



# The relationship between teachers' ability and awareness of their students' needs in listening and speaking skills

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### ABSTRACT

Student performance is the result of the interaction between the students and the instructional environment; and teachers can reasonably accommodate most of the students' needs after analyzing student learning needs. Good teachers are surely aware of the students' needs. (Douglas D Christensen ,Ph.D) In this study, we like to investigate the relationship between teachers' ability and awareness of their students' needs. Participants are 40 teachers (male and female) that teach English in foreign language institutes and 160 students who are in Intermediate level. This study was performed in Khorasan and Torsys foreign languages institutes in Kashmar. Participants were given questionnaires and asked to answer the questions. This research uses information from both teachers and students to explore the relationship between students' needs and awareness of teachers' ability. The data from the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS 13. After analyzing the data, it was clear that there is a significant correlation between teachers' ability and awareness of the students' needs.

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### Introduction

Students learn at various rates and in different ways .To assure that all students have opportunity to reach their needs, various educational programs have been designed to meet the unique needs of students. The students' relationships with teachers are fundamental to their success in school. It depends on how these students' needs and teachers' ability are integrated to each other into the myriad programs, the ability mentioned in this study refers to ability as perceived by teachers or to achievement on a standardized test. Teachers see that children enter school with different levels of exposure. A teachers' ability to relate with students is more important than to give them knowledge.

Some people are thinking the teacher should have enough abilities to give the better lesson for their students, but I believe in the fact that the teacher can affect the students including other important factors too (Alan October 2006)

As Freeman states, Students need to learn not only general knowledge but also a valuable life lesson from their teachers (2009). As time changes fast, the needed knowledge also add day by day, however, they can support you with their intelligence from old experiences, but cannot make satisfied you when you request them to know all new skills .So we can say: There is a relationship between teachers ' ability and awareness of their students' needs.

If the teacher try to give you just good lessons without affection, you can not understand very well. Some teachers want to have a chance to be a better than the teachers they personally experienced.

However many researchers (i.e, Frank ,1990;Fulton ,1989; Goodlad,1990; Handler,1993) state that : teachers usually teach in the way they were taught. This compelling statement highlights the importance of reviewing and analyzing students ' prior educational experience for insight in to the effective and ineffective attitudes and actions of teachers. The effective

attitudes and actions employed by teachers ultimately can make a positive difference on the lives of their students .

For effective teachers , there are many things that you can find them in the questionnaire in this research ,but I recall some of them again:the effective teachers willingly shared emotions and feeling(e.g. : enthusiasm , affection ,patience , sadness) as well as a sincere interest and care about their students. It is important to allow students both responsibility and meet freedom within the classroom community (Bonni Gourneau ).

Both teachers and students need to contribute to the learning environment for a relationship of closeness and acceptance to develop. The teacher provide meaningful learning opportunities for all students (Bonni Gourneau).

Effective teachers believe every child can and will learn .These teachers did not point out weakness ,but instead individual strengths and talents. If the teacher want to be effective ,first of all ,should aware of the students ' needs .(Bonni G ourneau)

The aim of this research is to find the relationship between teachers ' ability and awareness of their students ' needs.

### Research questions

#### There is one main research question for the present study:

Q1: Is there any significant relationship between teachers' ability and awareness of students' needs in listening and speaking skills?

### Literature review

When we consider the complex task of teaching, effectiveness is an elusive concept. Some researchers define teacher effectiveness in terms of students' achievement. Others focus on high performance ratings from supervisors. In fact it refers to successful teachers.

Cruck shank and Haeefe (2001) note that: good teachers at various times have been called *ideal ,analytical, dutiful, competent, expert, reflective, satisfying, diversity, responsive and respected.*

We can agree that effective teachers do have an extraordinary and lasting impact on the lives of students. Student taught by teachers with greater verbal learn more ability learn more than those who taught by teachers with lower verbal ability (see Rowan , Chiang , Miller , 1990 ; Strauss and Sawyer ,1986)

Thus a link exists between effective teachers ' vocabulary and verbal skills and student academic success , as well as teacher performance .Because communication skills are a part of verbal ability, teachers with better verbal ability , can more effectively convey ideas to students and communicate with them in a clear and compelling manner.

