

CTL Newsletter

Monthly Newsletter of the Centre for Teaching and Learning at IIM Udaipur



भारतीय प्रबंध संस्थान उदयपुर
Indian Institute of Management Udaipur

March 2023
Volume 1, Issue 6



Reflections on the practice of Teaching

As the academic year draws to a close, this is a good time to reflect on the practice of teaching and prepare for the next cohort of students. In this edition we have presented a short summary of a seminal book on the art of teaching – “What the best college teachers do” by Prof Ken Bain. This Harvard University press book comes well-recommended in teaching circles as a tool to aid and enhance teaching practice across disciplines.

Our literature selection has two articles and a teaching note. The articles deal with positive emotions training and feminism in management education, while the teaching note would be interesting for anyone who uses cases that involve embedded quantitative material.

Happy Reading!

INSIDE:

WHAT THE BEST COLLEGE TEACHERS DO PROF KEN BAIN

A summary of a classic book on the art of teaching by Prof Ken Bain.

BRIEF NOTES FROM THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

A Multiskill, 5-Week, Online Positive Emotions Training for Student Well-Being

Masculinity and Management Education:
Feminizing the MBA

Teaching Quantitative Material

What the best college teachers do

- Prof. Ken Bain

Harvard University Press (2004) ([HUP link](#))

(This is a summary of the book highlighting important points and presenting a book outline.)

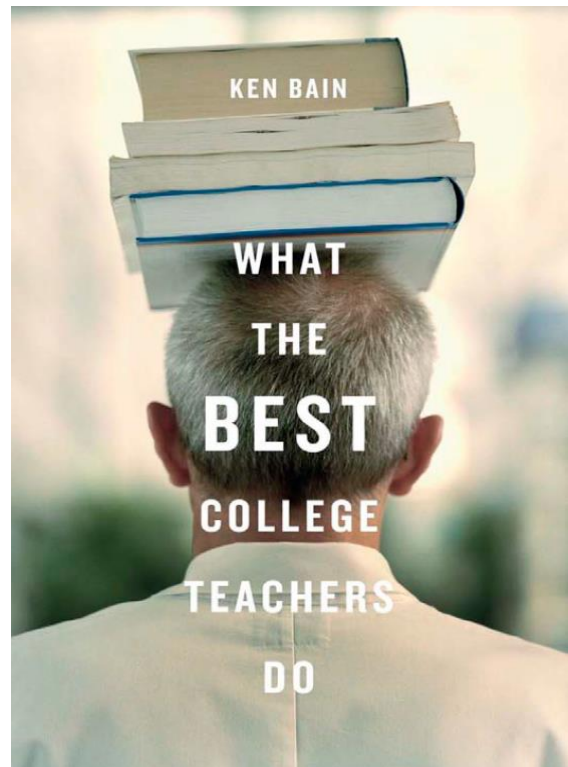
There are as many beliefs about what makes a good teacher as there are teachers. It is no small project to attempt to distill the essence of being a good teacher into a small volume. "What the Best College Teachers Do" by Ken Bain is one book that allows the reader to access the minds and practices of great teachers in a simple and structured manner. The book is a classic resource published by Harvard University press and the author is a professor of history and former director of the Centre for Teaching at Vanderbilt University.

Starting with the question "Who Are the Best Teachers?" in the first chapter, Bain challenges the notion that effective teaching is simply a matter of conveying information to students. Instead, he argues that great teachers are those who can inspire and motivate their students to learn, helping them to develop a deep understanding of the subject matter. He identifies several key characteristics of effective teachers, including a passion for teaching, and lays emphasis on deep understanding of the subject matter and the ability to connect with students. He also emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive learning environment, in which students feel valued and respected, and are encouraged to take risks, make mistakes, and learn from them. Teachers use a variety of teaching aids, including discussions and active learning activities, to engage students and help them develop critical thinking skills. He also highlights the importance of assessment, noting that good teachers use assessments to gauge student learning and to provide feedback that

helps students improve. Drawing on examples of great teachers from a variety of disciplines and institutions, he emphasizes that effective teaching is not simply a matter of following a set of prescribed techniques, but rather involves a deep understanding of the subject matter, a willingness to experiment and take risks, and a commitment to ongoing reflection and improvement.

In the second chapter, Bain further examines how great teachers prepare themselves to teach effectively. He emphasizes that teachers do not simply rely on their subject knowledge to teach well. Instead, they approach teaching as a "craft" that requires careful planning, reflection, and adaptation. Effective teachers are constantly striving to improve their teaching, and they do so by engaging in a variety of activities, such as attending conferences, seeking feedback from colleagues and students, and experimenting with new teaching methods.

