Reflective Essay on Learning and Teaching

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ABSTRACT: *Learning and teaching are inextricably intertwined. The principal objective of education is learning, and the means used to fulfil this aim is teaching. Considering that these two phenomena are inseparable, it can therefore be deduced that teaching has to be carried out for learning to take place. In light of the afore-mentioned, this reflective essay deals with some of my personal experiences in learning and teaching from my secondary years to my tertiary years and beyond. It is a reflection about my academic formation and how certain experiences and individuals in my life have shaped the way that I teach and whom I have become as a teacher. More importantly, this reflective essay highlights the transformative reflection that I experienced, during my postgraduate studies, in my attempts to become a better and more effective teacher. It is underscored that teachers have the responsibility to engage in continuous reflective practice as the principal means of improving and sustaining effective didactic practices. Effective teaching results in effective learning.*

KEYWORDS: *educational, instructional, language(s), learner(s), learning, learning and teaching, teacher(s), teaching.*

I.   INTRODUCTION

Learning and teaching are an ancient practice. These two phenomena have been in existence since the beginning of civilisation, even though their purpose, appropriateness and relevance have varied throughout the ages. Around the world today, in both developed and developing countries, teachers are learners are engaged in teaching and learning. The primary objective of education is *learning* and the vehicle used to attain this aim is *teaching* (Lunenburg & Irby, 2006).If teaching is effective, learning will be effective; conversely, if teaching is poor, learning will also be poor. In this sense, a very close relationship is formed between the two concepts. In other words, therefore, these two phenomena are mutually symbiotic: their combined effect is greater than their distinct effects. This point is further consolidated by Shuell (1993, p. 291): "Within an educational context, the two phenomena [teaching and learning] are so inextricably intertwined that it often is difficult to imagine one without the other".

It has been affirmed that the fundamental business of educational institutions is learning and teaching. With specific reference to that affirmation, this reflective essay on learning and teaching centres its attention on my personal experiences, as a teacher and learner, from my secondary school years to my tertiary school years and beyond. Of equal importance is the fact that this paper focuses on the transformative reflection which I have undergone (and which I am still experiencing) as I endeavour to become an effective, quality tertiary teacher. The remaining sections of the reflection cover issues such as my personal experiences as a secondary school student; a university student; a university graduate teacher; a graduate student in Foreign Languages/Applied Linguistics; a graduate teacher in Foreign Languages/Applied Linguistics; a graduate student in Tertiary Teaching; my philosophy of learning and teaching today, and some concluding remarks. Continuous emphasis is placed on the fact that effective, quality teaching results in effective, quality learning. It is through this synergetic relationship that '*learning that matters'* is produced.

II.   PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AS A SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT

I am a native of Guyana, in the continent of South America. My country is the only English-speaking country in the continent. Guyana means the '*land of many waters*'. This is the country in which the greater part of my educational life has been shaped. My decision to become a teacher (and more specifically a Modern Languages teacher) developed from the secondary years of my educational experiences, since I wanted to impart knowledge to students as well. I wanted to do just what my teachers were doing.

I attended the Starters' Nursery School and the St. Margaret's Primary School (1982-1989), located in the capital city. My maternal aunt taught at the Starters' Nursery School. Truth be known, I come from a family of teachers – aunts, uncles, close cousins – and this helped to shape me in becoming a teacher as well. I was always a very bright student throughout these years. I never gave my teachers a reason to complain. I was also dedicated to my work and always sought after knowledge because I wanted to learn and experience new things.

From 1989 to 1995, I attended the St. Stanislaus College. It was in this secondary school that my passion for Modern Languages grew and my thoughts emerged about possibly becoming a teacher. My Spanish teacher, Mrs. Margot Forde, helped me to understand myself, my potential and my interests. It was she who sparked my interest in learning. She was also the first teacher I admired because of her teaching style and techniques. She demonstrated the importance of using hands-on activities with emphasis on active and student-centred learning. She tried as much as possible to get us involved in language learning. Honestly, I was never bored in her class. I was always intrigued, encouraged and motivated. In every class session, Mrs. Forde found ways of keeping us attentive and stimulated. She always demonstrated passion in what she did, and that stuck with me continually. Besides being a great teacher and a familiar and friendly face, she was also a great role model; she was always available, outside of class time, to discuss difficulties with homework or to listen to students and their school-related problems.

