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Moderation and Facilitation towards a New Horizon in Teaching-Learning Process

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In the olden days, a teacher was the primary and/or only source of knowledge. Children were seated as rows of butterfly transfixed with pins and were stuffed with inert ideas. Teachers were used to verbalism and students were forced to rote learning. The teaching-learning process was dry, dreary and drab which resulted in mostly ineffective exercise. The traditional classroom with one teacher teaching 30 or 40 students which was mainly one-way communication or information is no longer effective for modern times. Change comes with challenges and opportunities. Educationists now-a-days realize that in education 'learning' is more important than 'teaching'. Learning is concerned with pupils whereas teaching is concerned with pupils and teachers. That's why, Pedagogy, the Science of Teachers Behaviour has given place to Mathetics, the Science of Learners Behaviour. They have to play the role of friend, philosopher and guide of students and inspire them with higher values of life. It goes without saying that the use of various new methods and devices is desirable for helping the teacher to do his work better whatever he has traditionally been doing for long time. The present paper provides the conceptual tools necessary for making teaching-learning process interesting and effective.

Swami Vivekananda said, "We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet. Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man".

Education has been acknowledged as one of the potential instruments of social change and an important means of bringing about national development. Elementary and secondary educations are critical links to our education system. They are the foundation of modern India. Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) is our national goal. India has directed its efforts for better quality of education than the quantity.

Education for all is not the same thing as quality education for all. Countries approaching full primary-school coverage increasingly realize that the pursuit of education for all around encompass the pursuit of excellence. Governments are not talking about quality, a concept that covers everything from the physical condition of schools to better teacher training and from the availability of text books to more parental environment. There is also increased focus on pupil's needs before and after the primary school years. (—Source: The Burning Issues, World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 2000)

The Upanishad says: "Lead me from the unreal to the real; lead me from darkness to light; lead me from death to immortality". Ancient Indian scriptures viewed teacher as an incarnation of satyam (truth), shivam (goodness) and sundaram (beauty). Even today these ideas

are very much ingrained in the present school system and are not exactly eroded by the processes of globalization, privatization and liberalization in India.

The quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. The quality of its citizens depends—not exclusively but in critic measure—upon the quality of their education. The quality of their education depends, more than any other single factor, upon the quality of their teachers. (Source: American Commission)

The National policy on (1986) Education has aptly observed, "The status of the teacher reflects the socio-culture ethos of a society; it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers. The government and the community should endeavour to create conditions which will help motivate and inspire teachers on constructive and creative lines. Teachers should have the freedom to innovate, to devise appropriate methods of communication and activities relevant to the needs and capabilities of and the concerns of the community."

The education system of any country is the nucleus and the teacher in that system is like the genetic code transmitting the characters to generations of future. He plays a vital role in the process of education because he is the real practitioner deciding every activity of the student and thus the future of the 'international community' which is perceived and advocated by great teachers of this world as the eternal goal of humanity. Taittiriya Upanishad says "be truthful in words, deeds and thoughts", which can be related to the school environment, teacher-student relations and values. Hence, the teachers' attitude towards school, relation with the students and values is of significance. In the present context of liberalization, privatization and globalization to study the attitudes of the teachers towards the school, teacher-student relations and values is of much more significance.

The Ministry of Education's document "Challenge of Education: A policy perspective" has mentioned, "Teacher's performance is the most crucial input in the field of education. Whatever policies may be laid down, in the ultimate analysis, these have to be interpreted and implemented by teachers as much through their personal example as through teaching learning processes".

There cannot be a school without a teacher and a teacher cannot be called a teacher if he doesn't touch school environment. One without the other has no identity. Teacher plays an important role in dissemination of knowledge to the child. Students spend most of their time in the school-listening to the words and looking at the actions of the teacher. Further, the student tries to absorb teaching situations and tries modifying his or her behavior. He is also a model before the child as his behavior directly or indirectly influences most of the activities of child. Hence, teacher-student relations influence a lot, the teaching-learning process.

Gone are the days when teachers were to use only 'Chalk and Talk' in the classrooms. They are to utilize at present various media and materials for making the teaching learning process more effective and interesting. Modern teachers are not the only source of knowledge;

there are multifarious media and agencies for providing learning experiences both knowledge and wisdom.

The processes and structures teachers choose to build in class rooms are very important factors influencing how a class develops and the norms it establishes for social and academic learning. Providing leadership for building productive classroom environments is a critical executive function performed by teachers.

The modern education is paedocentric and emphasis has shifted from subject of instruction to the nature and need of children, learning is given more important than teaching. That's why, science of teaching or pedagogy has given way to science of learning or mathetics. At present, educational programmes are to be devised and media used according to the mathetic principle or theory of behaviour of children undergoing the process of learning.

