



Facilitative teacher development: Decisive constituent of neo-millennium teacher education

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Abstract

Changing global scenario stipulates learner centered approach in education. Paradigm shift in education has placed prime substance on the learner and learning where teacher is obliged to recognize his new roles and responsibilities. Teacher needs to transform himself from traditional stance as a lecturer to co-learner, promoter, motivator and director of students' learning process. He needs to be a facilitator of students' endeavors of self-learning. Facilitative development of teachers needs to be at the root of all the teacher education initiatives. Facilitative teacher development should become the core component of teacher education curriculum.

Concept and need of teacher as a facilitator is discussed in this paper. Above all the paper throws light on distinct characteristics essential for a facilitative teacher. It also tries to address possibilities for the facilitative development through teacher education essential for new era.

Keywords: paradigm shift, facilitative competence, learning milieu

Introduction

Substantial modifications have taken place in education sector in two decades. Education system as a whole is undergoing radical change due to some of the major global reforms such as globalization, privatization and liberalization. It has paved way for quality assured and consumer (learner) centered approach in education. Educational scenario is renovating particularly after the grey revolution of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and emergence of constructivist approach in education. Internet has predominantly led to knowledge explosion. Global society is becoming knowledge driven society where knowledge related issues are at the core. It has led to unbelievable competition in knowledge sector. Consequently global benchmarks are ascending in education. Delors Commission (UNESCO's International Commission on Education for twenty-first century) (1996) in its report 'Learning the treasure within' promoted 'learning to know', 'learning to do', 'learning to live together' and 'learning to be' as four pillars of education for new age. It has emphasized learning throughout life as an essentiality. Education is regarded as the means of social transformation. Therefore education has to shape the future generation to be knowledge driven society. It needs to cultivate the learner as knowledge activist who will reflect and construct knowledge. Education needs to endow learners to achieve such skills, competencies and outlooks to be the creators of knowledge. National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, 2010 argues, "People need to view learners as active participants in their own learning and not as mere recipients of knowledge; need to encourage their capacity to construct knowledge; ensure that learning shifts from rote methods. Learning is to be viewed as a search for meaning out of personal experiences and knowledge generation as a

continuously evolving process of reflective learning." It is essential to modernize and restructure curriculum and particularly the teaching-learning process.

Knowledge is no more restricted within the four walls of classrooms. Various means and modes are available for learners to acquire information. Learner is not a mere recipient of information; in fact he is the creator of his own knowledge. The entire education system is witnessing paradigm shift in recent times. Every dimension of education is transforming and leading towards more and more learning centric and supportive manner. Teacher's roles and responsibilities have changed in the new paradigm shift. He is no more the sole transmitter of knowledge. He is more of a promoter, supporter and manager of students' efforts of self-learning. His role is of a facilitator in modern world. Teaching is no longer seen as the process of imparting knowledge and doing things to the students, but is redefined as facilitation of self-directed learning (Tight, pg. 26, 1996).

Teacher as a Facilitator

Various means and resources as well as technologies are available for the learner. He is not dependent upon the teacher for knowledge acquisition. Teacher is not a mere distributor of information; rather he has to encourage and support the learner in active learning endeavors.

Dictionary meaning of the verb 'facilitate' is i) to make easy or easier (Dictionary of English Language, 2009), ii) to make easier; assist the progress of (Collins English Dictionary, 2003). Facilitator is someone who helps to understand common objectives and assists to plan for achieving them without taking a specific position in the discussion. He is the one who contributes structure and process to interactions in such a way that groups are able to function effectively and

make high quality decisions. A helper and enabler whose goal is to support others as they achieve exceptional performance (Bens, 2000). "Facilitative teacher is one who guides, instigates and motivates students to learn. As such, the teacher is the facilitator, rather than the source of learning" (Siblerman, 1970). Facilitative teacher effectively implements appropriate instructional strategies and creates a positive learning environment. Facilitative teacher has the same level of knowledge about both education and pedagogy as well as the subject content knowledge as a teacher, but works with the goal of having students take as much responsibility for their own learning as possible.

There are certain qualities that a teacher needs to possess to be an effective facilitative teacher. Carl Rogers (1983) emphasized three distinct traits of a teacher as facilitator; 1) Genuineness 2) Acceptance 3) Empathetic understanding of the learner. Teacher needs to be real in his relationship with his students. There should not be any ambiguity or artificial stance while interacting with the students. He should be the real himself behaving naturally which will make the students

to have faith in him to connect and interact positively. Facilitative teacher should accept the students as they are appreciating their differences. He needs to show true regard to the learner and their efforts to learn. Nevertheless teacher has to have empathetic understanding towards each and every learner. These virtues make a facilitative teacher.

Facilitative Teacher Characteristics

Researcher has drawn out distinct characteristics essential for a teacher to be facilitative through the review of related literature along with expert views. They vary as per the area of facilitative competence. There are four key areas of facilitative teaching competence namely 1) facilitative communicative competence, 2) facilitative socio-emotional competence, 3) facilitative process competence, and 4) facilitative professional competence. Following table shows these major areas of facilitative teaching competence along with the characteristics related to those particular areas of facilitative teaching competence. They all make a teacher facilitative one.

