Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development

LECTURERS' PERSPECTIVE OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING: A CASE STUDY AT UNIMAS

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LECTURERS' PERSPECTIVE OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING: A CASE STUDY AT UNIMAS

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ABSTRACT

LECTURERS' PERSPECTIVE ABOUT EFFECTIVE TEACHING
A CASE STUDY AT UNIMAS

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The objective of the study is to understand lecturers' perception of' effective teaching. Questionnaires were used to collect data on: (i) lecturers' background; (ii) respondents' perception of effective teaching and (iii) factors contributing to effective teaching. The sample consists of 76 lecturers in Unimas. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage and mean) and inferential statistics (Independent Sample t-tests; One-Way ANOVA and Bivariate Correlations) were used to analyse the data. Findings of the study showed that: (i) the respondents perceive teaching is effective if it enhances students' knowledge, skill and ability; (ii) there are no significance differences between lecturers' background (having attended training programs, interest in teaching and teaching experience) and their perception of effective teaching; (iii) significance relationships exist between factors that contribute to effective teaching - comprising planning, knowledge of subject matter, classroom management and delivery strategies - and their perception of effective teaching. The study recommended that education and training institutions plan and conduct training programs to upgrade the knowledge and competencies of their lecturers in order to meet the changing needs and expectations of our education system.

ABSTRAK

PERSEPSI PENSYARAH TERHADAP KEBERKESANAN PENGAJARAN SATU KAJIAN KES DI UNIMAS

TAN SOO SAN

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk memahami persepsi pensyarah terhadap pengajaran yang berkesan. Borang soalselidik digunakan untuk mendapatkan data berikut: (i) maklumat latar belakang pensyarah; (ii) persepsi pensyarah terhadap keberkesanan pengajaran; dan (iii) faktor-faktor yang menyumbang kepada keberkesanan pengajaran. Responden kajian ini terdiri daripada 76 pensyarah di Unimas. Statistik deskriptif (frekuensi, peratusan dan min) dan statistik inferensi (ujian t, ujian Anova Sehala dan kolerasi Pearson) telah digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Hasil kajian menunjukkan: (i)responden berpendapat bahawa pengajaran yang berkesan berupaya meningkatkan pengetahuan, kemahiran dan kebolehan pelajar; (ii) tidak ada perbezaan antara persepsi pensyarah dari segi latihan, minat dan pengalaman mengajar terhadap keberkesanan pengajaran; dan (iii) terdapat hubungan yang signifikan di antara faktor-faktor seperti perancangan, pengetahuan tentang subjek yang diajar, pengurusan kelas dan strategi penyampaian, dengan persepsi pensyarah terhadap pengajaran berkesan. Kajian mencadangkan agar pihak institusi pendidikan dan latihan merancang dan menjalankan latihan yang dapat meningkatkan pengetahuan dan kemahiran pensyarah agar mereka dapat menghadapi perubahan dan cabaran sistem pendidikan kini

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The quality of teaching helps determines the quality of learning and thus the quality of the students. Educators are the most essential element in producing the quality graduates and subsequently, quality workforce as these students form our future labour force. Quality educators comprise a very important element in the teaching-learning process. Their perspective towards teaching and learning helps determine the teaching approaches and strategies.

1.1 Background

A paradigm shift is underway to transform our economy from a P-economy to a K-economy. This shift in mindset is needed, to produce a knowledgeable and highly skillful workforce imbued with positive values and attitudes. Malaysia realises the importance of preparing the younger generation for the demand of the future labour market through providing them with quality education (Nathan Achuk, 2002)

Malaysia is rapidly changing from an agricultural- or industrial-based to an information-based economy, which means that workers would have to shift from P-workers (production base workers) to K-workers (knowledge workers). As the world enters the 21st century, knowledge has become a commodity and plays an essential role in the workers' life because the primary source of competitive advantage is no longer physical or financial assets but intellectual assets. Malaysia is moving to knowledge-based economy and the success of business ventures will be dependent on the player's ability to be innovative and generate new ideas. During the Seventh Malaysian Plan (7MP), our government built universities and polytechnics to provide more edu ation opportunities for all irrespective whether they come from the cities or rural areas. Under the Eighth Malaysia Plan (8MP), human resource development had been highlighted as one of the thrusts to support the knowledge-based economy, and to enhance Malaysia's productivity and competitiveness through the creation of a human resource pool.

