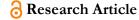
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# The Effective College Teacher: Views of Students

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#### Abstract

The teacher is one of, if not the most essential, factors in the teaching-learning process. The study explored the qualities of effective college teachers through the lens of the most important stakeholder of education - the students. The study involved college students of the University of Eastern Philippines Main Campus as respondents sampled proportionally from different year levels and colleges. The study utilized a descriptive research design and an open-ended questionnaire as an instrument. Responses of the students were classified into themes, utilizing frequency counts, percentages, and ranking as statistical tools. Characteristics of teachers were generally grouped into two categories - affective competence and professional competence. For students, an effective teacher is kind, understanding, approachable, and has good interpersonal relations for affective competence and knowledgeable, innovative, punctual, has good communication skills, and has technical know-how for professional competence. The two groups of competence are overlapping, as one cannot be easily demonstrated without the other. The students have varied conceptions of what an effective college teacher is. Learning institutions may consider these competencies in the evaluation of collegiate faculty members. Considering the effective characteristics of teachers in the evaluation of faculty members will redound to the overall improvement of the competence of faculty members.

**Keywords:** College Students; College Teacher; Effective Teacher; Effective Teaching

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Undeniably, the teacher is one of, if not the most essential, factors in the teaching-learning process. The teacher is a manager in the classroom and is mandated to lead students to the attainment of the goals of learning. Salandanan (2001) posits that no single factor can contribute more to improved student achievement than the guarantee of a quality teacher in every classroom; hence, the teacher should possess the qualities that would ensure that the best instruction is given to students. Varlas (2009) agrees that teacher effectiveness is the single most important school-based factor in student success.

Bullock (2015) posits that a good teacher is more than just an educator, and what makes a teacher good is complex and extensive. Abulon (2014) viewed effective teaching as a confluence of various dispositions, traits, knowledge, and skill sets. The quality of a teacher, synonymous with competence, provides the fine ingredients that make teaching truly humane and enriched with a sincere feeling of accountability (Salandanan, 2001).

The teacher is considered effective when s/he successfully carries out his professional mission and when s/he achieves educational goals linked to his role (Konstantinou & Konstantinou, 2021). Teaching effectiveness is evident in teachers who exhibit pedagogy, content, and knowledge, possess good qualities, a humanistic and professional approach, adopt and use varied technologies and online applications to facilitate learning, employ life integration in their lessons, anchored on the school's VMGO program, course outcomes, and activities (Aquino & Chavez, 2022).

Previous research had identified models of qualities of effective teachers as perceived by high school, college, and post-graduate students, teachers, and school heads. Calaguas (2012) identified characteristics associated with effective teachers in higher education and found that effective teacher characteristics in higher education can be categorized into four major themes labeled as Teaching-related behavior, Relational Expertise, Subject Matter Expertise, and Personality. Delaney et al. (2010) found that students considered effective teachers to be respectful, knowledgeable, approachable, engaging, communicative, organized, responsive, professional, and humorous. The mixed methods analysis of Onwuegbuzie et al. (2007) led to the development of the CARE-RESPECTED model of teaching effectiveness, which stands for the four meta-themes (communicator, advocate, responsible, empowering) and nine themes (responsive, enthusiastic, student-centered, professional, expert, connector, transmitter, ethical, and director). Meanwhile, the mixed analysis study of Anderson et al. (2012), which was anchored on the model of Onwuegbuzie et al., claimed that perceptions of effective teachers are multi-dimensional and thus organized the responses of doctoral students into only three meta-themes (synergist, enthusiast, transformer). Ralph (2001), as cited by Delaney et al. (2010), identified five attributes of effective instructors: commitment to learners, knowledge of material, organization and management of the environment, desire to improve, and collaboration with others.

Among secondary education students, students relate teacher effectiveness to scientifically accepted teaching practices implemented and procedures developed in the classroom and attribute the feature 'effective' to teachers who develop specific behavioral attitudes during interpersonal communication, such as empathy, friendliness, supportiveness, trustworthiness, and humor (Koutrouba, 2016). Misigo et al. (2014) identified qualities of effective teachers in secondary schools which include good sense of humor, knowledgeable in subject matter, caring and understanding, explaining concepts well, patience and respectful to learners, God-fearing, self-confidence and focused, emotionally stable, correcting wrong responses politely, providing social and career guidance, fluent and well-spoken in English, fair to all learners, marking assignments promptly, punctuality to class, counseling learners, willingness to help learners, warm and friendly to learners, preparing well for lessons, involving learners in lessons, encouraging questions, honest and admission of errors, commitment to duty, and being organized.