Table 1: Facilitative Teaching Characteristics

Sr. No.	Areas of facilitative teaching competence	Facilitative Characteristics Involved
1.	Facilitative Communicative Competence	1. Attentive
		2. Active Listener
		3. Effective Communicator
		4. Smart Interrogator
2.	Facilitative Socio-emotional Competence	5. Genuineness
		6. Empathy, Respect and Appreciation
		7. Relationship Oriented
		8. Motivator
3.	Facilitative Process Competence	9. Group Process Expert
		10. Cultivator of Shared Responsibility
		11. Creator of Learning Milieu
		12. Neutrality
4.	Facilitative Professional Competence	13. Resourcefulness
		14. Tactfulness
		15. Feedback Competence
		16. Professional Approach

1. Facilitative Communicative Competence

Every teacher who wishes to facilitate the students' learning endeavors needs to possess facilitative communicative competence. He needs to be attentive to all the verbal and non-verbal stimuli and responses from the side of the learners. He should be able to pay due attention towards each and every learner so as to enable the learner to feel valuable. At the same time teacher needs to be active listener. Teacher should be able to communicate effectively to the students to create the positive milieu for learning and take the learning process towards its desired learning outcomes. Facilitative teacher is not a lecturer; in fact he is more of a questioner. He should be able to use questioning as catalyst to provoke thought process of learners and direct the group learning process towards its desired goal. All-n-all facilitative communicative competence becomes quite crucial for facilitative teacher.

2. Facilitative Socio-emotional Competence

It is quite essential for facilitative teacher to develop a harmonious relationship with the students. Hence teacher

needs to possess socio-emotional competence as well to perform as facilitator. Teacher needs to be real in his relationship with the learners. He should be genuine in the view of learners so as to develop the bonding of trust. Teacher needs to have empathetic outlook towards students to develop rapport with them. He needs to pay due respect to each and every learner and his learning attempts. Learners' every attempt needs to be appreciated by the facilitative teacher. Teacher should be relationship oriented to stimulate the highest levels of involvement of learners. The key role of the facilitative teacher is more of a motivator. He must be able to inspire the students to provoke their thought process as well as active involvement in group process. Therefore the group learning process demands more of the socio-emotional capability of the teacher as well.

3. Facilitative Process Competence

Group learning demands group process expertise of the teacher. He must be proficient in designing and executing group learning process to attain the desired learning outcomes.

He needs to cultivate the sense of shared responsibility among the learners in group learning. The real skill lies in creating and sustaining conducive learning environment. Such learning milieu will pave way for the self directed group learning participants. Facilitative teacher has to possess neutral stance for the best outcome. He should fray away from expressing his knowledge or opinion directly. Instead he should evoke the learners to construct the knowledge on their own.

4. Facilitative Professional Competence

Facilitative teacher must be resourceful. He should have in depth subject knowledge as well as of the pedagogy and synergogy. He needs to have command over child psychology, andragogy as well. Facilitative teacher needs to be tactful to pose challenges and opportunities for the students' learning; give hints-cues; channelize group synergy constructively. He should have feedback competence. He needs to use feedback as a vital component so as to motivate the students. It is also inevitable for a teacher to have professional approach to be facilitative. For this he should be able to have the skills of effective time and resource management. He needs to have ask-oriented approach ensuring quality decisions and deadlines.

These four clusters (areas) of facilitative teaching competence need to be fostered through teacher education programme.

Facilitative Teacher Development through Teacher Education

Present teacher education programs are restructured as two year curricula since 2015-16. Emphasis is on thorough school based experience, but unfortunately it has failed to address the changing role of teacher as a facilitator. National Curriculum framework, 2010 has mentioned the necessity of teacher development as facilitator, but it has not offered clear guidelines and provided scope for doing do. Hence a fresh look at teachers' professional preparation is essential. Teacher education needs to modernize and restructure its curriculum to nurture facilitative competence among teachers through its both pre-service and in-service modes. But the present teacher education program cannot be replaced with the entirely new one. Hence smooth transformation is necessary in this perspective. Theoretical as well as practical components can play decisive role in the facilitative development of student teachers. Introducing short-term workshops can be instrumental when the student teachers have got clear idea and some experience regarding practice teaching. Such workshop will orient them regarding their new role as a facilitator. It will also provide concrete experience about performing as facilitative teacher. Afterwards student teachers can then plan and execute their practice lessons. This will lay foundation towards facilitative development of student teachers. Gradually teacher education programs can be formed as entirely competency based with respect to facilitative development.

Conclusion

Teacher education requires new outlook and methodology for preparing efficient teachers for new age classrooms. Teacher's shifting roles and responsibilities in changing times need to be taken into account while structuring and implementing teacher

education curriculum. Teacher education should groom teachers as facilitators of students' process of exploration, reflection, sharing and construction of knowledge. Teacher education programs should emphasize facilitative development through its theoretical and more importantly practical components. Various components of teacher education curriculum can prove instrumental in this perspective. Gradual transformation in teacher education curriculum designing and curricular transaction is essential. Models of facilitative development should be developed accordingly.

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