Mrs. Forde knew of my abilities and she always encouraged me to do whatever I do with passion, conviction and pride. Those three words remained with me. In school, I was always very helpful to my colleagues. I always found myself helping my colleagues with their work. Some even hinted at my 'good teaching skills'. Some even suggested that I become a teacher. Those words influenced me greatly, the kind of person I have become, and the kind of teacher into which I have transformed.

Still, with all that was being done, a surface approach to learning was adopted, since Modern Language learning and teaching was primarily executed by means of the traditional approach, the *Grammar-Translation Method*. This method involved a lot of memorisation, drills, recall, and so forth. *It was wholly transmission of information*. It was believed that students had to 'learn' this way, to be able to 'understand' important works. This is exactly how I was taught: everything had to be done from memory so that it could be recalled at a later stage. *This was a surface approach to learning*.

III.   PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AS A UNIVERSITY STUDENT

My secondary school experiences influenced my decision to pursue a degree in Modern Languages. Eventually I moved to the *University of Guyana* (UG), where I did my undergraduate degree (B.A.) in Modern Languages, specialising in Spanish and French (1999-2003). During these years, I encountered quite a number of role models in the form of Mr. Derek Archer and Professor Emeritus Joycelynne Loncke (French Lecturer), Mr. Terrence Fraser-Bradshaw (Spanish Lecturer), and Dr. Melva Persico (Spanish Lecturer). These four lecturers helped to solidify my interests in becoming a Modern Language teacher. Their dedication and commitment to learning and teaching were praiseworthy. In the execution of their responsibilities, they ensured that students grasped concepts through the various methods that they employed. And they did work for me, because they helped me in many ways.

My colleagues always depended on me for information and for assisting them with their work. In essence, I was a *peer teacher*. The thing is, though, I was the only *non-teacher* in the group. All of the others were trained Spanish teachers. I was just doing the degree in Spanish/French because of my love for languages. Throughout the degree programme, we would all sit and go through the work while I directed the study sessions.

They were always able to grasp difficulty concepts. And, again, they encouraged me to join the teaching profession since they felt I would make a good teacher. I said nothing then, but I inwardly thought about it. The way I was taught at the UG was not quite different from my secondary school years. *Instruction was teacher-directed and teacher-centred*, and I simply had to 'do as I was instructed'. There was no space for critical inquiry. It was a matter of regurgitation. This was thought to be 'intelligence', that the student had 'learned', that I had 'grasped the concepts'. While this may have been true for me, it was not so for many others, because they were not as 'bright' as I was.

IV.   PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AS A UNIVERSITY GRADUATE TEACHER

After completing my undergraduate degree, I taught at two secondary schools in my country of origin (2004-2006).When I first started as a teacher, I was truly oblivious of what teaching was all about. As a Modern Languages teacher, I just taught based on what was taught to me, following the text book method, exercise and drills, translation, grammar, among others. In short, I was following the *Grammar-Translation Method*, because that was the only teaching methodology with which I was familiar. That was all I could teach. I just taught what I knew, and that was that. However, with the changing times and the changing scenes in learning and teaching, as a Modern Languages teacher, I realised that the "modern-day" students were becoming frustrated with the traditional teaching methodology. It was clear that the traditional view that identified the teacher as an instructor who transmitted knowledge to students, and who took all decisions relating to the progress of the class and the outcomes of learning was no longer adequate. The changing times necessitated a paradigmatic shift in focus.

It is important to point out, though, that the efficacy of the traditional instructional method remains unquestioned, taking into consideration that I was a product of it, and given the fact that it is still an effective means of instruction (Estaire, 2005). This is to say that the traditional method of teaching does have its advantages and merits. It is still a powerful means of instruction (Johnson & Johnson, 2005). It is the teacher who is expected to use those aspects that are advantageous to make learning meaningful, and also to produce significant learning experiences for learners. Despite the positive benefits that can be obtained from the traditional instructional method, it is becoming increasingly clear that such a method, which may engage learners, is gradually becoming more and more obsolete because it does not foster learners' learning diversity or attend to learners' different learning styles.

