

ACTIVE LEARNING APPROACH TO CLASSROOM TEACHING AND REFORMS IN EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT:

Active learning has been defined as an approach to teaching and learning where students are fully engaged in the process and have real life experiences in classrooms for life-long learning (Edward, 2001; Prince, 2004 and Harfield et al., 2007). Activity based learning as a theory suggests that a classroom environment, material provided and knowledge introduced helps students to construct knowledge and understanding in their own personal ways. When students interact with the situation or engage in a concept, learning becomes more meaningful. Stoblien (2009) discusses in his study that active learning happens when knowledge integrates with experience. At primary level active engagement can be promoted with play-way. Pedagogical goals or curriculum is difficult to attain in a given set of time but children learn effectively when they are involved in play and are taught informally. Yet, a planned curriculum is required for a guided activity. Research has suggested that at secondary levels also activity-based learning makes learning effective. Blake et al. (2000) found that students at secondary levels taught with activity-based approach perform better in basic science. Hussain et al. (2011) found out that physics students at secondary levels performed better when taught with active methods than the traditional teaching. Decreased retention was accounted due to lack of proper use of active teaching methods in a number of studies (Prince, 2004 & Van De Bogart, 2009). Duchy et al. (2003) remarked that students taught by active learning techniques performed better on long term retention assessments. Muhammad et al. (2012) concluded in their study that there is a positive impact of active teaching on cognitive skills of secondary stage physics students. MacVaugh and Norton (2012) found that active learning approaches move learners away from dependence on (possibly illegitimate and unprepared) educators and towards a personal responsibility approach. Mello & Less (2013) conducted a study on active learning and academic achievement in arts and science. The data of the study suggested that academic gains due to active learning are statistically significant and there is more consistency in results of active learners than for traditional learners.

Keywords: Marketing Mix, Covid, Performance , B2B,B2C

INTRODUCTION

Student engagement and learning

process is must (Marmolejo, Wilder, Bradley, 2004). It is an approach beneficial for both students as well as the instructors (Eison, 1990). Literature has suggested that in order to increase student outcomes and outcome of education, student engagement plays an important role (Astin, 1999; Kuh, 2001; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005 and Zepke & Leach, 2005). Since different people learn in different ways (Meyers and Jones, 1993), a blended approach must be exercised in the classrooms. To move up the hierarchy, of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives, from lower order thinking skills to higher order thinking skills, instructor needs to implement problem

based learning techniques. This encourages life-long learning and memorization to understanding (Salter, 2010). An improved learning by implementing active approach has been documented in a number of researches (Abramovitz et al., 2010; Idris, 2009; Zhang, 2003 and Weiner & Kelly, 2012). Qualitative research was carried on to study eight-composition students and their instructor on perception of students on classroom instruction (Halm, 2015). Through observation and semi-structured interviews, the study suggested that at the core of student engagement is the bond between teacher and student. Halm (2015) further concluded that along with students'

personal, academic and professional goals, a mutual relationship of respect and trust enhances students' classroom engagement. Vygotsky (1978) maintains the role of social constructivism in the learning process for children. Teaching-learning is collaborative efforts of both parties and not just between a transmitter and receptacle, he believes. Constructivism can help engage and motivate students by making them take more active role in the learning process

Rethinking active learning: The teacher-student relationship and methods

Active learning in the current context is also viewed as a synonym to quality education. Active learning takes place with an active

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student and an active teacher. There is a counter effect involved in active teaching learning situation. The teacher is a facilitator of opportunities. A motivated teacher can motivate the students and active teacher can make learning effective. One of the major constraints in effective modern day education system is a demotivated and unsatisfied teacher. Teachers lack enthusiasm due to personal, familial, economic and work related issues. There are all different kinds of learners present in the classroom. Each student understands the knowledge in their own ways. It also depends upon how the teacher in taking up a classroom activity. Hence, the teachers have to be pro-active in their approach. Richard (2016) has analysed certain problems that overshadow a teacher's ability to adapt to the students in the class. Richard (2012) highlighted problems of Indian school teachers that ranges from their poor academic background, incompetency to segregation of teacher education department. A teacher is also always under pressure to meet the demands of the curriculum, teaching and assessment of students. The ideology of cheap labour is prevalent in India and underpaid teachers are the poor bearers of the societal vices and low self-esteem. The over-pressure has subdued their enthusiasm and motivation for the need to be flexible and innovative in classrooms. Active learning starts with a satisfied teacher who is full of enthusiasm and fully immersed in one's passion and skills. There is no single definition to describe active learning but it should be viewed in totality. The present paper suggests that active learning involves an active teacher along with active teaching-learning technique to make learning effective. Classroom teaching should maintain a balance between

