

Redefining & Reimagining Teacher Education: Preparing Teachers for facing the challenges in the classroom (Research Based Teaching)

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Abstract: *The present study tried to find out the various obstacles faced by the pupil teachers in the classroom during internship. It makes an attempt to study the abilities of the pupil teachers's for innovation and research in school internship. The study tries to find out the significance of action research in solving the problems faced in the classroom. Since the pre-service teachers have faced many challenges in the classroom during their internship the study is conducted on them. The results revealed that most of the pupil teachers are not aware of using action research in solving the problems faced in the classroom. Therefore it is suggested that the Pupil teachers should be made aware of using action research and indulge in research based teaching for solving the challenges of the classroom.*

Key Words: *Competency, Challenges, Action Research, Innovation.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

A good teacher can inspire hope, ignite the imagination, and instill a love of learning. (Brad Henry). Teaching is a very noble profession that shapes the character, caliber, and future of an individual. If the people remember me as a good teacher, that will be the biggest honor for me. (A. P. J. Abdul Kalam)

Education is the key to success in life, and teachers make a lasting impact in the lives of their students. Teachers are an extremely important facet of any society for a number of reasons and their role in society is both significant and valuable. Teachers play an extraordinary part in the lives of children for the formative years of their development and the importance of teachers is something that cannot be understated. Learning cannot be considered as a passive knowledge-consuming process anymore. Students are expected to be more autonomous and more self-regulated in their learning since they have to be prepared to be lifelong learners.

Teacher development is seen as a continuous progress that starts with a pre-service preparation and spans the entire career of the teacher. (Sithamparan and Dhamotharan,1992.) Teachers are always working for their students. Preparing lesson plans, working on creating just the right assignments and notes, keeping parents informed and doing everything to help the kids learn and grow in the best ways possible. In spite of making so many efforts there are always challenges to face in the classroom and school. Expectations are high – from students, from parents, from department chairs and administrators. Therefore a teacher has to be competent and innovative to solve the challenges that may arise in the classroom. Action research can also be used by teachers to improve the quality of their teaching and actions. It is a reflective process which helps teachers to explore and examine aspects of teaching and learning and to take action to change and improve. There are a number of challenges that a teacher face and a teacher has to prepare himself to solve the problems and make the teaching learning process interesting and motivating for the students. Therefore it is necessary to identify the challenges and problems faced by the teachers in the classroom and use research to solve the problems.

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Research based teaching can be of great help for prospective teachers as it provides new knowledge and understanding about how to improve educational practices and resolve significant problems in classrooms and schools (Mills: Stringer, 2008).The significance of this study emerges from the importance of research in teaching learning process as well as the prospective teacher's teaching practice experience in teacher education programs. The results of this study may draw attention to several problems and challenges faced by the student teachers while in the field. Therefore, this study attempts to share these issues that may help the educational stakeholders to minimize these challenges. The present study will also throw light on innovative skills and strategies to handle various classroom challenges.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To identify the current classroom challenges faced by the teacher trainees.
- To throw light on innovative skills and strategies to handle various classroom challenges.

- To study the possibilities and problems faced by the teacher trainees in doing action research during school internship.
- To give suggestions to prepare teacher trainees for research based teaching.

4. Delimitations of the study:

- The present study is restricted to the teacher-education institutes of Delhi/NCR.
- Pre-service school teachers are included in the study.

5. Methodology-

Survey method is employed to collect the data. A survey is a research method in which subjects respond to a series of statements or questions in a questionnaire or an interview. Surveys target some population, which are the people who are the focus of research. Because populations are usually quite large, the researcher will target a sample, which is a part of a population that represents the whole. The most common types of surveys are questionnaires and interviews. A questionnaire is series of written statements or questions. With an interview, the researcher personally asks subjects a series of questions and gives participants the freedom to respond as they wish. Both questionnaires and interviews can include open-ended questions (allowing the subjects to respond freely), or close-ended questions (including a selection of fixed responses). The population of the present study consists of the pre-service teachers of Delhi/NCR.

Sample:

Sampling is a process used in statistical analysis in which a predetermined number of observations are taken from a larger population. Simple random sampling was used to select the students and collect the data from them. Simple random sampling is the basic sampling technique where we select a group of subjects (a sample) for study from a larger group (a population). Each individual is chosen entirely by chance and each member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. A total of 100 samples were selected randomly from B.Ed. and B.EL.ED. Students of four teacher education institutes of Delhi/NCR for the survey.

