The Teaching Philosophy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Alqahtani Mofareh A.
King Khaled Military Academy, Civilian Studies,
English Department, Riyadh Saudi Arabia

ABSTRACT

Any philosophy of teaching stems from the given educational system and is reliant on the principles of various educational theories. As such, the factors which inform the teaching system objectives, foundations, standards adopted by the teacher, the methods and strategies which determine individual teaching practice, inhere attitudes and/or policies for student engagement with both educational methodology and moral values. These areharnessed to transit knowledge and improve student achievement in accordance with the fundamentals of contemporary teaching methods. In short, a teaching philosophy refers to the overall intellectual vision and a comprehensive view of strategic teaching objectives which are ultimately developed to promote the best learning outcomes. Since teaching philosophy rests on the three main and interrelated axes of the teacher, the student, and the curriculum, it is clearly imperative to involve the students in the research and discussion during the lesson. Moreover, the philosophy of teaching includes additional educational means such as the use of advanced projector devices to access the concept of the subject as quickly as possible, and the preparation of research papers by students. This study aims to introduce the student to organized academic research as an assignment of discussion, to enable them to adopt special ideas and/or express views clearly in tandem with the dissemination of information and the benefits acquired by each student, to use modern technology within the process of teaching by means of the latest audio visual aids, and to encourage students to use them in the process of submitting their papers. In order to achieve these objectives, the study seeks to investigate the following guiding questions: a) *what is the basis for the Saudi Arabian philosophy of teaching?***; and b)** *how can such a teaching philosophy be developed and managed to realize the desired results?* **In order to fully address these questions, a variety of research methodologies and instruments has been selected, including teacher and student questionnaires, data and document analysis, interviews with teachers, students, and educational policy-makers, and an historical contextualization of all relevant documentation. To this end, the researcher engaged with the analytical model of teaching philosophy and a number of previous studies which were used in the same context. In addition, by identifying the problem, importance, and objectives of the research, the hypotheses were deemed integral to certain teaching philosophy predicates and the ensuing results. In addition to a number of recommended stakeholder tools which address the main challenges to the teaching philosophy within Saudi Arabia, the researcher also underscored the concept of teaching philosophy as the foundation of the entire educational system to achieve all goals and targets set in accordance with a multi-dimensional philosophical vision.**

INTRODUCTION

As a dynamic and vital process, teaching is characterized by behavioural patterns and cognitive processes which rest on human interaction with the physical and social environment. These complement individual life by augmenting prior development of mental abilities, opening new horizons, and expanding individual perceptions. As such, teaching and learning are deemed axiomatic to the quality of life. It therefore follows that a teaching philosophy is a significant factor in the development of education as a public system and serves as the cornerstone of general educational systems. Moreover, since teaching is fundamental to the entire educational system, all education policy and regulation, particularly those carrying a direct relationship

between the teacher, teaching philosophy, and basic educational curriculum, should ideally be of a consistent standard throughout the entire education career in order to achieve the desired learning outcomes. The principle features of teaching should therefore align to the following precepts:

- The role of the teacher, including those cogitative and scientific aspects presented to the students
- Knowledge cannot be clearly relayed unless the teacher is properly aware of the value and formulation of particular educational goals
- Groundwork which enables teacher performance to be organized, free of random improvisations, and prepared for any problems arising during the lesson
- Planning for teaching
- Preparing students to acquire knowledge
- Methods of teaching which include all steps and procedures followed by the teacher to promote student comprehension and assimilation
- Diverse teaching techniques and strategies emphasize that individual choice of instruction method is often tied to the personal characteristics of the teacher.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Natasha Kenny & Carol Berenson (2018) maintained that teaching philosophy statements clearly communicate our beliefs about teaching and learning, why we hold these beliefs, and how we translate them into practice. Such statements, which essentially provide the foundation for teaching dossiers, can be used for a variety of additional purposes, such as job applications, and to underpin a teaching portfolio in the context of tenure and promotion reviews and/or teaching award applications (Chism, 1998).

Nancy Van Note Chism (1997-98) observed that the main components of philosophy teaching statements elucidate how teachers think learning occurs, how they believe they can intervene in this process, the chief goals they have for students, and the actions they take to implement their intentions. Amber Hussain Sayani (2015) on the other hand, argued for teachers to reflect upon their own philosophies and personal values. Recognition of our own attitudes and biases is a way to find an echo of the self which enables teachers to better determine and enhance their own educational philosophy. Assisting teachers to process their thoughts in a more constructive way may occasion an adaptation or even complete change of mind, or strengthen their viewpoint and resolve.