Studies support the finding that fully prepared teachers understand how students learn and what and how they need to be taught . In addition ,their background knowledge of pedagogy makes them better able to recognize individual student needs and increase overall student achievement.

The ability to apply and integrate knowledge or skills to a particular population in a specific setting is the key characteristics of an effective teacher (Demmon\_ Berger\_ 1986; Mitchell, 1998; Porter and Brophy,1988).

English grade students have higher achievement when they have teachers with following 3 characteristics. (Wenglinsky ,2002)

They engage in hands \_on learning emphasizing higher order thinking; They majored or minored in the subject that they teach They have training in how to develop higher order thinking skills Strong content knowledge has consistently been identified as an essential element by those who study effective teaching.

The effective teachers shows that what effective teachers do to cause student achievement. Walls ,1999:summarize the most prevalent recommendations from the teaching \_effectiveness research literature . They are the strongest links between what teachers can do and the learning that students achieve.

It represent a consolidated way of thinking about the" process "of teaching as it influences the "product". You may think of them as a catalysts for learning.

Student learning is better ,faster ,and /or more long lasting when teachers are able to play the four main keys . The four keys are summarized.(walls , 1999)

A) Outcomes: the first part of effective teaching concerns the utilization of an outcomes \_based instructional orientation .Out comes enable students to focus their attention on clear learning goals. The outcomes inform students of where they are going and how they will get there.

B) Clarity: The second part of effective teaching involves the clarity of instruction .More effective teachers typically provide students with highly explicit directions and explanations concerning the course organization and content.

C) Engagement: This principle suggests that student learn by doing .The formal lecture represents an archaic model defined by instructor as delivers and students as receiver .This model exemplifies one \_way communication and perpetuates an incomplete mode of education. Accordingly , teachers must create a dynamic ,educational environment that affords student the opportunity to practice every concept that they are learning . Walls and Cather ,1987 :A teacher should limit a lecture to no more than thirty minutes before employing a learning activity that activity engages all students. Furthermore , these engagement activities are intended to facilitate the development of the knowledge , skills and attitudes that will enable the students to accomplish the previously identified lesson outcomes.

D) Enthusiasm :The fourth part of effective teaching is enthusiasm . As straight forward as it may seem. "If you hate to teach it , your students will hate to learn it." Conversely , if you love to teach it , your students may very well love to learn it .More effective teachers display a high level of enthusiasm that reflects their professional competence and confidence.

According to Batten and Khamis (1993): Students in Australian schools describe a good teacher in the following terms .

#### **A good teacher :**

- \_Helps you with your work
- \_Explains well so you can understand
- \_Is friendly and easy to get on with
- \_Is fair and straightforward
- \_Makes lessons enjoyable
- \_Cares about you , is always ready to listen ,understands you
- \_Has a sense of humor
- \_Controls the class well
- \_Knows what he or she is talking about

Birtch and Ladd, (1996 ,1998 ): Reported that the student \_teacher relationship can influence students ' future paths toward academic success and was positively linked with children 's academic performance .

Lastly ,Miller (2000)found that the student \_teacher relationship play an important role in helping reduce the chances of future bad outcomes , i.e \_ dropping out of school.

#### **Method**

##### **Participants**

As it was mentioned above the focus of the study is on 40 Iranian English teachers who teach in Intermediate level and 160 students who attend in their classroom. (girls and boys ).From each class , 4 students randomly were selected to answer the questions .

This study is implemented in Khorasan and Torsys institutes .They are foreign language institutes in Kashmar . The researcher asked the teachers to fill the questionnaires about students ' needs and students answer some questions that are about teachers ' ability .These questionnaires show the characteristics of effective teachers. So, the teachers and students express their ideas about each other by 2 kinds of questionnaires:1)students' needs and 2) teachers' ability.

##### **Material**

Materials used in the research for data collection include 2 kinds of questionnaires, for assessing students ' needs and teachers ' ability. The questionnaires are prepared for teachers include 21 questions .They evaluate students ' needs and have five scales (always ,often ,sometimes ,never and N/A (not applicable)). The researcher define these options by numbers from 1 to 5 . The questionnaires are prepared for students have 47 questions that evaluate teachers ' ability. Again ,they have five scales and is defined from 1 to 5 by researcher.

