

Balancing Transactional Strategies for Teacher Preparation

(A balancing pragmatic and holistic approach)

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Abstract

Awareness of the balancing in instructional Strategies in the Classroom is essential for quality of learning. We need to incorporate practical workable operational guidelines from all developmental theories and empirical research evidences. Cooperative learning strategies, self-control, self-management, ambition, independence, social interaction has been found to reduce intimidation in the classroom, which inhibits learning. Instructional Pedagogy in teacher education need to be based on the rationale of Constructivism and Objective Based Teaching (OBT) derived from behaviorism.

Key Words: Transactional strategies, constructivism, Teacher education

Teachers are central to the process of change in school education. The professional preparation of teachers is very crucial as they are expected to bring changes in their pedagogical (a science and art of teaching) approaches to meet the emerging challenges. The Yashpal Committee Report (1993) on learning without Burden noted "Inadequate programmes of teacher preparation lead to unsatisfactory quality of learning in schools". The content of the programme should be restructured to ensure its relevance to the changing needs of school education. The emphasis in these programmes should be on enabling the learner to acquire the ability for self learning and independent thinking.

National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005) renewal, seeks to prepare teachers with conscious efforts to design pedagogical courses keeping in view the greater space to generate a deeper linkages between theories of child development and learning, instructional models and methods of teaching specific subjects. The focus of conventional teacher preparation on mere disciplinary knowledge without professional training in human pedagogy needs a change. Teacher Educational Institutes must train teachers to adjust to the needs of the existing system through the meticulous planning of lessons in new flexible formats. "Lesson planning as it is taught during teacher training is merely a routine without making them aware of the underlying psychological assumptions about knowledge and curriculum and the consequences of the practices based on them. A paradigm 'shift' in teacher preparation is recommended to make it sensitive to the emerging demands from the school system. For this, it must enhance psychological basis of pedagogy. TE has to prepare teachers to play a role of encouraging,

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supportive and human facilitator in pedagogical situations, where learners are enabled 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. This expects teachers to operate in a larger context and its dynamics as well as concerns impinge upon her/his functioning.

Methods of teaching need to have linkages with Psychological Foundations of Education. Practice Teaching/ School/ professional Experience Programme must be planned as per psychological /Humane pedagogical perspective. Humans are adopted to spontaneously transfer relevant cultural knowledge to specific content of teaching through a human-specific social learning system. This is called "pedagogy". Pedagogical knowledge transfer is triggered by specific communicative clues (such as eye-contact, body language gestures, facial expressions or contingent reactivity etc.). Learners show special sensitivity to such "ostensive" clues that signal the teacher's communicative intention to manifest new and relevant knowledge about a referent object. Pedagogy offers a functional perspective to interpret a variety of early emerging triadic communicative interaction between teacher and learner about new objects they are jointly attending to. The currently dominant interpretation of such triadic communication holds that learners interpret others object-direct manifestations in terms of subjective mental status (such as emotions, disposition or intentions) that they attribute to the teacher. The most important is the belief that learners do not bother what teachers teach, if teachers do not show 'care' towards them. This includes strategies for dealing with anxiety and the use of humor to help to put learners at ease; to gain attention and to help let the learners know that the teacher is indeed an empathetic caring human being.

Evaluation studies reveal that the dominant ethos of teacher preparation remains confined to a positivist approach drawn from classical schools having little contact with a large number of new and innovative experiments. The various types of approaches to pedagogy have dominated the field for a large part of this century. Behaviorism was not originally the base of learning theories, but a base of theories of behavior. Some behaviorist principles were important such as the significance of the learners' responses, "learning by doing", frequency of repetition, reinforcement, generalization & discrimination, novelty in behavior, motivational conditions, conflicts and frustrations. These no doubt were included in the pedagogy of teacher education being followed. However, we have been rigidly following the same without being flexible for updating it as per new research evidences

