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Analysing the Role of Facilitator in ABC and Child Centered Classrooms

Abstract

This paper tries to analyse the role of the teacher as facilitator in the child centred and activity based classroom of the revised school curriculum in Kerala. In the curriculum, the role of the teacher is changed as a facilitator who guides, helps, motivates, inspires and encourages each student considering his/her speed of learning and background. In child centered education system, children have the right to ask questions; to participate in debates, discussions, seminars etc. Moreover, Teacher is directed to find out the most suitable activities from textbooks, handbooks, local materials or from any other sources to enhance curricular competencies at mastery level. The teacher is not a person who is merely imparting knowledge and continuously delivering lectures. It is conspicuously known that activity based and child centred curriculum help the children become an ideal men and women who contribute a lot for the development of society.

Keywords:Teacher as a facilitator,Activity Based Classroom,
Child Centered Classroom

Introduction

This paper tries to analyse the role of a teacher as facilitator to develop the community through the child centred and activity based classroom in the revised school curriculum in Kerala. The use of a variety of activities in language is vital to language acquisition. Such activities provide a purpose for classroom learning. They are simulated real life activities. Therefore, they facilitate language learning with the help of the teacher. In the curriculum, the role of the teacher is changed as a facilitator who guides, helps, motivates, inspires and encourages each student considering his/her speed of learning and background of students before giving activities to them.

Role of a Teacher as a Facilitator

Facilitating involves creating rich environments and activities for linking new information to prior knowledge. And it also provides opportunities for collaborative work and problem solving. These may first involve attention to the physical environment. In the revised school curriculum in Kerala the teacher is perceived more as a facilitator, rather than as a proactive.

Revised Curriculum recommends the teacher to behave in a very friendly manner with pupils. Here the stick is the one weapon which is used to point on the Black Board. The aim of teachers is not to complete the text book but to ensure all the curricular objectives in students at mastery level to live in the society as an ideal man.

In his book Patel(2008) says "The goal of communicative approach is to make learners communicatively competent. In this approach the teacher is seen as a facilitator of his students, learning." Tylee(1990) defines learning "Learning is a complex process and there are many interacting variables that influence learning. Learning is not an isolated human activity and for internal school students learning occur within the context of a classroom, the school, a broader community and a particular society. The teacher, who is a variable in the classroom context, is charged with the function of acting as an intermediary between the variables outside the classroom and the students to assist the students in their learning". The function of being an intermediary means that the teacher has the role of facilitating student learning, as well as being a part of the school and community.

In the view of constructivism, on which revised curriculum is made, the learner is constructing their view of the world and constructing ideas. They are interacting with materials, directing processes, making connections, identifying patterns and organising materials. All of the learning is linked to existing knowledge. The learner is not passive; they are not receiving pre-digested or organised materials. It does not focus on

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what is to be learnt but on how the learning occurs. This is the role of the teacher as facilitator and this is consistent with the liberal/progressive orientation to curriculum.

Inside the classroom, students are organized into heterogeneous groups, with roles such as team leader, encourager, reteller, recorder and spokes persons .All these roles will definitely help them do their duties in the society and develop community.

Analysing Activity Based Learning for the Development of Community

For practicing the activity based curriculum the teachers have to be creative as the motto of the methodology is 'experience based teaching'. The teacher is supposed to give the child the designed experiences usually in the form of activities to perform and learn. In the curriculum, the stress is more on the 'doing' rather than memorizing. The learning achievement will considerably improve if the teacher is able to relate the existing knowledge with the life experience of children of a particular age group.

The activity-oriented teaching is helpful in building children's self-confidence and ensures that they become independent learners. When child gains self-confidence, he/she is able to do more, try more and have more success. One activity, which is suitable to one class, may not be suitable for other classes. Continuously and comprehensively evaluate each pupil and report it in the correct order is other important duty of a teacher in this curriculum. Minute behavioural changes of child are reported and evaluated.

There are shorter activities and longer activities. Talking about a given topic can be a shorter one, whereas a project or seminar can be a longer activity. The revised curriculum for the sake of convenience, it has been decided to divide, language learning activities into four sections.

1. Performance based activities

Those activities that involve the oral presentation skills of the learners are grouped under this section. Speech, recitations, reading poems, stories or other creative writings of the learners, acting loud reading news reading comparing etc are example of performance based activities.

