

A Turning Point in My Teaching Journey

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In my early years as a teacher, I was assigned to an elementary school. One day, I was supposed to show an educational film to my fifth-grade students. At that time, video players were banned in households, but schools were permitted to use them for educational purposes.

With the help of the school janitor, I brought a television and a video player into the classroom. The students were excited, eagerly waiting for the film to start. However, I—the teacher—stood in front of the device, completely unsure how to operate it. In university, I had learned teaching methodologies, but no one had taught me how to use educational technology. The Ministry of Education had not provided any training either, and since I had never owned a video player at home, I had no prior experience using one. I placed my hands on the buttons, but I had no idea where to start.

For a moment, there was silence. Then, one of the students, Javad, spoke up: "Sir, shall we set it up for you?"

Before I could respond, he and a few other students stepped forward, pressed some buttons, inserted the tape, and within seconds, an image appeared on the television screen. The film started playing. The classroom filled with excitement. But I wasn't looking at the screen—I was reflecting on a profound realization.

Analysis: From Traditional Teaching to Lifelong Learning

1. The Gap Between Formal Education and Practical Needs

This experience revealed a fundamental gap: formal teacher education does not always align with the practical demands of the classroom. In university, we learn pedagogical theories, but we receive little training in using educational tools, adapting to technological advancements, or addressing real-world classroom challenges. This gap was evident back then and remains a persistent issue in many educational systems today.

2. The Teacher Is No Longer the Sole Source of Knowledge

This incident was an eye-opener: in the modern classroom, the teacher is not necessarily the most knowledgeable person in every domain. Students, especially in areas related to technology, may be ahead of their teachers. Javad, a fifth-grader, possessed a skill that I, his teacher, lacked. This shift highlights a critical transformation in education: the teacher's role has evolved from a "knowledge transmitter" to a "learning designer."

3. The Necessity of Lifelong Learning for Educators

From that day on, I resolved not to wait for official training from the Ministry of Education but to take responsibility for my own learning. I realized that in today's world, a teacher who does not continuously update their knowledge and skills will soon become obsolete. Lifelong learning is not merely an option for educators; it is an essential professional responsibility.

4. Technology: A Threat or an Opportunity?

At that time, video players were seen as a potential threat—banned in homes but permitted in schools for instructional use. Today, similar debates revolve around smartphones, social media, and artificial intelligence in education. But is banning technology the solution? Or should educators embrace these tools, learn how to integrate them into teaching, and guide students in using them responsibly?

Conclusion: The Future Educator Is a Tech-Savvy Educator

That day in my fifth-grade classroom, I learned an invaluable lesson: if I wanted to be an effective teacher, I had to stay updated with technological advancements. I needed to embrace innovation, rather than fear it, and learn how to leverage it for educational purposes. Today, after many years in the profession, I still uphold this principle:

“The modern world is driven by technology. Embrace it, and you will thrive as an educator.”

Contact Information

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