The Gestalt theory emerged as a protest as it advocated that learning takes place through an act of insight, which needs the survey of the overall situation. It was a step toward cognitive based learning theories, which underlined the importance of problem solving, and it was a shift in pedagogy to the paradigm of Cognitive Psychology. The essential nature of cognitive Psychology is to see a human being as an intentionally active creature

who in order to perform acquires information from his environment, The active processing, interpretation and remembering of information is essential in order to construct the "internal model" which guide the action. Teachers need to talk, share and grow with learners; mentors, colleagues or anybody in education who is positive. The wealth of knowledge, information and experience in one's own building is immense. Thus, Social constructivism emerged as a significant area in psychology, which has implication for pedagogy in teacher education. It is viewed as a refreshing and liberating perspective. At this juncture the **pragmatic holistic humanistic balancing awareness in instructional Strategies (pedagogy) in the Classroom is essential.** The beginning of the balancing awareness in instructional strategies in the classroom pedagogy is delineated from the developmental psychosocial theories of Neo-behaviorism and cognitive learning. Teaching and training are used in opposite ways Training' implies a Skinnerian view of knowledge that depends more on rote memorization and 'teaching' implies a constructivist view that depends on student,s initiative. This concept needs elaboration .A due importance needs to be given to all relevant and pragmatic approaches rather than following one or extreme at the cost of the other. The positive aspects of Neo behaviorism as well as of Gestalt and of Social constructionism be balanced in such a way that a congenial smooth whole is made of all. There are also Constructionist consumerist ethos referred as "**an ethics of infinitude**". It promotes limitless possibilities; incessant change, persistent instability and fleeting preferences (Brinkmann 2006)*.

Brinkmann used the 'constructionist Consumerist ethos' for ethics of infinitude. It is different than social constructivism. The concept of Mega mall- the big shopping centers perhaps is emerged from this. Here people love constant change. They do not bother about stability or guarantee/ warranty-a concept of throw away after immediate use. We must think that this is creating environmental pollution as well as wastage of human and economic resources and degeneration of human values. Two are opposite to each other. Western culture is promoting it, but Indian culture prefers to strengthen bond of love, belongingness, mutual dependence, preservation of resources etc. Hence there is a need of balance and harmony with Nature and basic care of all living beings.

This constructionist consumerist ethos (CCE) however needs to be supplemented with certain core human features. Morality and Independence are real and are believed to be non-constructed features. In contrast to the constructionists focus on 'Possibility' the humanistic psychologist ethics of **finitude** begins with an idea of "Facticity" (that **something simply are the case prior to any social construction**). Solidarity, compassion and care of the other persons are possibilities for finite human beings. The need for new and changing processes, products, pressing environments and persons (social change agents/ teachers) generate a need for new ways of arranging working classroom cultures as well as Pedagogy for developing human lives - the ways that promote flexibility and a capability to change as per the time. Continuity, commitment

and Integrity are necessary for smooth life. Society wants loyal, reliable trustworthy human beings. Everyone should learn the art of re describing their selves continuously. There is a need of reinforcing the demand for change and flexibility leading to stable identities; that is an ability to live genuinely moral lives, which involve a certain kind of continuity, commitment and integrity. Coherent life narrative is a necessary condition for the capacity for moral action. As persons we must be reliable across contexts and practices (integrity) and pursue our goals and goods through extended periods of time (constancy) for being competent and trust worthy moral agents. Integrity and constancy cannot be down played. Values such as '**voice**' '**rights**' and '**autonomy**' encourage human possibility. These should supplement **obligation, loyalty and commitment**. Constructionists are cultivating individualism rather than collectivism. There is a need of sectarian understanding of existence. Peace lies with science and art of Just 'Society', where there are no racial biases, gender discrimination, bureaucratic hierarchies and where humanistic touch in dealing with human beings is followed. Community / organizations schools /classrooms promote universal democratic values (discipline, time management, loyalty, empathy / sympathy and so on). There is an endless list of moral codes of behavior. Those teachers are required, who are punctual, dedicated and actively are engaged in a classroom with specified guidelines. NCERT from time to time developed curriculum frameworks, syllabi, textbooks, teachers guide, Self learning material, and teacher training packages as per the prevalent social and national needs. In all these some aims, objectives, goals or instructional /educational objectives have been followed. All these have been done for a coherent life in an orderly society. The point to be adhered for teachers is to '*where to use what*'? *Here a need of pragmatic holistic humanistic balancing awareness comes in the instructional strategies of the classroom. Integrity and constancy cannot be downplayed. Morality is equally connected to obligations, loyalty and commitment as it is connected to 'Voice', 'Rights', and 'Autonomy'.* We all have been time and again emphasizing the role of Rights, Duties and Responsibilities. Equal weight needs to be given to all. Hence something has to be described or narrated along with providing space for reconstruction. Hence facticity and creativity goes hand in hand.

