Effective Teaching Behaviors in the College Classroom:
A Critical Incident Technique from Students' Perspective

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Teaching is a multidimensional, complex activity. The use of the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) has the potential to be effective in improving teaching as it reveals successful behaviors by identifying key actions associated between excellent/poor performances. The present study sought to identify teaching behaviors that differentiate excellent and very poor performance of undergraduate college teachers in India using CIT, from the perspective of students. Two hundred thirty-seven critical incidents were collected from 60 female students from three different undergraduate humanities courses using questionnaires and personal interviews. Qualitative procedures emphasizing the verbatims students generated were used for data analysis. The data generated from the incidents was subjected to content analysis, and sorted into 6 categories. The six categories identified were: rapport with students, course preparation and delivery, encouragement, fairness, spending time with students outside of class, and control. The frequency with which students reported each behavior as either good or bad is presented. The study yields specific behaviors for faculty to follow to yield improvement in teaching evaluations by students. A list of critical behaviors may have implications in selection, training and performance evaluation of teachers. The present study also underlines the robustness of CIT in education research.

What constitutes effective teaching in the context of higher education has proven rather elusive to describe. Multiple criteria of teaching effectiveness abound, including self-ratings, peer ratings, student ratings, and measures of research performance. Self-ratings have proven to be rather contaminated, as they are influenced by prior experience with student evaluations (Centra, 1979). Further, "faculty on average may have unrealistically high self-perceptions of their own teaching effectiveness" (Marsh & Dunkin, 1997, p. 276). Peer ratings, too, have rather unequivocally been criticized as indicators of effective teaching (Centra, 1979; Murray, 1980; Marsh, 1987; Braskamp, Bradenburg & Ory, 1985). Validity of research productivity as a measure of teaching effectiveness remains unclear. While some (Gavlick, 1996; Stack, 2003; Hong, Xuezhu, & Zhao, 2007) have found research productivity and teaching effectiveness to be positively correlated, others (e.g. Feldman, 1987) have found measures of research to share little or no variance with measures of teaching. This leaves us with student evaluations, a rather complicated measure of teaching effectiveness. Proponents of student evaluations (Cashin, 1988 and 1995; Cohen, 1981; d'Apollonia and Abrami, 1997; Dunkin & Barnes, 1986; Greenwald, 1997; Theall, Abrami & Mets, 2001) have argued that student ratings are generally both reliable and valid. Critics of student evaluations have pointed out conceptual weaknesses (Williams & Ceci, 1997; Trout, 1997; Nerger, Volbrecht & Ayde, 1995) and misuses (Cohen, 1986; Seldin, 1993; McKeachie, 1997).

Student evaluations are used for two main purposes (Nuhfer, 2003): summative (those used to evaluate teachers for rank, salary and tenure purposes) and formative (those that diagnose in ways that allow teachers to improve their teaching). While the use of student evaluations for summative purposes remains controversial, there is little disagreement about the utility of formative evaluations in improving teaching (Dunkin & Barnes, 1986; Stevens & Aleamoni, 1985; Cashin, 1988). The present research uses students' evaluations for formative purposes. Inarguably, students represent the most important stakeholders in any given classroom, and their satisfaction is not a trivial matter.

There is significant ambiguity in research on student evaluations as well as in the work defining the characteristics of effective teachers. Jackson et al. (1999) compared the work of leading researchers and concluded that there are common dimensions by which students evaluate their classes. Although researchers use different terms, there is a consensus regarding six dimensions: rapport with students, course value, course organization and design, fairness of grading, difficulty, and workload. Ramsden (1992) lists six key principles of effective teaching in higher education as: (a) Interest and explanation, (b) Concern and respect for students and student learning, (c) Appropriate assessment and feedback, (d) Clear goals and intellectual challenge, (e) Independence, control and active engagement, and (f) Learning from students.

Feldman (1976) identified 22 constructs of effective teaching, concluding that the two most highly rated dimensions were stimulation of interest and clarity of presentation. The most effective teachers were perceived as very knowledgeable about subject matter, organized, prepared for class and enthusiastic. Relatively less important characteristics were course management and interpersonal traits such as helpfulness, openness, and friendliness.