##### **Procedure**

At first the researcher gives questionnaires to students. Students express their ideas about their teachers' ability by answering the questions . Then this way is repeated for teachers and they answer to 21 questions to recognize their awareness of their students ' needs . All the students (girls and boys) are in the intermediate level .Need analysis questionnaires are prepared for non-native English students .Dominant language is not English for the students.

##### **Data analysis**

After collecting all the data ,the achieved results were loaded on the computer analysis program, SPSS, for coding and

categorization to distinguish the relationship between two groups . (teachers and students ).

**Result**

At first the researcher uses descriptive statistic and Pie chart illustrates the result of that.

The students answer the questions for analyzing teachers ‘ ability.

The total score for teachers ‘ ability :  $47 * 5 = 235$

I categorized teachers in 2 parts : Effective and Non\_effective

If the teachers obtain scores more than 70% of total score , they are effective .

If they obtain scores less than 70% of total score ,they are Non\_effective.

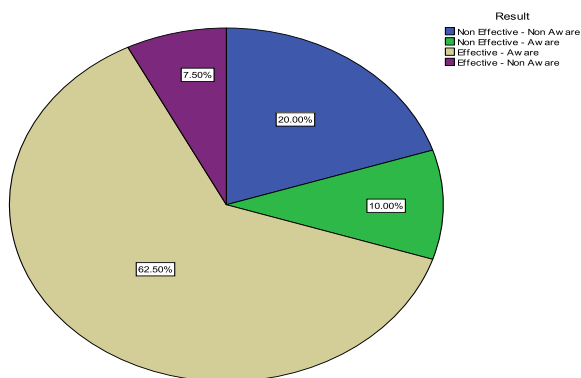
For example : the obtained score for the first teacher is 61%. This score is less than 70% , so this teacher is non\_effective.

After that , the teachers answer the questions and express their ideas about awareness of students ‘ needs .

The total score for students ‘ needs :  $21 * 5 = 105$  Again I categorized needs in 2 parts : Aware and Non\_aware

If the scores are more than 60% , the teachers aware of students ‘ needs , but if the scores are less than 60% , the teachers not aware of students ‘ needs ;

For example: The first score is obtained from students ‘ needs is 56, this score is less than 60% , so this is Non\_aware of students ‘ needs. Look at this graphs



**There are four groups in these graphs:  
Teachers' Characteristic \* Awareness of students' needs Cross tabulation**

		Awareness of students' needs		Total
		aware	non aware	
Teachers' Characteristic	effective	25	3	28
	non effective	4	8	12
Total		29	11	40

In the first group, there is a high level of performance, thus it can be inferred that the two skills of teachers' ability and awareness of the students' needs have a positive significant relation with the students' performance; whereas in the second, and third, fourth groups we can observe a low score in the skills stated in the study; therefore we come to the conclusion that both skills of teachers' ability and awareness of the students' needs are required to have a positive effect on students' listening and speaking skills; and even one of these factors cannot be ignored.

The data were analyzed quantitatively to identify the relationship between 2 variables. By obtained scores in questionnaires that are about teachers ‘ ability and students ‘ needs ,we can compute the correlation coefficient between 2 variables.

**Database**

**Nonparametric Correlations**

			P.T.S	P.S.S
Spearman's rho	P.T.S	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.784**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	40	40
P.S.S	Correlation Coefficient	Correlation Coefficient	.784**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	40	40

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

P.T.S is a percentage of obtained scores in questionnaires that teachers fill them P.S.S is a percentage of obtained scores in questionnaires that students answer the questions.

The correlation coefficient between 2 variables is 78/4 % and significant is zero 0000, so the correlation coefficient is remarkable and confirmed the strong relationship between 2 variables(teachers ‘ ability and awareness of students ‘ needs).

