



INSTRUCTION AND LEARNING IN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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Abstract

In India, where classrooms are intentionally structured in a manner that they could accommodate maximum number of children. Educators were involved in lecturing and not teaching. Children waited for teachers to deliver instructions, which they immediately captured in their notebooks and memorised and produced during exams. This was instructional approach. In the Learning approach, all of this would change. One major shift that learning approach could bring about in the Indian education system is to introduce constructivism in educational institutions. Considering constructivism is the only possible framework for teaching and learning. It is one way of thinking about how knowledge is formed and understanding takes place.

Keywords: Instruction, Teaching, Learning, Constructivism

Students come to educational institutions with multiple learning styles. The curriculum delivery mechanism should be sensitive and flexible in accommodating diverse learning needs. We find that lectures continue to be delivered in classrooms with the pre-conceived notion of one size fits all. We hope for homogeneity of the class room. Diversity has become a fact of life. The society is building pressure on institutions to rethink their existing curriculum delivery approach. Educational institutions are being increasingly pressured to undergo a shift from the instruction approach to learning approach. People may look beyond mere delivery of instructions to students. People should concentrate more on ensuring that real-time learning takes place. Teachers are expected to play the role of designers of learning environment, contributing towards making their institution a learner-centric one. Curriculum design and delivery would have to be based on the analysis of what the students need to know to function in a complex world rather than on what the teacher knows and wants to teach.

Instructional Approach

In India, where classrooms are intentionally structured in a manner that they could accommodate maximum number of children. The instructional approach prospered as the educators were involved in lecturing and not teaching. Children waited for teachers to deliver instructions, which they immediately captured in their notebooks and memorised and produced during exams. In the Learning approach, all of this would change. The class strengths would be small, learning would be self motivated preferably in groups, grades and marks would not be necessarily looked upon as a measure of learning. Educators believe that learning approach would give children space to know one-another, engage in a dialogue, work in groups, gain feedback and understand concepts. This was not taking place in the Instructional approach.

Learning approach

Experts believe that learning approach would create grounds to facilitate cooperative and collaborative learning. They feel it will be the future of classroom learning. Learning approach enhances student-student interactions, which is very critical for facilitation of learning and construction of knowledge. The role of teachers would change from delivering lectures

to facilitating the process of learning. This ensures classroom interaction takes place in the right environment. Educationists agree that collaborative and co-operative learning would have a significant advantage over the conventional approach. Learners would be at the core of the education process. Learners would enjoy greater amount of autonomy to learn in groups via project work and creative activities. It would empower students and encourage them to take greater control of their own learning approach. It is believed that learning would take place in a friendly atmosphere where students would have the liberty to not only share their knowledge, but also have the freedom to explain their version of how they arrived at it.

One major shift that learning approach could bring about in the Indian education system is to introduce constructivism in educational institutions.

Constructivism in Teacher Education

Constructivism explains the nature of knowledge. Constructivism also explains how learning takes place in human beings. Constructivism explains that human beings interact with what they already know and generate their knowledge. Construction of knowledge is based on one's belief, ideas, events, and activities with which they come in contact. The teacher in the classroom fills heads of students with information which the teacher feels are important. The teacher thinks that this information is true knowledge. The students store this information as given till they need it for exams. These models of teaching are called memory-oriented transmission models. Constructivists maintain that when information is acquired through such transmission models, it is not well integrated with prior knowledge. It is accessed and articulated only for formal academic purposes such as exams. Constructivist approaches, in contrast, are regarded as producing greater internalization. It develops deeper understanding than traditional methods.

Psychological Constructivism

Psychological constructivism believes that child should be educated in the way and in the area which are of interest to the child. Piaget believed that the child's needs are important. He believed in individual cognitive development. According to Piaget, learning is an individualistic activity. He believed in child-centered approach. Piaget's work is based on the



natural path of cognitive development. This approach believes that students come to classrooms with their own ideas and beliefs. The responsibility of a teacher is to modify them. This is done by the teacher by planning various questions that create dilemmas for students. The children work through these dilemmas and as a result knowledge is constructed. Therefore, the instructional practices include discovery learning. Children are given hands-on activities. Students challenge existing concepts. Students challenge present thinking processes. While teacher asks questions to the students, it probes students' beliefs. Teacher encourages examination and testing of those beliefs. This approach assumes that development is natural, biological process. The pattern of development is same for all individuals, regardless of gender and class. It also does not depend on race, social context in which learning and living take place.

Social Constructivism

According to Vygotsky's constructivism, education is for social transformation. It talks about a theory of human development which is associated with a person's socio-cultural context. An individual develops from social interactions. In these interactions, cultural meanings are shared by that group and internalized by the individual. Individuals construct knowledge while doing transaction with the social environment. As a result of these interactions, the individual and the environment undergo changes. It is important to study the relationship between an individual and the social and cultural environment. Schools are based on the socio-cultural settings. Here, teaching and learning takes place. Cultural tools such as reading and writing are utilized. Social constructivism believes that learning does not take place in a vacuum. They are shaped by cultural assumptions. This theory of constructivism believes that knowledge and the manner in which it is presented are influenced by the cultural environment. Here, the cultural assumptions and power relationships that influence learning should be exposed. Different social constructivism includes social reconstructivism, socio-cultural constructivism and situated constructivism.

Implementation of Constructivism

Constructivism is a theory of learning. It is not a theory of teaching. Translating constructivist theory to practice is difficult. Constructivist teacher education programmes neglects two major traditions. The first one is the development and second one is social reconstructivism. The teacher education programmes which have influence of developmental tradition, make an attempt to teach students how to teach in a constructivist manner. This means how to teach in Piagetian, manner. They are typically characterized by direct instruction in theory and practice. There are no opportunities for discovery, inquiry or self-examination. This approach then becomes very much prescriptive. Here, the teacher educator demonstrates models of various approaches to teaching to the students. The students are expected to employ same process in their future classrooms.

The teacher education programmes influenced by social reconstructivism tradition, tells teacher education students to deconstruct their own prior knowledge and attitudes. They are expected to comprehend how these understandings evolved. Students are expected to explore the effects they have on actions and behaviour of learners. They have to also consider alternate conceptions that may be more useful in teaching. Critical analysis and reflections are done by the student-teachers. They reconsider knowledge and everyday practical experience they get through teaching in the classroom. The challenge constructivism presents to teachers and teacher of education is the difficult work of translating a learning theory into teaching theory. Here, several questions arise such as what teachers need to know about the theory and how teacher will be able to use this theory. Teacher educators have to plan according to different disciplines. Several educators mention the importance of teacher educators' modelling constructivist approaches that engage students in collaborative activity, and field-based opportunities. This leads to experiential learning, reflection, and self-examination. To derive culturally relevant and socially appropriate practice from constructivist, teacher educators should deconstruct cultural assumptions. It is important to understand how social beliefs influence the development of theory and practices. If it is not done than societal inequities may be perpetuated in constructivist classrooms.

Conclusion

Constructivism is the only possible framework for teaching and learning. It is one way of thinking about how knowledge is formed and understanding takes place. One should remember that there is not only one way of doing the things. Various interpretations of constructivism are compatible with one another. Trainee teachers should be exposed to different perspectives. They should be given opportunities to develop the maturity to choose appropriate skills to implement their choices. Due to constructivism, learner is able to interpret realities. The learner is able to deal with real life situations which they face. If a learner can solve problem, they will apply their existing knowledge to a novel situation.

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