Rousseau stated that education is received from three sources—Nature, men and things. Philip H. Coombs (1985) argues that the quality of education and learning achievement of students depend heavily on the competence, personality and dedication of the teacher and conditions under which the teacher and students are working—for example, on whether the size of the class is manageable and its atmosphere conductive to learning, and whether there is an ample supply of equipment, textbooks, and other learning materials. Not least of all, they depend on the characteristics of the students themselves—on whether they are well nourished, physically and mentally healthy, strongly motivated to learn and enjoy strong family support.

The world-famous psychologists like Comenius, Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Piaget have arrived at the conclusion that every child has the built-in psychological and neurological mechanism for learning. The mechanism has to be exploited fully and learning experiences be provided adequately. Benjamin Bloom has also observed that environment during early years of life is very significant for cognitive development. Therefore all kind of facilities should be provided to the child to explore, to enquire, to play and to interact with his peers, parents and teachers for optimum education.

There is wider variation in school quality in developing countries than in developed countries. All schools have some minimum basic facilities in developed countries. In contrast, schools in developing countries are lacking in something as elementary and essential as a blackboard. Therefore many researchers assume that the quality of the school rather than socio-economic background of students is central to learning outcomes. These studies focus on the existing school environment.

Teachers must have training and orientation in the methods and techniques of teaching, and use of various media and materials so that they can not only improve their quality of teaching but also ensure optimization of learning experiences. They should develop: interest in learning skills; in adopting various methods of teaching like discussion, demonstration, interaction, problem solving, and seminar reading and so on besides traditional lecture methods

of teaching. Teacher should promote learning among the students than merely teaching themselves. They have to play, in fact, the role of "friend, philosopher and guide of students and inspiring them with higher values of life and promote in them the ethos of a new culture through self-learning, lifelong education and deep human commitment so that they can effectively counteract the challenges of 21st century.

Teacher can use the lesson creatively to motivate the students and also to sustain the interest level all through the learning process. A good teacher should basically have an understanding of the classroom situation and should be open to ideas and criticism from others. One should be innovative and creative and ready to change and grow with experience. The present paper provides the conceptual tools necessary for making teaching-learning process interesting and effective.

'Excellent teaching captivates and stimulates students' imaginations with exciting ideas and rationale discourse. Students satisfaction and enjoyment are stressed here as important criteria for successful teaching.

Lowman on the basis of his own teaching experience observed, "Few college teachers receive instruction in how to present intellectually exciting lectures, to lead engaging discussions or to relate to students in a way that promotes motivation and independent learning."

A model of effective teaching is based on two assumptions:

1. The college classroom in a dramatic arena first and a setting for intellectual discourse second and

2. It is also a human arena, wherein the interpersonal dealings of students and teachers-many of them emotional, subtle and symbolic-strongly effect student morale, motivation and learning.

According to Lowman, "Excellent teaching captivates and stimulates students' imaginations with exciting ideas and rationale discourse. Students satisfaction and enjoyment are stressed here as important criteria for successful teaching." Thus successful teaching and student satisfaction as well as motivation are strongly correlated and teaching and learning are not thought as cold and technological, but warm, exciting and personal. Rather college teaching should be personal taking process.

An important parameter for improving the quality of education lies in the art of imparting education i.e. on teaching methods or teaching style. Hence, in evaluating the education, it is perhaps necessary to have a look at the method of teaching which is followed in our universities.

Teaching aims at facilitating learning. Every teaching is therefore required to plan and direct the promotion of learning among students and with that purpose in view a variety of

activities are undertaken by him. But a college teacher is more obsessed with "what"-his subject matter, than "how" the methods and techniques of presenting the subject matter.

Teacher of higher education generally give most importance to acquire and transmit knowledge. They never care to know how far students have assimilated or grasped their new ideas. They are not concentrated about their abilities to communicate their strategies effectively and evaluate their own performance from time to time. More often they don't feel the need to evaluate their abilities. All efforts are made to cover the syllabus rather than uncover it for the students to explore, analyze and critically study in order to assimilate the knowledge and make it their own.

Many teachers do not treat teaching as a complex process calling for competencies in various knowledge and skills. They should master different teaching skills and understand the adolescent psychology, classroom management, pedagogy and methodology. Their postgraduate degrees showing their master in a particular subject and their research experience cannot ensure good teaching. Imitation and emulation are the only methods through which young teachers learn the teaching skills and other "tricks of the trade" for improving their professional competence. It is therefore felt essential to expose teachers to various teaching methods and models. They should be encouraged to try out the methods found useful and favorable. Proper guidance and supervision can be provided to them by experienced and skillful teachers.