Human resource development (HRD) involves developing the human pool as well as natural resources in creative and innovative ways in accordance with the needs of present and future labour market. In anticipation of the needs of the future workforce, the government through 7MP, 8MP and Vision 2020 has developed training centres and created opportunities for higher education by bringing local and foreign universities to the people's doorsteps. For instance, UNITEL, UNITEN AND UNITAR were the private university that had been established under the implementing of 7MP.

Students who are the future workers need to be well prepared educationally, socially and mentally if they are to contribute fully to the nations' future development. . Through the teaching and learning process in schools, colleges, and universities students are being prepared to become knowledge-workers. Only with knowledgeable and skillful workers who possess the right values and attitudes, will our nation be able to compete in the era of globalisation and information.

Quality teaching and learning, therefore, impact significantly on our ability to develop human resources that are competent, competitive and innovative An educator's perspective concerning a effective teaching and learning is an important issue influencing the quality of teaching and which needs to be studied and understood.

1.2 Problem Statement

In the Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996-2000), human resource development has become the most important issue facing the long-term economic growth. It is aligned with the industrialization program of our country that emphasized human resource development and the optimal utilization of the human resources (Arby Ahmady, 1996).

Graduates from various education institutes especially local universities such as Unimas are the future workers and workforce for the nation. Thus, the institutes or higher education must ensure that the graduates produced are quality graduates, who are ready to enter the labour market, employable, qualified, possess the qualities of a good worker as emphasized under 7MP and 8MP. These conditions are basic requirements for becoming a knowledge worker, which is needed in the era of globalisation and K-economy. Therefore, the teaching and learning process that takes place at institutes or higher education, among others, will determines the quality of graduates joining the workforce.

Educators play an important role in producing quality graduates who will ultimately become knowledge workers. This is because lecturers form an essential element in any teaching-learning process. Effective teaching can enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA) of the students. Education plays an important role in preparing future graduates with appropriate knowledge, skill and ability to become quality workers or knowledge workers.

Definitions of good or effective teaching are becoming not only more crucial but also more complicated. What is effective teaching? How does effective teaching relate to learning? What do teachers need to do to motivate their students? These are important considerations for anyone in education because they centre on the question " What is good teaching?" These concerns are also particularly important because these influence the kind of teacher one becomes. (Kauchak and Donald, 1993)

As a conclusion, when the educators ponder these questions, thinking about themselves and their classrooms they will form a personal definition of effective teaching. the teaching and learning process must be effectively carried out in order to generate adequate quality knowledge workers for the nation.

1.3 Objectives

The general objective of the study is to understand lecturers' perception about effective teaching.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. analyse lecturers' perception regarding effective teaching;
2. identify the difference between lecturers' background and their perception of effective teaching; and
3. identify the relationship between factors that contribute to effective teaching and lecturers' perception of effective teaching.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

