




Research Article

What makes an effective teacher? Unveiling teachers' perceptions

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Received 15 August 2023; Revised 19 September 2023; Accepted 20 October 2023

The need for effective teacher in 21st century goes beyond the classroom as they play a pivotal role not only in shaping schools, but also fostering academic, social and emotional development of students. The purpose of this study is thus to reveal teachers' perceptions of effective teachers and understand effective teaching practices. 35 teachers selected through maximum variation sampling were included in this study conducted as a phenomenology. Content analyses were used to analyze data collected via semi-structured interviews. The findings were categorized under five themes: (i) effective teacher as a person, (ii) classroom management and organization, (iii) planning and implementing the instruction, (iv) monitoring students' progress, and (v) necessary skills for 21st century classes. According to teachers, effective teachers interact with students through caring and understanding, and provide organized, inclusive, and engaging classrooms to respond diverse needs of students. Moreover, it is vital for effective teachers to be innovative, creative, flexible, and lifelong learners in today's educational environment.

Keywords: Effective teachers, 21st century skills, effective teaching

1. Introduction

The educational environment in 21st century is undergoing extraordinary changes driven by technological developments, new learning paradigms and diverse class environment. To navigate this rapidly changing educational landscape, individuals need to have necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes. More specifically, they are expected to gain 21st century skills which enable them to be flexible, innovative, and adaptive to changes. With the paradigm shift, technological advancements, evolving and diverse learning environments, what makes a teacher effective have gained new dimensions. Effective teachers are no longer just expected to be subject matter experts, but also the ones who can adapt to changing learning environments, use technology to engage, motivate and promote meaningful experiences for students with various needs. The role of the teacher and effective teaching have become more critical than ever before. This article thus aims to provide a comprehensive framework for teaching practices and essential characteristics of effective teachers who can inspire and empower students in this evolving educational environment. Understanding what constitutes effective teachers not only help to define effective teachers, but also provides a framework for professional development of teachers on becoming effective teachers.

The search for effective teachers has recently become an important issue in evaluating teacher qualification (Stronge et al., 2011) and school improvement (Darling-Hammond, 2000). The need for effective teacher in 21st century goes beyond the classroom as they play a pivotal role not only in shaping schools, but also fostering academic, social and emotional development of students. As many studies have shown, effective teachers are at the core of student success (Lavy, 2016; Özerbaş & Zhanbolotova, 2023; Stronge et al., 2007; Tatipang, 2022). In their longitudinal study, Kane et al. (2013), found that students of teacher who were identified as being more effective had higher achievement than students of other teachers in the same school, grade, and subject. Consequently,

it is widely acknowledged that teachers are seen as the primary component in determining quality of education (İlter, 2021). It is thus vital to define what constitutes an effective teacher.

1.1. Teacher Effectiveness

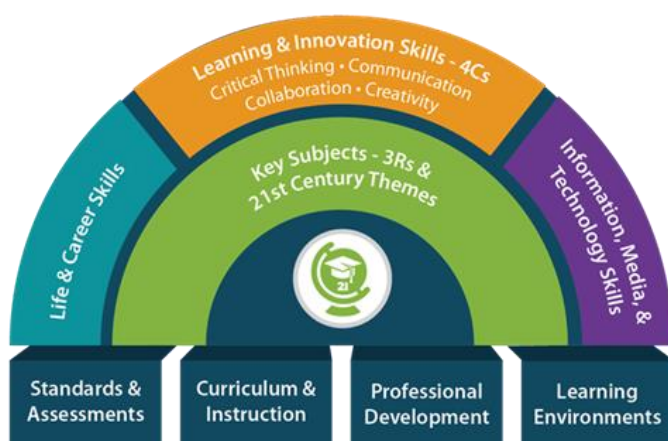
The term effective teacher has drawn the attention of many researchers from different fields and numerous studies have focused on the qualities and teaching practices of effective teachers by digging the ideas of teachers (Chen & Lin, 2009; Cizreli, 2023; Çakmak & Gündüz, 2018; Grant et al., 2013; Koutrouba, 2012; Tatipang, 2022) and students or pre-service teachers (Çalışkan et al., 2013; İlter, 2022; Külekçi, 2018; Minor et al., 2002). However, it is not always easy to define effective teaching and effective teachers (Korthagen, 2004; Winch, 2017). In the related literature, the terms good, ideal, competent, respected are among the synonyms used for effective teachers (Cruickshank & Haefele, 2001). Most of these students are in agreement that effective teacher should be caring and communicate with students (Chen & Lin; 2009; Grant et al., 2013; Wall et al., 2002; Watson, 2010), be knowledgeable about the subject and maximize student learning with various ways (Cizreli, 2023; İlter, 2022; Külekçi, 2018; Minor et al., 2002; Smittle, 2003)

To understand the characteristics of effective teachers in a better way, Witcher et al. (2001) prepared a list of effective characteristics based on pre-service teachers' perceptions. They reached 125 characteristics which were classified into the following six categories as being student-centered, willingness to teach, ethicalness, effective classroom and behavior management, teaching methodology, and knowledge of subject matter. On the other hand, Stronge (2007) conducted a meta-review of teacher effectiveness and provide a comprehensive framework including six dimensions as follows: (i) prerequisites for effective teaching (verbal ability, knowledge of teaching and learning, certification status, content knowledge and teaching experience); (ii) teacher as a person (caring, fairness and respect, interactions with students, enthusiasm, motivation, dedication to teaching and reflective practice); (iii) classroom management and organization (classroom management, organization and discipline of students); (iv) planning for instruction (importance of instruction, time allocation, teachers' expectations and instructional plans); (v) implementing instruction (instructional strategies, content and expectations, complexity, questioning and student engagement); and (vi) monitoring student progress. This framework has been frequently used in different studies on teacher effectiveness (Meng et al., 2016; Watson et al., 2010). Another outstanding conclusion is belonged to Koutrouba's (2012) study which examines the perceptions of teachers. They indicate that flexibility, friendliness, open-mindedness, tactfulness, supportiveness, respect and humor are considered among attributes of an effective teacher. However, the inflexibility of Greek curricula and their obsession with academic performance objectives discourage teachers from implementing effective instructional strategies, from establishing human relationships with students and from developing personal traits attributed to effective teachers.