Methods may vary from subject to subject, from topic to topic and from teacher to teacher. An adequate knowledge and practice of vital principles of teaching methods and learning theories can help the teacher to improve their performance in classrooms. Modern media and materials like radio, television, films, slides etc, have made the teaching methods more interestingly and lively.

Albert Einstein said, "I never teach people, I only create conditions in which they can learn themselves". Better school environment, positive teacher-student relations and positive value orientation among the teachers, one affecting the other, are primary requirements for effective teaching-learning process.

Learning primarily requires a healthy, pleasant and encouraging school environment. It influences both teaching and learning behavior in the classroom. It influences teacher-student relation as well. And, values among teachers decide the commitment, dedication and morals that decide each and every activity of not only teachers but also students for purposive learning. All of these collectively lead towards 'effective school' or 'ineffective school'.

Recent research indicates that teachers teach in a manner consistent with their own way of learning. However, it is not necessarily true that student learning can be understood from the teachers' own learning history because Learning is individual. Each learner has his own needs and interests, abilities and attitudes, hopes and aspirations. Thus the pace and depth of learning depends on the individual. Hence, it is very true that no single teaching strategy is ideal—each

has advantages and drawbacks. The optimal teaching strategy depends on the interaction of the student, the teacher, and the situation. Besides media and materials, the teacher of today is to acquaint himself with and acquire adequate skills in various modern methods like micro-teaching, programmed learning, computer-assisted education and so on. Education should be "child-centered" or "pupil-centered" in true sense of the term in place of "teacher-centered" as it is today. Emphasis should be more on "how" then on "what" of the teaching-learning process. Learning is to be given more importance than teaching. It goes without saying that the use of various new methods and devices is desirable for helping the teacher to do his work better whatever he has traditionally been doing for long time.

Researchers in cognitive and constructional psychology, learning and motivation have proposed various hypothesis, models, and theories about learning, intellectual development, and information processing. This research is reshaping how we think about learning. Above all, learning is an active, constructive process that is contextual: new knowledge is acquired in relation to previous knowledge; information becomes meaningful when it is presented in some types of framework. In addition, the acquisition and application of knowledge benefit from social interaction. Questions about student learning can be grouped into four categories (Davidson and Ambrose):

1. How do students select, acquire, and construct knowledge?

2. How do students integrate and maintain knowledge?

3. How do students retrieve knowledge when they have to use it?

4. How do students develop effective learning skills?

Learning is enhanced by social interaction. In fact, explaining material to another student helps reinforce the explainer's learning. Collaborative team-work and projects undertaken by heterogeneous groups encourage higher-order thinking and problem solving.

Students learn best by doing, writing, discussion, or taking action, because active learning situations provide opportunities for students to test out what they have learned and how thoroughly they understand it. For example, discussions give students a chance to check their thinking with each other and to articulate their ideas clearly enough to prevent being misunderstood. Provide frequent opportunities for students to actively restate or apply key concepts. The more frequently students apply new concepts to different situations, the better they will be able to remember and use those new concepts. So, don't tell students when you can show them, and don't show them when they can do it themselves. Let students summarize, paraphrase, or generalize about the important ideas in your class through group discussions, skits, role playing, simulations, case studies, and written assignments.

Students learn best when they are actively involved in the process. Researchers report that, regardless of the subject matter, students working in small groups tend to learn more of what is taught and retain it longer than when the same content is presented in other instructional format. Students who work in collaborative groups also appear more satisfied with their classes.

The students in a group must perceive that they "sink or swim" together, that each member is responsible to and dependent on all the others, and that one cannot succeed unless all in the group succeed. Knowing that peers are relying on you is a powerful motivator for group work. Strategies for promoting interdependence include specifying common rewards for the group, encouraging students to divide up the labour, and formulating tasks that compel students to reach a consensus.

Students must perceive the group tasks as integral to the course objectives, not just busywork. Early in the term, assign relatively easy tasks. As students become more knowledgeable, increase the difficulty level.

You should try to structure the task so that each group member can make an equal contribution. For example, one faculty member asks group to write a report on alternative energy sources. Each member of the group is responsible for research on one source, and then all the members work together to incorporate the individual contribution into the final report. Another faculty member asks group to prepare a "medieval newspaper." Students research aspects of life in the middle ages, and each student contribute one major article for the newspaper, which includes news stories, feature stories, and editorials. Students conduct their research independently and use group meetings to share information, edit article, proofread, and design the pages. (Sources: Smith, 1986; Tiberius, 1990)

You can set up "competitions" among the group. A faculty member in engineering turns laboratory exercise into competitions. Students, working in groups, design and build a small-scale model of a structure such as a bridge or column. They predict how their model will behave when loaded, and then each model is loaded to failure. Prizes are awarded to the groups in various categories; best prediction of behavior, most efficient structure, best aesthetics. (Source: Sansalone, 1989)

On a group test, either an in-class or take-home exam, each student receives the score of the group. Faculty who have used group exams report that group consistently achieve higher scores than individuals and that students enjoy collaborative test taking. (Hendrickson,1990; Toppins,1989). Faculty who use this technique recommend the following steps for in-class exams:

- Assign group work at the beginning of the term so that students develop skills for working in groups.