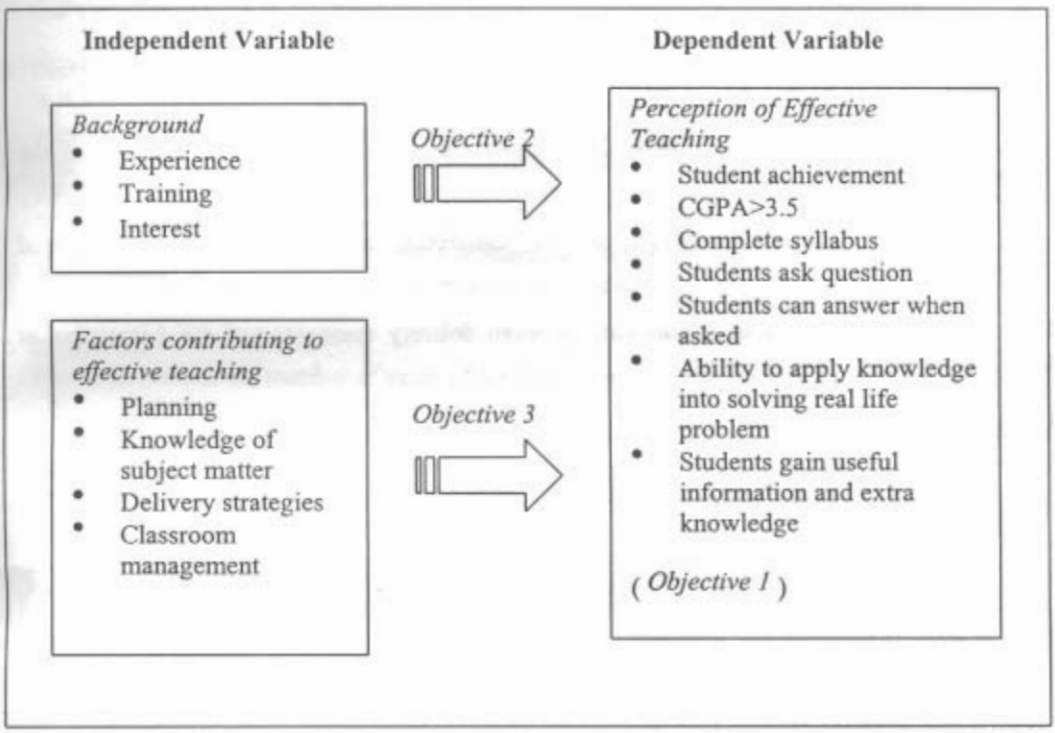


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework: Lecturers' perspective of effective teaching.

The figure above is the conceptual framework consisting of the lecturers' perspective of effective teaching. There are two variables, which are the dependent variable and independent variable. The dependent variable is the lecturers' perception of effective teaching. The independent variables are the background of the lecturers and the lecturers' perception of factors that contribute to effective teaching. In this study, the main objective is to understand the lecturers' perception of effective teaching. The specific objective 1 is to identify the lecturers' perception of effective teaching. Objective 2 is to identify the difference between the lecturers' background and their perception of effective teaching. Objective 3 is to identify the relationship between lecturers' perception of factors that contribute to effective teaching and their perception of effective teaching. Under each category, there are indicators identified by the literatures influencing the effectiveness of teaching.

1.5 Hypothesis

Hypothesis for the study are:

Ho1: There is no significant difference between experience and perception of effective teaching.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between having training course and perception of effective teaching.

Ho3: There is no significant difference between interest and perception of effective teaching.

Ho4: There is no significant relationship between planning and the perception of effective teaching.

Ho5: There is no significant relationship between knowledge of subject matter and the perception of effective teaching.

Ho6: There is no significant relationship between classroom management and the perception of effective teaching.

Ho7: There is no significant relationship between delivery strategies and the perception of effective teaching.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is important to the lecturers, students and universities specifically and for the human resource field generally.

This study is to identify how lecturers perceive effective teaching because lecturers are responsible for facilitating learning among students. Their perception towards the teaching and learning process inadvertently influences the way they teach. This study could help the lecturers to understand and revise their thoughts and beliefs towards effective teaching. The outcome of the study could also help lecturers to identify their weaknesses and strength with regards to their teaching thus enabling them to take appropriate action to improve their skills. By identifying the strength and weaknesses of the teaching learning process, the university can conduct relevant training programs to upgrade the lecturers' teaching skills and to enhance their knowledge in areas related to teaching and learning. The short-term effect of the training program is to increase the lecturers' KSA and ensure the effectiveness of teaching and learning process. As a long-term outcome, it will help to increase the accountability of lecturers towards their students and also the image and status of the university

The other aspect is for the human resource development. Some of the concept, theory and practice of the effective teaching and learning process could be benchmarked and applied into the training program. This will help training facilitators ensure the effectiveness of a training programs conducted.

1.7 Operational Definition

1. Effective

   This term means achieving the objectives. In this study, effective teaching occur when the objectives of a lesson are achieved or when students or learners learn what the lecturers set out

to achieve

2. Perspective
   A particular person or individual view, , thoughts, beliefs, opinion and perception towards certain situation or aspect. Normally, individuals will have their own perception which could differ from others.

