

Paradigm Shifts in Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

Education transcends beyond formal learning. It has to be made more responsive, ensuring learners thrive both in and outside the classroom. Given the profound transformation in recent times, our perspective of teaching and learning has gradually changed with more focus now being given to the wholesome development, encompassing all aspects of life. Appreciating, valuing and nurturing students' uniqueness by way of providing a supportive environment will go a long way in helping them realize their best potentials. This statement remains true for every generation and more so in the present context. Democratization of education has resulted in teachers being confronted with learners of different learning styles. Emphasis on 'Across-the-board' approach for every learner irrespective of their uniqueness is irrelevant in the recent times. Intellectual capacities alone cannot serve as the yardstick to measure students' merit. Having an overarching approach toward teaching-learning has gained a lot of attention in recent years which fosters an understanding of our world in an integrated manner and not simply through memorization of facts alone. Learning is seen as a dynamic process. This calls for the teachers to respond positively in tandem with the changing times. With the changes in educational paradigms, this study highlights the significance of having a comprehensive approach to teaching-learning and the multifaceted roles a teacher plays, not just as educators but also as facilitators, mentors, guides and life-long learning advocate. It is a qualitative study, a document analysis research paper.

Keywords: Paradigm Shift, All-inclusive Approach, Teaching-Learning

Introduction

Effective teaching-learning is an ongoing task often requiring teachers to master the art and science of teaching. Marzano (2020) defines instructional strategy as a series of actions having a definable outcome relative to student thinking or learning and a definable beginning and end. How a teacher

adapts and applies the right strategy to deal with the target group matters since instructional strategies are multidimensional and its effectiveness is dependent on the context in which they are applied. To cater learners with diverse learning styles, which approach will work best is influenced by factors like the nature of the group, course

content and the intended learning outcomes. Aligning instructional strategy with the intended learning outcomes would ensure its effectiveness. Equally important is the flexibility on the part of the teacher in integrating modern trends and practices. Argyos (2012) mentions that the role of the teacher has become more important due to current trends in teaching, requiring him to combat against outdated practices by way of integrating innovative teaching approaches into the educational process.

The traditional lecture method with focus on academics and students as passive learners is still an accepted and most popular teaching approach which has been the mainstay in higher educational institutions (HEIs). Emphasizing on the comprehensiveness and interconnectedness of all aspects of learning will empower students to utilize their academic learning as a footing for their holistic growth. A teacher plays multifaceted roles in teaching-learning, helping each student carve a niche for themselves by encouraging open and honest dialogue, a cooperative mindset, creating a positive environment, confidence building, incorporating emotional reflection, respecting and valuing others, enhancing mental wellbeing and

balancing scholastic and non-scholastic aspects as the key focus areas.

The role of teachers in the twenty-first century needs to undergo an upheaval. In these constantly evolving times, teachers must transform into something greater. With technology providing students easy access to knowledge, the role of a teacher can no longer be limited to knowledge provider, but requires the adoption of a greater responsibility - which encapsulates becoming a guide, mentor, and facilitator. (Souza, 2020, p. 132)

Teachers work out the curriculum, translating it into practice. Following a single teaching strategy for every student without taking into account the Principle of Uniqueness greatly undermines the true purpose of education which is to encourage individuals to become the finest that they can be and enabling them to experience all they can from life and accomplish their goals. To bridge the existing knowledge gaps, the NEP 2020 has also called for a revamp of the existing educational framework towards a more student-centric, holistic learning environment.

Objectives of the Paper

It is a qualitative study that aims to delve into the dynamics of paradigm

shifts in teaching-learning, exploring the significance and implications of integrating modern educational trends into teaching and learning environments to enrich students learning experiences.

Review of Literature

A study done by Biggs (2003) titled “Aligning Teaching for Constructing Learning” mentions the importance of matching curriculum, the teaching approaches that follows, including assessment process with the expected objectives, since teaching and learning are complementary to each other. Therefore, the role of a teacher is to plan for a supportive environment and plan for activities that will facilitate better learning in the students. McGonigal’s (2005) work “Teaching for Transformation: From Learning Theory to Teaching Strategies”, also suggests that for maximizing learning, it is not enough to simply present new information. Teachers should see to it that a change in students’ existing knowledge should be brought about by a change in their perspectives. Since approaches to instruction have considerably evolved overtime, teachers need to strive towards facilitating learning and a change in students’ attitudes, including their personal development by providing opportunities for reflection (Slavich,

2012).

Exploring the concepts quality and quality assurance, Netshifhefhe et al., (2016) in their study “Quality Assuring Teaching and Learning Processes in Higher Education: A Critical Appraisal” has attempted to draw a link by suggesting that any activity undertaken should attempt to enhance quality in order to ensure its relevance and produce graduates that will fit in the society. According to Behari and Saxena (2017), a teachers’ knowledge and perception towards instruction and learning do play a significant role in the realization of the intended learning outcomes. The aim of all higher education is to assist students in creating a niche for themselves and be responsible citizens. Hence, any teaching approach should be oriented towards facilitating such growth and academic freedom. Gudaji (2019) in his study “Pedagogy Approaches in Higher Education” has emphasized that better learning takes place when a change is brought about by new ideas and experiences to the already existing knowledge. To make learning meaningful, it is imperative that students be given opportunities for varied experiences which can enable them in discovering the true value of learning, and also help them in integrating into the society.

A study conducted by Snehi (2020) “Teaching-Learning: A Study of Undergraduate Level of Education” highlights how due to the demands of relevant skills and competencies for employability, there arises the need to adopt newer pedagogies and integrate technology, with emphasis on continuous professional development and collaboration among teachers for bringing about improvements in teaching and learning. As Varghese and Mandal (2020) observed, there is a need to establish linkage between students’ approach to learning and teachers’ approach to teaching to facilitate learning.