Feldman (1998) found the dimension most important in producing student learning to be attention to course organization and preparation. Ironically, this was found to be only the sixth most important practice for producing high ratings of student satisfaction. Feldman (1986) also showed that some aspects of professors' personalities, such as enthusiasm and self-esteem, affect students' ratings of overall teaching effectiveness. Similarly, Murray, Rushton, and Paunnen (1990) reported that forty to seventy percent of the variance in student teacher ratings could be accounted for by six personality traits, namely leadership, extroversion, liberalism, supportiveness, intellectual curiosity, and changeableness.

To complicate matters, educational research organized, prepared for class, and enthusiastic. Relatively less important characteristics were course management and has shown that there are many factors other than actual student learning that lead to students' evaluations of teacher effectiveness To complicate matters, educational research has shown that there are many factors other than actual student learning that lead to students' evaluations of teacher effectiveness. Student ratings are derived from students overall feelings that arise from an inseparable mix of learning, pedagogical approaches, communication skills and affective factors that may or may not be important to student learning. Research reveals that student evaluations are based on students' prior motivation or desire to take the course, factors that may or may not be important to student learning. Research reveals that student evaluations are based on students' prior motivation or desire to take the course (Marsh, 1984), anticipated grades (Howard & Maxwell, 1982), workload (Greenwald & Gillmore, 1997; Marsh and Roche, 2000), course level (positive relationship - Braskamp et al., 1985), class size (negative relationship - Cashin & Slawson, 1977; Smith & Glass, 1980), and grading leniency of the instructor (Greenwald, 1997). Cashin's review (1988) concluded that student motivation (willingness to participate actively in the learning process) has the greatest positive influence on student satisfaction than any other instructional factor like grade expectations, sex of teacher/student, age of teacher/student, time of day, etc. Further, the relative importance of teacher behaviors varies between disciplines (Erdle & Murray, 1986; Murray, Rushton, & Paunnen, 1990). Researchers have estimated the effect of these "bias-factors" on overall teacher effectiveness, to range from 12-14 per cent (1980), 16-20 per cent (Koon & Murray, 1995), to even 80 per cent (Cohen, 1986).

The literature outlined above illustrates an important point: Teaching is a multi-dimensional, complex activity (Marsh & Roche, 1997). Good teaching can be defined and evaluated with the aid of student evaluations, but not by such evaluations alone. Nonetheless, in order to render our teaching more appealing and perhaps even useful to students, it is imperative to understand what constitutes effective teaching in the eyes of the students.

The use of the Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954) has the potential to be effective in improving teaching because it identifies key actions associated with effective or ineffective performance. The Critical Incident Technique (CIT) is "an epistemological process in which qualitative, descriptive data are provided about real-life accounts" (Di Salvo, Nikkel, & Monroe, 1989, pp. 554-555). The CIT involves collecting factual stories or episodes about job behaviors that are crucial in performing a job effectively. Participants' own words provide greater clarity and specificity than any checklist of job skills or tasks to which they may respond. This technique allows researchers to more clearly capture employees' interpretations of their work settings and can appropriately analyze jobs in the social context in which they occur.

Research has shown extensive use of the CIT for identifying critical job requirements for jobs as diverse as dormitory resident assistants (Aamodt, Keller, Crawford, & Kimbrough, 1981), surgery residents (Edwards, Currie, Wade & Kaminski, 1993), leaders (Lambrecht, Hopkins, Moss, & Finch. 1997), bankers (Bacchus & Schmidt, 1995), nurses (Bjorklund & Fridlund, 1999; Zhang, Luk, Arthur, & Wong, 2001; Narayanswamy & Owens, 2001), community health care workers (Ferguson, Waitzkin, Beekmann, & Doebbeling, 2004), and teachers (Schmidt, Finch & Faulkner, 1992; Lambrecht, 1999). Increasingly, educational psychologists are using CIT to describe job competencies and derive educational program requirements.

The Present Study

There exists a large and growing body of research on student evaluations of teaching effectiveness; however, the fact that most studies identify characteristics instead of behaviors reduces their utility. Merely knowing that a particular characteristic of effective teaching exists does not tell a teacher how to enact that characteristic. For example, knowing that rapport is a common characteristic of excellent teaching does not provide any detail of the behaviors that convey or communicate rapport. There is more potential for improvement of teaching if behavioral items such as "Uses humor" or "Gives real life examples" are

used, instead of abstract, general statements like "good presentation."

