it's like a heavy burden sitting on their shoulders and even if they have interest in what they are doing the mindset had been evolved over a period of time so there is a kind of rigidity about it. So the first thing that is required is to dismantle that rigidity and to see that you know it's entirely up to them while the teacher has certain expectations, they should have greater expectation themselves and the teachers and this is difficult to do because they always had jump hoops, they always have to, you know, show grades to their parents, they have always believed that grades are the only way of figuring out their own capabilities or letting other people know what their capabilities are, so breaking down that system is quite a tough thing."

(Participant A)

She said that is unacceptable for a teacher to compare one student with another.

"Also I think comparing one person to another is absolute death. It should not be done, I mean, I am a complete disbeliever in saying that so and so have done it like that or so and so has done this so can't you do this, because it's usually the last thing that anybody wants to hear and it is immediately very intimidating. It is very discouraging because you are also doing a terrible thing of making one person like another which after all is not your job as a teacher, your job is to nurture an individual's point of view and their own expression and their own thinking because if you will tell them to be like somebody else then it is just going to be opposite of what you are trying to do."

(Participant A)

It is very important for a teacher to gain students' trust and to engage them in class because once the trust is developed then the student feels ethically and emotionally obligated to not to let the teacher down.

Participant D says that there are four strategies that she uses to engage students, first strategy, is to take away all possible distractions, that she achieves by, as she called it, her "three golden rules" for her theory class only, which she tells her students at the beginning of the term (i) No one should be holding their cell phones in their hands; (ii) They can never be late for class and for an assignment deadline; (iii) never talk amongst them and should listen to her and also when one student is talking in the class everyone should listen to them instead of talking to each other in small groups during the class. Second strategy, is that she uses a lot of humor and dry wit in her class and she also makes a connection between something from history and something fun and new which these students can relate to and can laugh about and once they are engaged in the discussion then she moves to the actual

point. She says that humor can help to dispel a lot of serious situations and it really works with the students of this age group. However, she added that using humor in the class doesn't mean for students to go out of control so there should be funny things but it shouldn't get out of hand. Third strategy, is that she tries to be very energetic while delivering her lecture and while showing slides on the projector, she moves around the class and talks to students as this keeps them forced and involved. Fourth strategy is that she shows a lot of images in her course and tells students anecdotes to help them to connect it to the real life. She also teaches her course content in the form of narrative to make it simpler and easier to understand for students.

Student motivation

A teacher can provide students with all possible facilities, give them the best knowledge and use all the successful strategies to facilitate their learning but it can all be just a waste if the students are not motivated.

As participant B suggested that to motivate student there should be an exhibition of works of foundation year students where public is invited to see students work and talk to them about it, as such events are one of the best ways to motivate students and they learn a lot from that experience. They learn to be responsible and to take ownership of their work and most importantly get the confidence to talk and interact with other people, especially, the non-artist ones as their responses and questions are much simpler in one way yet their answers are very complicated and this gives students an opportunity to answer those question and while doing that they automatically start seeing their work critically. As sometimes the kind of dialogue that is happening inside the art school at such exhibitions becomes very irrelevant as these students are involved in critiques weekly and they already have the artist's/ their teacher's feedback on their work so again getting feedback from another artist is important but little redundant as compared to public/layman's feedback because at that time a student feels like a real artist or designer instead of only being a student who is only performing for his/her own teacher in the classroom.

Engage students with the community and city will result them into being motivated as it will help them make linkage of what they are learning and doing to its applicability or importance in the real world.

Teacher-Student relationship should be based on trust and communication. All the students should trust the teacher, not trust them personally but to trust that their teacher will not pin them down for any reasons, teacher will not judge them on any statement they make during discussion and teacher will not be unfair while marking or teacher doesn't have any personal favoritism towards few students, teacher doesn't have all the power in the class and students can challenge their teacher where they disagree, etc.

It is also very important that students learn to become self-motivated because a teacher can not be the one always motivating students. The motivation should come from inside a student that can be easily achieved if students can discover those hooks that he/she is in search of in a class. However, a teacher should guide and help them to find those hooks by asking them to question themselves, talking to themselves, telling them to be self-reflective, helping them to learn to question everything which is not at all encouraged in our education system till a student reaches the university but even most universities do not provide students with complete freedom to question everything they see, hear and learn.