V.   PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AS A GRADUATE STUDENT IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES/APPLIED LINGUISTICS

I got the opportunity to go abroad to Chile to read for a Master's Degree in Applied Linguistics, specialising in Second and Foreign Language Teaching Methodologies, at the *Universidad de Concepción* (2006-2008). While I was intrigued at this prospect, I was also a bit apprehensive. Reality stepped in, and I knew that I was heading into uncharted waters. I was not worried so much about the use of the Spanish language; in fact, I was more concerned about being immersed in a foreign country, learning and appreciating a new culture, and also "fitting in" as a foreign student. Being immersed in the Spanish language and culture helped me tremendously to esteem myself even more, and to value my own native language/mother tongue and culture. This is what the target language and culture should do for learners: learners should become conscious of the value of other languages, cultures and civilisations.

Concerning my pedagogy, I knew that my language teaching methods would receive a boost with modern ones. And that is exactly what happened. As a student, my learning was more student-centred: it focused on what I was doing, because I was the protagonist of my own learning (experiences). As a teacher, I learned many new ways and approaches to learning and teaching languages. During the development of my Master's thesis, I had to teach a class of students (as part of my thesis work) to determine the efficacy of a mixed instructional method. This experienced helped me a lot in my pedagogy. This was encouraging, and a breath of fresh air for me. My educational experiences gave me the impetus to do things differently. Consequently, began to restructure my pedagogical practices for the better. It was the right thing to do.

VI.   PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AS A GRADUATE TEACHER IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES/APPLIED LINGUISTICS

After returning from completing my M.A. degree, I started to lecture at the UG (2009). At this university, as a Lecturer II (Spanish), I taught courses in Spanish Language, Linguistics, Translation, History and Civilisation, and Literature, among others. No job is without challenge, and mine was not. Now back in Guyana, I was so excited to implement what I had learnt abroad. I was a bit disheartened, however, because there were no observable improvements at the UG. Face to face (F2F) teaching was the only didactic method used. There was no visible innovation to learning and teaching. Teacher-centred techniques and strategies were still in vogue. Unfortunately, there was no other option left but to resort to the *chalk and talk method*, with little variation in how I did things. I was not able to implement much of what I had learnt abroad.

As a tertiary teacher, I was forced to find interesting ways of learning and teaching in such a traditional setting. It was not an easy feat, but it was worth the effort. My on-the-job reward was seeing my students making an effort to learn, even in such a non-conducive learning environment. With my knowledge of foreign language teaching, I did some innovative things in my classroom, despite the prevailing challenges. Students actively participated in all educational tasks. I prepared student manuals for my various courses in order to give my students a certain degree of autonomy of their own learning. The grades that they obtained in the various assessment tasks confirmed that they had learned what they were supposed to learn. While I did not have a grading criterion, I knew what to look for. If students requested explanations and clarifications, these were provided promptly.

VII.   PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AS A GRADUATE STUDENT IN TERTIARY TEACHING

I pursued the Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma in Education (Tertiary Teaching) at the *University of the South Pacific*, Fiji Islands, as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the M.A. in Education. I had decided to enrol in this programme because the *sponsored* Postgraduate Diploma in Education for lecturers at the UG did not - and still does not - cater for those who attend(ed) church on Saturdays. Besides, there was no one sufficiently qualified to teach the Modern Language component of that programme. Those were the two odds against me. I wanted to be trained as a tertiary teacher. There were things I wanted to understand about my profession, things that were not fostered at the UG since most of the professional development sessions focused on administrative issues, and not on pedagogical issues. I felt that this programme would open up my perspectives and conceptions about learning and teaching in higher education, and that it would help me to become a successful tertiary teacher.

At the beginning of the ED 401course (*Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*), I did not know what to expect. The class was fully online. I had never before, in my entire life, taken any class/course online, much more fully online. All of my previous teaching was carried out via the traditional F2F instructional delivery mode. Even though I was technology savvy, I knew that that was a different ball game altogether. "Would it be engaging enough?" "Would it be interesting?" "Would I feel lost?" "Would it be really worth it?" These were some of the questions that I was asking myself. I was really wondering what the course was going to offer. At the end of the course, though, I was thankful for that opportunity. I became aware that the *student-centred approach*(modern) was the most desirable and favourable for achieving student learning outcomes, and that the *teacher-centred approach* (traditional)was quickly becoming out-dated.