Effective teachers are expected to motivate, inspire, engage and guide the students (Islahi & Nasreen, 2013) and enable them to be equipped with the skills in order to succeed in 21st century. Thus, as the leading actors in developing students, teachers themselves must be trained on 21st century skills (Ağaoğlu & Demir, 2020). Based on arguments, there have been several attempts to provide frameworks to conceptualize 21st-century talents. One of the widely used is Partnership for 21st-Century Learning. It was developed with input from teachers, education experts, and leaders to define and illustrate the skills and knowledge students need to succeed in work and life (Battelle for Kids, 2019). These three skills are "Learning and Innovation Skills", "Information, Media and Technology Skills" and "Life and Career Skills", as presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Framework for 21st Century Learning (Retrieved from: <http://www.battelleforkids.org/networks/p21>)



1.2. 21st Century Skills

1.2.1. Learning and innovation skills

As it is shown in Figure 1, learning and innovation skills consist of critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity, namely 4Cs. Critical thinking helps individuals identify and get rid of their biases, while communication enables them to express their thoughts clearly. Additionally, collaboration is necessary for individuals to work together and accomplish a task, while creativity fosters genuine ideas that have value (Yurtseven & Karadeniz, 2020).

1.2.2. Life and career skills

Today's learners also need to develop thinking skills, content knowledge, social and emotional competencies to navigate complex life and work environments (Battelle for Kids, 2019). P21's essential Life and Career Skills thus include Flexibility and Adaptability, Initiative and Self-Direction, Social and Cross-Cultural Skills, Productivity and Accountability, Leadership and Responsibility. With the help of these skills, individuals can adapt to different roles and contexts, maintain independent works, work effectively in diverse teams and show respect to different views.

1.2.3. Information, media, and technology skills

Today, we live in a technology and media-driven environment, marked by access to an abundance of information and rapid changes in technology tools (Battelle for Kids, 2019). In this context, information, media and technology skills include information literacy and media and technology literacy. Information literacy can help individuals access, evaluate, use and manage information (Yurtseven & Karadeniz, 2020). Also, individuals can use media products and integrate technology into learning effectively through media and technology literacy.

1.3. The Need for Effective Teachers in 21st Century Classes

As it is supported by various studies, today's teachers are no longer solely responsible for teaching subject in classrooms, they also must be guides to facilitate learning and help students to go beyond their curve by gaining necessary skills they need. Thus, teachers need to be creative, innovative, flexible and adaptive to create dynamic and interactive educational environments which respond to the needs of diverse students. As the first step, it will be useful to understand how teachers conceptualize effective teaching and how they incorporate these conceptions into their own practices and classrooms (Zhang, 2011). As Kember and Kwan (2000) indicated that teachers' approaches to teaching were strongly influenced by their conceptions of excellent teaching. However, in Turkey, it has not been concretely determined which personal characteristics and skills are necessary for teaching profession, in other words, "what

characteristics the ideal teacher should have" (İlter, 2022). Although there is a long tradition of research on good teachers in the international literature, studies focusing on good teachers are generally focused on specific subject area (e.g., English, Science etc.) or providing a list for personal characteristic of effective teachers. It is thus clear that the concept of a good teacher has been one of the potentially important problems in education for a long time (Winch, 2017). Thus, different understandings and perspectives on what constitutes an effective teacher should be thoroughly revealed. In this regard, this article aims to broaden the horizon by shifting attention from teachers' personal characteristics to what they do and what they understand as effective teaching, as well as the skills that they need in 21st century classes by involving teachers with different subject area, teaching experiences, school type and gender. Identifying indicators of effective teachers can help to frame the discussions on improving teacher training programs and providing new mechanisms (Connell, 2009; Smittle, 2003). Consequently, this study aims to answer the question what teachers' perceptions of effective teachers are.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This study was conducted as a phenomenological study which aims to understand and interpret the meaning that people attribute to the phenomena (Creswell, 2016). The phenomenology design was thus used to understand teachers' perceptions of effective teachers.

2.2. Participants

Maximum variation sampling was used to select information-rich participants related to phenomenon. Maximum variation sampling aims to reach heterogeneity by gathering common dimensions and experiences from individual differences (Patton, 2014). In this sampling, cases or participants are selected that differ from each other as much as possible. Accordingly, 35 teachers as the participants of this study were selected carefully to represent variety regarding to teaching experience, school type, gender and subject area. Table 1 presents information about the participants.

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of participants

<i>Participants</i>	<i>School Type</i>	<i>Teaching Experience</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Subject Area</i>
P1	Private	1	Male	Information Technologies
P2	Private	26	Female	French Language Teacher
P3	Public	1.5	Female	History
P4	Private	2	Female	English
P5	Public	31	Male	Classroom Teacher
P6	Private	10	Female	English
P7	Public	25	Female	Pre-School
P8	Public	20	Female	English
P9	Public	5	Female	German Language Teacher
P10	Private	5	Female	Psychological Counseling
P11	Public	6	Male	Mathematics
P12	Private	2	Female	English
P13	Private	4	Female	Physics
P14	Private	2	Female	English
P15	Private	9	Male	Maths
P16	Private	22	Female	Music
P17	Public	15	Male	Maths
P18	Private	4	Female	Literature
P19	Private	8	Male	Geography
P20	Private	17	Female	Maths

Table 1 continued

<i>Participants</i>	<i>School Type</i>	<i>Teaching Experience</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Subject Area</i>
P21	Private	12	Male	Social studies
P22	Public	19	Female	English
P23	Public	15	Male	English
P24	Public	25	Female	English
P25	Private	27	Female	Preschool
P26	Public	18	Male	Social studies
P27	Private	5	Male	Psychological Counseling
P28	Public	19	Female	English
P29	Public	11	Male	English
P30	Private	12	Female	Literature
P31	Private	12	Male	Maths
P32	Public	3	Female	Classroom Teacher
P33	Private	15	Male	Literature
P34	Public	25	Female	Maths
P35	Private	13	Male	Literature

