
Research Papers



Teacher Education: Need of Paradigm shift from Behaviorism to Constructivism

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Abstract

Constructivism is relatively a new paradigm which exerts major theoretical influence on the present Education system. It is effective way of teaching and learning. Though the constructivism is a buzzword in the field of Education, our Teacher Education programme is still very much influenced by Behaviorism. Hence, there should be revitalization of whole Teacher Education programme and giving real thrust on constructivism.

How a teacher should be in 21st century? This question ought to be a prime consideration for the revitalization of Teacher Education programmes. At present Teacher Education programs perform traditional role for educating teachers. It has become dogmatic and stereotyped. In one year (B.Ed./M.Ed.), two years (D.T.Ed.) or four years (B.A.B.Ed.) Teacher Education programmes student-teachers have to complete, many practicals/ activities during the course as:

- 1) To complete General Education courses.
- 2) To complete Pedagogic courses.
- 3) To complete practice teaching programme.
- 4) To complete practical works.

Both Teacher-Educators and student teachers are after the completions of course work hence, both of them are mechanical and instrumental. The theoretical part is stuffed in to the brains of student teachers.

Innovations are brought in school curriculum at the time Teacher Education programmes are not framed, sometimes conceptual information is added as theoretical part (e.g. Multiple Intelligences). Teacher Education programmes are going in one direction and

school education is going in another direction. There is no co-ordination between Teacher education and school education.

In view of unprecedented explosion of information - technology, globalization etc. still our Teacher Education Programmes assumes that the teacher's role is mere transmission of information, imparting instruction which leads to learning of students. Nature of Teaching is not changed. However, a teacher today cannot afford to remain mere transmitter of knowledge. Both Teacher education and school education are under the strong impression of Behaviorism.

Behaviorism and Constructivism these are two predominant theories in Education for effective classroom teaching. In the researches conducted in these areas, there is oblivious shift more constructivist way of teaching.

Bases of Behaviorism

B.F.Skinner's behaviorism approach influenced world of education predominantly. Its reinforcement theory still has impacts on education. Skinner (1958) found that 'Behaviour' is to be shaped

and maintained by 'reinforcing' consequences rather than elicited as conditioned or unconditioned response to stimuli and these idea has been included in many educational practices such as planning of lesson, learning, teaching and evaluation. Its focus is on memorization of bits of information.

The present School Education program is still under the impact of Behaviorism of 20th century as follows, though innovations are brought,

- 1) Already framed curriculum for students prepared by teachers & experts.
- 2) Selection of learning objectives.
- 3) Choosing appropriate teaching – learning strategies.
- 4) Evaluation by written examination to measure student progress and for decision making.
- 5) Examination to measure learning objectives.
- 6) Same examination and same answer key for all students.
- 7) No objective interpretation of learner's achievement.
- 8) Emphasis on cognitive objectives.

Our Teacher Education programmes also run same way as-

- i) Micro teaching
- ii) Fixed Time table
- iii) Content of the programme and desirable activities relating to different components of the content
- iv) Logical sequence of the execution of various activities etc.
- v) Practice teaching programmes- lesson planning, observation & Feedback.

We are ignoring that present scenario of teaching and learning is changed due to high access of students, information, knowledge and influence of different Medias, many researches in the field of learning & teaching in Neuroscience etc.

Bases of constructivism

Constructivism has its roots in Jean Piaget's stage theory of cognitive development. Constructivism belief that child first assimilate external environment as own way which forms Schemata which are more mobile and better able to inter coordinate. This theory believes more on learning by doing so that learning will be more profound. Constructivism focuses on different aspects of education than behaviorism.

It has wide impact on learning theories and teaching methods. Through processes of accommodation and assimilation, individuals construct new knowledge from their experiences.

Parallel to Behaviorism, cognitivism and constructivism emerged which gave new approach to teaching & learning and now due to researches in the field of neuroscience, these are bringing revolution in the field of education, they are differentiated as follow :

- Behaviorism is based on observable changes in behavior which leads to learning.

- Cognitivism is based on thought process behind the behaviour which leads to learning.

- Constructivism based on construction of own perspective of the world through individual experiences & schema which leads to learning.

Thus, constructivism can merge into cognitivism, but Behaviorism is different from both of them.

One can differentiate between Behaviorism and Constructivism with reference to Educational psychology as follow:

Behaviorism	Constructivism
• Learning is Observable changes in behaviour.	• Learning means interpretation of new experiences by the individual through own experiences.
• Learning depends on response given by an individual to external stimulus hence, it is external process.	• Learning is internal process.
• Learners are less active in learning process.	• Learners are totally active in learning process.
• Change in behaviour is due to association between stimulus & response.	• Change in behaviour is due to personally interpretation of facts, concepts & generalization.
• It gives biological explanation of learning in the form of reflex actions.	• It gives biological explanation as brain based learning.
• Curriculum is forced	• Emphasizes students input to curriculum.
• Stresses on teaching or direct instruction.	• Stresses on meaningful learning.
• Teaching-learning methods are Teacher-centered.	• Teaching-learning methods are learner-centered.
• Learning out-comes are important.	• Learning process is important.

Last two decades of 20th century witnessed vigorous researches in the field Neuroscience related to learning, the out come of which is brain-based learning. Constructivism believes brain-based learning. National curriculum framework (2005) emphasizes constructivism and recommends that curriculum should help learners to become constructor of knowledge and emphasizes active role of teachers in relation to the process of knowledge construction according to which textbooks at primary education level are developed but what about Teacher Education programmes? They are the subset of school education and social interactions. Total constructivism approach is still far away, so instead of bringing constructivism in content, we can stress on process. Critical features should be how knowledge is acquired by the students.

Several authors cite importance of teacher educators modeling constructivist approaches that engage students on interdisciplinary exploration, collaborative activity and field based opportunities for experiential learning etc.

Teacher Education programme should consider recent researches and technical innovations and think what really should go on. If as Teacher educators we cannot deal effectively, we might fold our tents, steal away and

spend our time elsewhere, because there are technological institutions which can take steps for digital learning, there might be no need of formal Teacher Education Programmes.

Constructivism in Psychological perspective is receiving increased attention in Developmental Psychology & Educational Psychology. It encourages active and meaningful learning and promotes responsibility and autonomy. Hence, to grow professionally towards constructivist practices there is a need of paradigm shift from Behaviorism to Constructivism in Teacher Education Programmes.