As a tertiary teacher, ED 401 benefitted me (and continues to benefit me) greatly to such an extent that my teaching is continually being transformed for the betterment of the students with whom I come into contact. In designing teaching units and lessons, I have been able to witness the great value that has been derived from aligning my teaching constructively. The express objective of this alignment is to enhance and sustain *learning that matters* which promotes *creativity*, *application*, and *life-long learning*: creativity – learners should get to the stage where they become innovative, critical thinkers who have the ability to negotiate meaning and construct knowledge; application – learners should be able to skilfully apply what they have learned to real-life, real-

world contexts, situations, and issues; lifelong learning –learners should be given a firm educational foundation which encourages learning throughout their life. The attainment of these 21st century skills should always take centre stage.

Is this not what we want our students to be able to do, outside of the classroom setting? I can't speak for others; however, this is what I desire for my students. I am therefore convinced that this is the way forward. I have become conscious of the necessity to improve my instructional approaches, methods and techniques so that *all* learners can learn. Constructively aligned learning and teaching can ensure that *all* students learn effectively.

The various approaches to learning which I personally experienced in my capacity as a graduate student in Tertiary Teaching were quite refreshing. Doing a course that was fully online (which meant that I stayed at home, or in any other location, and yet connected to the teaching sessions) was a novelty. I quickly embraced that instructional mode of delivery because I found it quite intriguing. Other learning approaches used during the course included the preparation and submission of reflective writings, the design and development of lesson plans, participation in micro-teaching activities, and active involvement in online forum discussions which required asynchronous interaction and communication with my course colleagues. That was the very first time that I came face to face with 'Moodle', one of the many learning management systems used in institutions of higher learning. Two main types of learning were fostered: *independent learning* and *collaborative learning*, both critical in the learning-teaching process. The reflective essay, in particular, also proved to be very worthwhile, since it caused me to think critically, a vital component in contemporary pedagogical practices. More importantly, the arrangement of ED 401 followed constructive alignment proposed by Biggs & Tang (2011), and I was eternally grateful for it.

VIII.   MY PHILOSOPHY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING TODAY

In some educational institutions, nowadays, some teachers find it impossible to separate themselves from the textbook. Their every action seems to be guided by textbook prescription. While the textbook is important, it should only be used as a guide. It should not be seen as the "be all" and "end all" of learning and teaching, because it is not. Unlike these teachers rooted in "form", Iendeavour to find creative ways of teaching which address learner preferences, needs and interests. Since learners have different learning styles and techniques, it is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that *learners' learning diversity* is embraced. It is clear that no two learners learn in the same way. In my instructional environment, I try to offer my learners, as far as possible, a variety of approaches and techniques that could be used in the foreign language learning-teaching process.

This is why *technology* is so important in the (language) classroom (Livingstone, 2019). There is sufficient evidence to support the effectiveness of technology in education to promote *learner-centredness* and to foster learning diversity (Ota, 2015; Wang & Kim, 2015; Persaud & Persaud, 2019). In my classroom, I try, as often as possible, to incorporate (some form of) technology because it caters for *broad-based learning*, using a wide repertoire of tools and resources; it creates a *productive learning environment*, and it certainly *increases learner motivation*. Since the ever-increasing use of technology is evident in the real word, then technology in the learning-teaching process must be embraced. If learners are to be prepared by educational institutions for a technology-driven world, then the onus is on teachers to find ways to incorporate it into their didactic practices. In this technology-driven age, therefore, every attempt should be made to integrate ICT resources into instructional practices in order to develop learner competences through collaboration and learning communities.

Stemming from the above paragraph, a critical element in the language classroom is *motivation*. Motivation is critical to the learning-teaching process, and especially to learners, because it determines whether or not learning takes place (Dörnyei, 2003; Kormos & Csizér, 2008; Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011). If learner needs, interests and preferences are not considered in the instructional process, their level of motivation may be low; conversely, if their needs and interests are considered and interwoven into pedagogy, then the likelihood of their being very motivated would be high. The reason for increased motivation in (and during) the instructional process would be due to learners finding value in the different learning tasks that they are expected to complete. In other words, when learners see the value in carrying out educational tasks and activities, their level of motivation is heightened, and significant learning takes place.

