

Teachability Preview

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SUMMARY

The course on teachability introduces a newly coined term to address a critical yet overlooked factor in education: the teachability factor. This concept differentiates between intelligence and the ability to be taught, suggesting that a student's receptiveness to learning significantly impacts educational outcomes, even amidst advancements in pedagogy, curriculum, and technology.

- Teachability is defined as the ability or receptiveness to be taught, distinct from intelligence.*
- The teachability factor is often ignored in professional development discussions, despite its importance in the learning equation.*
- Many experienced teachers report that teaching has become increasingly challenging, which may relate to the lack of focus on teachability.*
- Advances in pedagogy, curriculum, and technology have not necessarily improved educational outcomes, as evidenced by declining literacy rates.*
- The traditional learning equation oversimplifies the teaching-learning dynamic, failing to account for variations in student receptiveness.*
- True learning is more than just test performance; it involves retention and application of knowledge over time.*
- The course aims to help educators understand and address the teachability factor to improve teaching effectiveness and student learning.*

Well, I'd like to welcome you to this eight uh session course on teachability. As some of you, I'm sure are wondering, is teachability a word? I can assure you, it's not a word either in English or in French and probably any other language that I know of. I had to invent a word. Uh some of you that are familiar with my material know that I do so on occasion. Invent words and so I I did have to invent a term to even talk about this. I now understand that uh at least in the English educational circles the word is spreading around so that uh others are beginning to use it as well.

uh it it's quite obvious I think uh from the uh from the word what it means uh able to be taught uh perhaps capable of being taught uh much uh different we're differentiating it here of course from intelligence uh in you can have a very intelligent child who's not at all receptive to being taught and and a child that is lacking in intelligence who is very receptive to being taught. And so we're we're talking here about a different factor and a factor that is seldom considered uh in the learning equation.

Uh there are some conver conversations uh that go on but usually in professional development uh this is ignored completely. And after putting all the pieces together, I'm convinced that it is actually the the main uh factor in the learning equation. And I hope after these eight sessions together uh that you will also be convinced in

whatever venue you uh represent. Uh some of you will be here uh involved in uh uh as classroom teachers, some as helping professionals uh consulting uh with the school system. Uh some will be involved in early education, others in the elementary, others in high school. Uh some will be taking this course as as administrators, but hopefully we can all get on the same page uh with this. Some of you will be taking the course as as teaching assistants uh or uh or behavioral assistance and so on. But understanding this factor uh I think is is one of the most significant. Now I've called it teachability factor. I I couldn't find a term that actually moved to cover both behavior and learning. And so as we get get into this, you'll see that really we're talking about a factor that impacts both problem behavior and learning problems. And so the more we understand it, the more we can address it. Um I I think this factor is somewhat of an elephant in the room. An elephant in the room in a sense that it's the biggest thing, the biggest thing that is there and the thing that is not talked about. And one of the reasons we don't talk about it uh is because we have no words for it. Hence, I had to make up a word. Uh you can see the problem. We just have no words for it. Uh we we talk about pedagogy. We talk about curriculum. We talk about uh technology.

We have no words for this. And and so we're unable to develop a science around it. We're unable to develop uh a a theory around it. And so again, science can only move ahead when you have a term that can organize the information around. And I'm hoping this term does it for you in this course is it organizes all the information around this which ends up to be uh all evidence points to this being again as I said the biggest factor in the learning equation. In fact bigger than all the other ones uh combined and so I hope it makes sense to you. Uh the subtitle is is why teaching is getting harder and what can be done about it. Uh it uh I've talked to uh to many teachers who have been in the field uh for 25 30 35 years and uh and uh many of these teachers share the same experience uh that is rather mysterious to them that why would teaching be getting harder? Why are are do they experience more frustration uh with teaching despite all the years of their experience? Uh why would it seem to be getting harder not easier? It it doesn't make a whole lot of sense of course unless unless uh unless this teachability factor that we're going to talk about is taken into consideration.

And so, um, we're going to answer, uh, answer that why teaching is getting harder and of course what can be done about it. But we first of all have to make sense of what teachability is. And I would invite you to um to think of uh of a couple of students that u seem to you to be very teachable, very receptive to being taught. and uh and a couple of students in your life uh that you experience uh uh being not receptive at all to being taught uh despite uh despite having all the potential of learning. There seems to be something in the way and see if this material uh helps make sense of that.

Uh consider this that despite significant advances in pedagogy, those in in uh on the French side are very familiar with this term. On the English side, we have lost the term pedagogy. Unfortunately, uh but think of it here as the art and science of teaching. Despite significant advances in the art and science of teaching, significant advances in technology, significant advances in in curriculum and fine-tuning the curriculum, we made tremendous progress in these areas in the last 20 years. uh that despite all of these advances, our actually efficiency in terms of education, the amount that our teaching translates into learning is actually decreasing. Literacy rates are actually falling. We're having more and more difficulty being able to do our job.

When you consider this, you consider the problem. Does the answer then lie in curriculum? Are we are we to try and fine-hone it some more? Does the answer then lie in pedagogy? Does the answer then lie in technology? If if you go to professional development uh seminars which uh which most taking this course will will go to regularly uh you could divide pretty well all the seminars, all the workshops into one of these three categories, you know, pedagogy, curriculum and technology. And and yet, as I said, uh if if um if if teaching is actually uh getting more difficult, uh we're we're barking up the wrong tree, so to speak. Uh we're focusing on on the wrong areas. Uh you can look at it this way. Uh that the learning equation we usually think of of of the learning equation is uh is being able to take a university trained uh government certified uh schoolboard hired teacher.

So everything is absolutely okay on this side. We simply add a child in need of learning and voila learning should occur. If it was this easy, we wouldn't have burnout in the teaching profession. We wouldn't have so many individuals who who leave it. We'd have one of the most satisfied professions in the world if it was this easy. Uh if uh if if this is uh is is how it went. And as we said, we all know that teaching doesn't automatically result in in learning despite our best efforts. it it doesn't always uh result in learning and and so and children vary tremendously in this factor. Some of your students are very receptive. At the end of the day, you have this tremendous satisfaction that yes, what you've taught has translated into learning. And I don't just mean performance here. I don't mean when I say learning here, I'm talking about true learning, not what we measure in tests. All of us know, you know, when we went to school that uh that when you studied for a test and when you you know, when you performed in a test, that wasn't necessarily what you remembered a month later. It wasn't necessarily what you you know went home uh or after the year that that you had when you look at at at your education.

You want to know what lasted? What stuck with you? Where did the real learning occur? Not just the poor performance, but even in terms of the performance. It's so frustrating when you spend all your efforts at doing the best you can do and and as a as a university teacher for years and years and years, you know, you would you would give the best lesson you could. Uh you would put everything into it. uh give all you had and then the and then they would write the exam and you'd look at the exam and you go how how in the world did so much of my teaching uh not translate into the learning like what happened I know these students are bright I you know there's all kinds of things there what happened and that's exactly what we're looking at in the school system. Uh we tend to put the focus on the school itself, on the system, on the education system. And I use this as just simply to represent it.

Uh the old icon of the school and we add a schedule to it uh a bell. And so if we can get them in the same place at the same time, uh if we can can uh get everybody into the uh the the classroom. Uh and uh and so we systematize things. we system systematize learning uh that uh that again uh learning will result in fact that's where a lot of focus goes on on on system change and I'm going to suggest here that it is not again it is not a system change after all the efforts we put into uh into revising systems into uh new ways of thinking we're still missing the most important factor in the learning equation.