

Teacher Education: Visions towards Achieving Standard

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Introduction

Every day, teacher education is emerging with more sensitive demands from the education system. Therefore, in this emerging era need of dynamic teachers is increasing. Gardner (1973) in his document, *Versatility and Innovation*, opined that, "of course, our schools cannot be wholly preoccupied with educating for innovation; they are concerned with continuity as well as change. There are continuities in the human condition, continuities in our own tradition and lessons to be learned from the past." Therefore, teachers have to play multi-dimensional roles in classroom or school set up by :

- Inspiring, supporting and humanising teaching and learning situations, which empower learners to realize their capacities, to appreciate their physical and intellectual potentialities, to grow personality and necessary societal and human ethics to play role of responsible citizens.
- Extending support to the group of individuals who make sensible efforts to contribute towards the process of renovation of school education and teacher education curriculum to retain its significance to shifting the societal needs and individual needs of learners, in the light of emergent goals and educational primacies.

These hopes recommend that teachers work in a larger context. It is to say, teacher is completely responsible and sensible to the social frameworks of education. There are several socio-economic evils like poverty, inequality, social injustice, casteism, religionism in the background of learners as well as in the national and global settings. O' Loughlin (1995) cleared about recent researches on teacher education which raise worries about teacher education programmes' tendency to encourage acquiescence and conformity to the status quo of both schooling and society. For achieving the goals of impartiality, uniformity, social justice and excellence, the teacher education must be moderated to-

- Care and teach the learners to love each other.
- Teach the learner in context of social, cultural and political developments.
- Provide insightful learning with personal experience.
- Understand the different and unique, ways and styles of learning.

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- Respect of each other with humble acceptance.
- Provide views for generating knowledge for developing process of reflective learning.
- Be environment friendly and continuously learning.
- Appreciate the hands on practices to train the brain.
- Understand the responsibility for community, society and nation.
- Analyse the curriculum frameworks, policies and texts.
- Have a comprehensive knowledge of languages.

Skills to sharpen the abilities of a teacher

An effective teacher should be known for teaching skills that help to make effective the teaching-learning process. In an interview APJ Abdul Kalam said that "Teaching is a very noble profession that shapes the character, caliber and future of an individual" (The Hindu July 28, 2015). The teachers of today need to be proficient in not only elementary skills, but also in innovative skill sets.

Flexibility

In this digital era, teacher needs to be malleable and be able to accept and overcome such situations. New skills are developing day by day that are changing the way of learning and teaching. Similarly, institutions are updating expectations and globalized learning standards. Being able to adjust is a skill that every fresh teacher must have. Dejan Stojanovic, a Serbian philosopher wrote in his book, "The Shape", that "I lose faith in mathematics, logical and rigid. What with those that even zero doesn't accept?" If a teacher is able to adapt the new skills, then he will have better results.

Assurance

The old testaments have described that a teacher is Father of Knowledge of a student. This was the symbol of assurance of teachers. Today all teachers need to have assurance, not only in themselves but also in other scholars and their contemporaries. An assured person encourages others to be self-assured, and a teacher's assurance can help to inspire others to be an improved person.

Communication

Teachers of today should be skilled in inter-personal communication with students, parents and staff, while intra-personal communication with self. If a teacher is skilled in communication then he can teach easily and clearly according to understanding of students.

Team Player

A teacher should be able to graft together in a team or group like classroom. If he has positive attitude towards grouping then he will provide a better chance to learn in unity. Thus networking of groups in a school creates a team spirit to solve problems of each other.

Continuous Learner

A teacher must be a continuous learner because teaching and learning both are lifelong processes, which never end. The education systems of the world today are always changing the curriculum and educational technology due to innovations in the area of pedagogy and technology. Therefore, a teacher who is constantly ready to go extra footsteps to learn will definitely be an effective and productive teacher.

Imaginative

A real teacher stimulates faith and ignites the mind of his student by his way or tricks of teaching. Imagination is the effective tool of a teacher to develop creative and unique thinking. Maria Montessori, an Italian philosopher and educator, opines in her book *From Childhood to Adolescence* that "Imagination does not become great until human beings, given the courage and the strength, use it to create." A teacher should find the imaginative methods to make learning enjoyable and fostering inventiveness in children. Nevertheless, Montessori also warned, "The child's imagination is vague, imprecise, without limits." Therefore, it is needed to control and provide right direction to the imaginative power of a learner softly.