The purpose of the present study is to identify specific behaviors that represent those characteristics present in excellent teaching. The objectives of this study include.

- The identification of specific behaviors that differentiate excellent and very poor performance of undergraduate college teachers in India using CIT, from the perspective of students.
- To reduce some of the ambiguity concerning specific behaviors associated with excellent teaching.
- The identification of specific behaviors that constitute effective teaching, so that faculty may apply them as a means of improving teaching quality.

Research has shown the robustness of the CIT as an appropriate tool that can be used to analyze jobs in the social context in which they occur, and in particular, for the job of a college teacher. Identification of exemplary teaching behaviours may help teachers in applying them as a means of improving teaching quality. From the findings of this study, further research may be developed to examine social and institutional factors that may constrain or support effective teaching.

Sample

The sample consisted of 60 female students from three different undergraduate humanities courses in a women's college in University of Delhi. Their age ranged from 18-21 years (M=19.24 and SD=1.48) and they all come from relatively upper middle class socio-economic backgrounds.

Procedure

Students were informed about the general purpose of the study. They were told their participation was voluntary and their responses would be kept confidential. They were assured that the exercise would have no bearing on their grades. In each case, all students agreed to participate.

Students were asked to write two factual incidents, each of times that they saw teachers perform in (a) an especially outstanding way, and (b) an especially poor manner. It was explained that the incident was to be described in terms of the precise behavior that the teacher demonstrated, and not traits. They were permitted to ask questions for clarification and then asked to list the critical incidents. The critical incident cards were taken back in a one-to-one setting, and reviewed for accuracy and usability. After reading the incidents, follow-up in-person interviews were conducted to seek clarifications, probe for details and react to nonverbal communication. This was deemed necessary as many incidents were devoid of necessary details and were very subjective and emotion-laden. Some critical incidents were written too vaguely ("good teaching") or described teachers in terms of traits such as "liberal."

Two hundred and thirty seven incidents were collected from the students. Three of the students could not generate an incident each, even after probing, hence reducing the number to 237 instead of the expected 240.

Analysis

The critical incidents were analyzed with qualitative procedures emphasizing the student-generated narratives. The data generated from the incidents was subjected to content analysis, and sorted into 10 categories on the basis of similarity of incidents. The incidents in each category were then re-read in order to name and define the categories. Classification and analysis of critical incidents are the most difficult steps because the interpretations are more subjective than objective (Di Salvo, Nikkel, & Monroe, 1989). In fact, Flanagan (1954) himself acknowledged that it was not usually possible to obtain as much objectivity in analysis of data as in the collection of data.

To verify the judgments made by the present researcher, three experts (two teachers and one psychology student) were given the incidents and category names and asked to sort the incidents into the newly created categories. If two of the three experts sorted an incident into the same category, the incident was considered as part of that category. Any incident that was not agreed upon by two sorters was either discarded or placed into a new category. This step was necessary to ensure reliability and validity of findings. The final categories were then reduced from 10 to 6.

Results

Table 1 presents the category-wise frequencies of excellent and poor incidents. The categories provide the important behavioral dimensions of the job of a teacher, while the numbers provide the relative importance of these dimensions. The six dimensions revealed are: rapport with students, course preparation and delivery, encouragement, fairness, spending time with students outside of class, and control.

Table 1
CIT Categories and Frequencies for Effective and
Ineffective College Teachers

Category	Excellent	Poor	Total
Rapport with Students	41	42	83
Course Preparation and Delivery	33	28	61
Encouragement	36	8	44
Fairness	5	29	34
Time Spent with Students Outside of Class	10	2	12
Control	0	3	3
Total			237

Given the volume of critical incidents, it is not possible to report each one individually. However, the verbatim incidents presented for each dimension reflect the type of critical incidents, both positive and negative, associated with each dimension.

Rapport with Students

The "rapport with students" dimension refers to a harmonious relationship between faculty and students. Such a relationship goes beyond the contractual relationship between student and teacher. Empathy and nurturance seem to be the building blocks for rapport. It is interesting to note that there are as many positive incidents (41) as there are disapproving ones (42). The positive narratives used terms like "thoughtful," "kind," "helpful," "considerate," "never felt hesitant in approaching her," "being in sync/on the same wavelength," "gives sympathy and comfort," and " indulgent." Many episodes focused on how the teacher "went out of her way" to help a student during a time of need. Three such episodes are reported:

Once my ring got stuck on the little finger and it was a class in which the teacher was supposed to give us an assignment. The lecturer realized that my finger was really swollen and something needed to be done about it. Since she was aware of the fact that I wasn't a Delhite (sic) and hence wouldn't know where to go in order to get the ring removed, she did not care about the assignment and took me to the doctor immediately for which I'll be grateful to her all my life.