These values, however also remind us the real facts in the form of duties to the meaningful context into which we are born. The real has to be described, not constructed or formed. Here comes the role of textbooks and syllabus. So a need of harmony and balance in educational institutes is must. Accordingly shift in pedagogy is to be viewed and planned. A point of agreement between constructivism and facticity concerns also with our culture and traditions. It is primarily about augmenting one's rights and autonomy along with obligation and love. These ethical demands are essential human features. Philosophically, human life can be disclosed as a 'care' 'structure'. This is a tripartite structure having (1) facticity (Reality), (2) fallness (decay due to daily rituals), and (3) Existence (capacity to be ahead of ourselves to project future and possibilities)

GUIDELINES FOR CURRICULUM PLANNING

Dewey, Vygotsky, and Bruner articulated stability, consistency & coherence as the criteria for curriculum guidelines. The idea of 'education for democracy' in which stability, consistency and coherence are created through the recognition of every individual's 'aspirations, values, and vision' in a socially- and morally-constructed society created a confusion, which rejects those concepts of knowledge proposed by Benjamin Bloom and many other curriculum theorists. For them 'knowledge' refer to those facts, concepts, rules, and sets of proposition that can easily be transferred and memorized- to be repeated on demand in assignments and assessments. The curriculum planning is constructed through the process of open and public communication. The theoretical frame works within which knowledge claims are formulated, articulated, and exposed them to critical scrutiny, error, elimination, and every possible attempt at disconfirmation.

Values are incorporated within the process of knowledge construction. Knowledge and morality ethics are not distinct entities but are integrated in a holistic concept. It is this holistic concept, of the wholeness of the curriculum secured by a constructivist concept of knowledge, which must be the foundation of a post- empiricist curriculum philosophy. Its intention must be to maximize human potential to enable learners to create the future they want. The curriculum must be seen as a dynamic process involving large-scale and rapid knowledge change in the dimensions of planning, delivery, and assessment

Every fact of present day education is somehow saturated with the reductionist worldview. This fragmentation of curriculum is widespread and it is leading to a confusion of the mind. Consequently the individual has developed a widespread feeling of helplessness and despair. It is difficult to find meaning of human's unique internal, subconscious experiences in this mechanical paradigm.. Fatigue, alcoholism or drug addictions and many other behavioral disorders are evidences of the crises of meaninglessness. The inter disciplinary subjects to the curriculum are symptomatic of this lack of understanding. For example subjects like life skills education, environmental education, sex education, anti drugs education, moral education, values education, HIV/AIDS education etc., added more separate fragments.. In this context totalitarianism can serve a purpose on an Indian cultural scale. We must focus on a balanced way of life.

The human need for order and the establishment of the existence of universal laws has allowed us to encounter the world with profound confidence and creativity due to the mechanical scientific paradigms. These generalized categories however are seriously questioned now. These criticisms of fragmentations propel educational thinkers to reflect upon a curriculum for the future. The foundation of curriculum must address, the effort or pursuits of knowledge as universal truth and finding the meaning and wholeness that is consequently absent in the traditional curriculums due to the reductionist viewpoint. In research methodology, factors/components of behavior are also streamlined operationally. Both approaches i.e. qualitative, quantitative of traditional

scientific paradigm of linearity and determinism should be adopted together as alone these techniques are misleading to the researchers. This goes with the assumption of the theories of Newton and Einstein who have provided models of scientific determinism when they say "The structure of the world is such that any object can be rationally predicted if we were given a sufficiently precise description of past events together with all the laws of nature." In this context, a stable and knowable universe is sampled on which a narrow bridge between chaos and order is encountered. At this juncture, being at a cross road a bifurcation point needs to be taken without ignoring the rigid model of determinism. Noble Laureate Ilya Prigogine (1997) has rightly remarked that "Chance or probability is no longer a convenient way of accepting ignorance but rather a part of a new extended rationality" Therefore Historico-hermeneutical approach aiming at a holistic interpretation of culture within the social context is to be followed. In this meaning is constructed as a result of hermeneutic exploration from experience.

