





Teaching for Understanding

“And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house”
(Acts 20:20).

Howard and William Hendricks in their book *As Iron Sharpens Iron* wrote, “One of the fundamental laws of education: people only learn what they can use. If information has no use, people won’t learn it. They may write it down, they may file it, they may be able to regurgitate it on an exam; but that doesn’t mean they’ve learned it. Learning involves change. The result is a different person as a result of the learning process.”

Gene Edwards in the *Titus Diary* suggests Paul and Barnabas may have used stories to teach illiterate converts. The hearers were free to interrupt teachings to ask questions. The eager converts repeated the stories back to the teachers. The apostles were able to teach enough lessons and stories in three or four months to allow the baby church to go on and survive after their departure. People were able to learn through:

-  Practical and applicable advice.
-  Asking questions.
-  Repeating what had been taught.
-  Paul and Barnabas probably kept to the basics and reviewed until they were learned.

Welcome to the School of Learning

It is registration day. Students are stepping into the classroom with a heart to learn. You can feel it as you look over the class. You can see it in their eyes. What will you teach them? How will you go about teaching it?

1. Use plain language. If people do not understand what is being said, the lack of understanding prevents the seeds from taking root.
2. Clarify hard words to increase understanding.
3. Use good questions to deepen understanding. These should not only be recall questions that ask, “What do you remember?” but questions that ask, “What do you think?” Asking questions allows you to know whether the student has understood what has been taught. Students enjoy answering questions if they know the answers. It builds their confidence and motivates them to learn more. It also convinces them that they can learn what is being taught. You can also check and see if the students are paying attention by asking questions. Let your students ask questions as well. The only foolish question is the unasked question.

4. Make your teachings “relevant.” Teach things applicable to life.

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Corinthians 2:4).

“Everything should be made as simple
as possible but not simpler.”
(Albert Einstein)

Jim Rohn once said, “Don’t let your learning lead to knowledge, but let your learning lead to action.” Students must be encouraged to practice what they have learned.

5. Keep it simple. The real test of intelligence is the ability to come down to the level of the

students/learners.

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).

6. Schedule the important classes and subject matter during the best time of the day. This is when the student is most alert and ready to learn.

“Woe to him who teaches men
faster than they can learn.”
(Will Durant)

7. Focus on learning and not just covering the content. More is not always better. Teach the things that are important, and let your students know what is important. Ted Sizer says, “Less is more. Thoroughness counts more than coverage.” Jesus said, “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear.” (John 16:12, *NIV*)

8. Make your subject interesting. We are teaching from the most exciting Book in the world. Don’t be boring. Someone has said that it is a sin to bore a child, and that could be true of anyone.

9. Teach from the overflow of your life. Teaching is not what you do; it is what you are.

Howard Hendricks has said, “If you stop growing today, you stop teaching tomorrow . . . If you don’t know it—truly know it—you can’t give it out.” We should learn before we try teaching others. The best teachers possess a teachable spirit. They are always striving for excellence and continuous improvement. Before we can expect others to learn and grow, we must first grow.




“He who learns, teaches.” (Ancient Africa Proverb from Ethiopia)

10. Prepare well. Know your subject matter. You become more confident when you have prepared properly.

11. Care about your students. It has been said, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”




12. There are five teachers in life—family, school, media (radio, newspapers, etc.), peers (acquaintances), and church.

13. Set the example. Someone is watching you. You are a walking Bible.

-  People learn least by what you say.
-  They learn a little more by what you do.
-  People learn most by what you are.

Students are saying to you, “Don’t tell me, show me!”

14. Protect your teaching time through:

-  **Study** (You must learn first.)
-  **Specialize** (Become an expert in your subject.)
-  **Prayer** (Depend on the Holy Spirit to work.)

15. Start from where your students are. Take them from the known to the unknown. Take them into a deeper understanding. Effective learning builds on what the student already knows.

16. Allow the students to discover truth and answers. Encourage their creativity. Give them assignments that cause them to discover the lesson you want to teach. Students learn by doing. Remember, “Tell me and I’ll forget. Show me and I may remember. Involve me and I’ll understand.” (Anonymous)

17. It would be wonderful if teachers and preachers learned the “one lesson, one point” approach to education and preaching. This means that each lesson contains one major point and is taught in such a way that the student learns that point.

*“As long as you live, you learn;
and as long as you learn, you live.”
(Howard Hendricks)*

18. Make your teaching time a priority. Do not allow yourself to be distracted by telephone calls, knocks at the door, and other things that pull you away from your class.

19. Assume nothing. Your students may not understand the basics. Do not assume that the students know anything about the subject.

Study Questions

1. Why should plain language be used in teaching? _____

2. What are the benefits of asking students questions? _____

3. What does “making teaching relevant” mean? _____

4. What is the real test of a teacher’s intelligence? _____

5. Which type of material or classes should be scheduled during the early part of the day or program? _____

6. How does a teacher focus on learning and not just covering the content? _____

7. Good teachers possess what type of spirit or attitude? _____

8. Quote the African proverb used in this lesson. _____

9. Why should a teacher know the subject matter? _____

10. What are the five teachers we have in life? _____

11. Why should teachers set an example? _____

12. How does a teacher protect his/her teaching time? _____

13. Why should a teacher start with what the student already knows? _____

14. Why should teachers give assignments? _____

15. What should we assume (about our students) when we start teaching? _____

16. According to Howard Hendricks, what is one of the fundamental laws of education?

17. According to Hendricks, learning involves change. What is the result of learning?

Additional Notes