2.3. Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers to collect data in this study. The interview questions were developed by searching for literature on effective teachers and effective teaching. Following the pilot study carried out with three teachers, the interview form, including eight questions were ready to use. I asked participant to share their beliefs and experiences on effective teaching practices in and outside of the classroom. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. All interviews were recorded using an audio recording device with the consent of the participants.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data obtained in the research were analyzed with inductive qualitative content analysis. Content analysis is defined as making sense of qualitative data and presenting it systematically by combining it under themes (Patton, 2014). An inductive approach has been adopted as the themes and categories are derived from the data through interaction with the data. The interpretation process begins with the development of codes, the creation of themes from the codes, and the organization of themes into larger units (Creswell, 2016). In this regard, after open coding in which the researcher reads and codes each line of text in this study, categories were created by grouping codes under higher order headings. To categorize teachers' perceptions Stronge's (2007) Teacher Skills Assessment Checklist which includes key indicators of effectiveness in a teacher's practice and P21's Frameworks for 21st Century Learning were used. After this process, five themes were identified by making connection between the categories: (i) effective teacher as a person, (ii) classroom management and organization, (iii) planning and implementing instruction, (iv) monitoring students' progress and (v) necessary skills for 21st century classes.

2.5. Trustworthiness

Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to establish trustworthiness of qualitative study. Credibility conveys how well the facts are compatible with the outside world (Merriam, 2009). Credibility of the research can be achieved by providing detailed information in the research process (Creswell, 2016). To establish credibility, detailed information was given about research design, participants, data collection and analysis in this study. Thick description and direct quotations of the participants' views were included in the findings section (Creswell, 2016; Merriam, 2009). All these steps are also considered to contribute to transferability.

Reliability in qualitative research means consistency or robustness (Neuman, 2014). Creswell (2016) suggested that more than one researcher should code and the compatibility between these codes and categories should be checked to ensure reliability in qualitative research. Necessary changes on the interview questions, codes, categories, and themes obtained from the data were made in accordance with the feedback provided by members and field experts to ensure consistency. The names of participants have been changed as P1, P2 ... etc. to protect the identity of individuals. Lastly, the role of researcher in this study was limited to collecting and analyzing data, revealing and interpreting the findings.

3. Findings

3.1. Effective Teacher as a Person

According to teachers' perceptions the first prerequisite of effective teachers is the teachers' interpersonal relations with students. Interpersonal relations are seen critical to teachers' judgment of effective teachers. They emphasize effective teachers (i) interact with students, (ii) care and understand (iii) show fairness and respect and (iv) dedicate to teaching.

3.1.1. *Interacting with students*

Teachers mostly emphasize the role of interaction with student in effective teaching. They think that effective teachers prioritize interactions with students and interactions should go beyond the four walls of classroom. Teachers also believe that conveying knowledge in classroom is much more effective when they know students' interests and needs in and out of school. One of the experienced teachers indicates the role of getting to know students in effective teaching as follows:

The first thing I did from the first year of my teaching was getting to know the student. It is difficult to be productive without knowing them. As you get to know them, you can be more effective. Because you are trying to teach according to the student's strengths and weaknesses. (P26)

Teachers also revealed that effective teacher use various strategies to learn about students' lives by emphasizing what they do in their own classes on the way of becoming an effective teacher. The first thing teachers do is to learn students' names and use every opportunity to keep the lines of communication open. Teachers spend time with students both in and outside of the school by involving extracurricular activities such as sporting events, movies, theater, or asking questions about their families, hobbies, likes and dislikes. Some teachers do not want to involve into outside social activities with student, however, they use break times to interact with students. They believe that spending time with students outside of classroom creates an environment where they can express themselves more comfortably.

Effective teachers build positive relationships with their students by showing interest in their lives and being approachable. For example, they may ask students about their hobbies or interests, or share stories about their own lives. They also create a supportive and inclusive classroom environment by encouraging students to respect and appreciate each other's differences. (P32)

Teachers assert that interactions between teachers and students not only contribute to student learning, but also develop sense of belonging to the classroom and make them feel valued by creating safe and inclusive classroom environment. Thus, teachers prioritize positive interaction with students to convey knowledge effectively in the classroom.

Building positive relationships with students is crucial for effective teaching, and I've found that there are a few key strategies that teachers can use to do so. One effective strategy is to show a genuine interest in students' lives outside of the classroom. For example, I make it a point to ask my students about their hobbies and interests, and I try to incorporate these topics into our lessons whenever possible. This not only helps students to feel seen and valued, but it can also make the learning process more engaging and meaningful. (P7)

3.1.2. *Caring and understanding*

Caring has been emphasized as a pivotal quality of effective teachers in much research, similarly, teachers in this study also frequently convey that caring plays a crucial role in establishing positive

relationships with students and creates a warm and supportive classroom environment. Based on teacher perceptions, effective teachers thus not only care about students, but also let student know how they care through listening, empathy, loving, and showing concern for their problems. Many teachers emphasize that effective teachers exhibit active listening to understand what happens in the classroom and students' lives in general. In this kind of listening, teachers pay attention to what students' say with empathy, sincerity and honesty. One of the teachers offered the following comments:

Listening comes first for me. If I do not listen or focus on what my student says, I cannot help him/her. Showing empathy is also one personality trait of effective teachers. I always observe the student because I need to learn his/her life and try to understand. Understanding helps me to make a connection with my student, and I see that it affects my student's learning process. One of my students who is 15 years old never participated in the lesson at first, and he was mad at his friends. Therefore, I started to observe what he was doing during break time and what was happening in his home. After three days of observation and talking to his parents, I learned that his grandmother passed away, and he was upset about it. So, I tried to make a connection between listening and understanding. Of course, I am not a counselor, but I felt that he needed someone who pays attention to his problem. (P9)

Teachers suggest that every teacher should show respect each student as an individual to be an effective teacher. As it is clearly understood in their sentences, effective teachers care for students first as people, and second as students by understanding their emotions and preferences. Students bring their own experiences, ideas, habits even problems with themselves. On this basis, being aware of individual differences is vital for teachers in effective teaching. Based on teachers' experiences, effective teachers create supportive and warm classroom environment which is sensitive to individual differences and students' well-being. It is thus obvious in this study that teachers who create a supportive and warm classroom climate tend to be more effective with all students and have a lasting impact on their academic success and personal growth, as it is seen in the following comments:

A good teacher should be approachable and to develop positive relationships with students. I get to know my students and demonstrate that I am concerned about their well-being. I've had students come to me with personal concerns, for example, and I've listened and offered to advise when I could. I also try to praise students for their accomplishments and to demonstrate that I am invested in their progress. I feel that developing strong relationships with students can improve their engagement and success in the classroom. (P24)

Effective teachers, in teachers' opinion, should be willing to devote time and effort in developing strong relationships with their students. This can be accomplished by being approachable and concerning for students' well-being. As teachers emphasize, effective teachers like other teachers are not robots and create a humanistic environment which responds to students' psychological and physical well-being. To achieve it, teachers concern for students' problems both in and outside of school. Teachers believe in the role of listening, being approachable for students, helping whenever they need, but most importantly they try to build trust on students. As they mentioned below, students do not open the doors of their inner world i.e., they do not share their problems, concerns and needs with someone they do not trust.

Finally, I believe that an effective teacher should be approachable and accessible to their students. This means being available for one-on-one meetings, providing additional support and resources as needed, and showing a willingness to listen and address any concerns that students may have. (P7)

It is very important to gain the trust of the student. If the student trusts you, they can ask you for support by telling you about family problems at home. He sees that there is a support next to him. This has a positive effect on both the social and school life of the student. (P5)

3.1.3. *Show fairness and respect*

Beyond caring, effective teachers are defined as the good models with their behaviors. As a good model for students, effective teachers are thought to value safe and inclusive class environment by

encouraging students to respect and appreciate each other's differences, which creates situations for all students to succeed. Teachers believe that effective teachers are fair and give every student what he or she needs to be successful. Consequently, teachers interviewed consistently highlight the importance of fairness and respect for both students themselves and effective teaching. As one of the teachers suggest below, students do not learn in the same way and at the same rate.

Being fair is very important. Allow all students equal opportunities and privileges. I mean, fair means giving every student an opportunity to succeed. We should know that not all students learn in the same way and at the same rate. So, praising and recognizing students for their effort is so valuable. Especially nowadays, teachers should be more approachable and friendly. When you visit their world, you can easily see who your students are as people. (P28)

3.1.4. *Dedicating to teaching*

Being passionate or enthusiasm for teaching is seen as a powerful tool for teachers on becoming an effective teacher. Both the experienced and inexperienced teachers interviewed contend that effective teachers should be creative and able to think outside the box with the enthusiasm they have for teaching. One of the teachers offered the following comments:

There are several personality traits that effective teachers possess. One of the most important traits is passion for teaching. Effective teachers have a deep love for their subject matter and are excited to share it with their students. They are enthusiastic about their work and are always looking for ways to improve their teaching methods. (P33)

Teachers' enthusiasm for teaching forces them to go beyond the curve which brings ongoing professional development. As many of the teachers in this study consistently indicate, effective teachers always seek ongoing professional development through workshops, in-service trainings or their own efforts.

I try to get to know my students on a personal level, and I encourage open communication in the classroom so that students feel comfortable coming to me with questions or concerns. Finally, I believe that an effective teacher is constantly learning and growing. I regularly attend professional development workshops and seek out new teaching strategies and approaches to stay current and improve my practice. (P6)

It is as clear as a day in teachers words that effective teachers should be enthusiastic and passionate about teaching. Also, this enthusiasm forces effective teachers to be creative and find engaging and innovative ways for students to learn.

Innovative individuals make effective teachers, but that doesn't mean you have to come up with everything from scratch! I take as much inspiration as I can from various sources, whether it comes from journals, training, Pinterest, YouTube, Facebook, twitter feeds, etc. Ideas don't always go as planned in life. Especially when it comes to classroom instruction, this is true. When change occurs, be adaptable and flow with the situation. An effective teacher accepts changes when a new principal is appointed without complaining. (P17)

3.2. **Classroom Management and Organization**

Beyond teacher as a person, teachers also noted effective teacher are good classroom managers. Under this theme, teachers emphasized two different categories as (i) creating an organized class environment and (ii) using appropriate management strategies.

3.2.1. *Creating an organized class environment*

Effective teachers have been shown the ones who create consistent and organized class environment in which both teachers and students know what's coming up next. Also, it fosters safe and positive classroom climate which leads to better learning outcomes for students. To succeed it, establishing rules and routines are defined as the first step by teachers. Thus, teachers who establish clear expectations for student behavior are thought to be more effective in classroom management and encounter fewer misbehaviors than those who fail to do so. For teachers, effective teachers establish rules and routines by involving students at the beginning of the school year and consistently reinforcing them thereafter. Effective teachers involve students in a

discussion of the class rules by asking their suggestion, then the whole class try to reach a consensus on specific behaviors. Involving students are seen as a crucial component of rule setting by teachers since they are more likely to accept and follow rules when students they involve. Additionally, teachers prioritize discussing the logic behind the rules while conveying expectations, which enables student to understand the need for rules and feel more motivated to comply, as it was explained below.

Establishing clear classroom rules and routines is an important aspect of effective teaching, and there are several strategies that I use to do so. First, I involve my students in the process of creating classroom rules and expectations. This helps them to feel ownership over the rules and to understand the reasons behind them. For example, I might ask my students to brainstorm a list of behaviors that will help us create a positive and productive learning environment. Then, we discuss these behaviors as a group and work together to come up with a set of classroom rules that we all agree on. (P35)

Effective teachers are also considered to be consistent in implementing classroom rules and be flexible to adapt them as needed. The provided rules should not be considered a definitive list. Thus, effective teachers are seen to be ready to reinforce the rules by providing positive feedback. As it has been indicated this means providing clear consequences for breaking the rules and recognizing students who are following the rules. Moreover, effective teachers are also resourceful in finding various way to teach rules. Teachers consistently exemplify how effective teachers teach rules with different strategies such as positive reinforcement, modeling, charts, drawing, games and stories as follows:

I always hang the paper on the wall which explains the rules with pictures to make them memorable for students. I recommend this method to everyone. (P9)

In this direction, while creating classroom rules and routines, we act with STORY-BASED LEARNING methods in which the student will love the second language through games, songs, animations, stories, understand and apply the classroom instructions and adopt them. The rules and routines set by games and songs are grasped because they are young learners. (P14)

3.2.2. *Being proactive*

In addition, teachers emphasized that rules should be stated positively. For example, teachers contend that “raise your hand to speak” is preferable to “no talking” because it clearly explains the desired behavior and what students should do. It's thus considered to be important to keep the rules simple and clear so that students can focus on what is expected of them. Moreover, successful classroom management is defined much more than rules and discipline. Indeed, it requires teachers to be proactive about what's happening in the classroom. According to all teachers interviewed, effective teachers are ready for the ups and downs of classroom climate, recognize behavioral problems in advance and engage students into learning. Thus, there is little time for students to misbehave when they are engaged. The teachers below explained how they differentiate instruction to engage students through getting to know their needs and individual differences.