"It's always that what does the teacher says, what is the right answer? What did my dad say? What did my mother say? What did my grandmother say? That must be the right answer so the fact that you know you are searching for the right answer inside of yourself is quite an alien idea most of the time."

(Participant A)

The best way to help students to learn to be self-reflective is to use humor, being a teacher one should sometimes make fun of themselves which will simply encourage students that if a teacher can be wrong and can make fun of themselves then it is okay for us to do so as well. It is very encouraging for students and they feel confident about themselves and become comfortable with the idea of being self-reflective and critical. Also sometimes making fun of the whole group collectively so they participate in making fun of their own behavior as a group also can work towards giving them the confidence to become self-reflective.

Participant D talked about a completely different strategy to motivate students as she has noticed in her courses, both theory and studio, that student now days have become very concerned about their grades and it has become a big motivation for them. So to motivate students she announces about the best projects/ papers/ works of students in the class that way the student whose work is selected is motivated due to the appreciation and others are motivated to do better as it ignites a competition amongst them and positive competition is always healthy for students. She also motivates students by announcing about getting extra +5 marks for students who finish their work on time etc.

Another important point that students are on different levels of understanding when they come to the university so the teacher should sometimes let students deal with it amongst themselves. This requires having some

bright students in the class to ignite a spark to challenge others to try harder, such environment in class has mostly proven to be motivating for both types of students.

Facilitating student learning

The first and most important thing to facilitate student learning in foundation year is for all the teachers to have an understanding about complete structure and curriculum of the program and how everything fits together to understand the holistic objectives of the foundation program. It can only happen if there is a pool of permanent teachers who teach foundation year because new teachers joining for just one term can not understand the complete cycle of foundation year that is divided into two semesters.

When it comes to facilitating students' learning it may be very time taking and energy consuming and the teacher will have to be on their toes all the time. But being a teacher one must use these measures to facilitate their students' learning as the outcome of it will not only benefit students but also will be very rewarding for the teacher to see that they have done a good job.

To facilitate student learning especially in studio it is important to involve students into critiques because it helps students see their own work and also their class fellow's work critically, plus they also gain confidence to speak up.

Students should be taught to support and trust each other in the group because the peer support system is a very useful tool for facilitating their learning. Plus they should also be taught to become independent and self-determined individuals.

Sometimes students face disappointments which result into them being frustrated and they begin to act out. Being a teacher once you can recognize that resentment then one must try to devise few strategies that will alter the state of mind of that individual. As such situation mostly accurate in foundation year so teachers should be prepared to face such situations and be flexible to devise prompt strategies to help students to pass the hitch and learn to find new ways of problem-solving. So next time or in the next project they can get over that hitch, move on and possibly develop it into their strengths.

"I think that is important so that the group recognizes the value of the difference, constantly we should I think try to inculcate in the group certain values which are not there in their upbringing or they are not there in the society or they are not there in the schools that they have experienced. Certainly respect for difference is something that we are so lacking as a society and I think somehow or the other bringing that into the strategy of teaching is important. Because sometimes you know you find that a student has really done badly in practically everything but there is some redeeming feature which you can point out and show that ok that may be the student didn't fulfill the requirement at all but they have somehow expressed an interest of theirs and that is something to be respected. So whatever strategy you develop for respecting difference I think is an important thing in class."

(Participant A)

Importance of dialogue/ discussion

All the interviewees also stressed upon the importance of dialogue and discussion especially in the foundation year. As during dialogue and discussion so many things come up which a teacher needs to identify and then accordingly decide things like, who should dominate the discussions? How to encourage students with average English speaking skills to talk and open up? How to be a good listener? A teacher should be a gentle moderator to keep a check and balance that the discussion is not digressing too much from the content.

Most of the students in the foundation year are very afraid of opening up or saying something as they care a lot about what others will think of them as they are all new and looking for friends and groups to fit in and they don't want to say something stupid in class that will make it difficult for them to make friends. So being a foundation year teacher who is holding a dialogue and discussion, one has to be observant about these things and should encourage students to speak up by assuring them that if they will say something it wouldn't be the end of the world.