3. Lecturer
   A person who teaches at colleges or universities. Lecturer in this study refers to the educators that teach in Unimas.

4. Background
   In this study, background of the lecturer is the independent variable. The background of the lecturer will only focus on their experience, training and interest.

5. Training
   The term means that the training program that the lecturers had taken for upgrade their teaching skill or before they become a lecturer, the training program that helps them to have a guideline on how to teach or the effective way to teach.

6. Experience
   This term refer to the number of years of teaching in any educational or training institutions..

7. Interest
   This term refers to the intention and why one becomes a lecturer or educator. This is to examine the purpose of teaching for the different individuals and to identify how their interest influence their perception.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

There are three limitations to this study:

1. The study l only applies in Unimas. Therefore, the result and outcome of the study only reflects the situation and the perspective of lecturers in Unimas. It does not extend to other universities in Malaysia.
2. There are many other factors that contribute to effective teaching such as the learning style, interaction, and environment. However, this study will only focus on four factors, which are planning, knowledge of subject matter, delivery strategies and classroom management.
3. The independent variable, background of the lecturer only focuses on three aspects, which are the experience, training and interest.. The others variables such as gender and the teaching subjects are not included in the study.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

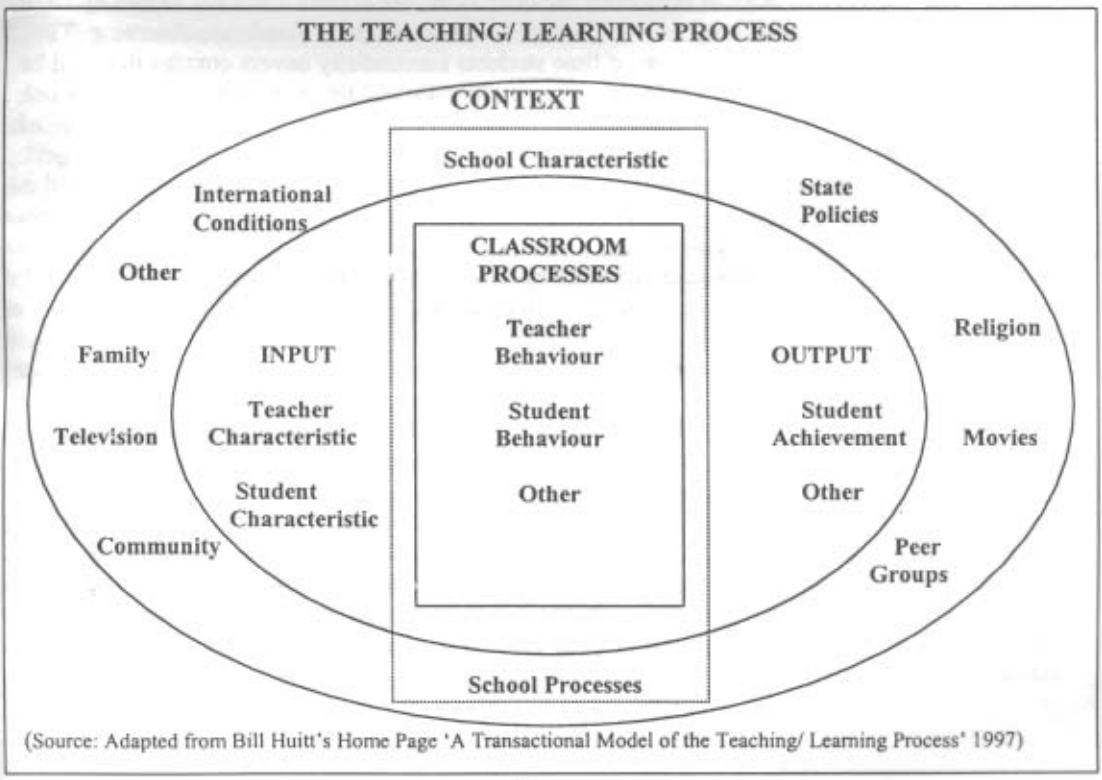
This chapter discussed three main topics related to the teaching-learning process. These are:

1. Definition and model of the teaching-learning process
2. Definition and principles of effective teaching
3. Factors that contribute to effective teaching

2.1 Definition and model of the teaching learning process

Teaching and learning is a two-way communication and interaction process between educators, instructors or teachers and the learners or students. There are several models of the teaching and learning process that have been developed. However, in this study, the model of teaching and learning discussed is the model developed by William Huitt (1995).