The teacher I consider best is one who especially made a card for me with a prayer when my father expired and came to my place and was very supportive during that phase. I found that very sweet of her.

When a fellow class mate got ill and was hospitalized, this teacher especially went to the hospital to meet her.

The negative incidents, on the other hand, were full of episodes where the teacher was "rude," "humiliating," "punishing," "authoritarian" (throwing copies away, flunking the entire class, etc.), "judgmental," "passing snide remarks," "making fun of questions asked in class," and the like. When the dialogue is threatening or viewed as abusive, students see this as inappropriate and appear to regard the teacher as "inhuman," particularly if such comments were made in public settings such as the classroom. For instance, consider these episodes:

It once happened in college when I wanted hostel accommodation. I had approached a senior teacher to guide me and help me out. I needed recommendation from her side so that I could show it to the hostel warden. But the teacher was very rude and started quoting the example of another girl from my class who, according to her, needed it more (even though that girl scored less than me in all class assignment and in Class XII)*. The teacher said that I didn't look as 'needy' as the other girl and even told me that I shouldn't have come to Delhi if I didn't like living in PG (Paying Guest accommodation). It was very rude of her and if she didn't want to recommend me, she could have very well said it rather than saying nasty things to me.

(Note*: Admission to the hostel in this college is done on the basis of merit/marks)

The incident that I remember is when Ma'am X embarrassed me in front of the whole class for pronouncing a word incorrectly. She asked me to stand up in front of the whole class and said that my pronunciations were bad. I felt that the teacher should have simply checked me for mispronouncing the word instead of embarrassing me in front of everybody. I am sure this incident has not helped me as for a very long time after it I became very conscious about my pronunciations.

Course Preparation and Delivery

The second most important dimension, course preparation and delivery, centers on presentation style and the manner in which information is delivered in the classroom setting. For this dimension, positive and negative critical incidents were almost evenly distributed. Interestingly, use of Power Point presentations in a mechanical manner resulted in negative evaluations. On the other hand, teachers who relate concepts to real life, who share their own experiences, and who use case studies and stories with interesting characters and events (often make believe as students discovered later) are regarded as more enjoyable than those teachers who use a more linear information transfer model that occurs in many classroom presentations.

Positive incidents used comments like "seeks understanding and synthesis," "arouses curiosity of ideas," "intellectually challenges and encourages independent thought," "uses latest references," "gives examples and illustrations," "communicates effectively," "maintains eye contact with everyone," "uses body language, gestures and postures effectively," "does not sit throughout the class," "gives clarity not only from the examination point of view but also for our basic foundation," "explained things logically, gave us links to connect concepts," "uses diagrams," "devised some mnemonic strategies for us," "gives hand outs of her notes and other references used," "allows us to participate," "invites questions," "shifts between lecture and discussion," "uses humor," and the like. Some incidents recorded by the students are as follows:

> While teaching, this teacher gives clear-cut points and a general guideline of the whole chapter, stressing on important and new terms which helps us attain better insight and also generates interest in the chapter and subject. She also checks and returns reports on time with clear guidelines as to what to write first of all and rewrite in case of any problem. This gives clarity to students and also they can remember the whole thing, if they are given back in time.

> She taught very well- covering new and interesting topics, making us look at topics from new angles, and encouraging challenging presentations.

> This teacher made a presentation and it was fascinating the way she made a very ordinary topic so lively and interesting that she had all of us hooked. She gave examples to explain many concepts and the examples were so funny they had all of us laughing. Till now I remember some of them because they were so real. The teacher was really good and she really seemed to know how to communicate effectively.

The negative incidents mentioned "not finishing the course on time," "leaving more than half the syllabus," "reading from the book," "confusing," "does not provide any examples or explanations," "ineffective organization of the course," "lack of clarity of speech," "speaks too fast," etc. Interestingly, while not finishing the course on time was cited as ineffective performance, no teacher was lauded for finishing the course on time. Perhaps that is taken to be part and parcel of a teacher's responsibility and thus is an example of average performance. Three example of negative performance reported by students include the following:

> This teacher did not cover the entire syllabus and concentrated on one particular topic, which was her favorite. Even when we told her that she needed to cover other topics, she didn't. This resulted in poor results for the entire class for that paper.