Thus, Sayani contends that in reflecting on their own philosophy, teachers will be better equipped to analyze their actions and to identify any shortcomings in their principles, values, knowledge, and/or practice.

Finally, Qais Faryadi (2015) purported that each teacher adheres to a set of beliefs and concepts in terms of the ideal meaning and value of teaching and learning. As such, it is vital that teachers' philosophical positions are judiciously deliberated and ringfenced so that the most beneficial ideas can be transposed into classroom practice. Thus, the main purpose of a teaching philosophy statement is two-fold: while it is important that the teacher understands and selects appropriate theories and guidelines for teaching from the perspective of the academician, it is equally important to delineate personal educative philosophies in order to ensure classroom pedagogies reflect such beliefs.

Statement of Problem

There is a pressing need to instantiate a basic unified teaching philosophy across all Saudi Arabian schools. Due to contradictory movement following diverse modifications and

developments which have shifted traditional teaching methodologies and behaviours, this study maintains that Saudi teaching philosophy is currently in "no-man's land". It is clear that the state of disorientation which now prevails between the original educational frameworks and a trend to modernize and renew the educational system, has been unable to devise a formula which can harmonize embedded local values with the social-cultural progress. However, renewal through cultural and scientific openness, along with adaption to the rapid changes, would arguably permit the educational system to keep apace and integrate with contemporary developments. As widely attested across the Saudi intellectual arena, there is a distinct lack of clarity in terms of a general guiding framework and the policy-based approach that tends to oscillate between various approaches. At present then, the philosophy of teaching within the standard of educational policies is going through a somewhat imbalanced phase. Several studies which examined this issue concurred that the adoption of a sound teaching philosophy improves the overall performance of schools, which, in turn, improves student attainment and learning proficiency. This ultimately leads to the development of teaching outputs as required.

The study of the relationship between teaching philosophy and professional school practices forms an important introduction to the philosophical position adopted by individual teachers and the results derived from such a philosophy. While it is evident that a close link connects individuated teacher philosophy and education philosophy, due to the absence of an overarching teaching philosophy, this study is necessary in order to elicit the true state of teacher philosophies and their relation to professional practices within the classroom. Moreover the study seeks to ascertain whether teacher philosophies vary according to gender, specialization, and experience in order to formulate suggestions and recommendations which may advance the ultimate amalgamation of teaching philosophies and scientific methodology to improve the capabilities of students and enhance development of their educational performance.

Research Questions
1. To what extent is teaching philosophy compatible with general Saudi educational policy challenges in terms of the methods and strategies of teachers?
2. How effective is the teaching philosophy which underpins the embedded culture and traditions of the Saudi education system?
3. Based on the latest foundations and concepts, which proposals should to be adopted within Saudi teaching philosophy?
4. Which are the most effective teaching philosophies and theories that teachers transpose to school strategy and practice?

Importance of the Study
The importance of teaching philosophy lies on introducing the relevant subject matter in terms of professional occupation that results in preparing an academically qualified generation according to the teacher academic capabilities, skills and behaviour. Moreover, the obvious dearth of overall teaching philosophy research in Arab libraries in general, and in the Kingdom in particular, underlines that while numerous studies engage with the description and analysis of the composition, origin and problems of the Saudi education system, studies that focus on the origins and mechanisms of Saudi teaching philosophy are all too few and omit international comparison or the general directives of philosophy. This study bridges this gap by presenting the most important elements and basic standards that must be included in the philosophy of teaching. Moreover, it also sheds much needed light on a number of important teaching philosophy facts within the Kingdom for all interested parties in the field of education and academic research, and offers suggestions for the advancement, development and

conceptualization of teaching philosophy which it is hoped will improve the quality of contemporary education for students and teachers alike.

Objectives
The current research aims to achieve the following objectives:
1. To identify the teaching philosophies and theories that teachers adopt in schools.
2. To elicit student opinion of and satisfaction with teachers' professional practices and policies in the classroom.
3. To determine the extent to which the relationship between the teaching philosophies of tutors and their professional practices in the schools delivers their stated objectives.
4. To study the impact of gender, specialization, and experience on teaching philosophies.
5. To assess the compatibility of teaching methods and principle philosophies adopted by teachers and modern educational policies which boost students' academic achievement.
6. To logically evaluate the possibility of updating and developing the mechanisms of teaching philosophy in line with contemporary changes, developments, and methodological indication.