Among university students, 67.26% put more emphasis on teachers' personal and interpersonal attributes, while only 32.74% emphasized pedagogical skills (Domede, 2023). The qualitative study of Jahangiri & Mucciolo (2008) identified the criteria for teacher quality preferences and revealed that for students, expertise on content design, content organization, and content development were at the forefront of their preferences, while for alumni, speaker self-confidence and expertise are preferred.

Basic education teachers' conceptual understanding of effective teaching was explored, and it was found that five major themes emerged to characterize the conglomeration of conceptions of effective teaching from personality-based dispositions, teaching competence traits, content mastery and expertise, pedagogical knowledge, and extension of the self (Abulon, 2014). Corollary, Muguti & Mawere (2013) found that effective teachers were characterized by school heads as those who embrace good classroom management and organization, clear planning of work and orienting for instruction, implementing instruction by catering for all learners, monitoring student progress, and making remedial lessons where necessary. The study of Bullock (2015) compared student and teacher beliefs on good teaching and found that students identified personality characteristics, such as helpful and kind, while teachers identified relational and ability qualities, such as flexible and caring, when describing a good teacher.

The present study looked into the qualities of effective college teachers from the perspective of the main clientele of the university – the students. It ascertained what characteristics are dominantly preferred by students in their college teachers. The study is vital in exploring what characteristics students want for their teachers. The students, being the constant companions of teachers, are the best people who could judge an effective teacher. The findings of the study are expected to be a guide in framing policies on evaluating the performance of college teachers.

## 2. METHODS

## 2.1. Research Design

The study utilized a quantitative descriptive research design. The study is quantitative in nature, as the responses of the respondents were counted as to what quality of the college teacher is mostly identified by the students. The descriptive research design is utilized as the study aims to describe the qualities of an effective college teacher as identified by college students. A descriptive research design is appropriate for the study as this design looks into the status of the phenomenon, which in this study, is the characteristics of effective teachers as perceived by university students.

## 2.2. Sampling and Participants

The study involved 332 college students of the University of Eastern Philippines Main Campus, a university in the Eastern Visayas region of the Philippines. The respondents were sampled through Slovin's formula and sampled proportionally from the various year levels and colleges. The respondents were randomly selected from all year levels and all undergraduate courses of the university. Students enrolled in graduate courses and the Law program were not included in the study.

#### 2.3. Research Instruments

An open-ended questionnaire was utilized in the study. The instrument asked the ideas of students about the characteristics of an effective teacher. There were ten blank spaces wherein the respondents were made to fill in ten qualities that s/he perceive as manifested in a college teacher.

#### 2.4. Data Collection

The researcher personally administered the instrument. After asking permission from the college administration, the researcher sought the help of the faculty members assigned to the classes of the identified respondents to facilitate the administration of the instrument. During the administration of the test, the study's intent was explained by the researcher, including the ethical considerations of assuring the respondents that the responses that would be derived from the study would be solely utilized for research purposes. The respondents were reminded that they can withdraw from answering the instrument if they feel there is a need to do it.

## 2.5. Data Analysis

Using thematic analysis, the responses of the respondents were categorized into themes that were based on the literature on effective teaching. Responses were tallied after being grouped into themes. The interpretation of the responses was based on the study of Bustos-Orosa (2008), where responses were interpreted as General, Typical, or Variant. As used in the said study, response is general if the response is mentioned by the majority or more than half of the participants; typical if the response is stated by at least 25 to 50 percent of the participants, and variant if the response is stated by at least 1 to 25 percent of the respondents. The study utilized frequency counts and ranking as statistical tools.

## 3. RESULTS

The responses of the respondents were grouped according to similar themes and organized into two general classifications: affective competence and professional competence.