Motivation also comes from being in a conducive learning environment (Windham, 2005). As a teacher, I try to make learners feel comfortable in their learning space so that they can express themselves openly and confidently, without fear of retribution or condemnation. I let my learners know that making mistakes when learning a new language is natural, and that they should not feel ashamed. My warm personality and personal style of teaching gives my learners enthusiasm, and it allows me to interact with them. This helps to increase their motivation as they are guided through their learning process. By providing learners with the appropriate materials, tools and resources, they would be able to supersede any difficulties that might emerge when learning a foreign language. This does not imply that all learners will be able to express themselves in the same way; rather, this suggests that all learners will be assured the opportunity to express themselves as best they can.

Since motivation is critical to language learning, I try to motivate my learners towards a certain level of autonomy/independence where they inculcate a desire to think and learn for themselves. My role becomes facilitative. Learners actively participate in task execution, as they seek to *construct knowledge* and *negotiate meaning*. In order to be actively engaged in their learning process, they are required to use their creative, complex and critical cognitive skills to communicate (as they learn from each other). As far as is possible, I promote a *learning community* or a *community of learners*, where *collaboration is central to learning*.

Teaching my native English language (or even Spanish or French), for example, allows me to draw on my own personal socio-cultural experience as a foreign language learner. In this way, my learners learn how to communicate effectively and to gain a deeper appreciation for other languages and cultures. In other words, it can be said that they develop *intercultural/multicultural/pluricultural awareness*. Intercultural awareness promotes independent thinking and develops independent thinkers (Byram, 2008; Duarte, 2013; Moeller & Nugent, 2014). Learners understand that with globalisation and internationalisation, linguistic diversity and cultural diversity have to be embraced, especially considering the vast language/linguistic and cultural richness of each society. The target language culture should never be left out of the classroom because language and culture are inextricably intertwined. I always ensure that culture is skilfully interwoven into the language curriculum.

Given the *changing scenes in university learning and teaching* today (the call for *teaching effectiveness*, and the *diverse student population* with *different learning abilities*), *constructive alignment*(CA) (Biggs & Tang (2011) is the way to respond to these growing concerns about learning and teaching in the 21st century. Educational institutions, in both developed and developing countries are making use of this instructional design method. The use of CA in the educational process is invaluable. The general idea behind CA is that harmony in course content acquisition should be achieved. This is to say that there should be a specific way (or specific ways) for learners to learn content. At all times, learners should be considered since they are the heart of teaching. This clearly affirms that *student-centredness* (modern), which is a strong reaction to *teacher-centredness* (traditional), should be paramount. In support of this contention, Shuell (1986, p. 429) contends that "It is helpful to remember that *what the student does* is actually more important in determining what is learned, than what the teacher does". In such learning environments, learners become *protagonists*: they acquire a certain degree of autonomy, taking control of their own learning when executing pedagogical tasks and activities. During the instructional intervention process, it is anticipated that learners will utilise their *high cognitive skills* to carry out tasks, thereby encouraging *higher order thinking* and a *deep approach to learning*.

As it relates to 'thinking about teaching', Biggs & Tang (2011) outline three levels: (i) Level 1-What the student is; (ii) Level 2-What the teacher does, and (iii) Level 3-What the learner does.

With respect to *Level 1-What the student is*, the responsibility of the teacher is to teach, and the learner is expected to learn what is taught. *Information is transmitted for learners to 'grasp'. Instruction is teacher-directed, teacher-centred and teacher-controlled*. Learners' preferred learning styles are not taken into account. Their personal characteristics, cognitive, affective and environmental development, ethnicity and ethnic background, and physical needs, preferences and interests, among others, are not considered. In fact, *learners' abilities determine whether or not they can perform* and achieve high scores and grades. In such a scenario, therefore, *the learner is 'blamed' for being bright or not bright*. In essence, the situation presented here is what would normally constitute a typical traditional pedagogical setting to the letter.

With reference to *Level 2-What the teacher does*, the responsibility still rests on the teacher to 'get knowledge across' to learners. Not only information is transmitted, but also *concepts and understandings*. The course content to be 'got across' has more complex understandings which warrants a move away from just 'chalk and talk'. *Instruction is entirely teacher-centred*. The possibility of more effective ways of teaching is entertained (unlike the situation in Level 1). In this scenario, learning is a function of teacher action and is not dependent on the 'type of learner'. Pedagogical techniques are varied considerably; the focus, nonetheless, is on teacher activity and not on what learners (need to) learn. As such, *the 'blame' is placed on the teacher*. In principle, what is demonstrated here is a slight move away from the "typical" traditional instruction setting in that there is a positive attempt to do things a little different.