We are thrown into the world with others that is already imbued with meaning, so we always already find ourselves into situations that we did not ourselves create and where things simply matter to us prior to any reflections or theories. In everyday life, we continuously become absorbed, into canonical ways of doing things and going about in the world; and we also have the capacity to be ahead of ourselves to project futures and possibilities. This is existence. We are thrown into a real world and we have possibilities only as so much is given to us including life itself. So the conclusion is social constructivism should be supplemented with the insights into human existential descriptions. Brinkmann (2006) quoted the famous saying

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,

Courage to change things I can,

And wisdom to know the difference."

We can change things by re describing and renegotiating them. Viable human psychology must take human facticity into account. The neo-behavioural oriented Stimulus- Response theories, Cognitive Gestalt learning theories and constructivism are to be scaled for balancing awareness in instructional strategies (pedagogy) in the classroom.

The modern time has created a positive, scientific consciousness of progressive disenchantment, increasing non-participation, rigid distinction & total separation of mind and matter. (Berman 1988) This has created unworkable and dangerous blue print for human thought & activity. The reason for this is the breaking down of the fundamental relationship that gave meaning to life & living. People have lost meaning in an ultimate, philosophical & moral sense.. Under such circumstances, need is to develop 'some type of holistic, participating consciousness & a corresponding socio-political foundation for the survival of human beings. A need of bold, deep & clear vision is called for from many persons and many angles.

Another problem confronting to our discipline is that we Educational psychologists find ourselves in the discomfiting position of lacking clear criteria of meaning for many of the terms used by us. There are markedly different terms to describe quite similar processes. Hence there is a need to achieve a greater clarity in word –making process and educational psychologists must welcome this. It is high time for us to embrace and share pragmatism of purpose and operationalisation of terms.

TEACHER EDUCATION

Teachers implement, and create the curriculum; they must understand the complexity and ambiguity of the world-in contrast to the world-view portrayed by the dominant paradigm. Teacher education must recognize that learning 'depends absolutely on being able to acknowledge specific uncertainties- unsettled questions for which we will never know the answer. *Uncertainty is the human experience*. Through science, we have acquired more knowledge than wisdom. At present, we have advanced cognitively, but emotionally and humanistic ally we are still in a stone age. We need to develop vocabulary of peace with science and art of 'just society'. Hence, a return to reverence is the first prerequisite for a revival of wisdom along with knowledge.

The post-modern situations require the restoration of meaning and the demolition of the wall 'separating bricks of truth and virtue, values and facts, and curriculum and social justice'. In 21st century, information is rare but ordered and structured by fragmented, classified patterns, subjects and schedules. Teacher s must seek to understand lived experience and the self in relation to others and the world,. Teaches must violate the restrictions of the traditional standardized lesson plan with a celebration of the novel, different, unfamiliar, unexpected, unusual, and even what may have traditionally be regarded as absurd.. Prospective teachers, and consequently teacher educators, must be educated in ways that let them explain the importance of the interpretative act, as it might bear on students.

LIVING LIFE

Meaning is *constructed*. The constructivist vision creates opportunities for the realization of human potential that manifests in self-understanding 'and that self-understanding results from the synergistic unification of intellect, body, spirit, and cosmos'. Participants in a curriculum discourse must become participants in a human quest for meaning in which the exploration of life itself is central. Slattery(1995) has suggested five guiding principles for curriculum development

- Restoring wholeness through the construction of meaning in pluralist grounds of knowledge that constitute the individual as a potential diversity of faculties and inter-relatedness.
- A process approach that respect the unique development of the individual and the inter-relatedness of all experiences.