Leadership

John F. Kennedy (1963), the president of America once stated while he was delivering speech as Dallas that "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." Today, this quote is pointing to the teachers of the world to find out great leaders in self to prepare the leaders for future from their students to give the best support to the human civilization.

Passion and Commitment

Hector Berlioz (1989) has rightly said, "Time is a great teacher, but unfortunately it kills all its pupils." The statement says to manage the time with a particular commitment. If a teacher is truly passionate about his teaching, then he is on his commitment with his profession of teacher education. Only a passionate teacher has ability to impart essential dedicative characteristics in his pupils.

Association

If a teacher has associative ability with unknown and always ready to which does not wish to meet, he will be able to impart associative skills in his students. Mainly a good teacher shares daily life experiences with his students. William Merritt Chase, an American artist said, "Association with my pupils has kept me young in my work. Criticism of their work has kept my own point of view clear." (Cited in *The Art Teacher's Book of Lists, Grades K-12, in 5.1 quotations*)

Innovative Efforts

If a teacher willing to try new things, new teaching skills and new education technology, is an innovative teacher then he/she can imbibe basics of innovative skills in students. The inventive and innovative teacher has divergent thinking and uses cognitive learning practices in his classroom. The inventive teaching practices increase insight of the learner. The cognitive learning will lead to cognitive impact on the skills and strategies as shown – below in the diagram.

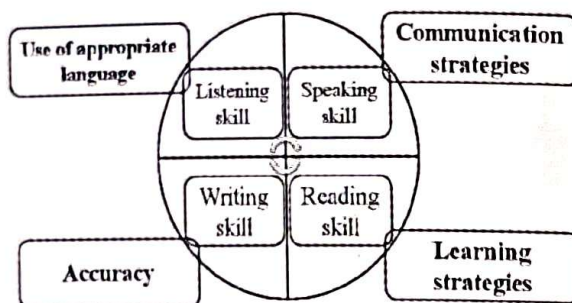


Figure 1 : Cognitive Impact of Learning

Commitment

Every student feels that his teacher has power of commitment, because he believes that he knows everything. Therefore, commitment is that characteristic of a teacher which makes him superhuman. Some time words are replaced with the name due to commitment. A modern teacher must have the quality to commit with his students, parents and the society to establish reliability.

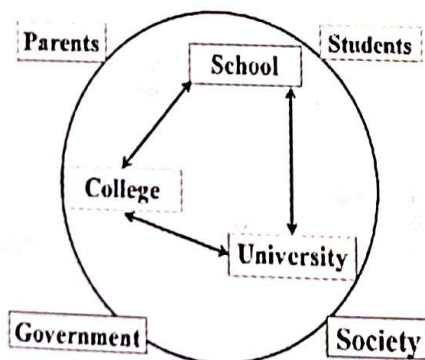


Figure 2 : Commitment

Ability to Expedient

Sometimes things do not rest in the state in which we want. Thus, the subject matter to be taught has some difficulty to be understood by the students. Here, the teacher plays an important role to expedite the content according to the understanding of the students by presenting some examples or by some experiments.

Understanding of Technology

From the last one decade, we are a recipient of advancement of technology. Today the technology has been a part of the teaching learning process. Offline content has gathered online to lessen the burden of bags. Therefore, a teacher must have understanding of technology to use in classrooms.

Supportive for Discussion

There are many ways to encourage discussion in the classroom. For example, some teachers initiate their content in group discussions, others with single learner discussion. Truly, a successful discussion in the classroom involves planning on the part of the teacher and preparation on the part of the learners. The degree of success of the discussion depends for the most part on the ability of the teacher in securing the wholehearted collaboration of the learners and selecting, organising and conducting group discussions. In case, a teacher finds that learners or volunteers are not obliging, then he should ask learners to relate their daily experiences in such a way the whole of the class is involved in the discussion.