Discussions are really valuable for students but they are very demanding for a teacher where she/he has 40 to 60 students in the class because when there are more than 20 students in the class then that is no more a seminar situation and it becomes a very big discussion forum. So ideally the teacher-student ratio for the course where dialogue and discussion are mostly held should not be more than 1:12. However, in studio courses it is completely different story altogether when it comes to discussions because there are multiple factors that a teacher needs to keep in mind, such as, the system that is followed at the institution is that student study studio courses on daily rotation in the first semester. So when a teacher only has one day in a week for one project then a teacher needs to see that to what extent the discussion session is allowed because if discussions are long then the project

won't be completed by the end of that day and that course will lag behind in completing the curricular. The discussion should not be just for the sake of it because if a discussion does not lead to fulfilling any aim and objective of the course are just waste of time and energy.

A very diverse group of students come in the foundation year at this institution and to handle that diversity especially during discussions is a very important and challenging part of the teacher's job. So to handle the diversity in the group a teacher needs to take the culture of the class and the culture of the course hand in hand to make sure that there are no loopholes made while conducting discussions. There should always be a common goal that should be determined by the course requirement and then everyone should be giving an opportunity to speak up as everyone has a unique voice and they all should be encouraged to raise that voice.

The teacher leading discussions in foundation year should understand that she/he should not always be the one having all the answers. Sometimes a teacher should not give answers to students intentionally and ask students to go and find out those answers on their own. This will teach them to get involved in the research, this will also serve as a bridge between the teacher and students and students will not feel intimidated by the teacher's knowledge and start seeing teacher as a person just like them. It is important for a teacher to humanize themselves while dealing with foundation year students as previously these students were used to the setup in which the teacher is the main person in the class who has all the answers and should not be challenged under any circumstances.

“To make the student your friend, respectful friend naturally, they have to feel that okay you like them but you also want them to become their own person and not a carbon copy of yourself and therefore they have to work hard at that on being themselves. So I think that one of the greatest challenge comes through when you are talking because when you are talking if it is the kind of talk in which you are on an equal level in which maybe you are saying that you know that this is the question and I really don't know the answer and you know can you help me with that can you maybe make me sense your answer. So conversation, dialogue, humor, sometimes stopping in the middle of the sentence and saying what do you think? Maybe I am wrong? All of these things are just ways and means of getting a response. Or maybe just asking what will your mother said? What will your father say to so and so? Can you tell me or can you guess? And so on.”

(Participant A)

When the discussion goes off the track and digresses from the main topic then to bring it back a teacher must intervenes and ask students that do you think we are going in the right direction? Is so and so the topic that we were supposed to talk about? Asking such questions during these discussion helps students come back to the right track but if a teacher tries to bring them to the topic in a forceful or aggressive way then it might ruin the atmosphere for the dialogue and discussion which might not be built again, definitely not in that session. It is very important for a teacher to bring them back to the topic very gently because foundation year students get discouraged very easily as they are new to the idea of speaking up and sharing their point of views and sometimes they also lose control and keep sharing a lot of things, as most of them have never gotten an opportunity in life to say what they think because mostly either they are not allowed to question or contribute in their homes as no one takes them seriously as they are treated like little children. So by using such strategies a teacher can really help a student get confidence and become mature and self-reflective individuals.

Foundation year

One of the main issues is that senior teachers are not very keen to teach in foundation year as they said that it is very time taking, tough, draining and few even said that it is also intellectually demeaning.

As mentioned earlier also under the heading, facilitating students' learning, there is also not enough permanent faculty available who teach in foundation year so sometimes the input while planning for the new semester becomes challenging as it is done in isolation by the coordinator/ head of department, as no one is there for engaging due to timings of planning time which are during the holidays and so the visiting faculty won't be paid and they so one can not expect from them to work without being paid. Although, a lot of faculty meeting take place but there is no proper follow-up so it does not serve the purpose to improving curriculum.

Good faculty is the most important factor in an institution as it affects teaching value, especially for the foundation year program. Good in terms of ready to experiment, flexible to moderate teaching methodology and alter course according to students' requirements, be up to date with the art and design world. However, there is still lack of field specific teacher trainings in the country.

Teachers should be associated with a group for the longer period of time instead of teaching them only for only one semester. As in long-term association together makes a people feel responsible for that particular group and it produces better results.

Foundation curriculum should be designed in a way that provides a room and flexibility for a teacher to adapt certain methods and technique and design such projects in which students have a lot of responsibility in their learning process.