Classroom management entails developing a happy and well-organized learning environment that promotes learning. Effective instructors manage their classrooms by effectively communicating and fostering a good and engaging learning environment. Because I mostly work with young students, it can be tough to keep them focused and ready to learn. I try hard to get to know each student and their objectives or expectations so that I can assist them in achieving them. I also inform them of my objectives and expectations. There are fewer disputes and misbehaviors when our classroom is a secure area where everyone may freely express themselves. (P23)

3.2.3. *Using appropriate management strategies*

Being proactive is a crucial key for effective classroom management. Another key to managing classroom and preventing negative behavior is using appropriate management strategies. Before deciding what strategy they will use, effective teachers are expected to define student misbehavior. To succeed it, effective teachers believe the role building relationship with students since it creates

a positive bond between teacher and students. Thanks to this bond, students can self-correct their negative behaviors. However, misbehaviors are inevitable part of classroom management. What matter is how to respond to misbehaviors. Teachers indicate that effective teachers use management strategies from simple to complex one depending on the type of misbehavior. These strategies like using proximity or move around the classroom, using verbal and non-verbal cues, using reinforcement and one-on-one guidance, giving tasks and responsibilities as indicated by teachers.

Effective teachers also often have a system in place for students to ask questions or seek help, such as a "help desk" or a "quiet corner" for students who need extra assistance. Overall, effective classroom management is about creating a structured and supportive learning environment where students can thrive and achieve their full potential. (P33)

For effective classroom management, the teacher must be disciplined as a priority. However, this discipline should not be achieved by intimidating the student. For example, in the first months of my teaching, I was trying to discipline students by getting angry, but I noticed that when I got angry with students, they exhibited even more negative behavior. Later, when I tried to establish positive bonds with them and approached them with love, I didn't have much difficulty establishing discipline. Because I created positive bonds with the students, I gained their respect and love. (P3)

3.3. Planning and Implementing Instruction

Teaching is a complex process that involves both careful planning and implementing instruction. The theme planning and implementing includes (i) being prepared and organized, (ii) responding to student needs and abilities, (iii) differentiating learning, and (iv) engaging and motivating students.

3.3.1. *Being prepared and organized*

For effective teaching, teachers should plan their lessons carefully before implementation. Teachers in this study consistently indicated that effective teachers come to class ready i.e., they both know the subject and teach it in a way that students can learn. It is thus vital for teachers to be prepared for ups and downs of the class and have extra thing in their pockets as one of the teachers emphasized below:

Before the lesson, I always prepare the ways that I will teach the subject in 3 different ways. These are in my pocket. A student may not understand that subject, this time I will explain it the other way. What if he still doesn't understand. I'll tell you the third way. In my opinion, an effective teacher should be ready for the questions that will come from the class by having a good command of the subject. (P34)

3.3.2. *Responding to student needs and abilities*

Beyond being prepared for ups and downs, effective planning should also involve getting to know students since effective teachers are defined as the ones who are aware of individual differences and adjust their instruction accordingly. Thus, flexibility and adaptability are seen pivotal to contribute teacher effectiveness by teachers interviewed. In the following statement, teachers frequently suggest the role of knowing and understanding students as individuals in terms of ability, achievement, learning styles, and need to respond their needs on becoming effective teachers.

Effective teaching plans and implements instruction, considering the needs and abilities of its students, differentiating their teaching, and using strategies to motivate their students. Every student has different needs. In my opinion, teaching techniques should be applied by considering the needs of each student, not in a single way. (P20)

For an effective teaching process, teachers must understand students' learning styles and needs, differentiate teaching, make learning materials interesting and fun, and organize classroom discussions, projects and games to motivate students. (P25)

3.3.3. *Differentiating learning*

Getting to know students is considered essential for teachers not only during planning but also during implementation. To meet students' needs and encourage their involvement in lessons, effective teachers are required to be aware of individual differences and use various strategies, including individual, small group and whole class instruction since they believe that one size does not fit all. They adapt their instruction to fit the demands of the students after considering their skills and learning preferences. For instance, a teacher could differentiate instruction through games, songs, videos, pictures to help students better understand the concepts being taught. One of the teachers offered the following comments:

Effective teachers plan and implement instruction in a way that meets the needs of all students, encourages active engagement, and promotes motivation and achievement. As a teacher, I use a variety of strategies to plan and implement instruction effectively. Firstly, I begin by assessing the needs and abilities of my students. This includes evaluating their prior knowledge and understanding of the subject matter, as well as identifying any learning differences or challenges that may require special attention. This helps me to tailor my instruction to the needs of each individual student and ensure that everyone is able to make progress. Secondly, I use a range of instructional methods and materials to differentiate instruction and meet the needs of diverse learners. This might include using visual aids, hands-on activities, or technology to engage students and make the material accessible to all. I also provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively, which allows them to share their knowledge and learn from each other. (P7)

As it is clearly seen in teachers' statements, student learning is vital for effective teachers. They prioritize student learning by being aware of students' needs and differentiating instruction accordingly. They design their lessons with clear objectives and use a variety of teaching strategies to reach all students. For example, an effective teacher may use visual aids, group work, or technology to keep students engaged and help them understand the material. Moreover, effective teachers also encourage students' involvement in activities and lessons for effective teaching. They seem to use various strategies, including providing additional clarification and illustration, motivating students with reinforcements, and providing collaborative opportunities for them to practice through hands-on activities, multimedia resources as follows:

Effective teachers plan and implement instruction by meeting the needs of all students, differentiating instruction based on students' learning styles and abilities, using a variety of teaching strategies to engage students, and providing opportunities for student-centered learning. For example, an effective teacher may use a project-based learning approach to allow students to explore a topic in depth and use their creativity to demonstrate their understanding of the concept. (P11)

3.3.4. *Engaging and motivating students*

Student engagement and motivation plays a crucial role in student learning and teacher effectiveness. If teachers succeed in catching students' attention and encouraging them to involve lessons, they can provide interactive and engaging classroom which contributes teacher effectiveness. In accordance with this basis, teachers indicated that effective teachers make learning fun with different techniques and make the content relevant to students' lives to encourage their engagement and achievement. As teachers emphasized below, if teachers do not focus on the subjects that will interest them while making a learning plan, learning will not take place. In other words, the topics in the course should be made interesting and applied by making connections in daily life.

