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Innovative practices in teacher education

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Abstract

The quality of educational process largely depends upon the quality of teachers. Though teaching is being considered as a science and a skill, basically it is a sublime art. It is the teacher, who unconsciously designs the growing plastic mind of the child entrusted to him. Thus, teaching is not a mechanical process. Indeed, it is an intricate, exacting and a very challenging one with good leadership and appropriate teaching methodologies, the teacher's effectiveness can be enhanced. Challenges in the educational system have no permanent and fixed answers because of the changeable nature of human society. The teachers in the 21st century will have no deal with a world different from that of the 20th century in respect of pedagogical and technological advancement. So, no teacher education programmer can prepare teachers for all situations that they will encounter. Teachers themselves will have to make the final choices from among many alternatives. Therefore, it is imperative for teachers to constantly reevaluate their choices. This can be achieved through introducing or promotion of innovative ideas and practices in teacher education. This paper will focus on new ideas and innovative practices like cooperative learning, constructivism, reflective teaching etc.

Key Words: Innovative practices, cooperative learning, constructivism, blended-learning, reflective teaching.

Introduction

Teachers are the future builders of our country; they are the providers of knowledge and wisdom. They are the basic source of education for most of the people of the country and they are the ones who build the future of the nation. The teachers can very easily decide what they want the nation to look like and educate the masses accordingly. They have the ability and the strength to fight the odds and make India a powerful and a well-educated country. Teachers have a vital role in nation building because the future is totally in their hands.

Now a day, advanced technology has effectively revolutionized human society. An unexpected by product of this revolution has been the emergence of a generation of children weaned on multidimensional, interactive media sources, a generation whose understanding and expectations of the world differ profoundly from that of the generations preceding them. If we are to give these children the education necessary to succeed in our technologically intense, global future, then a new form of educational practice that builds on children's native learning abilities and technological competence must replace our existing methods.



Innovations

Innovation is usually understood as the introduction of something new and useful, like introducing of new methods, techniques, or practices or new or altered products and services. Schools or teacher education institutions can carry out innovations or experimentation on any aspect of their work related to teaching –learning, training or management of schools in order to improve efficiency of the institution to overcome problem and difficulties, they face in day to day functioning. The present structure of teacher education is supported by a network of national, provincial and district level resource institutions working together to enhance the quality and effectiveness of teacher preparation programs at the pre-service level and also through in –service programs for serving teachers throughout the country. Teacher education is now becoming more ye to the emerging demands from the school system. Because the changing educational needs of the student and advancement in technology has wider the area of responsibilities of the teacher. Now teacher has to perform various role like encouraging, Supporting and facilitating in teaching –learning situations which enables learners (students) to discover their talents, to realize their physical and intellectual potentialities to the fullest, to develop character and desirable social and human values to function as responsible citizens.

Meaning and Concept of Innovative Practices in Teacher Education

There is wide variation among countries with regard to what they believe constitutes an innovation, reform or development in the teaching learning process. For example, the use of colored chalk and basic audio –visual materials may be regarded as being as educational innovation in some developing regions, whereas in other more affluent countries innovations may refer to the development and use of sophisticated technologies and methods, practices etc. In our country also, this electronic technology has dramatically penetrated in to every area of our society and every aspect of our social and cultural lives.

There has been a tremendous shift in the ways and means of education services over the years. Research and innovations play an important role in improving the quality of teachers and the training imparted to them for all levels of teaching. They demand to introduce new ideas and practices in classroom transaction and other curricular and co-curricular activities. The teacher's effectiveness can be enhanced with good leadership and appropriate teaching methodologies. The purpose of teacher education is to prepare teachers who have professional competencies to lead the nation forward through their manifold roles.

Innovative Ideas to Make Your Teaching Methods More Effective

The biggest challenge any teacher faces is capturing the students' attention, and putting across ideas in such a way that it stays with them long after they have left the classroom. For this to happen, classroom experience should be redefined and innovative ideas that make teaching methods more effective should be implemented. So here are innovative ideas that will help teachers reinvent their teaching methods and make their classes interesting

- (1) Creative teaching
- (2) Audio & Video Aids
- (3) “Real –World” Learning
- (4) Brainstorm



- (5) Classes Outside the Classroom
- (6) Role Play
- (7) Strong-board Teaching
- (8) Stimulating Classroom Environment
- (9) Work Together As a Team

Some Innovative Practices in Teacher Education

Following are some of the innovative ideas that need to be focused

1. Team Teaching, Cooperative or Collaborative learning process:

When teacher and students have to work under so many constraints, then the practice of “Team Teaching or Cooperative or Collaborative teaching is always a good option.

