

## Brief Communication

# Characteristics of the Capable Teacher from the Viewpoint of the Students at Faculty of Health, Guilan University of Medical Sciences in 2013

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(Received: 20 Mar 2014 Accepted: 10 Jun 2014)

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## Abstract

Teachers are responsible for teaching the students, and improving the teaching quality plays an essential role in the efficiency of the student and teacher. The present study was a descriptive cross-sectional study with a total research sample of 220 people that investigated the characteristics of the capable teacher from the viewpoint of the students at faculty of health, Guilan University of Medical Sciences using census method. Data collection tool was a 24-item questionnaire. The validity of the questionnaire was determined through content validity and its reliability was calculated by Cronbach's alpha ( $r=0.87$ ). The collected data were analyzed by SPSS software using descriptive statistics. The most important characteristics of capable teachers from the viewpoint of the students included being knowledgeable (90.5%), interest in teaching (78.9%), eloquent presentation (77.3%), accepting criticism (75.5%) and flexibility (71.4%), respectively. It is necessary to take these characteristics into consideration while recruiting the faculty members and planning for faculty development programmes.

**Keywords:** Capable teacher, Student, Faculty of health

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Citation: Mehrabian F, Karimi Z, Dadashkhah Z, Rafizadeh A, Slemi K. Characteristics of the capable teacher from the viewpoint of the students at faculty of health, Guilan University of Medical Sciences in 2013. *Educ Res Med Sci*. 2014; 3(1): 26-29.

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## Introduction

Nowadays, despite the rapid developments in science and technology, one cannot achieve all the sciences, on the one hand, and teach all the sciences, on the other hand (1). Educating the students is a major responsibility of every teacher and promoting the teaching quality plays a pivotal role in increasing the motivation, vitality and efficiency of the teacher and student. Teacher is considered as the most important element in the achievement of educational objectives.

A good teacher can facilitate the teaching process and even compensate the deficiencies of the course books and educational facilities (2, 3, 4). Although the teacher's

activities are in line with the students' theoretical and professional learning, the most important role of the teacher is educating and training the students. On the other hand, the role of the teachers in motivating the students cannot be denied because they are greatly involved with the students mentally and emotionally (5, 6).

One of the major techniques used for evaluation of the teachers is the student's evaluation of the teachers (7, 8). Some scholars have introduced student's evaluation as the best type of evaluation, because they believe students are the only ones that are directly taught by the teachers; therefore, students are the most appropriate individuals to

evaluate the teachers. However, others believe that students are not fully mentally mature to judge the capabilities of the teachers, are not familiar with the teaching and learning concepts and are simply deceived by an attractive demonstration or a good score (9). The most common and important method for evaluation of the teacher is administration of feedback questionnaire (7). It seems that questionnaire should be designed as to precisely obtain the students' viewpoints without being influenced in different situations. The present study was aimed to determine the characteristics of the capable teachers from the viewpoint of the students of faculty of health at Guilan University of Medical Sciences (GUMS).

## Methods

This descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out in the first semester of the academic year 2013-2014. The questionnaire was administered before the final term examinations and the statistical society included 350 health students at GUMS, from whom 220 students (210 undergraduate and 10 master students) from environmental health, professional health, general health and health education departments completed and returned the questionnaires.

Sampling was performed through census method. The tool for data collection was a questionnaire including two sections, the first section contained personal information and the second section (24 items) comprised of questions about a good teacher (13). The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed via applying content validity, making use of the teachers' views and modifying some parts of the questionnaire, and reliability of the questionnaire was determined by Cronbach's alpha (0.87). The scoring system was based on a 5-point Likert scale (ranged from very important to not important), allocating the scores from 5 to 1, respectively. The obtained data were analyzed by SPSS software using descriptive statistics.

## Results

178 students (80.9%) of the total sample were female and 208 students (94.54%) were undergraduate. The most important features of the capable teacher were being knowledgeable (90.5%), interest in teaching (78.9%), eloquent presentation (77.3%), accepting criticism (75.5%) and flexibility (71.4%), respectively. The frequency distribution for characteristics of the capable teacher from the viewpoint of the students is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Distribution of the characteristics of capable teacher from the viewpoint of the students of faculty of health, Guilan University of Medical Sciences**