Effective teachers, in the process of planning and implementing teaching, primarily look at the level of the class. If there are students at different levels, they prepare an educational program that will establish a balance. It is also very important to make the lesson more fun during the planning and implementation process of teaching. Using different techniques always increases the student's enthusiasm for learning. For example, drama technique, storytelling, learning with games, etc. (P2)

An effective teacher is someone who can also facilitate learning and create opportunities for students to engage with the material in a meaningful way. Thus, an effective teacher can develop objectives, questions, and activities which are appropriate for the content and the students.

In terms of differentiated instruction, I may provide students with different reading materials based on their reading level or interests, or I may assign alternate assignments to students who struggle with written work. This enables each student to work at their own pace and level while remaining challenged and engaged with the topic. I also feel that student interests should be incorporated into the curriculum. For example, if I have a student who is very interested in sports, I may utilize sports examples to teach grammar or vocabulary. This helps pupils stay involved and motivated, which is essential for learning. I believe in providing students with timely and helpful feedback. This allows them to track their success and discover opportunities for growth. (P24)

3.4. Monitoring Student Progress

Monitoring student progress is defined as an inseparable part of effective teaching by teachers in this study. Beyond planning and implementing instruction in a way that meets the diverse learning needs of their students, teachers think that effective teachers also assess student progress regularly and provide additional support where needed. They not only assign homework, but also check and review it regularly.

3.4.1. Clearly explaining assignments

As teachers emphasized, effective teachers use various assessments, including formative and summative assessments. While doing it, they clearly communicate the learning objectives and expectations for the assignment. They provide students with specific instructions on how to complete the assignment and what criteria will be used to evaluate their work, as one of the teachers indicated below.

An effective teacher should be clear and unambiguous once increasing the assignments. He should clearly and clearly state the instructions he will give to the students and the things that are wanted to be done. At the same time, it should explain what the purpose of this homework is, why it is important, and what the gains can be when doing this homework as a result. It should clearly and clearly announce the deadline for the assignment and how it will be done. At the same time, it should show the materials that they can use while doing this homework and the resources they can benefit from as a guide. In the evaluation criteria, the criteria should be determined in advance and shared with the students. It should show and inform how the evaluation results will be reflected to the students. During this process, he should not hesitate to give detailed feedback. (P31)

They also provide students a checklist or rubric that lists the essential elements of the task and the standards for success.

When I explain assignments to my students, I make sure that I provide them with precise instructions and expectations. To help students understand what is required of them, I break down complex activities into simpler parts and provide examples. I also give students the opportunity to ask questions and explain any confusion they may have. When it comes to grading papers, I provide students precise comments that helps them understand their strengths and places for improvement. To give clear and objective criteria for grading tasks, I use rubrics or checklists. (P23)

3.4.2. Giving timely, clear, and constructive feedback

Giving clear, timely and constructive feedback is also noted as important as assignment itself because they understand feedback is one of the most important parts of the learning process. Effective teachers also think give students timely, clear, and constructive feedback to help them better their tasks. Constructive feedback means to teacher is not simply indicating right or wrong answers, because this practice can have a negative impact on student learning. Instead, it means providing specific explanations of what students are doing correctly, what they are not doing correctly, and how to fix it. In this regard, they give advice and assistance to help students in achieving their academic objectives while boosting their self-assurance and enthusiasm for studying as follows:

Effective teachers do explain and evaluate assignments in a clear and specific manner. They provide timely and constructive feedback to students that helps them understand their strengths and weaknesses and make improvements in their work. They may also provide examples of high-quality work to help students understand what is expected of them. After students submit their assignments, effective teachers take the time to thoroughly evaluate the work and provide feedback that is clear, specific, and constructive. Feedback provided by effective teachers is timely, given as soon as possible after the assignment is submitted. This helps students understand their mistakes and make improvements while the material is still fresh in their minds. (P6)

3.4.3. *Relating assignment and feedback to the content and to student*

A teacher can pick the next steps in the teaching process based on the results and feedback from assessments, which primarily serve as evidence for decisions concerning the teaching process. There are many ways to assign students, but a teacher should also consider each student's condition when assessing any of them. Accordingly, effective teachers seem to relate homework to the content and to needs and levels of students by varying the assignments and giving personal feedback for each student in the classroom, as it is indicated in the teachers' statements below.

I use a variety of assessment methods, such as written assessments, class discussions, observations, and performance tasks, to assess student progress. I also use formative assessments throughout the learning process to inform my instruction and provide immediate feedback. I provide feedback that is specific, actionable, and focused on growth. For example, I may use a feedback sandwich approach, where I start with positive feedback, provide constructive criticism, and end with positive reinforcement, to ensure that students feel supported in their learning journey. (P29)

Another crucial thing in assessment process for teachers is to involve students by gathering their suggestions and finding innovative ways to motivate them.

Since the assignments we usually do in class consist of self-knowledge articles, etc., I transfer the assignment in a more motivational way. For example, does he need to make an observation to get to know his own self that week, what does he gain as a result of this observation and how it affects him, I also convey this so that the student understands better. In fact, I want them to define these assignments I give to my students as activities aimed at getting to know and developing themselves better, and not as a necessity like their assignments in other branches. This way they do the homework more willingly. The feedbacks given to such tasks are not in the form of true /false but are more guided and advisory content. (P10)

3.5. **Necessary Skills for 21st Century Classes**

Lastly, teachers are asked for the skills that effective teachers need to have in the classes of 21st century learners. As it is stated in many studies, 21st century skills include (i) learning and innovation skills, (ii) life and career skills, (iii) information, media and technology skills.