Sometimes the young adults tend to give a lot of attitude to teachers as a group that causes a teacher to be disappointed and instead of being sorry they unload their responsibilities on the teacher for not working. In those cases, the teacher needs to take a back seat and give them a levy. Such projects may cause problems and create a mess but it is necessary for students to be held accountable for the mess they created because it helps them become mature and serious about their work and learn from their mistakes. Participant B’s fundamental philosophy for learning in foundation year is that *“What we can not learn, we learn by doing.”* (Participant B)

The institution lacks active workshops i.e. metal and wood workshops, where the worker are doing their commercial work but they are doing it on campus so that students can go and learn for them as this a great way to learn skills of a certain kind.

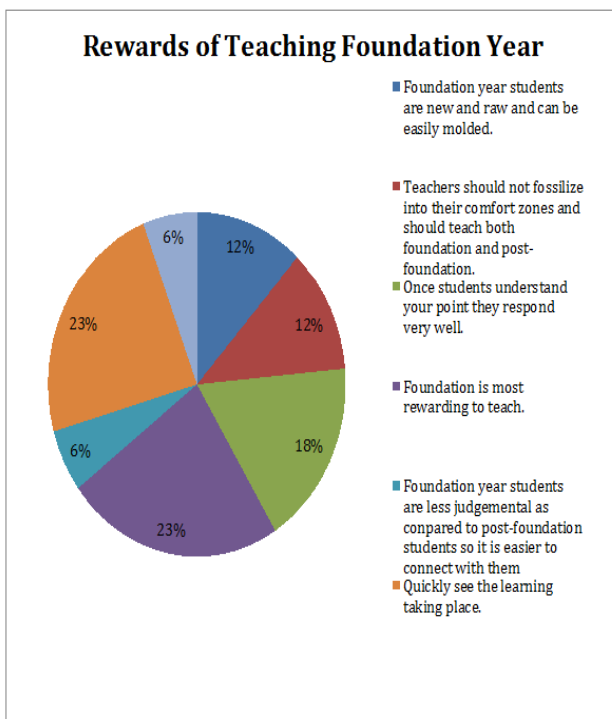
The collaboration with other local and international institutions will give students of foundation year as well as post-foundation years an opportunity to travel and explore right from the beginning as learning through experience in very important for students to connect it to the real world.

“The good thing about analyzing and really scrutinizing how we teach and how to become better teachers and what is evolved in teaching, I think that if people do who are pedagogues, who are teachers, it is a tremendous service... pushing for change comes only when your faculty is ready to do that and I think that is an important thing to remember that an institution even if it is 150 years old if it doesn't have that team of people who are ready and working and energized then you don't have a hope.”

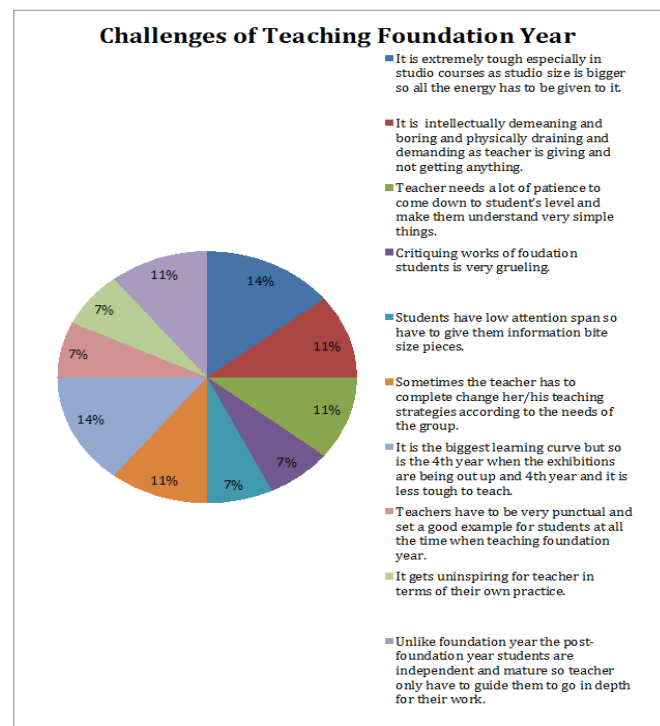
(Participant A)

Challenges & rewards of teaching foundation year

Below shown are: “Table 1: Rewards of teaching foundation year” and “Table 2: Challenges of teaching foundation year”. These charts are based on the responses of the four research interviewees.