One key element of effective teaching preparation is creating a "learner-centred" environment. This means that the teacher puts the needs and interests of the students at the centre of the learning experience, rather than focusing solely on



the subject to be taught. To do this, they engage in careful planning and reflection, seeking to understand their student's prior knowledge, interests, and learning styles, and adapting their teaching skills accordingly. Bain emphasizes the importance of building relationships with students, which can help create a positive learning environment and improve student engagement. Good teachers take the time to get to know their students, learn about their backgrounds and interests, and establish a sense of trust and respect.

In chapter 3, Bain emphasizes the need to approach course design as a creative process to create a cohesive and meaningful learning experience for their students. Effective teachers begin by establishing clear learning goals for the course, and then put equal efforts in outlining assignments, activities, and assessments that are aligned with those goals. A key element of effective course design is incorporating a sense of "flow," in which each component of the course builds on the previous one, creating a sense of consistency and momentum. This involves careful sequencing of material, as well as thoughtful use of course materials that help students in developing their skills and knowledge over time. Group projects, discussions, and peer reviews create opportunities for student engagement and collaboration. Effective teachers often use a variety of teaching methods and strategies to meet the needs of different learners, and to promote active engagement with the course material. Effective course design involves a willingness to experiment and take risks, and a commitment to ongoing reflection and improvement.

In the 4th chapter "Creating Natural Critical Learning Environments" Bain discusses how the best college teachers create environments that encourage critical thinking and engage students in the learning process. A natural critical learning environment by engages students in complex and challenging tasks that require critical thinking. They also provide opportunities for students to

collaborate and engage in discussions, debates, and other forms of active learning.

Efficient teachers also use case studies, simulations, games, and other interactive tools to help students learn and create a sense of community in the classroom. This encourages students to work together and build relationships with each other. While students learn from each other and share their knowledge and experiences, they also foster a sense of belonging by creating a classroom culture that is inclusive, supportive, and respectful.

In further chapters Author discusses the proper conduct of the class and the teaching practices of outstanding college instructors. These teachers create a learning environment that fosters active engagement and interaction among students where they take ownership of their learning. Great teachers often use active learning techniques such as group work, case studies, simulations, and problem-solving exercises to involve students in the learning process. They also employ methods that encourage students to reflect on their learning, such as journal writing, self-assessments, and peer evaluations. They also encourage students to ask questions, seek clarification, and challenge their assumptions.

Another key element is feedback, and it works both ways. Timely and constructive feedback that helps students improve their understanding of the material and their ability to apply it is an essential part of a teacher's toolkit. The best college teachers are open to feedback from their students and are willing to make changes to their teaching approach as needed. Active learning requires flexibility and adaptability from instructors, as they need to be able to adjust their teaching methods to meet the needs and interests of their students.

The concluding chapter focuses on how teachers encourage students to take ownership of their learning and become self-directed learners. Students should not just be passive recipients of knowledge but should instead be active

participants in the learning process and the best teachers empower their students by helping them develop the tools they need to become self-directed learners. Strategies that encourage student responsibility for learning include setting high expectations for students, providing regular feedback, and encouraging students to reflect on their learning and progress, independent research projects or self-assessment activities. Self-directed learners build lifelong skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and time management skills which are equally important in the professional world. Building these skills requires a collaborative effort between teachers and students in an environment where students feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes.

As a resource for teachers this book comes highly recommended for its observations, and recommendations. The case studies in the book are quite insightful. Having a copy of this book on your shelf to peruse every once in a while, is a good way to reconnect with teaching as a reflective practitioner.

- Vaidehi Sharma and Joel Xavier

Brief notes from the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

A Multiskill, 5-Week, Online Positive Emotions Training for Student Well-Being

Maria Hamdani
Journal of Management Education 2021,
Vol. 45(1)

Stress is on the rise among management students, and management educators need to take a leading role in preparing them to cope with it.

Classroom well-being training can be particularly instrumental in developing students' competencies to cope with stress, which directly improves their psychological state and helps them meet academic challenges. Well-being training programs are also effective in building students' adaptive socioemotional competencies, which are essential for long-term personal and professional success. Management students are preparing to assume leadership roles, and in-class well-being training can provide them with an opportunity to build these leadership skills. This article discusses an online positive emotions training program that effectively addresses these concerns.

This positive emotions training program is incorporated into an introductory organizational behavior course to teach students concepts related to self-management, motivation, teamwork, and leadership. It focused on eight well-being skills: noticing and capitalizing on positive events, gratitude; formal mindfulness, informal mindfulness, positive reappraisal, recognizing personal strengths, setting attainable goals, and performing acts of kindness. The implementation consisted of weekly topics, assigned tasks related to the skills, and a daily online journal for students to report their progress.