3.5.1. *Learning and innovation skills*

According to teachers, effective teachers in 21st century classes need to be creative and innovative to meet the needs of students, as students in today's classroom have diverse learning styles and backgrounds. It requires teachers to be aware of diversity in the classrooms and use a wide range of teaching strategies to meet the needs of students. Teachers interviewed indicated that effective teachers are successful in getting to know students and adjusting their instruction accordingly. Thus, effective teachers are considered to be able to come up with unique ideas that evoke students' interest and inspire them to go beyond. Teachers suggest that effective teachers can speak the same language with students, keep up with technology and differentiate learning with various ways as follows.

Effective teachers try to follow recent developments and innovations. Therefore, they can attract students' attention. Effective teachers adapt recent trends to the lesson. For example, the new generation loves social media and the internet, thus the teacher can find related topics or readings. Maybe, they can use online platforms and interactive channels. (P8)

Teachers always need to update themselves. They must master the new generation classes and technology. They should have knowledge about children's interests and be able to speak the same

language with them. They should follow the innovations. It is important to find new applications besides notebook, pen, paper, etc... The teacher should use techniques that will surprise the student and remain in mind (make the student: wow what have we just did) (P22)

Communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity known as the 4Cs of 21st century and needed to be successful in today's world. Accordingly, teachers also emphasize the need of communication, collaboration and critical thinking for effective teachers beyond creativity. Communicating with students is consistently emphasized in teacher effectiveness because teachers believe that if they interact with students, they can get to know them, build relationship, and differentiate learning to respond students' needs. To be effective in 21st century classes, fostering communication, creativity and collaboration with both students and the other teachers are important, as it is explained below.

Effective teachers should also possess excellent communication skills, both written and verbal. They should be able to convey complex concepts in a clear and understandable manner, as well as listen actively and empathetically to their students. Flexibility, patience, and a sense of humor are also crucial qualities for teachers to have, as they help create a positive learning environment and foster meaningful relationships with their students. (P33)

In my opinion, an effective teacher in the new generation classrooms should have 21st century skills such as creativity, critical thinking, leadership, media literacy. (P4)

3.5.2. *Life and career skills*

Life and career skills consist of (i) leadership and responsibility, (ii) flexibility and adaptability, and (iii) social and cross-cultural skills. As a leader, effective teachers are required to take the responsibility of both students' and their own development. Teachers highlighted the notion of ongoing professional development for effective teacher. They thus need to be life-long learners who never give up learning and self-development. In this sense, P14 asserted that "Seize the opportunity for self-development." Another response is as follows:

Every student has different learning needs, and teachers should be able to identify these needs and create lesson plans that support each student's academic preferences. Effective teaching demonstrates an engaging classroom presence, emphasizes real-world learning, shares best practices, and fosters a lifelong love of learning. (P16)

Under the theme of life and career skills, the second category discussed by teachers is flexibility and adaptability. As it has been indicated before, effective teachers are flexible and adaptive. They are ready to plan and adjust activities, teaching approaches or strategies according to students' needs, interests, likes and dislikes because they know that one size does not fit all, as it is explained below in detail with different examples given by teachers.

In my experience as a teacher, some of the most important qualities that teachers need to be effective in the new generation classrooms include adaptability, creativity, and a commitment to lifelong learning. Adaptability is key because the landscape of education is constantly changing, and teachers need to be able to adjust to new technologies, teaching methods, and student needs. This means being open to trying new approaches, being willing to take risks and make mistakes, and being flexible in responding to unexpected challenges. (P12)

Social and cross-cultural skills require effective teachers to respect cultural differences and create inclusive classroom atmosphere for students from a range of social and cultural backgrounds. 21st century teachers thus need to be open minded and show respect to different ideas and values. They should also be able to create a safe and inclusive learning environment where all students feel valued and supported. In this manner, P13 asserted that "A teacher who is active with students who encourage different points of view, who can constantly renew their skills, must be. The teacher must be socially active with the students." Another response is as follows:

Teacher in the new generation classrooms should be able to understand and respect the diversity of their students, including their cultural backgrounds and learning styles. They should be open-minded. Additionally, teachers should be good communicators, both with their students and with parents, and be able to provide clear feedback to help their students improve. (P17)

3.6. Information, Media and Technology Skills

When we look at 21st century classrooms right now, students are distracted very quickly. That's why the teacher must be very dynamic. To understand the students, they should learn and apply what the students like and need. Effective teachers follow learning methods in new generation classrooms, use technology, understand the different characteristics of students and apply appropriate teaching methods, as indicated below.

Effective teachers in the new generation classrooms should have a deep understanding of technology and be able to integrate it into their teaching. They should also be able to adapt to the changing needs and interests of their students. (P2)

You must follow their agenda to keep up with them, what they like, and to empathize with them. This keeps you young as a teacher. Also, the attention span of the new generation is very short. Lecturing non-stop for 40 minutes will alienate students from the lesson and from you. Diversifying the lesson and using new techniques is what we must do to complete the lesson. For example, my new generation students' favorite thing is to play Kahoot. They enjoy it a lot and it helps them further consolidate their learning after class. They want different techniques like this, and every new generation wants more. In short, the more you diversify the lesson and use new techniques, the better it is for both you and the students. (P30)

4. Discussion, Conclusion and Implications

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perceptions of effective teachers. Within this purpose, five themes were emerged: (i) effective teacher as a person, (ii) classroom management and organization, (iii) planning and implementing instruction, (iv) monitoring student's progress, and (v) necessary skills for 21st century classes. The findings of the study showed that effective teacher as a person is critical to teachers' perceptions of effective teachers. Effective teachers are thought to interact with students, show care and understanding, create a respectful and fair classroom atmosphere which embraces individual differences. More specifically, effective teachers are considered to prioritize getting to know their students individually, not only understanding learning styles and needs, but also understanding their personality, likes and dislikes. In this context, effective teachers use various ways to know students, including learning their names, following their sportive, academic, or social activities, spending time in and outside the school, being approachable for students. Similarly, Watson et al. (2010) noted teacher as a person domain is critical to teachers' judgement of effective instruction. There are many other studies suggesting that developing positive relationships with students is necessary for effective learning environments (Çalışkan et al., 2013; Koutrouba, 2012; Stronge et al., 2011). Not only teachers but also preservice teachers (Minor et al., 2002) and students (Chen & Lin, 2009) regard the interpersonal relations between teachers and students as an essential part of effective teaching and an important indicator of teachers' commitment to students and learning.