In “A Paradigm Shift for a More Inclusive, Equal, and Just Academia? Towards a Transformative - Emancipatory Pedagogy” Cappiali (2023) suggests that in order to move towards a more inclusive, equal, and just academia, it is necessary to address the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities, and promote a change in the way we approach teaching by implementing diverse learning principles and methods that motivate and challenge students’ abilities and potentials.

An analysis of the literature review reveals how various studies have attempted to address the necessity of a more holistic and innovative

interventions tailored to the varying needs of the students for ensuring quality teaching and learning. Insights can be drawn on how the success of any educational program is dependent upon the teachers’ capability to adapt their pedagogical strategies in tune with the course objectives and the evaluation process that follows. To help students face the challenges and navigate uncertainties of life, a relook at the various teaching and learning practices can help in developing new teaching approaches that can bring about a transformation in students’ learning experiences by recognizing their individuality, abilities, and interests (Margarit, 2021).

Methodology

The study analyzes various secondary sources like academic journals, books, educational policy documents.

Understanding Paradigm Shifts in Teaching-Learning

Educational paradigms have evolved overtime from the conventional teacher-centred instruction to a more dynamic, student-centred approach reflecting a broader transformation in our understanding of teaching-learning. The modern trend leans towards knowledge generation and its application, holistic development,

collaborative and blended learning, psychological integration, facilitative role of teachers, skill enhancement, digital literacy, experiential learning, use of technology driven methods, comprehensive evaluation and assessment, emphasis on independence and proactive role of learners, sustainability, inclusiveness and process-based teaching and learning – all tailored to the requirements of the students. Paradigm shift can be understood as a standard, perspective or set of ideas. In education, it refers to any improvement or need-based changes or a fundamental change in approach or underlying assumptions. One of the most important requirements at present is to embrace, prioritize and adapt an all-inclusive development over conventional teaching methods to enhance the learning experiences of the students. In such an approach, it is expected of a teacher to help students find meaning and purpose in life, by addressing both scholastic and non-scholastic needs. This pertains to going beyond memorizing facts ensuring learners not only excel in their academic pursuits but also become well-rounded individuals capable of facing the challenges of life. With classrooms becoming complex, multifaceted and demanding places to work, outstanding pedagogy is

far from straightforward (Husbands & Pearce, 2012). To help learners tackle complex life and work environments, it is essential that they be oriented in understanding global issues, citizenship values, sensitized towards preserving the environment, being articulate, collaborative and innovative, a concern for fellow beings, exhibiting responsibility and accountability towards self and others, analysis and synthesis of information and effective use of technology to evaluate and communicate information. While planning for instruction, teachers should also take into consideration different aspects like –

- Knowing the students.
- Taking into account the varied learning requirements of students.
- Understanding student learning processes.
- Appreciating difference in backgrounds and abilities of students.
- Matching instruction with the learning objectives and assessment process.
- Outlining goals and expectations crucial to effective teaching-learning partnerships.
- Offering diverse methods of feedback.
- Reflecting on the learning and its applicability in real life situations.

For creating a supportive and stimulating learning environment, various teaching-learning strategies that can be considered are –

- Self-guided learning.
- Learning by doing.
- Building connections, team spirit, social responsibility and collaboration with the community.
- Interdisciplinary coursework for seeking new perspectives.
- Strong student-teacher relationships; trusting rapport.
- Encouraging self-confidence.
- Mindfulness and wellness programs by incorporating emotional reflection and practices that promote mind – body well-being.
- Holistic / Integrated Assessment by evaluating students' overall performance.

Implications

A teacher's effort towards making active connections and building upon the students' previous knowledge and experiences can play a decisive role in realizing the intended learning outcomes. Besides, his personal passion and exercise of foresight can positively impact the teaching and learning process. As education continues to evolve, educators and stakeholders concerned must be responsive to changing educational needs to ensure an effective and relevant

education system. There is also the need for acknowledging the role of technology in broadening our access to knowledge, enabling customized learning, and facilitating collaboration and global connections. Paradigm shift in education are not without challenges and its effective implementation requires a significant investment in time and effort; a commitment and collaborative effort of all stakeholders concerned. To optimize teaching-learning, it is imperative that changes in the mindset and practice of educators, addressing challenges around curriculum reform, flexibility, digital access, teacher development and resource constraints, policies that support the independence and innovation of educators and changes in how to evaluate and measure learning outcomes be prioritized. This can lead to the creation of an educational environment conducive to the optimal development of students. With the focus heavily centered on academic achievements, adopting a comprehensive approach to education reminds us of the essential balance needed for a well-rounded upbringing. Teachers need to strengthen skills in developing academic rigor, building positive relationships, inspire and be reflective practitioners, adapting to

new insights and understanding the positive impact they can have on students. This humane touch in education fosters deep personal connections, essential for guiding academic and personal growth. Complacency in teaching perhaps is the biggest obstacle to self-development, often leading to lack of enthusiasm. Effective teaching calls for resilience, persistence, clarity and genuine concern on the part of the teacher. Teachers are expected to be constantly on their toes and work on their personal

transformation, which would involve introspection, reflection and shift in ones attitude in understanding what constitutes success and failure, recognizing one's weaknesses, accepting these and seeking ways to overcome them. Considering the reciprocal nature of teaching and learning, sharing knowledge and insights often resonate with an educator's personal growth and learning journeys. This aligns well with Seneca's quote, "While we teach, we learn".

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