“Table 1: Rewards of teaching foundation year”



“Table 2: Challenges of teaching foundation year”

Challenges & rewards of being a teacher/ young teacher

A teacher should teach with their own strength because there are other teachers to teach other things. So one should not stress out by trying to do it all on their own because over engaged teachers are easily let down by students which sometimes creates bad energy and works very negatively for the teacher. Many times, being a younger teacher, one has so much to prove that they become over invested and they loose the focus from broader vision of teaching. There are always rights and wrongs in most of the things we teach or do, so teachers should not worry about being always right or not being wrong in front of students.

Teachers suffer when they don't practice arts while teaching so practicing what they are teaching is very important to become a better teacher.

There are two very different aspects of art teaching, first is teaching a skill which is very important and second which is also equally important that is making good art, these two things are completely different from one another and it is a teacher's struggle to determine that which one is more important for their students.

It is only fair for students to meet the teacher the half way and be passive learners because a teacher can accommodate students' needs and interests of the course only if students show their interest and are keen to learn and explore.

Self-Reflective analysis through Self-Assessment Rubric

The assessment rubric below "Self-case study assessment rubric" was designed on the basis of scholarly literature read during this study and some data was used from the findings of the interview/ part 1 of the research. Researcher has answered questions in the rubric after seeing the four videos that she recorded of her own classes/meetings with students. The researcher was looking answers for some questions for her self i.e. are my findings relevant to my practice, Am I missing out something? What am I missing out? How can I improve them? What are the areas where I should further work on to improve? Etc.

This case study has helped the researcher to articulate her teaching practice and to point out what is missing from her teaching methodology and philosophy.

Self-case study assessment rubric:

Strategy	Already using it or not?	How does it help or it doesn't help?	Comments, if any
Retaining focus, emphasizing importance content and repeating during discussions	Yes. I use this strategy to some extent but practicing it more often especially while having discussions can be beneficial.	Sometimes a student is unable to articulate his/her point across properly during a discussion so when the teacher repeats the same point then it helps other students to understand it. So it is a very important tool to adopt.	I am now conscious about using these strategies in my classroom since I discovered these after reading the articles for my thesis literature review. However, in these videos that I have assessed my teaching were made before it. Even then unconsciously I was already using these strategies but only about 50% of the time. However now I use these up to 80-90% times during my lectures.
Using humor to capture interest and for making the classroom experience safe and stress-free for students	Yes. I do use humor in my class because it naturally is part of my personality.	I think it is a very useful tool for a teacher to make her classroom environment learning friendly as once a teacher laughs with her/his students then students feel a connection with them that is otherwise missing. Furthermore, it really helps to release stress during some serious discussions.	It is my nature to joke and use dry humor in my class for which sometimes I make fun of myself in front of my students just to make them realize that although I am their teacher but I am also a 'normal' person like them which leads to a good teacher-student relationship. Humor helps the most especially when the lecture/ discussion gets too long and leaves no room for a break then these short moments of laughter really breaks the stress and tension and make the learning environment comfortable and positive.

Strategy	Already using it or not?	How does it help or it doesn't help?	Comments, if any
Asking open-ended and thought-provoking questions	Yes, I try to use this tool as much I possibly can.	It really helps to generate a dialogue in the class. It facilitates the discussions to be taken to another level of depth .	I lead discussion seminars as a moderator instead of a teacher and facilitate students' discussion. As a moderator I maintain a decorum during the discussions and whenever students get stuck or sidetracked I bring them back by just give them a little push by asking open-ended and thought-provoking questions, which then helps them to engage further into a healthy discussion.
Connection of material with personal experience- <u>Relevance</u>	Yes, I try to use it as much as possible.	It really helps students to connect with the topic of discussion . I encourage them to give me examples from their experiences which helps them to connect the topic learned in the class with the world outside .	I have been using this technique since the beginning of my teaching career. I learned this technique by observing my senior co-teacher who I have taught with for 5 years. Therefore, I know the importance of "relevance" and I try my best to help my students' makes those connections.
Student-centered lessons	No, I haven't used this technique so far.	This is another approach that I should incorporate in the course I teach and see how it works out as it seems more relevant to studio courses . However, it can also be appropriated for a contextual studies course .	I will try this technique at least once with a smaller group to see how it works out and then use it in future if it works well. It will be added in to the pool of my strategies that I use based on the kind of students' I get each semester.
Having students do reflective writing	Yes, I am using this technique but not enough.	I think reflective writing is a very important exercise for students as it helps students to learn to articulate and express their ideas or opinions and also improves their writing skills .	I do give few written assignments to my students in the course but as it is a contextual studies course I think doing this reflective writing exercise once or twice in a term is not enough. It should be incorporated in each class.