## 3.1. Affective Competence

Affective competence pertains to the values and attitudes shown by teachers in doing their tasks. Table 1 presents the themes and core ideas related to affective competence. The table shows the 25 themes

under this competence. Of the 25 themes, there was no theme which is general in nature. Four themes were viewed as qualities of an effective teacher by at least a quarter to half of the participants – kind, understanding, approachable, and good interpersonal relations - thus interpreted as a Typical response. Twenty-one themes viewed as qualities of effective teacher were interpreted as Variant because they were identified by only at least 1 to 25 percent of the respondents – honest, patient, caring, sense of humor, open-minded, pleasing personality, hardworking, enthusiastic, humble, emotional stability, role model, flexible, perseverance, confident, God-fearing, optimistic, loyal, ethical, respected, risk-taker, and well-rounded.

Other core areas under the theme 'kind' include the teacher being nice, humanitarian, kind-hearted, generous, values-oriented, virtuous, compassionate, merciful, forgiving, forbearing, helpful, a good preacher, and supportive. Being kind also entails the presence of a good attitude, good conduct, good manners, and good character. The teacher does not criticize, does not discriminate, avoids stereotyping, does not embarrass, and helps students improve themselves.

The lowest frequency for the themes centers on the teacher being a risk-taker, along with other core ideas like the teacher being adventurous, courageous, and aggressive.

**Table 1.** Underlying Themes and Core Ideas related to Affective Competence

Underlying Theme	Core Ideas	Frequency	Type of Response
Kind	Kind, nice, humanitarian, kind-hearted, good	145	Typical
	attitude, good conduct, good manners, generous,		
	values-oriented, virtuous, good character, good		
	preacher, compassionate, merciful, forgiving,		
	forbearing, does not criticize, does not		
	discriminate, avoids stereotyping, does not		
	embarrass, helpful, helps students improve		
	themselves, supportive		
Understanding	Understanding, understands behavior of students,	117	Typical
	considerate, ability to handle circumstances, ability		
	to deal with problems, accepts ability of students,		
	gives second chances		
Approachable	Approachable, accommodating, open for	101	Typical
	consultation		
Good interpersonal	Friendly, gets along well with students, positive	87	Typical
relations	dialogue, ability to jive with students, listens to		
	students, good listener, listens to students'		
	problems, develops rapport, easy to talk with,		
	harmonious relationships, relates with other		
	people, interpersonal, knows how to socialize		
Honest	Honest, sincere, trustworthy, sense of secrecy,	75	Variant
	reliable		
Patient	Patience, long temper	73	Variant
Caring	Caring, concern for student, knows strengths and	59	Variant
	weaknesses of students, aware of students, know		
	struggle of students, knows how to deal with		
	students, warm-hearted, responsive, thoughtful,		
	sensitive to students' needs		
With a sense of	Sense of humor, funny, joker	57	Variant
humor			T
Open-minded	Open to ideas of students, accepts ideas and	57	Variant
	opinions		
Pleasing personality	Good grooming, well-dressed, neat, good looking, charming, pleasing personality	44	Variant
Hardworking	Hardworking, industrious, upholds work ethics	41	Variant
Enthusiastic	Enthusiastic, enjoys teaching, energetic	34	Variant
Humble	Humble, down-to-earth, accepts corrections,	31	Variant
	accepts criticisms, admits mistakes, modest,		
	simple, knows his strengths and limitations		

Underlying Theme	Core Ideas	Frequency	Type of Response
Emotional stability	Emotional stability, cheerful, happy, good mood,	29	Variant
	calm, smiling face, enjoyable		
Role model	Role model, good influence, good example, shares	27	Variant
	inspirational stories, family-oriented, good leader,		
	disciplinarian		
Flexible	Flexible, can adjust	25	Variant
Persevering	Perseverance, persistence, diligent	21	Variant
Confident	Confident, high self-esteem	20	Variant
God-fearing	God-fearing, religious	20	Variant
Optimistic	Optimistic, positive thinker	19	Variant
Loyal	Loyal	18	Variant
Ethical	Knows right and wrong, ethical, knows	15	Variant
	responsibilities, walks what is preached, selfless,		
	willing to sacrifice		
Respected	Dignified, dignity, idealistic, righteous, famous,	12	Variant
	adorable, lovable, with integrity		
Risk taker	Adventurous, courageous, risk taker, aggressive	10	Variant

## 3.2. Professional Competence

Professional competence pertains to the knowledge and skills shown by teachers in doing their tasks. Table 2 presents the themes and core ideas related to professional competence. The table shows the 17 themes under this competence. Of the 17 themes, there was no theme which is general in nature. Six themes were viewed as qualities of an effective teacher by at least a quarter to half of the participants – knowledgeable, good instructional skills, innovative, punctual, good communication skills, and good follower - thus interpreted as a Typical response. Eleven themes viewed as qualities of effective teachers are Variant as they were considered by at least 1 to 25 percent of the respondents: fair, committed, excellent lesson delivery, motivator, intelligent, strict, accountable, facilitator, critical thinker, constant learner, and visionary.

