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Measures for Innovating Classroom Teaching Methods

Manpreet Kaur Bhatia*

ABSTRACT

The term “learning environment” suggests place and space – a school, a classroom, a library. And indeed, much 21st century learning takes place in physical locations like these. But in today’s interconnected and technology-driven world, a learning environment can be virtual, online, remote; in other words, it doesn’t have to be a place at all. Perhaps a better way to think of 21st century learning environments is as the support systems that organize the condition in which humans learn best – systems that accommodate. Experts say 21st century learning must take place in contexts that promote interaction and a sense of community [that] enable formal and informal learning. Informal learning means upgradation of human ware. Need to develop attitude through skill monitoring. Many of the successful organizations that we see around us today attribute their success to employees who are empowered to learn and innovate at great speeds. The internet has caused an explosion of access to information on a global level, sparking the need for a paradigm shift in the way educational organizations function. In the era where almost everything is being supported by latest technology, we cannot continue with outdated methods of teaching and still expect to produce a work force which is ready to face the future challenges. The rapid globalization, accelerating technology changes, massive demographic shifts demand change in education systems to a more modern format which is more learner friendly. We need to take advantage of developments in technology to secure an education that is relevant and responsive to the needs of society as it evolves. The purpose of this paper is to suggest various measures to improve the current methodology of teaching focusing mainly on classroom education.

Keywords: Case-Study; Digital Infrastructure; Effective Learning; Multimedia Tools; Skill Development.

1.0 Introduction

To start with, education system in India is competitive and trains students rigorously to withstand fierce competition worldwide. Our scholars are at par if not superior to most of the students abroad. Indians are powers to reckon with due to their sheer talent and efficiency and this can be attributed to their rigorous training at school and majorly at college degree levels. Having considered the optimistic points of the education system in India we’ll now put light on the loopholes in the current teaching methodology. Firstly, let us try and differentiate between the two situations where one is considered as a literate and when as an educated individual. Being able to read and write is what is considered as literacy. However, being educated has a broader spectrum spanning beyond one’s ability to

read and write. Being educated is associated with the capacity to reason, using your ability to read and write to your benefit and to be able to widen your horizon of knowledge by trying to surge deeper into the literate knowledge imparted to you. Education, formal or informal helps a person to get along any hardships that the student may have to face.

But it is unfortunate to see the limited scope of education by considering it as an accumulative knowledge.

Education has traditionally consisted of the two fundamental elements namely teaching and learning with Indian education system giving weighty emphasis to teaching. The lecture – styled teaching has been used for centuries to build today’s literate, competent and intellectual society but ends up being a highly inefficient system. The flow of information is controlled by one person at a time.

*Institute of Innovation Technology and Management, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi, India
(E-mail: kaurbhatia.manpreet@gmail.com)

Another major drawback in the education system is that we follow a much more meritocratic system compared to a more holistic system. Admission, placement and overall judgments about a person are more on your achievements in exams. This only promotes the habit of concepts and overshadows the much necessary perception of actual retention of the information. The prevalent method is to cram and get marks and the sickening part is that this method is operational for years and methods to change the methodology cannot be foreseen in near future.

A stark reality is that though our students possess an extensively progressive mind but still find classroom teachings as full of innumerable pages of obsolete outdated theory with little or no scope of innovation and practical work. All this leaves a room comprising of bored students who consider studies as an interminable burden and teachers who are victims of disinterest. The situation currently prevalent support the fact that students find classroom education as less productive and low on meaningful contents[4].

2.0 Measures for Innovating Classroom Teaching

Teaching and learning needs to be shaped in a different way, with more personalisation, individualisation and localisation. There needs to be less focus on a narrow curriculum and more development of innovative assessment methods which really test for understanding and application, rather than just factual recall.

Enlisted and explained below are some of the measures which need to be implemented in the classroom to make learning more effective

2.1 Using multimedia tools to conduct classes

Students today are natively digital. Technologies are so commonplace today and have always been a part of their lives. As a result, they are particularly tech savvy, and may become more engaged in their lessons if given the chance to spend part of class time on the computer applications is included as a mode to impart knowledge.

This would surely increase the student's interest in a subject by manifolds[3]. The younger generation is intimately familiar with multimedia, accustomed to receiving and sharing information in a range of formats. In contrast, students spend most of their time in the classroom viewing printed text and

listening to a teacher. This disconnect is troublesome. Appropriate use of technological infrastructure will make access to knowledge easier than ever. Use slides to communicate and spend sufficient time explaining about each slide.

