

A Personal View of Teaching Innovations

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With the application of IT, teaching no longer has to be seen as transmission of knowledge from teachers to learners. Learning has shifted from a teacher-centered approach to being more learner-centered. Theories of learning and teaching are now blended innovatively to stimulate the development of new methods of learning for students, to encourage students to engage in self-directed learning and to become life-long learners.

This short essay provides you an overview of teaching innovation. It is appended with exemplary lesson plans of novice teachers and prospective teachers, including students who had studied courses entitled TLS3008 and TLS6036 from the Education University of Hong Kong since the mid-2000s.

‘Inventing’ is ‘creating’ and ‘innovation’ is valuing, introducing, and using ‘invention’ (Barker, 1995). Innovations can be understood as new discoveries and applications of novel ideas, skills and technology in managing day-to-day practice or performing specific skilled procedures for operation, production, management, training, education and development, which may lead to value-added outputs and improvement of outcomes that enhance the quality of living and productivity in a society.

People often relate teaching innovations to technology. IT does change the interaction pattern between learners, content materials and the teacher; it creates a multi-dimensional space for learners to experience the dynamics of learning in the virtual world. However, the gist of innovation in teaching is beyond the use of IT. Teaching innovation is the teacher’s answer to the important mission of teaching to consider learners’ interests and needs, of making sensible arrangements, crafting the best learning experience to accommodate diversity, including the use of multimodality and different forms of methods for inquiries to enable each individual student to flourish. Teaching innovation, if focusing on the capacity of learning instead of the quantities of learning, can affect the quality of learning of learners.

Innovative teachers define teaching as a process for achieving whole person development. Teachers who use innovative teaching approaches to teach not only care about students’ intellectual development, but also their social and emotional development. Innovative teachers focus on developing students’ generic skills such as problem solving, creative and critical thinking, and reflective thinking, cultivating in them a growth mindset, so that they can be resilient and compassionate, as well as constructive and positive to their own living and to the lives of others. To be innovative, it is crucial to cultivate virtuous personality traits in learners, such as commitment, enthusiasm, empathy, perseverance, respectfulness, trust worthy, and friendliness. Furthermore, cultivating students with a creative personality is essential, since the

personality traits of creative people would benefit their own strivings, such as a sense of humor, flexibility, self-confidence, self-initiative and supportiveness. Creative people are self-conscious, and their works are meticulous (Wang et al., 2017).

References:

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Further Readings:

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