> This particular teacher is very boring. She couldn't generate interest in the subject-does not go beyond the textbook, even read lengthy paragraphs from the book. And what was worse was that the references and definitions provided were very out-dated. I ended up hating the subject because of her!

> Ma'am Y would enter the class, begin with a power point presentation and finish the topic simply reading from the slides. There was no attempt to explain or discuss the concepts.

Encouragement

The next dimension, encouragement, refers to providing support, confidence, or hope to the student(s). It implies recognition of heterogeneity in the class and responding to it appropriately, whether motivating slow learners or challenging the brighter ones into exploring their potential. It differs from the first dimension, rapport with students, as encouragement stresses stimulating the development of intellectual or subject related skills and interests and eliciting student contributions, while rapport focuses on the teacher's help and support during times of personal need (like an accident, a personal tragedy or crisis). There were six times as many positive critical incidents as there were negative ones. Some positive episodes are described as follows:

> I realized what a great teacher she was when I had missed many assignments, instead of making rude judgments about me like the other teachers, she calmly called me and asked me why I was not giving my assignments. And now I suppose am quite regular and try my best to do it. That teacher would even call me if I missed a class. She is a good teacher because after teaching (i.e. having a hectic job), she cares for slow learners like me and motivates them.

> Once I had to make a decision about my project. This teacher sat with me for at least an hour helping me to focus on my strengths. I was not sure whether I could take it on but thanks to her by the end of the conversation, I decided to give it a chance.

This teacher encouraged me to carry out a rather unconventional project I had proposed, and praised me when it turned out to be good.

I missed a class assignment because of my illness. Although I got a scolding from this teacher, she really motivated me later and explained the importance of giving assignments. I later got the desired result because of her and will always be thankful to her for this.

In contrast, one example of a negative incident states:

It was the time for doing an event, which was being done after a long time. The teacher, instead of being supportive, criticized our efforts and made a mockery of how we haven't been doing anything productive. That was very mean and demoralizing.

Fairness

The next dimension, fairness, refers to behavior by the teacher that is just or appropriate in the circumstances. It also means treating students equally and not having personal biases or favorites. It is noteworthy that very few instructors were lauded for meeting these standards. Not meeting them, however, resulted in negative student reactions. There were almost six times as many disapproving critical incidents (29), as there were positive ones (5). Two episodes of excellent performance include the following:

Since I was an avid reader, she invited me to accompany her for a meeting where books and poems were being discussed. I was given an opportunity to talk about what books I had read. And the best part was that she was so fair in her approach as otherwise the same girls were being sent for various activities by the college.

There was this teacher who was neutral towards everyone. She did not have any favorites, like most other teachers. She reminded me of my mother.

Contrast the examples of excellent performance with the following episodes of poor performance:

This teacher was obviously not very fond of me, especially because I used to correct her in class. During the mid-term exams, she had given me 5 out of 8 in an answer, which was identical to another girl's answer, but she had given her 7 out of 8. I went and fought with her over it and she had to finally give me 7 out of 8.

There was an essay competition in college and the judge was a teacher who disliked me. She did not even read my essay and got it disqualified on some flimsy pretext. It was not even evaluated.
There was this teacher in college who developed a sort of a bias against a girl in my class and she always did insult her and said sarcastic things to her-that was really bad because even when her answer was the same as somebody else, the teacher would give her low marks and say something or the other.

Spending Time with Students Outside of Class

For the next dimension, spending time with students outside of class, positive narratives focused on availability, giving time despite hectic schedules, "giving (her) personal phone number and email id and responding quickly," while negative ones mentioned "not having any time" and "not answering questions outside the class." Similar to encouragement, there are five times as many positive incidents (10) as negative ones (2). Episodes of positive performance include the following:

Once I had to make a decision about my project. This teacher sat with me for at least an hour helping me to focus on my strengths. I was not sure whether I could take it on but thanks to her by the end of the conversation, I decided to give it a chance.

We were participants in a competition- which required help from a teacher. So we approached this teacher- who was kind to give us time and explain to us in detail everything that we needed to know.