Other core areas under the theme 'knowledgeable' include the teacher having mastery of subject matter, knowledge of subject matter, depth of knowledge, many ideas, adequate knowledge, and being academically competent, knowledge-oriented, skillful, omniscient, updated on new information, experienced, well-rounded, holistically developed, and versatile. The teacher also knows how to level instruction with the type of students.

The lowest frequency for the themes centers on the teacher being a visionary, along with other core ideas like the teacher being a planner and futuristic.

Underlying Theme	Core Ideas	Frequency	Type of Response
Knowledgeable	Mastery of subject matter, knowledge of	158	Typical
	subject matter, depth of knowledge,		
	adequate knowledge, academically		
	competent, many ideas, knowledge-		
	oriented, skillful, omniscient, levels with		
	students, updated on new information,		
	experienced, well-rounded, holistically		
	developed, versatile		
Good instructional skills	Utilizes different strategies, utilized	157	Typical
	different teaching styles, non-traditional,		
	utilizes strategy that would make others		
	listen, utilizes collaborative learning,		
	promotes multiple intelligences, develops		
	HOTS, utilizes new technology, computer		
	literate, utilizes various materials, not		
	bookish, has other sources, provides info		
	materials, gives updated syllabus, provides		
	fun activities, activities in line with		

Table 2. Underlying Themes and Core Ideas related to Professional Competence

Underlying Theme	Core Ideas	Frequency	Type of Response
	subject, interesting learning tasks,		
	integrates topics to real life, current issues,		
	utilizes appropriate assessment tools,		
	discusses well, explains clearly, excellent		
	teaching skills, exert effort in teaching,		
	provides many examples, makes students		
	understand, simplifies lessons, spends		
	more time until students learn, interesting		
	discussion, have ice breakers, not		
	mentions irrelevant/not related things		
Innovative	Resourceful, innovative, experimenter,	116	Typical
	creative, artistic imagination, productive,		
	efficient, initiator, initiative		
Punctual	Time conscious, time management,	109	Typical
	punctual		
Good communication	Communication skills, good speaker,	104	Typical
skills	fluent in English, speaks in appropriate		
	tone, modulated voice, good diction		
Good follower	Implements rules and regulations, on time	94	Typical
	in giving grades, knows responsibilities,		
	wears proper uniform, good follower,		
	disciplined, cooperative, professional,		
	attends college activities, joins activities,		
	always present		
Fair	Fair, not bias, no favoritism, fair in giving	72	Variant
	grades		
Committed	Dedicated, devoted, commitment to job,	69	Variant
	love the job, works under pressure		
Motivator	Motivates students to study more, pushes	58	Variant
	students to a higher level, pushes students		
	to a brighter future, encourage students to		
	participate, encourages students to study		
	well, gives inspiration, inspires students,		
	boosts confidence of students, lifts group		
	spirit, persuasive, can make the best out		
	of worst students, boosts self-esteem,		
	appreciative, gives wise advices, make		
	students love the subject, provides		
	incentives, not insecure to students		
Intelligent	Intellectual independence, intellectual,	51	Variant
-	intelligent, smart		
Strict	Strict in a right way, moderately strict,	50	Variant
	sometimes strict, not perfectionist		
Facilitator	Facilitator, more student talk, ensures	38	Variant
	participation, entertains questions, focus		
	on student activity, involves students in		
	decision-making, lets students express		
	opinion, lets students learn on their own,		
	lets students participate in activities,		
	interacts with students, engages students		
	to worthwhile activities, enhances skills of		
	students, works actively with students,		
	possesses 21st century skills, OBE		
	activities		
Critical thinker	Critical thinker, thinks outside the box,	12	Variant
STICON CHINE	rational	_	
Constant learner	Pursues professional development,	9	Variant
Constant learner	researcher, research-oriented, masteral		,
	study, ready to learn		
Visionary	Planner, futuristic	2	Variant
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## 4. DISCUSSION

According to university students, an effective teacher has characteristics that were grouped into two general classifications: affective competence and professional competence.