Teacher is sensitive to the characteristics of the students and students ‘ needs so, uses a wide variety of techniques.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

What we did in this research to study the relationship between teachers ‘ability and awareness of students ‘ needs, considerable results were achieved .As the results clarifies : the 40 teachers answered the questions , 25teachers were effective and aware of students ‘ needs . These results show the significant relationship between teachers ‘ability and students’ needs ,because the Correlation Coefficient between 2 variables is 78/4 and the Significant is zero .According to this research *if the teachers aware of students ‘ needs ,they are effective.*

In this classroom the students were described as warm , friendly .Conversely ineffective teachers often create a tense classroom and were described as cold, and uncaring. The presented results were remarkably , because we can relate effective and non\_effective teachers to positive and negative procedures and behaviors that teacher should notice, according to their students ‘ needs. Teacher quality characteristics as certification status and degree in the field to be taught are very significantly and positively correlated with student outcomes.

**When the teachers aware of students ‘ needs, can answer to many questions:**

- 1)How to be a good teacher or bad teacher ?
- 2)What the best or worst teachers did?
- 3)What characteristics should a teacher possess?

This study is aimed to investigate the impact of teachers ‘ability and their students ‘needs .Knowing the determinants of students ‘ performance can help the teachers to modify teaching methods. It can help policy makers to plan and implement strategies to increase efficiency of education plays and important role in increasing individual productivity

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Average scores				
1	61	non effective	56	non aware
2	67	non effective	61	Aware
3	77	effective	65	Aware
4	81	effective	67	Aware
5	82	effective	69	Aware
6	77	effective	66	Aware
7	72	effective	61	Aware
8	73	effective	59	non aware
9	68	non effective	54	non aware
10	74	effective	61	Aware
11	78	effective	68	Aware
12	73	effective	62	Aware
13	75	effective	63	Aware
14	68	non effective	62	Aware
15	72	effective	64	Aware
16	79	effective	68	Aware
17	81	effective	68	Aware
18	79	effective	67	Aware
19	78	effective	70	Aware
20	77	effective	69	Aware
21	70	non effective	58	non aware
22	78	effective	60	non aware
23	65	non effective	59	non aware
24	71	effective	61	Aware
25	71	effective	60	non aware
26	75	effective	61	Aware
27	78	effective	61	Aware
28	67	non effective	58	non aware
29	67	non effective	61	Aware
30	74	effective	62	Aware
31	74	effective	65	Aware
32	75	effective	62	Aware
33	73	effective	63	Aware
34	67	non effective	58	non aware
35	76	effective	66	Aware
36	79	effective	67	Aware
37	66	non effective	61	Aware
38	73	effective	64	Aware
39	66	non effective	60	non aware
40	58	non effective	60	non aware

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## Index

### Questionnaires

Dsigners are Dr .Hamid Ashraf , Dr. Khalil Motallebzadeh and Farzaneh Aminzadeh.

*Needs analysis questionnaire for non-English background students*

#### a)Speaking and Listening Skills

How often do the following happen to you?	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	N/A(*)
1)Receive low grades in tasks involving class participation					
2)Have difficulty working in small groups during class					
3)Have difficulty working with other students on out_of_class project					
4)Have trouble leading class discussions					
5)Have difficulty participating in large group discussions or in debates					
6)Have difficulty interacting with student demonstrators in labs tutorials ,etc					
7)Struggle with out _of_class assignments which require interaction with native speakers of English					

#### b)Speaking skills

8)Have difficulty giving oral presentations.					
9)Have trouble wording what you want to say quickly enough					
10)Worry about saying something in case you make a mistake in your English					
11)Not know how to say something in English .					
12)Not know the best way to say something in English.					
13)Have difficulty with your pronunciation of words.					
14)Find it difficult to enter discussion.					

#### c)Listening Skills

15)Have trouble understanding lectures.					
16)Have trouble taking effective notes.					
17)Have to ask staff questions to clarify material you have been taught.					
18)Have trouble understanding lengthy descriptions in English.					
19)Have trouble understanding spoken instructions.					
20)Have trouble understanding informal language.					
21)Have trouble understanding the subject matter of a talk, i.e , what is being talked about.					

(\*): The term 'N/A' is used in this questionnaire . It means 'Not applicable'