Another teacher helped us in organizing an important event- she spared her time to share her expertise with us- so that the event would be good and well organized. What's most memorable for me is that she didn't have to!

 On the other hand, an episode of poor performance is recorded as follows:

This teacher never allowed us to ask questions outside her class. She always said, 'Not now, I have to rush for a meeting', etc. But the worst part was that when we asked questions in class, she would say that the course will never get finished if there are so many interruptions!

Control

The final dimension, control, refers to the ability to maintain discipline and decorum in the classroom. A

balance on the continuum between a laissez-faire approach to classroom management and an excessively strict, micromanaged environment is preferable. Although there were only three incidents (negative, no positive) generated, this category could not be combined with any other. One incident (negative) is as follows:

> The teacher would teach us unaware of all the tamasha [sic] and ruckus we were creating in the class. As a result, we never understood what she taught and we all ended up disliking the subject.

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to empirically identify specific behaviors of excellent college teachers from India. The CIT method identified six areas that distinguish excellence from mediocrity and poor performance. It is important to recognize that these behavioral dimensions are not mutually exclusive. For instance: encouragement, giving time outside of class, and rapport with students, often go hand in hand.

The behavioral dimensions identified by the present study are somewhat in line with previous studies. For example, Cohen (1987) presented results from a meta-analysis of 41 well-designed studies; the correlations between achievement and different student evaluation components included structure (.55), interaction (.52), skill (.50), overall course (.49), overall instructor (.45), learning (.39), rapport (.32), evaluation (.30), feedback (.28), interest/motivation (.15), and difficulty (-.04), all but the last two being statistically insignificant. This "skill" dimension was represented by 3 dimensions- instructor's knowledge of the subject, clarity, and teacher sensitivity to class level and progress (Feldman, 1989). Marsh and Dunkin (1997) identified nine characteristics of effective teaching as learning/value, enthusiasm, organization, breadth of coverage, group interaction, individual rapport, examinations/grading, assignments, and workload difficulty. Using CIT, Varca and Pattison (2008) identified four sets of behaviors as key to overall teaching excellence: administration, course preparation and delivery, student interaction, and teacher motivation.

The significant point of departure of the present study from previous researches is the resounding importance of "rapport." While most researchers have underlined the importance of instructional strategies (for e.g., Marsh & Ware, 1982; Schmidt, Finch, and Faulkner, 1992), the importance of rapport is somewhat unclear. While some (Erdle and Murray, 1986; Jackson et al., 1999; Marsh and Dunkin, 1997) have emphasized rapport, Cohen (1981) found that particular affective practices contributed only moderately to higher ratings ('Teacher rapport' $r = 0.31$).

Cultural factors may account for these unexpected results. The dimension of "rapport" encompasses elements of nurturance and care giving. While it is at odds with the prevalent stereotype of generation "I," it must be noted that 70-80% of these girls are living away from home, perhaps for the first time in their lives. An exemplary teacher perhaps fulfills the void of a mother figure in their lives. Kakar (1978) would ascribe this to "an unconscious tendency to 'submit' to an idealized omnipotent figure, both in the inner world of fantasy and in the outside world of making a living; the lifelong search for someone, a charismatic leader or a guru, who will provide mentorship and a guiding world-view, thereby restoring intimacy and authority to individual life." Drawing upon Indian familial values of affection, a "strong emotional connectedness...a constant mutual indulgence of warmth and concern" (Roland, 1988, p. 196-197), dependency and need for personalized *sneh-shradha* (affection-deference) relationships (Sinha & Kanungo, 1997), it is no surprise that a teacher who conveys warmth and nurturance in her behavior is regarded as excellent. Other researchers have also commented on the efficacy of a "nurturant superior" (Kakar, 1971) and the "nurturant-task" leader (Sinha, 1980).

What is interesting to note is not just the sheer number of incidents in each dimension, but also the distribution of positive and negative incidents generated under each dimension. These findings lend themselves to several interesting interpretations. There are two dimensions under which positive and negative incidents are equally distributed: rapport with students and course preparation and delivery. Coupled with the fact that these two are also the dimensions under which the maximum number of incidents has been generated, it is evident that while a teacher's rapport with her students leads to her effectiveness, lack of rapport leads to negative evaluations. Similarly, presentation style and the manner in which information was delivered in the classroom setting were important. Relating concepts to real life, the use of a variety of instructional strategies, the use of humor, and the use of nonverbal behavior led to positive evaluations, while ineffective organization of the course, not providing examples or explanations, and a lack of clarity of speech led to negative evaluations.