Beyond interactions with students, another important quality of effective teacher is classroom management and organization. Teachers think that effective teachers provide an organized classroom for students by establishing rules and discussing the consequences with students. Establishing rules on the first day of school with various ways such as involving students, discussing the rationale behind them, providing clear consequences and using different tools which include games, pictures and songs are seen pivotal for effective classroom management. Similarly, many studies on effective classroom management and effective teachers emphasize the necessity of rules and routines in the classroom, but also point out that these rules should be created democratically at the beginning of the year with the participation of students and explaining why these rules are needed (Cangelosi, 2013; Stronge, 2007). Creating an organized classroom environment may not solely be the solution of problems in the classroom. Thus, teacher need to apply different strategies to manage their classrooms. Teachers noted that effective teacher build positive relationships with students, consider individual differences, needs, and apply appropriate management strategies from simple to complex one regarding to the severity of problematic behaviors. Non-verbal cues, getting close to the students, making the group focus by

attracting their attention and reminding them of the desired are among the strategies that applied by effective teachers. Similarly, Emmer et al. (2003) suggest simple, moderate and more comprehensive interventions that teachers can use to manage the classrooms effectively. Making eye contact, using proximity, catching the attention of the group and reminding the desired behavior, warning and I messages are among the simple interventions, while depriving students of a desired activity, using punishment, sending them to school administration and communicating with families are among the moderate and comprehensive interventions. Effective teachers are thus defined as effective classroom managers who can define the reason and type of misbehavior, and then apply appropriate solution. Hence, they experience fewer disciplinary problems than other teachers, which increases the success of their students (Stronge et al., 2007)

Another component of effective teachers suggested by teacher is planning and implementing instruction. Teachers believe that effective teachers plan the instruction carefully and implement it effectively. To succeed it, effective teachers come to class ready to teach, adjust their instruction according to students' needs and abilities, differentiate learning, engage and motivate students. As it is clearly seen in teachers' perceptions, effective teachers are not only subject matter experts, but also know how to convey knowledge by using various ways in today's diverse classrooms. In the study based on the views of preservice teachers on effective teachers, İlter (2022) reached the similar results that good teachers manage the teaching-learning process effectively by planning lessons according to students' needs, involving students into learning and preparing activities that catch students' attention. In one of the comprehensive studies comparing US and Chinese teachers' perceptions, Grant et al. (2013) emphasized the roles of using different instructional activities, maximizing student learning, having true student engagement, and keeping a learning environment that fosters learning in effective teaching. In this context, being prepared for the lesson is defined as the first component of effective teaching (Çakmak & Gündüz, 2018; Külekçi, 2018). Effective teachers are not only ready for teaching the subject, but also ready for ups and downs of the dynamic nature of classrooms. They know how to engage students and differentiate learning with technology, games, or activities. From this point of view, another two domains that stand out are activating teaching and differentiation learning (Noben et al., 2022). Moreover, an effective teaching process requires teachers to choose methods, resources and strategies that are suitable for the characteristics of the students, the type of teaching and the content presented, which shows that a single approach is not effective (Gettinger & Kohler, 2006). Effective teachers thus evaluate the conditions they are in carefully and choose appropriate teaching methods depending on the needs and characteristics of students, and give clear, constructive and timely feedback as it is clearly seen in teachers' comments.

The last point that teachers draw attention to regarding effective teaching is what skills enable them to be successful in today's classrooms. These skills are called 21st century skills which involve learning and innovation, life and career skills and information, media and technology skills. Based on this framework, teachers suggest that effective teachers are required to have 4C's of 21st century, namely creativity, collaboration, communication and critical thinking within learning and innovation. Effective teachers are thought to be creative and innovate in finding different ways to teach and meet the needs of students. Additionally, effective teachers take the responsibility of both their own and students' learning through ongoing professional development and being a guide for students to dig information within life and career skills. Today's classroom are dynamic places with diverse students. It is seen vital for effective teacher to create inclusive classrooms and develop cross-cultural skills for students with different gender, religion, socioeconomic status and family background. The last but most important component of effective teachers based on teachers' perceptions is to have information, media and technological skills. As 21st century is mainly constructed with new learning paradigms and advancement in technology, effective teacher must know how to reach information, use media and integrate current technologies into learning. Accordingly, effective teachers should embrace change (Smittle, 2003), be adaptive and flexible to changes or innovations (Cimer et al., 2010) and be the leaders of renewing society through renewing themselves (Cizreli, 2003) in 21st century. It is thus clear how important to equip

teachers with 21st century skills to gain learners the necessary skills to handle opportunities and problems of today's rapidly changing environments. In the light of these studies mentioned above, it is concluded that effective teachers are the most important factor shaping education systems and individuals to go beyond their curve.

To develop effective teachers in schools, it is imperative for teacher to prioritize their ongoing professional and personal development and following current developments in technology and teaching practices. As a conclusion, it is imperative for teachers to assess themselves by considering the qualities and practices suggested by researchers. On this basis, it is vital to define effective teachers and effective teaching practices in and outside of schools. The exiting literature is mostly based on providing a list of qualities of effective teachers. Thus, not only teachers, but also students and teacher candidates can be asked for how they see themselves as effective teachers by comparing different schools, grade levels and subject areas with different dimensions with advanced quantitative and qualitative analysis. Lastly but most importantly, it is also essential to reveal the boundaries and problems in developing and defining effective teachers as well as the differences between theory and practice in teacher training.

Acknowledgements: The author wants to thank teachers who participated in the study and shared their views.

Declaration of interest: No conflict of interest is declared by author.

Funding: No funding source is reported for this study.

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