Impartial and Tolerant

It is not easy to get right answers from students in the classroom. Therefore, it should be the quality of teacher to tolerate their stuff and nonsense in manners, to converse their minds freely with encouragement for diverse perspective and be impartial with their unexpected bearable behaviours in discipline.

Ideal teacher is being demanded of every time. But today there is a need of pioneer teacher according to the changing time. Society has a demand of dynamic teachers, who have capacity to take challenges with sudden problems of education. To prepare a professional and skilled teacher, more study and learning about the content, practice of application, inter-personal and intra-personal discussion with mentoring and improvement in ideas are needed, which are given in the following diagram.

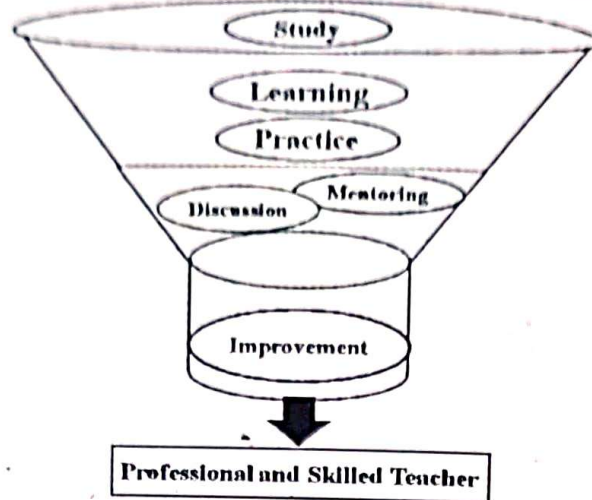


Figure 3 :Development of Professional Teacher

Finding the Sweet Spot for Learning

Gardner (1963) in his book *Self-Renewal: the Individual and the Innovative Society* described, "Those in the cognitive school think highly of bafflement. They suggest that bafflement motivates the learner to utilise previous learning to come to an understanding." While Steve Barkley, the executive vice president of PLS 3rd Learning, an organisation is engaged to improve the teaching learning in K-12 Schools through advanced technologies, suggested that "learning is minimised at both ends of the given scale" –

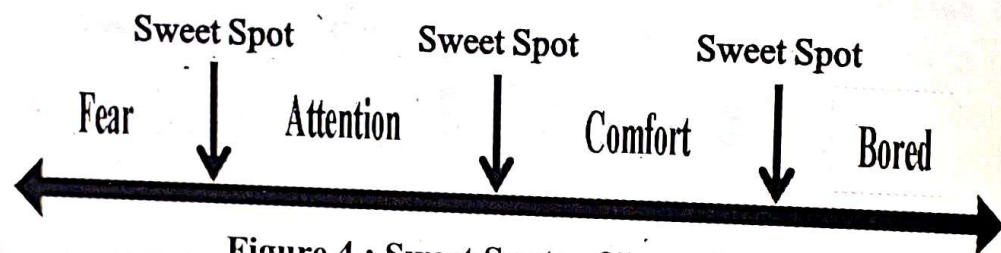


Figure 4 : Sweet Spots of Learning

Barkley described that "we need to eliminate school and classroom cultures based on fear, where students experience threats, embarrassment and/or violence and where learning is secondary to safety." However, "when students exhibit characteristics of boredom, teachers need to raise the anxiety level by increasing requirements through additional rigor or depth of learning. If students begin to show anxiety, the teacher must reduce that feeling. One way is for students to complete challenging assignments by working together in pairs or groups." John Dewey in his book *Experience and Education*, was published in 1938 wrote, "students are not actively involved in the learning process in the traditional model of education."