Collaborative learning is a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together .It is a method of teaching and learning in which student’s team together to explore a significant question or create a meaningful project. A group of students discussing a lecture or students from different schools working together over the internet on a shared assignment are both examples of collaborative learning.

2. Reflecting Teaching and Reflective education:

Reflective teaching is a personal tool that teachers can use to observe and evaluate the way they behave in their classroom .It can be both a private process as well as one that you collect information regarding what went on in your classroom and take the time to analyses it from a distance, you can identify more than just what worked and what didn’t Reflection refers to the ongoing process of critically examining and refining practice ,taking in to careful consideration the personal ,pedagogical ,societal and ethical contexts associated with schools classrooms and the multiple roles of teachers.

3. Constructivism and Teacher Education

The concept of Constructivism has evolved from cognitive psychology .Constructivist paradigm is based on the contributions of Piaget, Vygotsky, Gardner, Dewey, Tolman and many others. Thus, it is synthesis of many dominant perspectives on learning .It is believed that the key element of constructivist theory is that people learn by Innovative Practices in Teacher Education .An Overview Manisha Das Volume –I, Issue –IV .May 2015 17 actively constructing their own knowledge, comparing new knowledge with their previous understanding and using all these to come to new understanding. Constructivist learning is based on student’s active participation in problem –solving and critical thinking regarding a learning activity .Students construct their own knowledge by testing ideas and approaches based on their prior knowledge and experience, applying them to new knowledge and with pre-existing intellectual constructs. The Teacher is a facilitator or a Coach who guides the student’s critical thinking ,analysis are synthesis abilities throughout the learning process .The Teacher is also a co-learner in the process .Hence ,teachers should facilitate cognitive change by presenting difficulties through specific tasks that pose dilemmas to students .In this context ,problem –solving teaching procedure is defined as a process of raising a problem in the such a way to stimulate purposeful ,reflective thinking in arriving at a rational solution.



4. Blended –Learning and Teacher Education:

Blended –learning describes an approach to learning where teachers use technology, usually in the form of Web-Based instruction, in concert with and as a supplement to live instruction, or perhaps utilize components of a learner –centered Web course with components that require significant instructor presence and guidance .The strength of a blended –learning approach is that it provides a means to ensure learners are supported and guided as they undertake independent learning tasks .Use of the Web in such settings provides many affordances for the teacher an students in the form of communication channels ,information sources and management tools. These aspects appear to make blended –learning particularly well suited to teacher training students ,especially those in large groups where direct instructor support may be difficult to deliver.

5. Soft skills and Teacher Education:

Development of human capital is an important asset since it drives the development of a nation. Quality human capital comes from quality education process through carefully designed and well –planned education system .Soft skills are personal attributes that enhance an individual’s interaction, job performance and career prospects and hard skills which tend to be specific to a certain type of task or activity .Soft skills refer to personality traits, socialgracefulness, and fluency in language, personalhabits,friendliness and optimism that mark people to varying degrees .Soft skills are broadly applicable in teacher education programmed, thus the curriculum of teacher education could contribute to the development of a holistic human capital that can foster economic ,social and personal development .Infusing the soft –skill in the curriculum of teacher education is the need of the profession for it to be successful.

Problems of Raising the Standard of Teacher Education

Very many factors are included in the standard of teacher education at any level –its aims, its Curriculum, its institutions, the teacher working in the institutions and the product of the teacher education institutions. The most important factor of all these is the product. This is the real touchstone of the standard of teacher education. Whereas the reality at present is that the product of teacher education at any level is not up to the mark .The teachers coming out of these institutions possess neither insight not attitude towards education and teaching, nor the skill of training in activities. Lack of honesty and of devotion to duty has become an endemic disease of the country, and if it is found among the teachers, coming out of these institutions, then it is not they but the .entire society and the controlling agency is to be blamed.

Initiative steps of Innovation in Teacher Education system

NPE (1986) stated “The existing system of teacher education needs to be overhauled or revamped.”

This has resulted in a number of initiatives being launched and they are-

-Establishment of NCTE by the government of India on August 17, 1995 as a statutory body responsible for the regulatory as well as professional aspects of teacher education.

-Programmed of Mass Orientation of School teachers (PMOST) was launched as a centrally sponsored scheme in all the states and Union Territories during 1986-1990.



-Special Orientation Programmed for Primary Teachers (SOPT) was taken up in 1993-94 to provide orientation to primary school teachers.

-In the light of recommendations of NPE 1986, Block and Cluster Resource Centers were established for professional growth of elementary school teachers and heads.

-Interactive teleconferencing has been successfully tried in Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh in in – service training course.

