



Philosophies in Action in Schools

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT *Philosophy is often considered as an abstract subject meant for theoretical discussions and deliberate adoption in life by the educated or by the philosophers themselves. The author of this paper however states that even children are capable of understanding the philosophical orientations of individuals from their speech actions and their life style. This is manifested in the life of school going children who choose to give correct attributes to each one of the teachers knowingly or unknowingly characterizing their philosophical base. The author has found evidence in the form of markers such as Model, Guide, Modern, Mom teachers and progressive teachers underlying a particular philosophy.*

Introduction

Can school students be Philosophers? "No", would be the general response. Because the students are students in all circumstances, no one will believe that their behaviour will have philosophical connotations.

Once I happened to interact with the students of high school classes when I was counselling a group of them who were told to be a little bit different in their behaviour in classrooms especially in the presence of teachers. In my anxiety to know what really is the reason for their difference in interacting with different teachers, I talked to them individually to dig out what is at the bottom of their heart. All my questions were quite informal, casual as well as friendly to gather information about the teachers whom they like very much and also to whom they don't show much interest. My suggestive words prompted them to speak out about these two categories of teachers pertaining to their classroom teaching, mode of interaction inside and outside the class, nature of questioning, and consideration for learning, unique efforts to change the behaviour of their students, and the values and virtues they regard most. From the answers given by them, I was able to evolve five categories of teachers liked by some and those not liked by others.

Model Teacher

The first category of teachers is stated to be the real masters of their subjects they teach. They are noted for their spontaneity in their presentation of facts and figures and every moment they prove that they are the authority of the subject and the class, and free from any serious short comings in their works. They are systematic in presenting the subject matter and adopt suitable methodology to teach effectively irrespective of the standard or stage of the learners. They are strictly rule bound and expect perfection in all activities. Apart from aiming at mastery level learning they stand for discipline and dignity in the profession. The learners who can't cope with the expectations of these teachers naturally fall apart and criticize the behaviour of these teachers. Many of the dissatisfied students in the class of such teachers seem to have a fear psychosis over the rigidity witnessed by them in teaching, in dress code and in general behaviour inside and outside the class. However such type of teachers is very much regarded by parents and authorities. These categories of teachers seem to enjoy the status of a "model" teacher.

Guide Teacher

Another category of teachers who are liked by the learners manifest often their individuality in the process of teaching as well as in their teacher behaviour. These teachers seem to be innovative and differ from the structured methods and

procedures of teaching to impart better learning. They seem to consider the individuality and individual capacity of their learners while disseminating the subject matter to them. They are also good in following rules and regulations of the institution with very minor deviations. As these teachers are not very strict in enforcing formal discipline they are very much liked by many. However when the students violate rules or regulations these teachers adopt some corrective measures for instilling discipline rather than giving punishment. Therefore these teachers who are helpful and individual oriented are very much liked both by the parents and students. Their intimacy with the students and consideration for the weaker ones have earned appreciation from all. They are fondly accepted as their "guides".

Modern Teacher

The third category of teachers liked by a good percentage of students is down to earth practioners. The positive aspect in these teachers are ; firstly , enabling the students to understand the concepts fully so as to apply them in life situations; secondly, inclined to instill the scientific attitude in the minds of their learners by providing a lot of illustrations and practical works; thirdly, the rules of the institution are enforced by them only for the benefit of learning not for just mechanical discipline purpose; and fourthly, they offer lots of latest information and world happenings for encouraging each one of them to exploit their creativity. These positive aspects are the reasons for a category of students to consider such teachers as "modern" in their thinking and dealings.

Mom Teacher

Some of the learners seem to look for something concrete in teachers for their immediate use. That is if they are hungry they must be fed. Or if they are in need of some special consideration it must be offered immediately; if not they feel neglected and however good the teacher may be they are undermined by them. The students of this category appreciate teachers who are giving individual attention especially to those slow learners. Moreover they prefer a systematic and logical presentation of the content following simple to complex process of teaching. They are sincere in adhering to rules and regulations and love teachers who have the social concern. Though they call the disciplined students as good they wish to forgive those who have violated the norms unwittingly. In short they want the teachers to behave as their parents in treating them. Such teachers they adore by calling them as "mom" teachers; and all others are unwanted for them.

Progressive Teachers

The last category of students I identified on the basis of their

intimate remarks about varied teachers is those who monitor the process of teaching according to the class requirements. These teachers though not furnishing large amount of information, whatever they give are systematic and practical oriented. They are fond of demonstrating the facts with experiments and providing projects at different degrees of difficulty. These teachers aim at making the students fit for the future with necessary skills and abilities. For them the rules of the institution are not for controlling the students but for making the learning more effective. Therefore violation of rule for a good cause is a typical sign of this category of teachers. The students who look for utility oriented teaching and learning, favour such type of teachers and proudly tag them as "progressive".

Conclusion

After such categorization I came to understand that each category is sprouting out from the roots of some philosophical

thought. The different elements of different philosophy when matched with the thinking and the manifested actions of the teachers reveal this fact. The behaviour of "**model teachers**" underlie the philosophy of "**idealism**"; the behaviour of the "**guide teachers**" characterizes the philosophy of "**naturalism**"; the behaviour of "**modern teachers**" mirror the philosophy of "**realism**"; the "**mom teachers**" the philosophy of "**humanism**"; and the "**progressive teachers**" are the examples for philosophy of "**pragmatism**" inaction. From all these it may be concluded that even the students of secondary and higher secondary classes are capable of identifying the teachers who practice different types of philosophies and show their preference for or indifference towards them prompted by the philosophy they are nourishing with right now. Yes, now I realize that the schoolgoing ones are also philosophers in action!

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