Learning through Interest

A few years ago, I was inspecting teacher trainees during their internship; a teacher trainee was teaching Interest to class 8th by reading book without making a dot on blackboard. When I asked, then he answered me that the children have been taught this topic in lower classes. It was not first time when I was shocked. It is seen often, a few teachers have natural quality to make learning enjoyable, but most of them have to learn. It is the main function of teacher to motivate the learner by increasing his interest and arousing curiosity for learning. A teacher should understand the passion of learner and efforts to awaken it by-

- Showing interest in teacher, make teaching activities.
- Focusing in curiosity of the learner
- Making relevance of the content to the real world of the learner.
- Using audio-visual aids in classrooms
- Active learning
- Changing the activities of the students regularly
- Surprise and novel activities in classrooms and play grounds
- Group competitions and group discussions

Phil Schlechty in his speech at the Schlechty Centre Conference at Atlanta, GA in October, 2010 focused on importance of zeal of work entitled "Engagement". Phil Schlechty described five types of engagement (zeal of work), are discussed under-

1. **Authentic Engagement** – In this type of engagement, the student has propensity to the task that is personally useful for him. For example reading a book for personal interest.
2. **Ritual Engagement** – In this type of engagement, the student has propensity to the task's outcomes that are valuable for the learner. For example reading of books to pass a test.
3. **Passive Compliance** - In this type of engagement, the student has propensity to the task to avoid negative consequences. For example reading a book to verify the answer.
4. **Retreatism** - In this type of engagement, the student has no propensity to any task but does not attempt to disturb the other activities for it.
5. **Rebellion** - In this type of engagement, the student refuses to do the task, tries to disrupt and disturb the work, or attempts to substitute other tasks to which he is committed for sake of those assigned by the teacher.

Useful strategies of teaching and learning

It is the responsibility of higher education institutions to favour the individual, society and the nation from the view of political, socio-economic and technological development. But these days, suicidal tendencies are homing in the mind of learners due to pressures of families and institutions. After the development of technologies, the question, how good learners are prepared, is a challenge. The teachers are trying to lessen the burden of the learner by feeling his pressure, by making classroom more interactive and collaborative, by using technology in teaching. Some useful strategies for the teaching and learning are earmarked as follows-

1. Steadiness of power – for empowerment of learner.
2. Content – according to the needs of learners.
3. Responsibility of teacher – as guide, supervisor, supporter, inspector.
4. Accountability for learning – decided by environment of learning and willing for learning.
5. Objectives and procedure of evaluation – self assessment and problem solving.

Teacher Education and Skill Maintenance

After getting a job, most of teachers, Bloom (1964) focused on individuality of learning. He documented that some factors also affected the learning like environment, study habits, time paying for the contents etc. But teacher influenced the learning by his teaching strategies. Bloom opined the skill and conceptual learning programmes can help to assess the learner's learning. Harlow, Petricia Miranda (2004) expressed about the benefits of maintaining skills up to date. She said that maintaining skills help to keep your mind young in addition to-

- Build confidence by updating of knowledge
- Stay malleable and keen about your work
- Make better time management and use of time
- Turn into more valuable to the learner
- Make a larger and healthy contribution to your profession of teaching

Teacher Education v/s Formal and Informal Learning

More or less, the word Education is used in common conversation, but in reality, what is meant by formal education? Roland Meighan and Iram Siraj-Blatchford (1997), in his book *A Sociology of Educating*, have described that a more

comprehensive and precise explanation of education might be the means by which a society transmits its culture, ethics, ideology, and information in a way to learn easily. In the other hand the majority believes that most proficient and special identities come from informal learning. Highly professional personalities often found difference between practice and theory. Therefore, formal learning or conventional schooling with education is a big mistake that most learners, teachers, scholars, parents, educationists, schoolists and governments make daily. In teacher education, skill development programmes like microteaching, school internship, block teaching and other curricular activities have a short time period for practice. It is need of today to provide skill support for practicing behaviour of teacher. Informal strategies like proficient reading, use of internet, using new strategies for teaching in classrooms, action research projects and advanced studies etc. may be useful for developing teachers.

Prepare Teachers for Assessment

Today a teacher should be skilled for proper and exact assessment of the learner. This continuous and comprehensive assessment of learner will provide ideas for futuristic arrangement of the learner. The teachers are to be skilled for following assessment :

- **School assessment** refers to assessment of the learner for mastery on content in order to develop teaching and improve learning.
- **Central assessment** refers to written and oral tests, daily assignment, project work that assesses subject command.
- **Psychometric assessment** refers to various psychological tests as attitude tests, aptitude tests, personality tests and study habit inventories to assess students' behaviour, his skills, choices, attitude, aptitude and personality.
- **Physical activities assessment** refers to assessment of learners' physical stamina, body measurements etc.
- **Co-curricular assessment** refers to assessment of learners' participation and performance in other extra co-curricular activities.