-Three National Curriculum frameworks on Teacher Education have been brought out by the National council of Teacher Education (1978, 1988 and 1998).

-To acquire ICT literacy, the NCTE has produced a CD-ROM entitled 'IT Literacy.'

-NCTE has developed self-learning modules on 'Human Rights and National Values' with a view to familiarize entrant teachers with values enshrined in our constitution.

Suggestions:

The above observations clearly indicate that teacher education programme at secondary level needs to be examined critically in terms of its innovativeness. Here are some suggestions which can be used to overcome these problems.

-Identification of the Innovative research could be done if all the Departments of Educations Countryside contribute in this area. They may periodically produce the Research Abstracts of the Studies conducted in their respective Departments, which may be made available on the World Wide Web.

-Every Teacher Educator may be given Unique Identification Number. It will facilitate Manpower Planning in Teacher Education.

-There should be networking amongst all the Teacher Education. Institutions to learn from the innovative practices of each other.

-Efforts should be made to realize holistic Teacher Education by integrating various skills, such as, microteaching, info –savvy, techno –pedagogic, life skills in the various Teacher Education Programs. Along with cognitive development there should be adequate focus on emotional maturity, psycho-motor development, health and environment, and inter –disciplinary development.

-It is imperative to strengthen Vocational Teacher Education in almost all the domains of vocational Education, such as, agriculture, horticulture, sericulture, servicing of the electric and electronic appliances. Innovative approaches need to be evolved.

-Physical facilities and funds should be adequately provided to the institutions by the government, local bodies and organizations. The internship model of practice teaching should be adopted.



-The conventional system of a few demonstration lessons given by a few teacher educators at the beginning of the practice teaching may be replaced by display of some video recorded good lessons in each subject delivered by expert teacher educators, teachers and teacher trainees.

-Relevant methods of instruction such as tutorial, discussion seminar, team teaching and interactive teaching learning should be adopted.

-More –curricular activities such as physical education, social services, tree plantation, and formation of eco club should be organized.

-Modern technological gadgets like computer, video, mass media, OHP should be used at the time of instruction.

-Counseling and follow up programs should be initiated and made effective.

-Teaching staff should be given adequate representation in the management.

-The Teacher educators should be made mobile so that they can see their professional world outside their institutions.

-The service and support from practicing schools, administrators, students-teachers, guardians and community should be encouraging.

-Teacher educators shall be given proper incentives for the professional growth.

-Publication and subscription to professional journals by the institutions should be encouraged

-Research wings in the university departments and selected government colleges should be started.

-A healthy relation among teaching staff would evolve new procedures and move towards new goals.

-The management and administrators should be watchful in maintaining the health of the institutions so as to make them innovative and progressive .Conclusions to meet the challenges of the new millennium, teacher education in India.

Conclusion

Thus, it can be concluded, it today's era information and knowledge stand out as very important and critical input for growth and survival. Rather than looking at education simply as a means of achieving social uplift, the society must view education also as an engine of advancement in an information era propelled by its wheels of knowledge and research leading to development .Innovation is the path to progress for any nation and the future of a nation is in its classrooms .It is not necessary that each innovation is structured and invented; it could be even a crude ,unstructured ,informal method adopted by the teacher for the sake of meaningful learning of the students.Hence,we need to respect such innovations as well and promote innovative methods and new ideas and practices of teaching in our schools, college universities and other institutions. In innovation is to take of research based knowledge and education the two sides of the coin and their integration within single policy



framework is necessary to achieve the culture of innovation which will energize and sustain the knowledge economy. Teacher education in India is at a new state in view of the new policies laid down and the globalization processes. Indian Teacher education needs to orient itself to the new challenges and enable its pupil to complete level. The pupil who are pursuing teacher education are required to place community and future citizens at a higher place by possessing new skills and attitudes as well as competitive knowledge in the stream of education concerned. All these can be possible through practice of innovative teaching practices being in vogue as well as promoted by different institutions working in the area of teacher education, there is every possibility that these practices would certainly attract the attention from the academic fraternity. They, in turn, may initiate steps either to follow the existing innovative teaching practices in teacher education or eschew new path of innovative teaching at their respective institutions. To meet the challenges of the new millennium, teacher education in India needs a tremendous change. The teacher educators need intensive training in various aspects related to new innovations. The above stated problems are challenging and strategies to overcome these problems are the need of the hour. Therefore NCTE, SCERT/SIE and University department of education should take immediate action for making education system innovative. There is nothing to get disheartened. India Education is a state of flux. The national vision mission will definitely nurture innovations, as evident through the emergence of National Curriculum for Teacher Education (NCTE, 2009) and Teacher Education Reflection towards Policy Formulation (NCTE, 2009).

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