Figure 2: Huitt's Model of Teaching and Learning Process



(Source: Adapted from Bill Huitt's Home Page 'A Transactional Model of the Teaching/ Learning Process' 1997)

Figure 2 shows the Huitt's model of teaching and learning. The model shows the relationship between four categories: context, input, classroom processes and output. Context refers to family, home, school, and community environments. Input refers to what students and teachers bring to the classroom process. Classroom processes refers to what is going on in the classroom while output refers to measures of learning done outside of the classroom. According to Huitt (1995), important context variables must be considered because our society is rapidly changing from one that is agricultural/industrial based to one that is an information based children are members of a society, that influences and modifies the way they process learning as well as which defines the important knowledge and skills that must be acquired to be successful in society.

The Output or Outcome category is the most important and the focus of Huitt's model. It is because Huitt (1995) stated that educators must first identified or proposes an end result before choosing the predictor variables. What one measures is what one get (Hummel & Huitt, 1994). The educators must be clear about how they measure learning outcome because this will influence how they choose the variables that impact their teaching. The outcome category could be considered as the objective set by the educators regarding their teaching. If the teacher perceived effective teaching should be based on excellent results, variable such as teaching instruction may differ from those who emphasized on developing cognitive skills.

The second most important category is classroom category (Huitt, 1995). This includes teacher behaviour, student behaviour and others. The category of teacher behaviour consists of all the actions a teacher would make in the classroom and includes three additional subcategories - planning, management, and instruction. Planning refers to all of those activities a teacher does to be ready to interact with students in the classroom. Management refers to controlling student behaviour, while instruction refers to actually guiding student learning.

The category of student behaviour includes all of the actions a student would make in the classroom and includes one very important variable which is Academic Learning Time (ALT). ALT is defined as the amount of time students successfully covers content that will be tested (Squires, Huitt & Segars, 1983). ALT is a combination of three separate variables, which are content overlap, involvement, and success. Content Overlap is defined as the percentage of the content covered on the test by students and is sometimes referred to as "Time on Target". Involvement is the amount of time students are actively involved in the learning process and is often referred to as "Time on Task". Success is defined as the extent to which students accurately complete the assignments they have been given. A high level of ALT means that students are covering important content; students are "on-task" during most of the class period; and students completed most the assignments successfully.

There are a variety of other classroom factors which have been related to student achievement such as the classroom climate and the opportunity for students to engage in leadership roles. One of the most important concepts that have been developed in educational psychology during the past 30 years is that classroom process variables are directly linked to student achievement (Roshenshine and Stevens, 1986).

Huitt (1955) defined input as descriptions of teachers and students prior to their coming into the classroom. Two subcategories of input are teacher characteristics and student characteristics. Teacher characteristics include teacher values and beliefs, knowledge, thinking and communication skills, performance skills, and personality. Student characteristics refer to classroom behaviour and student achievement. Bloom (1971) and Anderson and Block (1977)

in developing mastery learning have shown that a student's prior knowledge is most important in determining the length of time a student takes to learn.

Context, according to Huitt (1995), includes all of those variables outside of the classroom that have an impact on teacher and student characteristic, classroom processes, and output. The most important elements of context variables include school characteristics and school processes. School characteristics include variables such as organizational structure and school size. School processes include factors related to activities such as leadership· supervisory practices and school climate.

There are a wide variety of other context variables that influence the teaching and learning process. Some of these variables include home, peer groups, community, religious institutions, society, culture, and the international environment Variables related to the home environment seem especially important and the education level of parents (Campbell, 1991; Zill, 1992; Voelkl, 1993), family income/socio-economic status (SES), parental characteristics such as age or marital status. It also include a group of miscellaneous variables such as the amount of technology in the home (Perelman, 1992), and the number of books and magazines in the home

There are many models of teaching and learning that have been developed by the researchers. Each of the models has its' own strength and weaknesses. The reason why Huitt's model is chosen is due to its fitness with the study. The model developed by Huitt covers almost all the variables that exist in the teaching and learning cycle. The model categorised the main variables and the sub-variables. The model shows a clear picture of the teaching and learning process. In conclusion, to ensure the teaching and learning process run smoothly, all the related variables must be taken into consideration.