| Characteristics  | Very important |      | Important |      | Rather important |      | Little important |     | Not important |     |
|--|----------------|------|-----------|------|------------------|------|------------------|-----|---------------|-----|
|  | (n)            | (%)  | (n)       | (%)  | (n)              | (%)  | (n)              | (%) | (n)           | (%) |
| Teacher's being knowledgeable                          | 199            | 90.5 | 14        | 6.4  | 5                | 2.3  | 0                | 0   | 2             | 0.9 |
| General knowledge about the course                     | 151            | 68.6 | 57        | 25.9 | 12               | 5.5  | 0                | 0   | 0             | 0   |
| Presentation of new materials                          | 130            | 59.1 | 69        | 31.4 | 20               | 9.1  | 0                | 0   | 0             | 0   |
| Referring student to resources                         | 73             | 33.2 | 84        | 38.2 | 54               | 24.5 | 7                | 3.2 | 2             | 0.9 |
| Teaching experience                                    | 86             | 39.1 | 73        | 33.2 | 48               | 21.8 | 9                | 4.1 | 4             | 1.8 |
| Interest in research                                   | 69             | 31.4 | 73        | 33.2 | 55               | 25   | 17               | 7.7 | 6             | 2.7 |
| Organizing and planning the course                     | 134            | 60.9 | 62        | 28.2 | 21               | 9.5  | 3                | 1.4 | 0             | 0   |
| Fascinating presentation of the materials              | 154            | 70   | 51        | 23.2 | 12               | 5.5  | 3                | 1.4 | 0             | 0   |
| Providing the students with a creative thinking ground | 116            | 52.7 | 67        | 30.5 | 22               | 10   | 13               | 5.9 | 2             | 0.9 |
| Attending the class on-time                            | 76             | 34.5 | 98        | 44.5 | 23               | 10.5 | 10               | 4.5 | 13            | 5.9 |
| Using supplementary materials                          | 78             | 35.5 | 81        | 36.8 | 46               | 20.9 | 12               | 5   | 4             | 1.8 |
| Creating a ground for students' participation in class | 90             | 40.9 | 67        | 30.5 | 48               | 21.8 | 12               | 5.5 | 3             | 1.4 |
| Eloquent presentation                                  | 170            | 77.3 | 31        | 14.5 | 11               | 7    | 8                | 1.5 | 0             | 0   |
| Interest in teaching                                   | 173            | 78.6 | 31        | 14.1 | 12               | 5.5  | 4                | 1.8 | 0             | 0   |
| Observing ethical considerations                       | 148            | 67.3 | 48        | 21.8 | 11               | 5    | 11               | 5   | 2             | 0.9 |
| Accepting criticism                                    | 166            | 75.5 | 39        | 17.7 | 8                | 3.6  | 7                | 3.2 | 0             | 0   |
| Flexibility  | 157            | 71.4 | 43        | 19.5 | 12               | 5.5  | 8                | 3.6 | 0             | 0   |
| Good sense of humor                                    | 105            | 47.7 | 65        | 29.5 | 43               | 19.5 | 6                | 2.7 | 1             | 0.5 |
| Tidiness   | 103            | 46.8 | 61        | 27.7 | 46               | 20.9 | 8                | 3.6 | 2             | 0.9 |
| Decisiveness and robustness                            | 50             | 22.7 | 73        | 33.2 | 64               | 29.1 | 17               | 7.7 | 15            | 6.8 |
| Willingness to help the students                       | 150            | 68.2 | 56        | 25.5 | 12               | 5.5  | 2                | 0.9 | 0             | 0   |
| Being accessible out of class hours                    | 96             | 43.6 | 64        | 29.1 | 42               | 19.1 | 14               | 6.4 | 4             | 1.8 |
| Intimate relationship with students                    | 109            | 49.5 | 68        | 30.9 | 34               | 15.5 | 8                | 3.6 | 1             | 0.5 |
| Appropriate eye-contact with students                  | 105            | 47.7 | 61        | 27.7 | 35               | 15.9 | 16               | 7.3 | 3             | 1.4 |

## Discussion

The findings of the present study indicated the teacher's being knowledgeable as the most significant characteristics of the capable teacher from the viewpoint of the health students, which seems will facilitate the learning process and promote the learners' motivation to comprehend concepts and terminologies. In the study conducted by Dargahi et al. and Mobaraki et al. 86.8% and 98% of the students introduced teacher's being knowledgeable as the most important feature of a good teacher, respectively (6, 14), which is in line with the results of the present study. Further, Mandira et al. highlighted being knowledgeable as one of the predominant features (15).

In this study, components such as interest in teaching and eloquent presentation were introduced as other characteristics of a capable teacher. In the study of Ghorbani et al. carried out at Semnan University of Medical Sciences, eloquent presentation and course organization and planning style were recognized as the most important features of a capable teacher by the students (5). These findings are compatible with the results of the present study in the case of the first two components and in contrary in the case of the latter component, course organization and planning style.

Moreover, accepting criticism was ranked significant in the present study. Accepting criticism and flexibility were considered as the characteristics of a capable teacher from the viewpoint of the students, which were ranked important following dominance over the course, interest in teaching and eloquent presentation.

Furthermore, in the study carried out by Sharifi et al, self-confidence, intimate relationship with the student, and starting and finishing the class on-time were reported as the most significant features of a good teacher from the viewpoint of the students at Qazvin University of Medical Sciences (16).

Decisiveness and robustness, interest in research and referring the students to resources were considered as the least important characteristics of a capable teacher from the viewpoint of the students at Guilan University of Medical Sciences, which was in line with the results of Dadkhah at Ardabil University of Medical Sciences and in contrary to the findings of Moezi et al.'s study at Shahrekord University of Medical Sciences in which the lowest priority was given to the students' class attendance (17, 18). It seems that extreme robustness from the part of the teachers reduces motivation and causes academic loss in the students.

## Conclusion

Since being knowledgeable, interest in teaching, eloquent presentation, accepting criticism and flexibility were the most important characteristics of the capable teacher from the viewpoint of the students at the faculty of health, it is necessary to take into account the above characteristics and educational capabilities while hiring the faculty members. Moreover, empowerment workshops are recommended to be held to enhance the professional capability of the faculty members.

## Acknowledgement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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