

Things have changed.

We no longer sit in a classroom and watch our professors flutter about in our classrooms, trying his best to convey his thoughts and conceptualizations to us. We now hear voices from the microphone, coupled with a pre-recorded video or a digitalized slideshow, often stripping our teachers of all their larger-than-life qualities and turning them into the pale imitations of a robot.

The question looms large over our thoughts: If all that he does in lieu of teaching can be reproduced by a mechanistic setup like a YouTube video, has not the teacher lost purpose? Does not his existence disintegrate to meaninglessness? Is there nothing we gain by his presence which this video cannot give us?

The purpose of this article will be to show how the role of the teacher can yet retain a sense of importance, and to untangle it from the robotic descriptions it has been conflated with.

We ask ourselves, then: What is the job of a teacher? What is a teacher supposed to do?

Is it only to make us capable of solving a set of assignments? Is it only to make us be able to score highly in assessments? And worst of all, is it only to throw onto us a collection of data for us to memorize? To him who assents to this and believes that this encompasses the entirety of the teacher's task, his professors would have long ago ceased to have any value to him; a YouTube video can replace their presence and existence entirely for him.

There has been inculcated within both us as well as, regrettably, some of our teachers, an obsession for the tangible benefits of learning. But none among us would be happy with leaving our professors with a job description so very shallow.

Let us, then, try and indicate what it is which lies in the void between a YouTube video and an actual class—and perhaps this may also show us what it is that the teacher's task ought to be.

My most memorable, perspective-shaping teachers from my school days are not the ones who increased my database of facts. They are the ones who, as their very description suggests, touched upon and changed my very *style of thinking*; the ones who gave me fresh perspectives regarding a given problem, and by extension, the very world itself: In a word, the ones who introduced me to a new paradigm. A new world.

The true teacher in the classroom is one who has immersed himself into the role to the fullest extent, akin to a painter flourishing art upon the canvas or a writer creating a text upon the sheet. He sees the world as a true artist does: The same way every stroke of the painter and every punctuation mark of the writer is pregnant with connotation, it is every gesture by him, every dart of his eyeballs, that is loaded with a certain undefinable content.

We are his canvas; his body is his paintbrush; teaching is his art.

The larger-than-life presence of the teacher in front of our eyes is, for us, the only way by which we may reap the benefit of his art. And this phenomenal shadow is precisely what is lost upon condensing it down to a YouTube video: We no longer feel the force of his words; no longer sense his accompanying body movements as a real presence. His mode of expression is lost.

A paradigm, by virtue of its intangibility, is precisely that which can only be communicated nonverbally. A paradigm shift is what fills up the gap between a blind man's notion of the colour 'red' and its "actual" meaning. And ultimately, it is what lies in the void between a YouTube video and an actual class.

Of course, it may yet happen that a teacher is so unbelievably skilled a practitioner that even with this pre-recorded fatality, this digital restriction, he is able to convey a certain style of thinking, a mode of being, to his students.

But we now see that this artist must dramatically modify the manner in which he expresses his art—it can no longer be with his bodily presence. He may now have to rely on animations and other digital features in order to impute a paradigm onto his students; the choice of the medium lies wholly with the artist.

To sum it up, then: The ultimate duty of the teacher is to impress upon us a *way of looking at things*, give us an altogether fresh tempo in our thoughts and refurbish the perspectives we adopt to behold the world and its problems. These are the intangible things which no examination can assess; and yet, this is what the ultimate aim of the professor should be.

And this is, in turn, precisely what the machine lacks the ability to do—simply by virtue of the fact that it is a *machine*, and has an altogether different effect in our cognition—and shadowing this statement are all the arguments asserting why a machine can never become a true artist.

To achieve this, we must enable our instructors by handing them their artist's toolbox, telling them what works and what doesn't; and they must reciprocate by exercising their creative energies and taking the art of teaching to its highest note.

Happy teacher's day to these artists: May they paint their masterpieces upon us!