

What my students taught me

Ujala Sawant

As the saying goes, 'Teaching is an ongoing learning process.' A teacher never stops learning and a student never stops teaching! Yes you heard it right. Every day in class, for that matter, outside the class as well students through their words, actions, or deeds are teaching us, the teachers, a few things. Each student has unique qualities that directly or indirectly influence our thoughts. Here are a few things I learnt from my students.

1) To trust: When I first chose this profession little did I know that teaching-learning is based on trust. I started teaching the primary section and I realized whatever I taught or said was blindly accepted by the students. They trust the teachers so much that they don't bother to check the authenticity of what is told to them. Their unquestioning trust taught me that we adults too should start trusting one another a little more.

2) To be assertive: When I teach, I realize that assertiveness is something that students look for. I remember a child who secured less marks in an exam but came very confidently to me saying that he would do better in the next exam even though math was a difficult subject for him. That day I learnt that being assertive is really important.

3) To keep secrets: My students feel that whatever they share with me will remain a secret, for they are very careful not to disclose any information that the teacher tells them not to. I learnt to really keep a secret secret.

4) To be ok if I make mistakes: My students' nonchalant attitude when they make mistakes has taught me that

it's ok to make mistakes sometimes. We don't have to be the 'know it all', perfect teacher always. We too make mistakes, we are only human.

5) To acknowledge that respect is a two-way traffic: I have learnt, over the years, from my students that they are happy to give respect to their teachers but only if teachers respect them as well.

6) To be inclusive: Teachers may sometimes find it difficult to be accommodative of 'special' children in class, but have we ever had students finding it difficult to accept a teacher because of her shape, colour, size or gender?

7) To appreciate others: Students, very quickly, mingle with each other and make friends, encouraging and supporting one another. As adults, indifference and jealousy comes more easily to us.

8) To be friendly: Students, irrespective of their age or gender, become friends with others very quickly. As adults we hesitate to talk to people we don't know; say when travelling by bus or train we wait for others to speak to us but students start talking to each other.

The list is endless; there are many more lessons I have to learn. I would like to end the article with the following poem:

My students are my strength

Their success can be measured in length; they sometimes learn and sometimes guide but from me their feelings can't hide

I see them quarrel I see them together

*But for them this selfish world doesn't
bother*

*They have their own imagination and
rules*

*They think they can trust everybody;
it is their inexperience and innocence*

*Which keeps them away from
violence*

*In their own world and company they
are engrossed*

*Sometimes in excitement their limits
they cross*

*At times they are my friend, at times
my teacher*

*Because unknowingly we learn from
each other*

Their progress makes me so proud

When they shine among the crowd

I owe my success to my dear students

*Who made me a better learner and
my life pleasant*

I pray to almighty to keep them safe

*And always keep a big smile on their
face*

*I wish each birth God gives me the
same profession*

*Where without any range between
people there is a huge connection.*

The author is a teacher at Bharati
Vidyapeeth secondary and Senior
Secondary School Dhankawadi, Pune.
She can be reached at
ujalasawant2330@gmail.com