Strategy	Already using it or not?	How does it help or it doesn't help?	Comments, if any
Have connection with each student to make them comfortable	No, not that much.	Due to the nature of my course I am unable to make connection with each one of my student till the last month of the term. It is very important for a teacher to have a connection with each and every student to facilitate his/her learning.	Although I try my best to connect to as many students as possible for the first three months of the term but it doesn't happen due to the large number of the students. But during the last month I have group meetings to discuss the final project with all students, so that is the time when I get to talk to and connect to each one of the student.
Teacher being "innovative" and "adaptive" to students' needs	Yes, but I only use it very little.	It is important for a teacher to understand the needs of the group s/he has got and to be innovative while designing the course for them and to be adaptive to the ideas students bring in and incorporate them in the course.	The course I can currently teaching is a contextual studies course and it doesn't have a huge margin to be innovative and adaptive but I do try to add new things. There is only a minimal change in the strategies as the course content has to be covered as much as required.
Provide students with sense of community through dialogues	Yes, I use it a lot during the discussion session.	I think it is very important for every human being and especially the youth to know about the things happening in the society and to realize that it is their responsibility to take a position and address those issues by going in the community and working for them. It teaches them empathy and a sense of belonging.	I really try to motivate my students to become aware about the issues present in our society and to become active members of the society, to give back to people who need it, to get out of their bubbles and go and work with thousands of underprivileged people present in our society.

DISCUSSION

While writing the findings the researcher was constantly realizing that no matter what country you are teaching in, there are many similarities in the teaching strategies all across the world, she was able to make this connections by information she gained from the literature and her findings. Although, there is a vast difference in the kind of students of Pakistan as compared to students of other countries but surprisingly there are large number of similarities present in their learning styles/patterns even though the context and culture of Pakistan are completely different from that of other countries.

It is seen that students' around the world need nurturing to grow and excel in their education. The nurturing nature of teachers all over the world connects them together through their like-mindedness, even when they might never meet or interact with each other but they share similar kinds of philosophies.

Furthermore, the researcher do not agree with some of the strategies that were discussed in findings but she has included those because this research paper is not only to serve her as a guide but it is also for many other new and mid-career teachers out there looking for such strategies to assist in their teaching practices. This research paper aims to be helpful for all the teachers who are working on developing/ redeveloping their teaching methodologies; no matter what career level they have reached.

Researcher was able to find out about different factors to keep in mind, understand, analyze and consider before designing a curriculum. The fact also based on the scholarly literature is that there should always be a margin and flexibility in curriculum to be altered according to the requirement of students. Being a teacher one has to compromise on the rigidity in order to become a better teacher.

The researcher have practiced few strategies from the findings of the research and based on that experience she can say that first part of the findings of the research has helped her find answers to most of the questions that

she was in search of earlier. However, it is also correct to say that it has raised a lot more questions in her mind that she would want to investigate in future.

Teaching a contextual studies course in the institution, the researcher believe that if a teacher can have a holistic approach towards teaching the theory course then that could do wonders in terms of understanding ideas and concept of anything and everything that students learn..

CONCLUSION

Conclusion of the findings

In the conclusion of this research paper, firstly, the researcher says that she was fortunate enough to mostly achieve the goal she set for herself at the beginning of this research. She was able to find out strategies to better engage students in class, strategies that could help in facilitating student learning, to motivate students, to handle diversity in a class during discussions, to use that diversity as an advantage for the learning of their students etc.

The researcher would also like to see her research as a guide for teachers to find out about different and useful strategies to make the classroom a good learning space for students and teachers.

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