With regard to *Level 3-What the student does*, the focus is on *learner action*, its relation to teaching, and *how well the intended outcomes of learning have been attained*. *This model of learning and teaching is learner-centred* in which teaching is used to support learning. Expert use of instructional techniques and strategies become irrelevant if learning is not produced. In this level of teaching, it is not just about the transmission of information, facts, concepts, understandings, and principles; in fact, it is also about learners achieving 'understanding', as per the intended outcomes of learning, and the kinds of learning-teaching activities which are needed to help learners to attain these 'levels of understanding'. In essence, this is what constitutes modern pedagogical practices in which learners are the nucleus of the learning-teaching process.

In my opinion, based on the three paragraphs above, I would admit that I am not a Level 2 or Level 3 teacher. I would say that I am a *Level 2.5* (if such a level were to exist). This means that I am somewhere in the middle. I would definitely like to become a Level 3 teacher which is the desired and effective level. I would definitely like my teaching practices to be cutting-edge and high-quality. The only way that I can become a Level 3 teacher is by engaging in *transformative reflection* (McGee, Haworth & MacIntyre, 2015), *which is the lifeblood of effective, quality pedagogy*, in order to improve my didactic skills, and keep on doing so.

My academic formation during the period of 1989 to 2017 has helped tremendously to shape the kind of teacher I am. I have been exposed to different kinds of teaching practices that have given me clarity. I am both a teacher and a constant learner. I do not know it all, and I am always learning on a daily basis. I engage in professional growth and development, I listen to my learners, and I rely on my *professional learning community*. As a teacher, one of my main goals is to empower my learners so that they can learn, not only in the classroom, but also in the real world. Figuring out how learners learn is a major part of teaching, of which I am cognisant. I am very passionate about learning and teaching. I believe in this wholeheartedly, since it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure the success of the students' learning process. In the case of language learning and teaching, for example, it is the teacher's responsibility to equip students with the instrumental and formal knowledge of the language so that they will be able to express themselves quite comfortably and confidently whenever they find themselves in the target language environment.To this end, I hunger and thirst after knowledge with a view to becoming an effective, quality teacher. Due to this yearning, my instructional styles and techniques are still evolving.

CONCLUSION

Learning and teaching are an age-old practice. The way in which these two phenomena were approached in ancient times ought to be different from how they are to be considered in modern times. Modern times demand modern ways of thinking about (and engendering) meaningful learning and teaching. This suggests that in modern times, *learner-centred pedagogy* should take centre stage, while teacher-centred practices take backstage. Learner outcomes achievement, learner autonomy, learner needs and interests, learners' learning styles, and learners' intellectual, emotional and social development, among many others, should be the central tenet in didactics.

The focus of this reflective essay on learning and teaching has delved into my personal educational and pedagogical experiences in a number of educational contexts: as a secondary school student; a university student; a university graduate teacher; a graduate student in Foreign Languages; a graduate teacher in Foreign Languages, and a graduate student in Tertiary Teaching. My philosophy of learning and teaching in the

21[st]century has also been examined. With reference to the afore-mentioned, it has been underscored that learning and teaching ought to be the chief occupation of institutions of (higher) learning if learners are expected to derive significant learning (experiences) from instruction. The paper has also focused on the transformative reflection which I have experienced (and which I am still undergoing), as I attempt to become an effective, quality teacher.

As 21st century teachers, our philosophy of learning and teaching should always be in a state of continual transformation because, as reflective education practitioners, we should be ever involved in the process of discovering new(er) ways to sharpen our instructional skills and practices. This means that teachers should be both 'teacher' and 'learner', exploring their passion for learning and teaching. Continuous emphasis is placed on the fact that effective, quality teaching results in effective, quality learning. It is through this interdependent relationship that '*learning that matters'* is produced. As a teacher, I have found out, over the course of time, that when I share my 'passion' for pedagogy with my learners (making use of several educational principles with eagerness and compassion), they are ultimately connected to their 'passion' for learning. In doing so, *learners get to experience positive learning*, their *enthusiasm for learning is ignited and sustained*, and they are *provided with a solid foundation for creativity*, *application*, and *life-long learning*.

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