Hypotheses
- There are statistically significant differences in student perceptions of EFL instructor teaching philosophies in terms of gender, specialization, or experience.
- There are statistically significant differences in student perspectives of why the teaching philosophies of EFL instructors are either accepted or rejected.
- There are statistically significant differences in student perspectives of public EFL teaching philosophies in terms of individual instructor styles and/or strategies

METHODOLOGY
The researcher followed a descriptive analysis methodology in relation to teaching philosophy in Saudi Arabia. Thus, horizons, challenges, and the future of methodology used for different research chapters rest on the data located in the literature review. As such, the relevant documents and data were submitted to statement analysis in order to elaborate upon teaching philosophy both as an approach and a method. Since the characteristics which comprise education policy in Saudi Arabia, especially that pertaining to teaching procedures and strategies as the main focus to improve the standard of teaching, require upgrading to keep abreast of all developments in this crucial arena, so the descriptive statistical analysis applied used data statistics to devise a package of questions analysis results performed by Ministry of Education teachers.

A subsequent questionnaire prepared for teachers, students and specialists within the Ministry of Education, aimed to elucidate the efficacy of teaching philosophy in achieving the goals. The survey identified various avenues of potential support for strategies of teaching philosophy. The results were then analyzed by following a methodical thematic framework using both an inductive method to interrogate documented texts related to the subject matter, and an historical approach to contextualize the historical background of Saudi Arabia.

Research Terms
- TEACHING: denotes both a process to facilitate learning and the presentation of knowledge, and demonstration of ability or skills. Since effective teaching enables students to make connections between old and new knowledge in order to form new ideas, competent teachers play a crucial role in the advancement of the entire community.
- PHILOSOPHY: denotes the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, especially when considered as an academic discipline or a group of theories and/or ideas related to the understanding of a particular subject.

RESULTS

The study found that due to its perceived importance, concerted efforts are currently being made to encourage teachers to adopt their own teaching philosophy. In addition, the results confirmed that a properly formulated teaching philosophy helps to improve the logicality of teacher reasoning. Moreover, it demonstrated a positive impact on the development of teachers' moral and social attitudes and a strengthening of teachers' ability to access and communicate with students more effectively. The results attested that teachers who adopt clear teaching philosophies based on contemporary principles maintain consistently high awareness of teaching competencies, while those who adhere to traditional teaching philosophies register a low self-perception of teaching competencies.

The results of the present study are consistent with those of comparable studies in the literature related to this topic. They conclude that abiding by a teaching philosophy which aligns with contemporary teaching approaches and compatible modern teaching methods increases teacher self-awareness and overall performance. In fact, the findings revealed that most teachers adopt an innovative teaching philosophy, followed by progressive, constructive, tactical, and finally, core, while the majority of students were found to respond more favourably to teachers who adopt modern teaching philosophies.

DISCUSSION

The philosophy of teaching is an important part of the professional portfolio file which is usually provided when seeking career advancement such as a professional promotion or a more prestigious post. Moreover, it is held that the process of determining personal teaching philosophy by consistently reviewing personal teaching practices can foster positive changes in teaching capabilities which ultimately renew and refresh professional and personal growth. The review and discussion of this debate is therefore deemed a valuable exercise for developing professional teacher capacity to achieve personal teaching goals.

While there is no single or specific way to formulate the philosophy of teaching, it is nonetheless assumed that the strategy adopted by the teacher as a method and approach mirrors his own professional practice. As such, the philosophy is a subjective expression of the teacher's personal view which can be summarized through the following axes:
- teacher's view of the nature and concepts of teaching and learning in terms of limitations and influencing factors
- teacher's perception of effective teaching
- purpose and reason for being a teacher in terms of ultimate goal, aims, and desired learning outcomes
- preferred teaching environment, class-size and methods, and the approaches, procedures and conditions perceived as most beneficial
- nature and efficacy of teacher role in learning process

- teacher perception of the role of the student and ways to enhance student performance and proficiency
- ensuring that individual teacher values consistently align on these issues
- identification of assessment methods which correspond to philosophical views which are based on these values and other integral teaching considerations

It is emphasized that the philosophy of teaching always strives to show the purpose of the practices and attitudes adopted by the teacher within the teaching process. Philosophy, as a name implies is not merely a statement of practice then; it also offers concise clarification of the logical foundations behind these practices and attitudes. Since a philosophy of teaching may not necessarily correspond with the 'expert' opinion of reviewers or commentators, but is rather a statement of what an individual teacher holds and perceives to be right, it merits an intensive level of professional reflection and self-awareness.