- Use multiple choice tests that include higher-level questions. To allow time for discussion, present about twenty-five items for a fifty minute in-class exam.

- Divide students into groups of five.

- Have students take the test individually and turn in their responses before they meet with their group. Then ask the group to arrange themselves in the room and arrive at a group consensus answer for each question. Score the individual and group responses and prepare a chart showing the average individual score in each group, and the group's consensus score, ninety-five percent of the time, the group consensus scores will be higher than the average individual scores (Toppins,1989).

Role playing and case studies, which can be incorporated into almost any course, give students a chance to apply why they are learning. In role-playing activities, you present to your student a realistic or hypothetical situation and a cast of characters. The students then improvise dialogue and actions to fit their views of the situation and the character they are playing. In a lecture class, for example, students might be asked to play various characters responding to situations that occur after the end of a novel. In language classes, students can play the role of people in everyday situations such as someone ordering in a restaurant. In a city planning class, students might play the role of administrators and developers trying to resolve an issue about building on the waterfront.

The case study method originated in the teaching of law and medicine and has most often been extended to the teaching of business. Students are presented with a real-life problem that has been addressed by scholars, researchers, or practitioners. A good case study presents a realistic situation and includes the relevant background, facts, conflicts, and sequence of events—up to the point requiring a decision or action. As students analyse and discuss the case, they retrace and critique the steps they taken by the key characters and try to deduce the outcome.

Situational dialogues and Role play:

Divide the class into pairs and have all the pairs work simultaneously. As the students become comfortable with role playing, have some students observe others.

Role playing works best when the situation involves some choice, decision, or conflict of motives. Draw situations from interpersonal conflicts, intergroup relations, moral conflicts, individual dilemmas, or historical or contemporary social problems.

True-to-life cases have an inherent appeal (this really occurred) and offer closure (this is finally what happened in the case), but hypothetical cases can also capture students' imagination and interest. Hansen offers practical advice on writing your own case studies. You can also engage students in writing cases.

In discussions of case studies, you will want to pose questions and guide the discussion toward points of major importance, but avoid lecturing or telling students the "right" answers. Use probes, questions, challenges, and rephrasing to help students analyze each case for themselves. As with other discussion activities, students should feel comfortable in openly speaking their minds.

Allow for the fact that different students learn, think, and process information in different ways because learning is a highly individual process, based on personal constructions of meaning, students vary in how they learn-and how long they take to learn-something. These differences are more noticeable when the new information is abstract and complex rather than simple and concrete. Moreover, learners do not make uniform progress. Sometimes students reach plateaus and their rate of learning slows down. Research also suggests that men and women may differ in "ways of knowing" and that woman may respond better to certain types of learning strategies, such as small group discussion and experiential learning activities.

Remember that when learners encounter new material, they place it in the framework of what they already know about the subject. This framework also affects which aspects of the new material they pay attention to and how they organize that new material. If material in your course conflicts with students' earlier understandings or firmly held assumptions, they may distort the new information so that it will fit in to their old framework.

Students who understand the demands of a given learning tasks and who consciously select appropriate learning strategies learn more effectively. Research shows that learning strategies can be taught to students. You can help your students become more self-reflective and self-regulated learners by coaching them on how to improve their reading comprehension and retention, how to take notes, how to participate in class discussions, and how to study for tests. Davidson and Ambrose offer the following advice to faculty who want to help students develop effective learning strategies:

- Give students opportunities to rehearse new information through repetition.

- Help students set goals for the amount of material to be studied.

- Explain the value of skimming prior to careful reading.

- Stress the importance of generating questions about the material both to focus study efforts and to identify what is known and not known.

- Give students guidelines for when to seek help from teachers, tutors, and other students.

If you can relate what you are teaching to something already meaningful, relevant, or important to students, they are more likely to understand and remember the new material. In small classes you may be able to tailor your examples to your students' interest and backgrounds.

In all courses, you can encourage students to draw connections between what they already know and what they are learning.

It is an established fact that frequent, immediate and specific feedback helps students learn. You should focus your comments on one or two items at a time. Constructive criticism and evidence of progress help sustain students' motivation to earn and to struggle onward on a task. In addition to making comments to individual students, you can photocopy examples of good papers or handout solutions to problem set so that students can compare their performance to standard. Most students tend to increase their effort in response to praise and encouragement rather than reprimands.

Innovation in teaching is a continuous process. We as teachers need to move steadily, from strength to strength.

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