Procedure:

The sample of 100 students was selected by way of simple random sampling by giving equal weightage to B.Ed. and B.EL.ED. Students. The statistical technique used is percentage analysis of the responses from the sample. Focus group discussion and interviews were also conducted.

6. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA:

- On the basis of percentage analysis it was found that 99% of teachers faced challenges in the use and availability of teaching learning material. This may be due to the fact that schools are not providing adequate material to the teachers and the pupil teachers also do not get sufficient time to prepare TLMs.
- It was found that 70% of the teachers had difficulties in classroom organization and management. Same results were found in a study conducted by Borden (2013).
- The study revealed that 96% of pupil-teachers had problems in dealing with individual differences amongst students. This may be due to lack of time and planning on the part of the teachers.
- The study reported that 60% of the prospective teachers did not have an access to ICT based classrooms. It can be due to the fact that all the schools does not have the facility of smart classrooms.
- It was found that 50% pupil-teachers were not able to use innovative approaches and strategies in the classroom as students were indifferent to these approaches. This may be because the students in the schools are being taught by traditional methods of teaching like rote-learning and the teachers are also not motivated to use innovative methods.
- The study revealed that 70% of the prospective teachers faced problem in pupil-teacher ratio in the classroom.
- It was found that 80% of the pupil-teachers have faced gender issues in one form or another in the classroom. It may be due to lack of motivation amongst female students in classroom discussions and various activities of the school.
- The study revealed that 60% of the pupil-teacher had difficulty in motivating the students to give desired terminal behavior. This may be due to the fact that more emphasis is give on theory papers rather than practical skills.
- The study reported that 90% of the teacher trainees had less time and expertise to do action research to improve educational practices and resolve significant problems in schools. This may be due to the fact that the pupil teachers had lack of experience.
- It was found that 70% of the pupil-teachers were having problem in completion of endless paper work for which they had not been prepared. These results are in consistent with the study conducted by Watson (2006).

This is may be due to the fact that Teacher training institutions are not preparing teachers for doing paper work during their course study.

- It was found that 90% of the teacher trainees were having challenges with content knowledge. It can be due to the fact that most of the subject related topics were not taught in the teacher training course. Same results were found in a study conducted by Boakye and Ampiah (2017).

7. SUGGESTIONS:

- Teacher Education institutes must include action research as a core unit in Teacher training courses as it holds a significant value to improve practices within classrooms, schools and communities.
- Pre-service programs should equip pre-service teachers with the skills of seeking answers to difficult problems of teaching and learning.
- The pre-service teachers can be trained to handle specific issues in context instead of just learning about them so that they have the real experiences of the challenges that will help them to cope if they happen to meet similar challenges.
- The teachers in the school should be equipped with a package of teaching learning material rather than a single text book that could be used to engage the child in active learning. A large number of TLM packages should be developed at the district and state level.
- A proper orientation for student-teachers should be carried out using efficient means of communication like seminars, workshops, conferences and discussion before they go for teaching practice.
- School of Education and colleges should organize the teaching practice exercise very well so as to give the best professional practice to the trainee teachers.

8. CONCLUSION:

If teaching is indeed a complex practice, and not something that individuals will naturally develop on their own, then teacher educators must develop new approaches for preparing ordinary people, in an extraordinarily brief amount of time, to be prepared for the challenge. Organizing professional education around a core set of practices would challenge many of the existing structures within teacher education. Teacher educators would need to develop their roles as clinical educators, able not only to profess about teaching, in the abstract, but also to provide the kind of skilled feedback and coaching that enables teacher trainees to improve. We would move away from a curriculum that symbolizes the separation of theory and practice through its division into foundations and methods courses toward a curriculum that puts practice at the center of all endeavors. Action research is a valuable exercise for teachers to undertake. It offers teachers a systematic process of inquiry that actively seeks to address areas of concern.(Holter&Frabutt, 2012; Mills, 2011). Action research provides teachers with the technical skills and specialized knowledge required to bring positive change within classrooms, schools and communities.(Johnson,2012;Stringer,2008).Teachers must be capable to handle all types of individual differences and classroom challenges. In view of the above study, it is needed to rethink, redesign and revitalize teacher education in the global perspective.

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