Indeed, the philosophy of teaching is not limited to specific definitions, but is a concept which may be renewed, redefined, adapted and interpreted according to personal vision.

In light of this, the formulation and application of a well-rounded teaching philosophy may include any number of the following questions:
1. Does the application of the philosophical view in the field of human experience emanate from philosophical theories and ideas within a certain civilized framework?

2. Does of philosophy of teaching philosophy:-
   a) elucidate and develop effective teaching methods
   b) illuminate the processes of more effective teaching
   c) clarify the teacher stance in relation to the requirements of educational curricula
   d) enable the teacher to compare the pros and cons of various theories/applications
   e) propose new lines of knowledge
   f) develop teacher ability to explore the realization of educational goals
   g) offer an experimental teaching philosophy that rests on the organization of ideas

3. Does the teaching philosophy build upon or reference any of the following trends:-
   a) *authoritarianism*: a teaching philosophy which privileges the teacher as the main factor in the educational process
   b) *natural*: a teaching philosophy which proposes nature as the basis of knowledge
   c) *democratic*: a teaching philosophy which assumes the teacher and learner to be integrated and complementary with the educative process
   d) any of a number of additional approaches to teaching philosophies, such as *ideal*, *realistic*, and/or *innovative* philosophies

RECOMMENDATIONS
In light of the above findings, the researcher recommends that faculties of education across Saudi Arabia instantiate training programmes on the formulation of teaching philosophies specific to and in accordance with the strategic vision of individual teachers.

The author further suggests that conferences, seminars, and workshops should be organized in conjunction with the education colleges and related teaching councils to examine relevant theory and practice and raise teacher awareness of the role of personal teaching philosophy, as a means of encouraging teachers to apply their own teaching philosophies.

It is clear that more research is needed concerning the preparation of professional development plans for teachers. This is particularly the case in terms of teaching philosophy, since further data collection and analysis may identify the extent to which individual teaching philosophies remain apace with the latest developments and/or are compelled to adjust as a result of the confronting with school difficulties and experiences.

School administrations should encourage all teachers to adopt clear teaching philosophies as the most important factor in the contemporary educational structure. As such, the author urges school administrations in Saudi Arabia to hold periodic meetings with teachers to discuss their teaching philosophies, and to support them in overcoming difficulties when practicing their philosophies within schools. This would not only assist all key parties; it would also ensure that the professional achievement file of every teacher included an outline their teaching philosophy and strategies as a clear basis for professional evaluation. Finally, the author recommends that efforts are made to provide a teacher environment conducive to adopting a teaching philosophy which inhere clear vision and systematic implications.

CONCLUSION

This study presents a comprehensive summary of the theoretical and practical importance of teaching philosophy for both teachers and students. In so doing, it weighs the extent of its use and efficacy, along with the many challenges of achieving the desired learning outcomes. It is hoped that this study will assist teachers to develop a sound and integrated teaching philosophy, which reflects their teaching experience according to the current goals and the possibility of renewing teaching philosophy in accordance with future educative and curricula developments. Moreover, it is held that the adoption of an effective teaching philosophy will generate valuable opportunities for continuous reflection and reformulation of strategies that will ultimately yield professional development, improvement of teaching methods, and the ability to maintain pace with modernity, innovation, and all the relevant developments. While a well-constructed teaching philosophy no doubt enhances the professional performance and promotion prospects of the teacher, it is evident that the student also benefits from a clear and expeditious teaching method which supports assimilation of the curriculum and effective communication with the teacher. In short, a well-considered and faculty-supported teaching philosophy can foster and sustain teaching strategies which effectively target the needs of both teacher and student.

References

Amber Hussain Sayani (2015), School of Nursing and Midwifery Karachi, Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan. My Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

Arthur, L. (2016). Communities of practice in higher education: professional learning in an academic, career. International Journal for Academic Development, 21(3): 230-241.

Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS) (2008). Guiding principles for graduate student supervision. Retrieved from:
https://cags.ca/documents/publications/working/Guiding%20Principles%20for%20Graduate%20Studen t%20Supervision%20in%20Canada%20-%20rvsn7.pdf

Carmichael, D. L., & Martens, R.P. (2012). Midwestern Magic: Iowa's state-wide initiative engages teachers, encourages leadership, and energizes student learning. Journal of Staff Development, 33(3), 22-26

Creanor, L. (2014). Raising the profile: An institutional case study of embedding scholarship and innovation through distributive leadership. Innovations in Education and Teaching International, 51(6), 573-583.

