

SWOT ANALYSIS IN TEACHING

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For the overall study of a teacher's career skills as well as holistic progression of learners, SWOT analysis is a tool that can come handy to analyse ourselves more structurally if planned, prepared and practiced well by pedagogically strong and skilled professionals, analysts and teachers and even learners.

SWOT analysis is an alternative, termed as SWOT matrix that can be carried on in an organisation, place, person, project, or plan. As an individual learner, a group or an organisation, we face many hardships in achieving competency while reaching our goals and so often we have to give up our plans on the way and our career growth goes down the scale of our expectations. Therefore, we remain stunted and below par with our counterparts and those to whom we are accountable. Thus, this analysis can be extremely beneficial not only for teachers but also for students as SWOT offers helpful baseline information for a group of people/learners or organisation that want a vision for their future or analyse a problem.

The term SWOT used in ellipsis stands for our 'Strengths', 'Weaknesses', 'Opportunities' and 'Threats'.

For instance, the English language teachers' team in your school might do a SWOT analysis to look for ways to grow and become more competent in English language skills. At the same time the team or group can sit together and identify the areas of major weaknesses of language learners. Similar efforts can be initiated in other subjects as well.

To carry out SWOT analysis, start by drawing a large square on a white board, chart or paper. Divide the square into quadrants. Label the upper left quadrant 'Strengths', the lower left 'Weaknesses', the upper right 'Opportunities' and the lower right 'Threats'. Just let the group undergoing SWOT analysis learn that strengths and weaknesses are internal and opportunities and threats are external factors.

Strengths Strength in one's life has many interpretations. All of us are born with unique capabilities and skills, and the way to build one's strength is to focus on these specific skills and grow with them. Some people run fast, others are flexible, some can lift significant weight. When it comes to mental muscles, there has been significant research work done in the past decade on identifying natural strengths.

SWOT as a strength measuring tool can be helpful in identifying internal as well as external strengths of individuals, children or teachers through giving and taking feedback, preparing specific questionnaires, maintaining anecdotal records, conducting group activities on inter and intra level.

In fact, CBSE or ICSE and state board run schools have started implementation of students' core strength measuring under CCE plan. For teachers, CTET is another proficiency and skill measuring test. But still there is need for developing more comprehensive tools for routine skill evaluation to benefit the larger teaching and learning fraternity.

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A methodical study of the individual's external and inborn strengths and abilities may make him/her go from strength to strength. Knowing where one comes in strong and where one needs assistance can help him/her to stabilise personal life and foster proficiency. By SWOT analysis we can easily carry out a survey of a person's growth in all relevant spheres. Just look at these questions.

- Which of your achievements you are proud of this year?
- What subjects or topics were you good at?
- What worked for you in your approach to learning?
- What are you proud of achieving?
- What new skills did you develop?
- What personal resources can you access?
- What values do you excel in that others fail to exhibit?

Weaknesses:

Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, a French bishop, theologian and well-known orator once said, 'The greatest weakness of all is the great fear of appearing weak.' So often many issues concerned with individual growth in career hold us back and we are not able to overcome them. For example, in school a teacher may suffer individually from low self esteem and the same weakness may pass on to his pupils and vice versa. The first and foremost concern here is to analyse weaknesses by choosing a set of evaluation tools by self or others objectively or subjectively formulated by test battery questionnaire. For example:

- What were your greatest challenges in achieving your personal goals at school?
- What did you find difficult this year in your vocation/ academics?
- Are you fully confident in your educational skill training and learning level?
- What are your negative work traits and habits?
- What skills do you feel needed more work?
- What areas of your approach did you struggle with?
- When did you not feel confident about your ability to succeed?

One must consider personal internal or external perceptions in a very truthful and realistic way. Always admit that weaknesses occur, be specific about them, seek guidance from others, assess yourself regularly, forget the past and do your best for the next time. I remember an old Chinese proverb – 'A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step'.

Opportunities:

Opportunities knock at everybody's door but all can't dare to get up to open the door and hug them whole heartedly. Throughout my teaching career, I have never let a chance or opportunity turn back from my door. I recall my school principal who would often put me in hard challenges of doing difficult but novel tasks in the beginning of my school teaching career. As a learning teacher I never declined to face challenges. This helped me to embark upon a successful teaching career.

In SWOT analysis a teacher or student can be best judged by self or others by giving or taking feedback on the following or likewise set of questions individually or in a group prepared for self judgment vis-a-vis team or group evaluation.

- What could you do to build your strengths and deal with your weaknesses?

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- Who did you encounter this year that might be able to help you on this journey?
- What will be different about next year that will create opportunities to change?
- What could you personally do differently in your approach to school next year?
- What one thing could you change that would make the biggest difference to you in being a more effective teacher/ learner?

As teachers we too must learn to embrace new opportunities and should take them to pupils. Children at school must be given new challenging opportunities like prepare a 'School News Bulletin', 'Design a collage on a given topic', 'Present a Radio Show' in the morning assembly session, 'Share your Success story', 'Interview of a teacher or the Principal by Learners', etc. Even the slow learners or low achievers must be an essential part of new learning opportunities of their level and interest.

Threats:

Our assessment system despite several new and novel tools of evaluation still suffers from a multitude of defects. It instills in us the fear of failure. In education, SWOT analysis at the grass root level may help to redress these fears. Threats are challenges that will surely come but no challenge must overpower or overtake us in our drive to success.

Under SWOT analysis as a teacher we must learn to chalk out the real threats when we try to accomplish something. Let us ask ourselves these questions and find out the causes of our shortcomings.

- What are the biggest obstacles before you in making changes in your career/ learning?
- Are there other individuals you work with who make your work difficult?
- What stops you from achieving what you are capable of?
- What challenges do you face in staying motivated to do your school work?
- What challenges do you face in managing distractions and procrastination?

Make it certain that threats are external trespasses that may attempt to stall your passage to new learning. Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone, and teacher of the deaf got many accolades as a child. His later life was full of threats and failures. But his SWOT intelligence was strong and he learnt much from his early failures. He himself made this famous announcement 'When one door closes another door opens, but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the one which has opened for us.'

Reference:

- 1) <http://www.researchgate.net>
- 2) <http://journalijiar.com>
- 3) SWOT Analysis –Alan Sarsby