However, it must always be considered that spending five minutes on five slides will almost always be more engaging to your students than spending five minutes on a single slide, even when the information is exactly the same. Photos, figures and icons work as visual memory triggers. They help your students remember what it is you're saying. Any time you can add a visual that helps illustrate or reinforce the points you're making in your slides, you should use it[1].

2.2 Design assignments creatively

The best student assignments engage students in specific skills and practices that instructors want students to develop. In addition to traditional writing assignments, there are alternative activities that will exercise students' minds, and create opportunities for them to practice the real world skills of a professional in a particular field of study. Design course activities that incorporate those skills for your students[2].

2.3 Adopting case-study methodology

There are more number of inductive reasoners in a classroom than the deductive ones. This means that more pupils are comfortable understanding the concepts by examples which logically develop the basic principles of a chapter. The use of case study thereby becomes prominent tool in providing meaningful knowledge and facilitates better retention of concepts.

Case study based methodology provides students with problem solving skills, helps them to analyze a situation better using qualitative or quantitative measures depending on the case and hence increases their probability of making correct decisions even in the most complex of the situations.

Case study methodology is a great help for the instructor when the concept to be explained is tough and above the level of students to understand at one go.

Not all students are quick learners. In such a situation, case study helps an instructor to walk through applications, interpretations and especially limitations of a topic[5].

2.4 Allow students to conduct lectures occasionally

Make students demonstrate the understanding through activities. Give students the time they need to understand and absorb an activity by themselves. A summary of the activity can be prepared by a student or a group of students from the audience. This could be an effective of determining the extent to which the topic was clear to the students [2][5].

In many professional contexts, people need to be able to speak up in a group or in front of a large number of audience. And so students may need to offer information, ask questions, or argue for a different solution.

They don't learn to speak up in a group by reading about how to do it—it's one of those skills best developed with practice. Students can be asked to comment on what another student has said. A question can be asked and students can be invited to discuss possible answers with each other before the public discussion.

2.5 Award the winner, reward the participants

Rewarding the participation of the students is equally important as motivating them and monitoring the performance. Meaningful rewards can positively influence student attitude and behavior. In order to build the interest of the students in a particular subject, its important for the teacher to understand the psychology of rewarding them of the smallest efforts made by the students.

Rewards may include recognition, higher status, positive feedback, more responsibility or greater participation. Praising students efforts and their accomplishments cultivates a sense of self-esteem within them which enhances their desire to learn and their ability to focus[3].

All of this innovative thinking in the sphere of education accounts for more opportunities for pupils, new interesting teaching methods, less administration for teachers, greater willingness of students to handle practical situations providing a firm foundation of learning and more relevance to gaining employment with new industry-based qualifications.

Today's learners have grown up with technology around them. For them, a world without ubiquitous communication tools is incomprehensible. Listening to their views of schooling should be of

vital importance to policy-makers. It might even reduce disaffection, disruption and truancy in schools

3.0 Conclusions

A strong education has been a problem in our country and lack of it has been blamed for all sorts of evil for hundreds of years. Rote learning still plagues our system, students study only to score marks in exams. Long ago, education system was introduced in India with a sole idea to create clerks and civil servants, and we have not deviated much from that pattern till today.

If there are a few centers of educational excellence, for each of those there are thousands of mediocre and terrible schools, colleges and now even universities who still consider the notion of clearing exams as the sole purpose of education. If things have changed a little bit somewhere, elsewhere things have sunk into further inertia. In this country millions of students are victim of an unrealistic, pointless, mindless rat race. The mind numbing competition and rote learning only crush the creativity and originality of millions of Indian students every year.

But the reality is vaguely different from the ideology that rules the education system. In near future, student will have to be self starters who are persistent and have aptitude for measured risk taking.

They will have to think for themselves and possess specialized or technical knowledge to thrive. The goal of education shouldn't be to solve the problems of yesterday but to be able to tackle problems of tomorrow that we don't know today using the technology that hasn't been invented yet. So what is required in education sector is not evolution or reform, but radical revolution – majorly in the ways adopted for teaching. Making impact in education, both in building our knowledge and skill as well as our understanding towards one another is worthy of the best and brightest minds. Teacher should utilize better professional development tool, new content creation and other teaching tools and the latest research in brain science to adopt and refine their methods. More focus should be given on finding effective and elegant learning solutions.

Education should also encourage creative thinking, teamwork and problem solving. Education should be supplied with an aim of providing young people with skills for life, work and earning a livelihood.

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