Dr. Qais Faryadi, Faculty of Science and Technology, Department of Computer Sciences, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia USIM. Teaching Philosophy Statements

Felten, P. (2013). Principles of good practice in SoTL. Teaching & Learning Inquiry,1(1). 121-125.

Foote, K.E. & Solem, M.N. (2009). Toward better mentoring for early career faculty: results of a study of US geographers. International Journal for Academic Development, 14(1), 47-58.

Hendry, G.D. & Dean, S.J. (2002). Accountability, evaluation and teaching expertise in higher education. International Journal of Academic Development, 7(1), 75-82.

Johnson, B. (2007). Transformational supervision: When supervisors mentor: Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 38(3), 259-267.

Jones, S., Lefoe, G., Harvey, M., & Ryland, K. (2012). Distributed leadership: A collaborative framework for academics, executives and professionals in higher education. Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 34(1), 67-78.

Kenny, N., Berenson, C., Chick, N., Johnson, C., Keegan, D., Read, E., & Reid, L. (2017, October). A Developmental Framework for Teaching Expertise in Postsecondary Education. Poster presented at the international Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Conference, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Retrieved from: http://connections.ucalgaryblogs.ca/2017/11/04/developing-a-learning-culture-a- framework-for-the-growth-of-teaching-expertise/

Keppell, M., O'Dwyer, C., Lyon, B., & Childs, M. (2011). Transforming distance education curricula through distributive leadership. Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 15(4), 9-21.

Kreber, C. (2002). Teaching excellence, teaching expertise, and the scholarship of teaching. Innovative Higher Education, 27(1), 5-23.

Lizzio, A., Wilson, K., & Simons, R. (2002). University students' perceptions of the learning environment and academic outcomes: implications for theory and practice. Studies in Higher Education, 27(1), 27-52.

Nicol, D. J., & Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006). Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: A model and seven principles of good feedback practice. Studies in Higher Education, 31(2), 199-218.

Mathias, H. (2005) Mentoring on a programme for new university teachers: a partnership in revitalizing and empowering collegiality. International Journal for Academic Development, 10(2): 95-106.

Mårtensson, K., & Roxå, T. (2016). Leadership at a local level–Enhancing educational development. Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 44(2), 247-262.

Natasha Kenny, Carol Berenson, Cheryl Jeffs, Lorelli Nowell, Kimberley Grant September 2018, University of Calgary, Taylor Institute for Learning and Teaching. TEACHING PHILOSOPHIES and TEACHING DOSSIERS

Nancy Van Note Chism, Ohio State University, Volume 9, Number 3, 1997-98 Developing a Philosophy of Teaching Statement.

Phillips, S. L., Dennison, S. T., & Cox, M. (2015). Faculty Mentoring: A Practical Manual for Mentors, Mentees, Administrators, and Faculty Developers. Herndon, US: Stylus Publishing. Retrieved from http://www.ebrary.com

Poole, G. (2013). Square one: What is research? In K. McKinney (Ed.), The scholarship of teaching and learning in and across the disciplines. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. 135-151.

Shulman, L.S. (2004). Lamarck's revenge: teaching among the scholarships. Teaching as Community Property: Essays on Higher Education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 164-172.

Shulman, L.S. (1993). Teaching as community property: putting an end to pedagogical solitude. Change, 25(6). 6-7.

Schlosser, L.Z., Lyons, H.Z., Talleyrand, R.M., Kim, B.S.K., & Johnson, W.B. (2011). Advisor-advisee relationships in graduate training programs. Journal of Career Development, 38(1), 3-18.

Taylor, K. L. (2005). Academic development as institutional leadership: An interplay of person, role, strategy, and institution. International Journal for Academic Development, 10(1), 31-46.

Tigelaar, D.E.H, Dolmans, D.H.J.M, Wolfhagen, I.H.A.P, & Van Der Vleuten, C.P.M. (2004). The development and validation of a framework for teaching competencies in higher education. Higher Education, 48, 253-268.

Trigwell, K., Prosser, M., & Waterhouse, F. (1999). Relations between teachers' approaches to teaching and students' approaches to learning. Higher Education, 37(1), 57-70.

Weimer, M. (2013). Learner-centred Teaching: Five key changes to practice, (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.