In the present study, there are two dimensions under which positive episodes outweigh negative ones: encouragement and spending time with students outside of class. This implies that students do not really expect to see motivated effort on the part of their teachers but evaluate those who do demonstrate extra effort in a highly positive manner. Similarly, students do not really expect a teacher to give extra time, but evaluate those who do favorably. It appears that students recognize quality service. Behaviors such as allowing

students to access one at home, providing support, and meeting extra hours before an exam are highly regarded and even respected. It would not be wrong to interpret these two dimensions as "value added" from the students' perceptions. Research, however, shows that only about 10% of the students in many classes ever go to the professor's office for help (Nuhfer, 2003). Thus, if faculty were to appreciate the importance of extra time or encouragement provided, it would not be very difficult to practice (considering only about 10% of any class would actually need it)!

Lastly, there is only one dimension- fairness- where the behaviors cited details of overwhelmingly negative performance. Most critical incidents associated with fairness were negative, describing what an instructor should not do. Students, it seems, are unwilling to tolerate unfairness and discrimination in the classroom setting. They expect faculty to be objective, fair and unbiased. If they are, it is regarded as part and parcel of their job and it seems it does not warrant a positive evaluation, but if they are not, then negative evaluations seem to be the order of the day.

One element that might restrict the implications and use of the present findings is the sample. Female humanities students represent a sample that is rather small, and data were collected at a single college, in an urban city in India. It is possible that a larger, more rural group representing sciences or health sciences might have different expectations for their teachers. In any case, research clearly shows that the subject one teaches (Erdle & Murray, 1986) and the profile of students (Cashin, 1988) significantly impact student evaluations.

The critical incident method does not produce a complete job description, outlining everything a person must do to be successful. Further, its emphasis on the difference between excellent and poor performance ignores routine duties. As a conversational approach, the anecdotes and stories often colorfully reveal the humor, excitement, and drama of working life, while normal, successful work incidents may be taken for granted and under-valued. For instance, not one incident mentioned administrative work like attendance, invigilation, paper setting, etc., that all teachers carry out routinely. In using CIT, there is also a danger of over-elaboration of anecdotes and the problems of reliability, subjectivity and interpretation. Sometimes people cannot think of relevant incidents or are unwilling to discuss certain types of incident with insiders especially in instances of failure. On the other hand, some people may find it easier to narrate incidents that had not gone well. These may be more vivid in recollection.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to develop a behavioral profile of excellence on the job for college teachers, as seen by students. The present research has underlined the robustness of the CIT in education research. Data from other techniques may be used to provide information on the understated aspects of work. The study yields very specific behaviors for faculty to follow that should yield improvement in at least students' perception of the quality of instruction. The "excellent" behaviors under the various behaviorial dimensions, such as rapport with students, course preparation and delivery, spending time with students, and providing encouragement are not very difficult to perform, and the "poor" behaviors such as treating students unfairly are equally simple to avoid.

A list of critical behaviors may provide a sound basis for making inferences as to requirements in terms of aptitudes for selection, training, and perhaps performance evaluation of teachers. Selection practices in colleges traditionally focus on knowledge, skills and abilities (often judged by one's published work, research, and paper presentations, which find no mention under excellence in teaching as identified by students!), as also non-job related criteria like goal-orientation, interpersonal skills, or even value congruence. The behavioral dimensions identified in this study may aid in the development of valid selection instruments and procedures, such as a situational test or a situational interview to assess candidates' aptitude or potential for the same. Further, trainers may design developmental programs around the behaviors that separate excellent from mediocre performance. Training programs can be skill-based, focusing on imparting skills of empathy, communication, feedback, and course organization. Departmental leaders and administrators can also give precise feedback as to what behaviors new entrants fail to demonstrate or inappropriately demonstrate. Teacher evaluations may be based on techniques that generate data through critical incidents. The benefit of exposure of specific behaviors, the critical incidents of performance, is that myths and legends surrounding excellence are dispelled. Once the mystique surrounding "excellent" performance is penetrated, faculty may apply them as a means of improving teaching quality.

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