Historico-hermeneutical approach aiming at a holistic interpretation of culture within the social context keeping in minds the national issue of the past. This approach exercises the diachronic development of the educational system and society focusing on a specific case. There are links between the life of people and societies. It is central to the process the lifelong learning of learners and teachers-in that it radically changes both learner's and teachers' traditional roles. Slatery (1995: 253) clarifies that: "Construction of meaning as a result of hermeneutic exploration, recognizes that meaning is constructed from experience. The point of departure for the hermeneutic ways of thinking is the concept of the intentions of human activity. It focuses social psychological mechanism involving the process of change taking place in different societies at different times keeping in view the value objectives as background for education. Teachers must be lifelong learners and students must be leaders of instruction. A hermeneutic circle must be formed in classroom where the discourse is shared, This is a dramatic break with modern bureaucratic curriculum paradigms.

Classroom culture needs to be friendly. Teaching is a stressful venture. Becoming a successful teacher is not a destination. It is a never-ending wonderful journey. Professionally good teachers continually strive to improve their own professional growth by attending conferences, in service programs, collaborating with colleagues and keeping up with the latest professional journals. We must incorporate functional operational inputs from all effective classroom transactions.

CONSTRUCTIVE PEDAGOGY VERSUS CONTENT

A perceived dichotomy holds sway in education. Educators think that they can either stress enquiry learning, using lots of hands – on – experiences or stress content knowledge, decreasing hand-on-learning and proportionately increasing direct instruction. This viewpoint implies, that you can do one or the other but you cannot do both. Bill Robertson (2007) demonstrated and proved that Science teachers could practice inquiry Science (constructivism) and ensures that students grasp content knowledge. Teachers can do both through a learning cycle approach using the '5 E,s. (Engagement, Exploration, Explanation, Elaboration and Evaluation) They can practice constructive pedagogy and ensure that students grasp knowledge. If students are given opportunities to use well-selected science materials, they can discover concepts on their own. However teachers feel that kids have a great time doing hands – on different subjects, but they do not seem to be discovering the concepts that they hoped to learn. Learning cycle is also pedagogy. This involves both –explanation which is similar to starting out with a lecture format leading to exploration and elaboration. This has been found most effective method for all learners as revealed by investigations of Renner et al (1988) and Robertson (2007). However, learning cycle too cannot be used to teach all information or every concept. Teachers have to make choices as per the situation with clear understandings of the concepts to be learned and how they will tie into various phases/ activities to the mix pedagogy.

At this juncture the **balancing awareness in instructional Strategies in the Classroom is essential**. Many educational psychologists have recommended powerful lessons from the partnership of developmental psychological theories and classroom practices. We need to incorporate practical workable operational guidelines from all developmental theories and empirical research evidences

For this attention has to be paid to the following

- Cooperative learning strategies, self control, self-management, ambition. Independence, social interaction has been found to reduce intimidation in the classroom, which inhibits learning. On the other hand, the academic benefits include improved reading abilities, systematic reproduction of knowledge, ability to make conclusions and summarizing.
- Managing student controlled peer interaction within a cooperative framework. Classroom tasks related to real world questions generate more instructional support for learners than topic bound tasks. Similarly student initiated tasks increase collaborative interactions in groups. Group productivity increases when students gain ownership.
- This all represents a compelling integration of neo-Behavioral psychosocial theories with education practice and concerns for critical pedagogy. This is helpful for developmental researchers, educational reformers, program-developers and teachers. It provides a strong theoretical foundation with many concrete examples. The beginning of the balancing awareness in instructional strategies in the classroom is delineated from the developmental psychosocial theories of Neo-Behaviorism and cognitive learning. It is a developmental level integration that has extended Neo behavioral Objective based teaching and individual's social constructivism perspective, -the coordination of social perspective in discourse and action in classroom situations. The center of the whole discussion is unveiling of awareness of personal meaning of balancing pragmatic rapprochement as a new construct.

Instructional Pedagogy in teacher education need to be based on the rationale of Constructivism and Objective Based Teaching (OBT) derived from behaviorism. Keeping in view a few important ideas of activity based joyful teaching –learning process and real facts /concepts instructional material may be prepared in the form of broad unit or /and lesson plans as steering guidelines. The role of play and activities be incorporated in the pedagogy. **The present shift is expected to lead to substantive and methodological changes, which will break new grounds by redesigning teacher education curriculum and process by enhancing the psycho-social bases of pedagogy in teacher preparation and will create the synergy required to revitalize the professional preparation of teachers.**

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