2.2 Definition and principles of effective teaching

2.2.1 Introduction

Based on the HEQC (High Education Quality Council, London) Report (1994), which analysed reports written on 69 universities audited between April 1991 and April 1994, the quality of teaching and learning is now high on universities' agendas. Some universities are designing and testing or using a variety of means to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching. Evaluation methods include the use of performance indicators, student feedback, teaching portfolios and observation of teaching. The greater attention being paid to teaching and learning is also evident in the wide variety of, and enthusiastic support for, innovative practices in many universities. Even "old" universities are placing increased importance on teaching besides their research activities by incorporating statement of objectives on teaching and learning in their corporate plan.

2.2.2 Literature on definition of effective teaching

The literature on teaching and learning is abundant with definitions of effective teaching. Hunsinger (1992) contended that the elements of good teaching are content, technique and "classroom chemistry". The effectiveness of a teaching session is contingent on physical conditions, as well as content, teaching techniques, classroom chemistry, students' motivation, students' behaviour and the timing of the session. Samuelowicz and Bain (1992) argue that effective teachers base their teaching practices on the implicit theories they hold about teaching

and learning. The theories held by a teacher are indirectly expressed through what and how they teach and how learning outcomes are assessed.

Ramsden (1992) stated that good teaching and learning arise from what lecturers and students do and how they both think about what they are doing. Good teaching promotes good learning for students and that teaching and learning becomes more enjoyable for teachers and students respectively. Good teaching also lead to the development and growth of students.

Kyriacou (1989) regard effective teaching as essentially concerned with how best to bring about the desired learning by pupils through some educational activities. However, according to Cole and Chan (1987), effective teaching is defined as that which conforms to established principles that promote student learning and that enhance the cognitive, personal and social development of students.

Kauchak and Eggen (1993) stated that effective teaching involves the ability to apply research findings to classroom practices. Teaching combines human relations skills, judgement, intuition, knowledge of subject matter, and understanding of learning into one unified act, resulting in improved learning for students. An effective teacher combines the best of human relations, intuition, sound judgement, knowledge of subject matter and knowledge of how people learn (different learning style) – all in one simultaneous act.

Based on the above findings, it is evident that teachers and students play an important role in ensuring that effective teaching occurs. Effective teaching takes place when students' knowledge, skills and abilities are enhanced,. Thus, it may be concluded that effective teaching focuses on the development and growth of students.

2.2.3 Principles of effective teaching

Richard Leblanc (1998) identified ten principles of good teaching. These principles, which emphasize teacher behaviour, are:

- Teaching students how to learn
- Treating students as consumers of knowledge and bringing the gap between theory and practice
- Listening, questioning and being responsive and remembering that each student and class is different
- Flexible, fluid, experimenting and having the confidence to react and adjust to changing circumstances
- Ensuring interaction and two-way communication in the classroom
- Using humour to get students to learn in a more relaxed atmosphere
- Caring, nurturing and developing minds and talents
- Supported by strong and visionary leadership and very tangible institutional support which are resources, personnel and funds
- Mentoring between senior and junior faculty, teamwork and being recognized and promoted by one's peers
- Having fun, experiencing pleasure and intrinsic reward as good teachers truly enjoy teaching.

