

A practical framework of teaching

by Prof. Samish Dalal

I still remember, when a professor of economics in my post-graduate b-school asked me, “tell me why is the price of a loaf of bread at Rs. 15”. I answered with all the knowledge that I had of cost accounting and ingredient composition. After my economics class he asked the same question and I replied the same answer with one addition – the law of demand and supply. She was very happy.

Prologue: Now that I am a teacher myself, I wanted to teach my students in a manner so that they can understand and apply the concepts that are taught to them. I researched at different places to find a suitable framework to teach in the best manner. However, one day my quest found its answer. I was interacting with Prof. Parimal Merchant and he explained to me the practical framework of teaching. I liked it, not because it was easy to understand, but because it was a proven method. Some times we don't believe in a theory and spend a lifetime to test it. But here was a theory (although not articulated anywhere) that had been proven.

Relevance

Engage

Simple Language

The framework has three components – **Relevance, Engage** and **Simple Language**. Each component is equally weighted. The following paragraphs explain each component in depth.

Relevance: Imagine you are sitting in a class that is meant for development of own business and the professor teaches you to write business proposal through the example of writing a job application.

This is a gap. It is called the gap of relevance.

The professor does possess the knowledge of writing the business proposal, but is giving a wrong example to this particular set of students. If the students were job aspirants, then this professor's session would be miraculous. The lesson is – the teacher should give examples or anecdotes that are relevant to the student profile, so that knowledge gets digested faster.

If the teacher gives examples that are peripheral to the core topic, then should make an effort to relate it with the core, so that relevance of the example is not lost. Relevant examples help to establish a strong connection between the student and the teacher.

It would also apply to general public addresses. For instance, in a conference, which has a theme of growing business through technology, the speaker gives all the examples of technology failure. Such examples put off the audience and disconnect them from the speaker. Relevance is the edifice on which the building of a good presentation rests.

Engage: A good teacher is expected to engage students in meaningful activities, so that teaching becomes exciting and the students tend to digest more:

- Learning by doing
- Ensuring attention

In the current times the students tend to have smaller attention span. It could be due to a variety of reasons, but the fact is – there are smaller attention spans. In such scenario it is imperative to engage the students into meaningful activities in the class in order to reinforce the learning and also to ensure their attention.

For instance, even the lousiest class can become exciting if the students are encouraged to participate. There could be a debate as to what activities fall within the purview of engagement. I have done some brainstorming on the subject and have concluded that any activity that would involve the students to do something is engagement. The stress is on the word – **do**.

Simple Language: Have you ever come across a person who would come and say, “Hey buddy I just attended a fantastic lecture by a world class professor”, and you ask, “Dude can you please share some snippets from the lecture”, to which he is dumb-folded.

Education’s main function is to help the recipient to think, to reflect, to understand and then to apply. If the recipient is lost in a jungle of high-end words, more commonly referred as – jargons, there wont be any learning. So the question is – how does an orator simplify. The answer lies in the understanding of the presenter / orator or the teacher. If the teacher has understood the concept well and can explain it well with suitable examples (*read:* relevant examples) then can teach a complex concept in a simple, easily understandable language.

Having said all this, I am not against the usage of jargons. It is necessary to use jargons in the real business world, because it is required. The equally important thing is – the one who uses those jargons, should know the depth of the word, so that proper usage is done and meaning is conveyed.

Epilogue: I am not a research scholar, who has gone through piles of literature to come up to the above practical framework of teaching. This article has originated out of repeated **practise**. There is no literature support for the claims made in this article, but as an individual performer and our practise, my humble submission to the reader, would be – to make an effort in your life to apply the practical framework of teaching in your own teaching style and create difference in your life and in the life of your students.