2. Interactive activities

These activities involve the ability of the learner to interact individually and the groups. Group discussion, panel discussion, debate, seminar, dialogue, interview, TV/Radio anchoring etc. are examples of interactive activities.

3. Investigative activities

Investigative activities involve the ability of the learners to arrive at proper conclusions or point of view through the study/survey of data collected from different materials, Project, survey, field study, case study etc, are examples of investigative activities

4. Creative and academic writing activities

The written products prepared by the learners as a result of classroom activities are included in this group. The ability of the learners to construct creative and academic compositions shall be evaluated in this section. Stories, poems, screen

plays, review, literary appreciation, reports, letters, notices, news, Editorial, translated pieces, comparative studies, book reviews etc belong to this category.

Altogether it can be said that all these activities of the revised curriculum of Kerala helps the learner deeply to live in this competitive world in order to develop community.

Analysing Child Centred Classroom

The learning process can be defined as "...making connections, identifying patterns, organising previously unrelated bits of knowledge, behaviour, activities, into new (for the learner) patterned wholes" (Cambourne p.12). The philosophy at the bottom of Cambourne's definition is that the learner is actively involved in the learning process .Traditionally, a class is taught by a teacher mainly through lectures. The teacher presents information in an oral presentation while students listen, take notes and occasionally ask questions. This method sometimes leaves little room for class discussion or hands-on work; the teacher is the focal point and usually takes most of the class time. Grades are usually based on written exams. This will not bring much development in the community, as here learners are only passive audience who do not get any training for real life situations.

In the previous curriculum of Kerala, the students were supposed to memorise as to why Dewali, Christmas, Id etc. are celebrated. Now children would narrate them in their own experiences as to how they celebrate these festivals. Such changes are visible and comprise as an essential component of the activity based, child centred experience sharing pedagogy. This brings us to look at the teacher-child relationship in this new paradigm. The teachers always have crucial role to play in creating learning environment for students by using the facilities available in the school. Their qualification and training determine the planning and organization of curriculum in classroom. In the present education system, the teacher is perceived more as a facilitator, rather than as a proactive. Thus, the relationship of teacher-taught, to facilitator would help to create a learning environment in the school.

Now, in child centred education system, children have the right to ask questions; to participate in debates, discussions, seminars etc. Language teacher is directed to find out the most suitable activities to develop communication at mastery level from textbooks, handbooks, local materials or any other source. A facilitator, on the other hand, is an instructor who leads the class in discussions based on the material covered. This is a student-centered approach. Facilitators rarely lecture; instead, they lead the class to discuss the material and share personal insights from real-world examples. This approach allows students to apply the information to their own situations, making the learning more meaningful to them.

When the child is made the centre, the learning activities will become very important. The child is led to classify, compare, find out differences,

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make inference and gradually become competent to practice the item he learned in his real life situations. In this process, there must be pupil learning with the help of the teacher, mutual learning and self learning. For energetic participation of pupils, to develop communication, a number of activities have been given in the text book like learning games, dramatization, project, field work etc.

Revised curriculum envisages the English classroom where the learners can interact with one another, with the materials, with the facilitator and with the society outside the classroom, whenever necessary. The profile of the classroom must be collaborative rather than competitive. Knowledge is conceived not as the monopoly of an individual or an agency but as the collective asset of a society. Hence the classroom encourages, sharing of knowledge among the learners. A teacher is to rise to the level of a researcher who continuously works for tackling academic issue. Collaborative learning among learners also brings about positive changes in education. Hence, the teacher can exploit all possibilities of gameting language by shifting the role of the learner from a recipient to that of a producer.

Conclusion

The role of the teacher is diverse and has several orientations. One important aspect is that in this curriculum teachers are considered as facilitators. The facilitator attempts to provide circumstances that will enable students to engage with the learning opportunities and construct for themselves their understandings and skills. This role will interact with those of teacher as learner, colleague and community partner. Instead of only giving continuous lecturing, role of the teacher has been changed as a facilitator who provides necessary help to the pupils for learning languages. These all activities of the teacher as a facilitator directly and indirectly help the development of community, because development of students means development of next generation.

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