The author found that the program was effective in improving participants' positive emotions, life satisfaction, and overall well-being. Participants reported increased positive emotions, including happiness, joy, and contentment, as well as decreased negative emotions, such as stress and anxiety.

This kind of training program could be a useful tool for promoting student well-being, particularly during times of stress and uncertainty. The program could be easily implemented in educational settings and tailored to meet the needs of diverse student populations. Full details and resources for program design and implementation are also shared along with the article.

Masculinity and Management Education: Feminizing the MBA

Ruth Simpson

Academy of Management Learning & Education, Jun., 2006, Vol. 5, No. 2

In recent years, gender diversity in Indian MBA programs has progressively improved. This has followed deliberate steps taken by top institutes to tweak admissions criteria to achieve a better mix. In this context, this article provides some food for thought by highlighting how the traditional MBA curriculum reinforces masculine gender norms and perpetuates gender inequalities in the workplace. Taking a Critical Management education perspective, the article looks at the underlying values of Management and how they influence pedagogic practices and the development of a managerial identity.

Management education serves to socialize students into particular ways of thinking, primarily reflecting managerialism and its associated values. These values have a masculine bias, evident in discourses such as managerialism, instrumental rationality, strategic management, and technical rationality. Despite the promotion of "feminine" qualities and values, masculine values override them, and this is evident in the ethos of many MBA programs.

Management education has an important role to play in the creation of a managerial identity. This identity is often gendered, with masculine discourses of decisiveness, rationality, and instrumental control reinforcing managerial identities. It offers aspiring and existing managers the means to partly secure a managerial identity and a degree of comfort in a managerial role. It may also help to frame appropriate behaviors and values and increase confidence and credibility. For women, acquiring the subject position of "manager" may require a considerable identity shift, which the MBA helps facilitate.

Simpson highlights the need for a more inclusive and diverse approach to management education,

one that values collaboration, emotional intelligence, and social responsibility. The author suggests that incorporating feminist perspectives into MBA curriculums can help to challenge and reshape traditional gender norms and prepare future leaders to address contemporary business challenges in a more inclusive and ethical way.

Classroom techniques

Teaching Quantitative Material

A brief summary of the [Teaching note](#) - C. Roland Christensen Center for Teaching and Learning, HBS.

The quantitative material embedded in cases challenges students to learn how to identify problems, look for relevant data, think critically about approaches and assumptions and solve problems embedded in context. The C. R. Christensen Center for Teaching and Learning at HBS suggests the following core principles for addressing this specific aspect of the case method of teaching:

1. Quant segments should be approached as workshops to explore the numbers and develop students' quantitative analysis, comparison, and communication skills. Instructors should Budget time for questions and comprehension checks, embrace learning opportunities from mistakes, and inquire into process and application to build situational awareness.
2. Focus on teaching process fluency as well as results in order to create learning opportunities. Incorporate questions that encourage process awareness, sensitivity analysis and boundary conditions, and interpretive skills.
3. Be mindful of the range of comfort and exposure to quantitative analysis of

participants when leading a class discussion. Experts can help with calculations, but not all are good at explaining the underlying concepts. Working with novices may require slowing down and providing learning opportunities out of errors and misapplications.

In addition, [the note](#) also provides specific recommendations for pre-class preparation and in-class facilitation for instructors with helpful illustrative questions and board usage guidelines.

Feedback

Please click on the link below to share your feedback and comments and to let us know what kind of content you would like to read about in future newsletters.

<https://forms.gle/oT73PwW9tafiTmXb7>

For queries or for making a guest contribution, please contact the Centre for Teaching and Learning at ctl@iimu.ac.in

©2023, IIM Udaipur, all rights reserved.

Updates from CTL

March marks the end of the academic year at IIM Udaipur. After 3 years of unforeseen changes, the calendar is back on track with the convocation for graduating students of the flagship 2-year MBA, the MBA-DEM and MBA- GSCM cohorts and the lone PhD graduate from IIM Udaipur taking place in the last week of March.

Convocation is an important event for students as they transition out of campus after completing what will be the last educational degree for many students. It comprises multiple events including parties, formal dinners and the ceremony itself. For some students who have entered relationships, this is the perfect opportunity to get to know each other's families. The gold medals for academic and all-round performance and a number of other prizes and certificates are awarded to winning students. The junior students also get a chance to send off their seniors on a high and celebrate the start of their careers.

The events surrounding convocation are tailor made for reflection and crystallization of beliefs and values. It is also a very inspiring moment for students from the junior batch as they take inspiration from symbols of appreciation like gold medals and public appreciation of the work that they have seen their seniors doing. It reinforces the cultural and behavioral norms on campus. It is the culmination of a critical phase of identity development. CTL wishes the graduating students all the best wishes for a successful career.

-Joel Xavier

