



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 5.2
IJAR 2018; 4(4): 238-240
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 04-02-2018
Accepted: 05-03-2018

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Innovative practices in teacher education programme

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Abstract

The superiority of any educational process mainly depends upon the excellence of teaching process and teacher. Though teaching is considered as a science and a skill, basically it is a transcendent art. It is the teacher, who intuitively designs the emergent plastic mind of the child entrusted to him. Thus, teaching is not a motorized process. Rather, it is a sophisticated, rigorous and a very challenging one. With good leadership and correct teaching methodologies, the teacher's efficacy can be enhanced. Challenges in Indian educational system have no permanent answers because of the variable nature and continuous demands of human society. The teachers in the modern era specifically 21st century will have to transact with a world different from past in respect of pedagogical and technological advancement. So, no teacher education programme can make teachers fit for all situations that they will encounter in their profession. Teachers will have to make final selections from many alternatives in the course of teaching. Therefore, it is vital for teachers to constantly reassess their alternatives. This can be done by presenting innovative ideas and practices in teacher education programme. Since teachers are of fundamental importance in enlightening the quality of education; hence, the advancement of innovative practices in teacher education is of extreme importance. This paper is designed to stimulate discussion on new ideas and innovative practices required in teacher education programme. The paper will emphasize on novel ideas and innovative practices like cooperative learning, brainstorming, constructivism, blended learning, reflective teaching etc.

Keywords: Innovative practices, cooperative learning, constructivism, blended learning, reflective teaching

Introduction

The growth of a nation depends upon the quality of education system which in turn depends on teachers and for this purpose teaching is being considered as the honorable of all professions. The teacher, therefore, occupies a crucial place in the educational system as well as in the society. But teaching is not a motorized process. It is a sophisticated, demanding and a very stimulating one. Though teaching is being considered as a science and skill, basically it is a transcendent art as it is the teacher who intuitively designs the emergent plastic mind of the child. Like an artist the teacher is also responsible for influencing or reshaping the behavior of the young ones in a socially desired way. Thus, the teacher needs to be in contact with the child so that she could shape her mind in creative way.

All through the history, people say teachers have played diverse roles and they will continue doing it. But, today's world is world of change and advancements which is passing through swift changes and abundant progressions. In such a situation, even education system cannot repel change. As a result it is the requirement of present scenario as new demands and new dreams allocate more perplexing role and responsibility to the teacher. Now a day, innovative technological development has commendably revolutionized our society. An unanticipated result of this revolution has been the development of a generation of children dependent on multidimensional, interactive media sources, a generation whose understanding and beliefs of the world differ greatly from that of the generations preceding them. If these children are to be given education, it becomes essential to succeed in our technologically concentrated future which is global in nature, then a new system of education is required that is built on children's instinctive learning abilities and technological skill must replace our existing methods.

Since challenges in education system have no permanent answers, so, teachers themselves will have to make the final selections from many alternatives. Therefore, it is vital for teachers to persistently reconsider their choices.

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This can be done by presenting innovative ideas and practices in teacher education programme.

Meaning and Concept of Innovative Practices in Teacher Education programme

There is a extensive disparity among countries with regard to the terms innovation, transformation or expansion in the teaching learning process. For example, the use of colored chalks may be regarded as being an educational innovation in some developing or under developed regions of the world, whereas in other advanced countries innovations may be regarded as to the development and use of refined technologies and methods, practices etc. In India, electronic technology has intensely entered into every area of our society. Today's generation is growing up with remote controls and they spend more time on computers, internet, playing video games etc. than reading books; even toys are now filled with buttons and lights.

In such a situation, it is very essential to pay attention on "How can we educate this Modern Tech Savvy Generation?" To reply to this, a compassionate environment, one in which they can generate their own ideas; both individually and collaboratively, must be provided.

Etymologically, the word "Innovation", is derived from the Latin word "Innovare" which means to change something into something new. It is an advancement of new ideas and practices in education and training.