Among the typical responses for affective competence, the characteristic 'kind' was noted by 145 respondents, the highest proportion of respondents. The finding is parallel to Bullock (2015), who noted that the largest number of respondents identified the effective teacher as 'kind'. In the study of Abulon (2014), the typical responses for personality-based dispositions are among the themes of the present study: patient, good sense of humor, caring, approachable, good communication skills, pleasant in dealing with others, and role model.

Among the typical responses for professional competence, the characteristic 'knowledgeable' was noted by 158 respondents, the highest proportion of respondents. This finding is parallel to Calaguas (2012), who found that the statement 'shows mastery of lessons taught' had the highest factor loading among the theme subject matter expertise. Muguti and Mawere (2013) reported that the concept of effectiveness of teachers as being knowledgeable in one's subject matter ranked first in the perspective of school heads' associates. In the study of Abulon (2014), the typical responses for teaching competence traits are among the themes of the present study: committed to teaching, punctual, has knowledge of the subject matter, and always ready for the lessons.

Students greatly agree on teachers' knowledge of the subject and kindness as the main qualities of being an effective college teacher. Teachers are expected to have deep knowledge of subject matter because what they will pass on to students is the knowledge the students will use in their future careers, which would greatly affect their professional development. Teachers are also expected to be kind because college students are a group of individuals coming from a wide range of backgrounds and personalities. With the growing disparity in the socio-economic conditions, students expect the humanitarian and caring personas from the teachers. While there are typical responses from the college students, many qualities identified are still variant. This suggests that definitions of effectiveness vary from the perspective of students.

The study provides insights into how teachers refine teaching methods with an analysis of what makes a teacher effective. When effective teacher traits are demonstrated, students tend to be motivated and engaged, leading to increased academic performance. Schools and policymakers can design professional development initiatives based on proven characteristics of effective teachers. The school's hiring policies may also be influenced by a research-based set of guidelines for how teachers will become assets of the institution.

However, the study recognizes its limitation of conclusivity of the effective characteristics of teachers. The responses were perceptions expressed by the respondents and were not validated through observations and in-depth interviews with students.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study explored the qualities of effective college teachers from the perspective of the very reason why they are teaching in the university – the students. The qualities of effective college teachers as viewed by the respondents can be grouped into two: affective competence, which focuses on values and attitudes, and professional competence, which focuses on knowledge and skills in teaching.

Typical responses from the respondents are centered on the effective teacher being kind, understanding, approachable, exhibiting good interpersonal relations, knowledgeable, innovative, punctual, exhibiting good communication skills, and instructional skills. The biggest frequency of responses in both groups of competence is indicated in the teacher being kind and knowledgeable. Being students in higher education, the students regard the college teacher as someone who has a high level of adequacy of knowledge in the discipline s/he are teaching. However, the college students, being far from their families, need the kind treatment from teachers and other school officials, who are supposed to be their second parents.

The two groups of competence that are demonstrated in an effective teacher overlap. The professional competence cannot be easily demonstrated without the affective competence. There are only

few typical responses from the respondents. Majority of the responses are variant. The students have varied conceptions of what an effective college teacher is.

In view of this, there is a need for learning institutions to consider these competencies in the evaluation of the faculty members. The qualities of effective teachers may be incorporated in rating the performance evaluation of teachers by students. Awards given to teachers may also consider the qualities borne out of the study as parameters or criteria. Activities, such as retreats, where the personal and professional qualities of teachers could be reflected upon, may be conducted. Schools may use these findings to improve education systems that promote equitable learning opportunities for students.

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Research Ethics. Considering research ethics, the author affirms that this research was conducted with integrity and in adherence to ethical standards and that all procedures were conducted in accordance with applicable laws and institutional regulations. All data, findings, and conclusions presented in this article are original and accurately reported. The study received ethics approval on January 10, 2024 (Reference Number: 2024-001-d-001) from the University Ethics Review Committee as a prerequisite for the conduct of the study.

Data Availability Statement. All data can be obtained from the corresponding author.

**Conflicts of Interest.** The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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