

A Lifelong Learning Perspective: Some Suggestions for Restructuring Teacher Education

Prepared and Presented by

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Abstract

The term 'life-long learning' involves cradle-to-grave perspective, which recognizes that learning occurs at all stages of life, in different forms and in variety of arenas.

Teacher Education must include preparing teachers for their roles of teaching students learning-to-learn strategies and also to train teachers with life long learning skills

This paper suggests programs and activities and some of the suggestions to prepare present generation teacher with competencies like:

- To cope with different learning needs and expectations of learners in any school affiliated to any of the national and International Boards.
- To unlearn old methods of teaching imparting knowledge and understanding of subject matter and relearn new way of transacting curriculum to develop the ability of 'learning to learn' among students.

The present teacher education program needs to be restructured to inculcate in teachers the life long learning skills to enhance their competencies so that they can inculcate the same attitude in their students.

The onus is on teacher education institutions to develop these competencies in the teachers so that they can take up the challenges with confidence.

One of the most profound changes which occurred in society over the past decades was the development of the concept of lifelong learning. There are now few occupations or professions where there is not an expectation that its members will engage in significant level of continuous learning and training to guarantee the relevance of their knowledge and skill. Teaching should reflect strongly this larger societal shift. If young people are to succeed they need to be encouraged to see the 12 years of education as the platform for a future of learning throughout their lives. If they are to learn the skills and strategies necessary to become lifelong learners, then lifelong learning must provide an underlying philosophy not only for practicing teachers, but also for those training to become teachers.

The present teacher education program needs to be restructured to inculcate in teachers the life long learning skills to enhance their competencies so that they can inculcate the same attitude in their students. Some of the suggestions to restructure teacher education program to prepare present generation teacher with lifelong learning competencies are:

- Teacher Education program should adopt a holistic approach for holistic development of pupil-teacher to become lifelong learners
- Techniques like Concept mapping, outlining, reflective teaching model, experiential learning, collaborative and co-operative learning, peer-coaching, etc need to be adopted to teach the Pre-service teachers. They should be encouraged to see that knowledge is dynamic and evolving, they are then are more likely to pass on these skills on to the children they teach.

- An inductive approach to learning by students experiencing teaching situations before being told about them or being presented with learning theories.
- As lifelong learning is concerned with the personal growth of individuals throughout their lifespan, pedagogy related to different learning styles and different types of intelligence should be demonstrated in Teacher Education Program.
- Organization of internship or practice teaching sessions should be of longer duration.

- Skills like problem solving which instills lifelong learning needs time to implement and acquire. During the hasty period of practice teaching and internship the pillar of life long learning is lost, hence if the time is more a conscious effort can be made to make learning more interesting and lasting.

- Modeling of Lifelong learning by the Faculty
 - ⇒ Application of lifelong learning practices within the classroom or lecture –delivery, assessment, etc. i.e. the teacher educator can use transaction strategies like collaborative techniques, experiential learning, effective technology, reflective model, etc
 - ⇒ Practical examples of teacher educators themselves being lifelong learners i.e. they model behavior to be Collaborators, Facilitators, Co-creators, Researchers, Reflective thinkers, etc

- Enabling access to advanced information technology and telecommunication infrastructure and reliable sustainable infrastructure support service within the education institutes.
- A Thinking Curriculum should be framed which-
 - ⇒ Makes pupil-teachers independent and autonomous learners.
 - ⇒ Develops their awareness and control over thinking process and meta-cognition
 - ⇒ Assists pupil-teachers to develop complex thinking skills, deeper exploration, authentic learning experiences and problem solving skills.
- Developing a comprehensive Government Policy Framework for education and training in shaping lifelong learning
- A learning community is developed through building three modes of capacity: personal, interpersonal, and organizational
 - ⇒ Personal Capacity - Building personal capacity involves individual teachers reconstructing their structures of practice: embedded values, assumptions, beliefs and practical knowledge.
 - ⇒ Interpersonal capacity depends on fostering both an affective climate where teachers feel affirmed and motivated to participate, and a cognitive climate that encourages learning.
 - ⇒ Organizational capacity depends upon the productive rearrangement of structures that can enable and encourage collective learning: resources, power relationships, and instructional design
- Being a networked society requires new a teacher with new competences. A major role of Teacher Education Program is to help

pupil-teacher circulate in the knowledge networks, to find appropriate paths in complex networks, to validate the knowledge found, to find appropriate knowledge. Therefore teacher education must take into account the networked characteristics of the knowledge society.

⇒ Teacher Education Networking System as a platform can be developed which has a country wide framework for teachers' lifelong learning connecting the Universities, teacher education centers and schools. Making college clusters to develop a spirit of Caring and sharing - information, resources, new ways of teaching, etc

- Changing Learner's Profile – Tech Savvy, converger & synthesizer, able to deal with 21st century shifts of Violence and Terror, Changing skills sets, etc
- Infrastructure of teacher education in accordance with Global challenges – Virtual Classrooms, smart colleges, networking, e-learning, blogging, etc.
- Focus of Teacher Education needs to be broadened beyond creator and transmitter of generalized knowledge to encompass enhancing the knowledge creation capacities of all pupil-teachers i.e. focus on skills needed to assess, assimilate and accommodate new knowledge – critical thinking, critiquing, reflection, meta cognition, analyzing, hypothesing, etc

A stable learning society will not evolve unless teachers in training and teachers in service understand and come to terms with lifelong learning ideas, concepts and practices.

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