There has been seen a remarkable shift in the methods of education services over the years. Research and innovations play an imperative role in refining the quality of teachers training for all levels of teaching. They call to introduce new ideas and practices in classroom transaction and other curricular and co-curricular activities. The teacher's effectiveness can be enriched with good leadership and modern teaching methodologies. No teacher education programme can make teachers fit for all situations that they will encounter in their profession. Teachers will have to make the final choices from many options available. The purpose of teacher education is to make teachers who have professional competencies to lead the nation forward through their multifarious roles.

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 limitations, then the practice of "Team teaching or cooperative or collaborative teaching" is a good option. Team teaching or cooperative learning process is a team work where members support and rely on each other to complete an agreed-upon goal. Cooperative learning is a popular teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a range of learning activities to increase their understanding of a subject. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn, thus creating an atmosphere of accomplishment. Students work on the assignment until all group members successfully understand and complete it.

2. Reflecting Teaching and Reflective Teacher Education

Reflection on one's own work is a key component of being a professional teacher. Teachers must observe their beliefs, expectations and prejudices regarding teaching and learning and determine how these beliefs influence classroom practice. Reflection is an ordinary process that assists the development of future action from the review of past and current behavior. Reflection discusses the ongoing process of analytically examining and refining practice, taking into careful deliberation the personal, pedagogical, societal and ethical contexts related 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 a amalgamation of many dominant viewpoints on learning. It is believed that the key element of constructivist theory is that people learn by dynamically 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 trying ideas and approaches based on their preceding knowledge and experience, applying them to new situations and assimilating new knowledge gained with pre-existing intellectual constructs. The teacher is a facilitator who guides the student's critical thinking, analysis and synthesis abilities throughout the learning process. The teacher is also a co-learner in the process. Hence, teachers should facilitate cognitive change by awarding difficulties through specific tasks that pose problems to students. In this context, problem-solving teaching procedure is defined as a process of raising a problem in the minds of the students in such a way to stimulate purposeful, reflective thinking in arriving at a balanced solution.

4. Blended-Learning and Teacher Education:

Blended-learning explains an approach to learning where teachers use technology, usually in the form of Web-Based instruction, in concert with and as a complement to live instruction, or possibly utilize components of a learner-centered Web course with components that involve substantial instructor presence and guidance. The strength of a blended-learning approach is that it provides a means to certify learners are supported and directed as they commence independent learning tasks. Use of the Web in such settings provides many affordances for the teacher and students in the form of communication channels, information sources and management tools. These characteristics appear to make blended-learning predominantly well suited to teacher training students, especially those in large groups where direct instructor support may be hard to deliver. Blended-learning usually describes learning that combines traditional teaching and learning methodologies with information and communication technologies. It is projected that blended learning will enrich the student learning experience; at the same time it also demands that the teachers should be trained as online facilitator.

5. Soft Skills and Teacher Education

Growth of human capital is an important asset since it energises the development of a nation. Quality human capital originates from quality education process through carefully designed and well-planned education system. Soft skills are personal attributes that improve an individual's collaborations, 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, social gracefulness, and fluency in language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism that mark people to varying degrees. Soft skills are mostly related to teacher education programme, thus the curriculum of teacher education could add to the holistic development of human capital that can nurture economic, social and personal development. Instilling the soft skill in the curriculum of teacher education is the need of the profession for it to be successful.

Conclusion

In the end it can be concluded that in today's era of information and communication technology it is imperative to develop teacher for growth of society as well as for self. Education system should not be looked at provider of education only rather it should be treated as a means of achieving social elevate but also as a motive of progressions in a period of knowledge and research dominance. Innovation is the track to progress for any nation and the future of the nation is built in classrooms. It is not essential that each innovation is organized and created; it could be basic, unstructured, informal method accepted by the teacher for the sake of significant learning of the students. Hence, attention should be given to such innovative methods and new ideologies and should be incorporated in teacher development programmes.

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