Tipping and Tiberius (1989) have listed twelve principles of effective teaching and learning, as follows:

- Teachers' knowledge of the subject matter is essential to the implementation of important teaching tasks
- Active involvement of the learner enhances learning
- Interaction between teachers and students is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement
- Students benefit from taking responsibility for their learning
- There are many roads to learn
- Expect more and you will achieve more
- Learning is enhanced in an atmosphere of cooperation
- Teaching-learning materials must be meaningful
- Teaching and learning are enhanced by constructive feedback
- Critical feedback is only useful if the learner has alternatives to pursue
- Time plus energy equals learning
- Experience usually improves teaching

The literature shows that there are many factors that influence teaching and learning. These factors are delivery strategies, planning skill, interaction between educators and learners, understanding of the student, knowledge of subject matter, classroom management, environment, concept of time, learning style, teaching material, expectation or motivation, personal growth and etc. Educators, instructors as well as teachers and lecturers must understand the importance of these variables and utilise them for ensuring effective teaching process. In this study, the factors that will be studied are planning, knowledge of subject matter, delivery strategies and classroom management. The literature on teaching and learning have shown that, the above-mentioned four factors are the important variables influencing the effective teaching.

2.3 Factors contributing to effective teaching

This section discusses in detail the four factors that will be studied, namely:

1. Planning
2. Knowledge of subject matter
3. Classroom management
4. Delivery strategies

2.3.1 Planning

a) Definition

Planning provides a form of security and bolsters teachers' confidence. Planning provides a classroom script to follow as lessons are conducted. The environment is simplified through planning by reducing the number of decisions that need to be made. Planning includes the entire decisions teachers make that affect their instruction. By proper planning, a teacher is believed to carry out the teaching lesson more systematically and effectively (Kauchak and Eggen, 1993).

Teacher planning sets the condition for allocating the use of time, choosing an appropriate method of instruction, creating student interest in the lesson, and building a productive learning environment. Planning also helps control the unpredictability and the fast

moving pace of classroom life. Similarly, once a lesson has been taught, a teacher must evaluate how much was learned and then use that information to plan subsequent lessons. In short, planning is crucial and an ongoing part of teaching (Arends, 1997).

b) Lesson Planning

There is an old adage that says, "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail". This is especially true in teaching. Research on characteristics of effective teachers showed that they are organized. The first task of an effective teacher is to do a detailed plan of the lesson to be carried out.

Kauchak and Eggen (1993) stated that teachers approach lesson planning in their own unique, personal ways. In addition, the process varies with the topic. A teacher, who is familiar with, and confident about a subject, will plan differently from one who is hesitant about it. Experience, too, makes a difference. This is because, by reflecting on their previous teaching experience, teachers can improve on their lesson plans thus helping to increase students' concentration towards the lesson.

There are five major functions of lesson planning which includes the preparation of materials, setting learning objectives, course designing, course syllabus, course sequencing, and guidelines for assessment. Knowing what to teach in class enables the instructors to make preparation of materials to be used. The planning and effort involved in developing a lesson plan help the teachers in getting a firm grasp on the materials used in teaching. In a lesson plan, the instructor sets some learning objectives that need to be achieved by the students to ensure they gain the knowledge provided. The instructor is also responsible to design a good course that incorporates five principles. These principles challenge students to higher level learning, using active forms of learning, giving frequent and immediate feedback to students on the quality of their learning, using a structured sequence of different learning activities and having a fair system for assessing and grading students. The course syllabus is a document given to students at the start of the course. It gives students a sense of what the course covers, what work is expected of them and how they will be evaluated. The syllabus also contains course policies and procedures. Therefore, with the implementation of lesson plan, the lecturers can ensure that the course will be carried sequentially. Research shows that teachers who are organized are more effective compared to teachers who are not. Finally, lesson plans can be used as a guideline for assessment and to prepare tests., Detailed lesson plans are invaluable in preparing tests. It is easy to construct test items by reviewing the lesson plans.

Planning represents one of the elements of teacher behaviour. There are many steps in preparing a lesson plan. Planning could help to ensure the flow of teaching. Planning is a tool for the lecturers to teach systematically. Therefore, it is important for lecturers to equip themselves with the ability to plan.

2.3.2 Knowledge of subject matter

To teach something, we must know something. This simple statement seems self-evident and it is well documented by a number of studies linking what teachers know and how they teach (Shulman, 1986; Wilson and Richert, 1987). However, knowledge of subject matter alone is not enough. An effective teacher must be able to translate the information that he or she wants to deliver into a form that the learners will understand (Kauchak and Eggen, 1993). Tipping and Tiberius (1989) suggest that teachers who know their subject matter thoroughly can be more