Projects and Programmes for Teacher Education Improvement

At the global stage, various agencies like the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Asian Development Bank (ADB), The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (UASNIE), and various universities as University of Winchester, University of Oregon, Michigan State University and so on are engaging for changing and modifying the shape of teacher education through various projects of teacher education with the objectives to -

- Prepare the teachers of inclusive education for initial inclusive education.
- Prepare the general teachers for working in inclusive settings
- Provide the opportunity for the disabled persons with general settings
- Develop, introduce, maintain and implement the curriculum of teacher education of two year and four-year Bachelors' degree programmes.
- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of teacher education through implementation of the newly developed programmes of teacher education
- Make teacher education more personalised through mobile technology
- Promote knowledge beyond classroom.
- Provide learning independence to the learners.
- Review and evaluate the teacher education projects

Future Facets for Teacher Education

Berry et al. (2010) pinpointed about specific skills for teachers of 21st century, in the book entitled Teaching 2030: What we must do for our students and our public schools - now and in the future, will be useful in the schools of tomorrow. They said that teachers must be ready to discover and adapt new technologies to connect the next digital generation, as well as effort across conventional subject areas using scheme learning. They must be able to use facts and evidence to update their practice and know how to work in both practical learning environments and brick-and-mortar schools. They will need also to work together with community centered organisations and work in schools that provide all varieties of other services for learners and their families. Some future facets are discussed for preparing new world of teacher education.

- **Learner centred values** – it includes empathy, belief in children or learner, commitment to nurturing the potential in each learner and valuing of diversity.
- **Teacher identity** – it includes aims for high standards, enquiring nature, quest for learning, strive to improve, passion, adaptive and resilient, ethical and professionalism.
- **Service to the profession and community** – it includes collaborative learning and practice, building apprenticeship and mentorship, social responsibility and engagement, and stewardship.
- **Skills** – it includes reflective skills and thinking dispositions, pedagogical skills, people management skills, self management skills, administrative

skills, communication skills, facilitative skills, technological skills, innovation and entrepreneurship skills and, social and intelligence.

- **Knowledge** – it includes self, pupil, community, subject content, pedagogy, educational foundation and policies, curriculum, multicultural literacy, global awareness and environment awareness.

Implementation of Policies

Countries of the world are changing strategies, curriculum of teacher education and infrastructures and other facilities of teacher education institutions due to changing needs of individual and society day by day. The implementation of teacher education can be better attained by policy actions at every level of education. Some basic aspects are helpful for these actions are discussed as under-

- Policies of teacher education should be based on the understanding of the professional requirements and development of teacher according to teacher education and its present scenario, mental satisfaction and job satisfaction of the teacher, culture of society and need of society, current competencies.
- Attractive incentive possibilities and career development should be taken into account.
- Teacher should be free for developing and maintaining his mindset for his professional and individual development.
- Principles of initial teacher education should be the in base of the development of teacher education programmes.
- The opportunity for experience oriented and research oriented development should be provided for strengthening the professional participation of teachers.
- Collaborative culture, associative practices, cooperative skill and development should be incorporated for professionalism.
- Teacher educators and teachers should communicate with each others to find and resolve the gaps between theory and practice.
- Government and stakeholders in alone and in association should take responsibility.
- There should be unity in decision making, its implementation and monitoring process.

Conclusion

Gardner (1963) in his book *"Self-renewal: the individual and the innovative society"*, wrote that the ultimate goal of the educational system is to shift to the individual the burden of pursuing his own education. This will not be a widely shared pursuit until we get over our odd conviction that education is what goes on in school buildings and nowhere else. Not only does education continue when schooling ends, but it is not confined to what may be studied in adult education courses. The world is an incomparable classroom, and life is a memorable teacher for those who are not afraid of her. The words of the famous American writer William Arthur Ward support the passionate and dedicated teachers that, "The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires" (Cited in Benzouine, 2012). Conclusively, we can say that the role of teacher education is reflected in its vision of preparing teachers for the universalisation of education.

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