the participation of instructor and participation of students. The pupil-teacher ratio is one of the key measurement of quality education (Opanuga et al., 2019). It is very essential to quality education (Ikediashi & Amaechi, 2012). Opanuga (2019) also states that a pupil-teacher ratio of above 1:50 is unacceptable in Ogun state, Nigeria. It negatively impacts on the quality of education. It promotes the lecture format of imparting education at junior, secondary and higher levels of schools education. The pupil-teacher ratio in an average north-Indian school classroom is 40:1. The government's schemes for free and compulsory education for all and access to quality education has led to a rise in student enrolment. One of the goals of New Education Policy (2020) is to increase the gross enrolment ration from 27% currently to 50 % till 2035. The increased enrolment in schools shows that the classroom capacity has increased too. But this doesn't necessarily leads to a decrease in pupil teacher ratio or better education system. Waita et al. (2015) documents that a rise in enrolment has forced the schools to accommodate more children and it doesn't translate into improved education quality. A constant teaching force and expanding gross enrolment is a major obstacle to implement active learning approach in classroom and overall quality education. Larger classroom size are hindrance in active communication. Howard et al. (1996) conducted a study on gender and class size and the findings indicated that class size is a major predictor in student participation in active learning than gender. Hyde and Ruth (2002) and Myers et al. (2009) rightly

pointed out that students in small class size are more willing to participate in active communication with the teacher. In their study, Weaver and Qi (2005) stated that in larger classrooms shy students have a possibility of hiding away from the teacher or feeling anxious in active participation in the class (Smith, 1992). In traditional classroom setting with lecture method of teaching and large classrooms, students have the feeling of being mere listeners to an authoritative figure. Students have their own personal fears and anxieties. They may feel inadequate in front of others and choose not to participate in the class (Fritschener, 2000).

Several other factors such as personality differences among students, different speaking styles of males and females and teacher's approach to classroom teaching are responsible for students' active participation in class. Worako (2016) describes that before actually beginning the lesson, a teacher can take up small steps for motivating the students. these steps may include rearranging the physical format of the class, orally motivating the students, including repetitive reinforcement and appreciation system, indiscriminate observation of students, free communication and encouraging group activities with assigning duties and responsibilities (Worako, 2016). A self-reported improvement in character and critical thinking skills have been documented by students who engage in active classroom learning (Kuh & Umbach, 2004; Crone, 1997). Active learning enhances the overall personality of students and give them gains in their professional future life.

A conducive classroom environment boosts students' self-esteem and confidence. Conduciveness is important for active classroom environment and effective learning. An active

participation is also linked with grades of students. The teaching method in a classroom positively affects the grades students achieve at the end of their course or study (Handelsman et al., 2005). However, there are still so many factors that affect students' active participation or hinder in facilitating active learning in the classrooms. Debele and Kelbisa (2017), in their study, found out several factors that hamper active learning. They stated that 41% of students showed lack of confidence and 20% showed instructor's approach, cultural background and language barriers each as hindrance in active participation. Furthermore, 16% students blamed lack of incentives and seating arrangement each. The remaining accounted for active learning method (8%) and silence and shyness (4%) (Debele & Kelbisa, 2017). Thus, there is a long road to transforming the attitudes and perception of students and teachers from traditional learning to active learning. A large class size can often go up to 100 pupils in developing and low-human development regions (Ron, 2004). This makes a teacher overwhelmed and deprived of employing active teaching-learning approaches like group study, cooperative learning, collaborative learning and problem based education. Research has evidence into the positive effects of these approaches. Cooperative learning is one of the most commonly use form of active pedagogy (Tsay & Brady, 2010). A case study on cooperative learning and academic achievement in higher education was conducted by Tsay and Brady (2010). They conceived that there is a positive and significant relationship between the two variables. Cooperative learning is a strong predictor of students' academic performance. Students work really hard

for and learned more from cooperative learnings than from traditional lecture or text based components of courses studied (Carlsmith & Cooper, 2002). McCarthy and Anderson (2000) suggest that collaborative practices, role playing and pair-square activity enhances classroom learning environment. These exercises can be incorporated in teaching to ensure learning at deep (active) level and not just on surface (passive) level. Johnson et al. (2007) states that a well collaborative practice of teaching-learning promotes positive interdependence and accomplishment of common goals. Whereas a competitive structured groups are hindrances to positive development (Johnson et al., 2007). A student to student and student to teacher interaction is integral in healthy communication of ideas, guidance and feedback. This free flow is also an integral part of active learning.

National education policy (2020) and Holistic development

The New Education Policy (2020) of India has a special mention of Holistic development that can be viewed as having multidisciplinary approach to education or treating every discipline as an art. It points towards blending curricular and co-curricular activities in mainstream education, harbouring value education and personality development in curriculum framework. However, this paper suggests that holistic development is possible with a transformed approach to classroom teaching for education for learning outcomes. Every educational institution has goals of education. The major goals are generally broader in area. They include transfer of learning, critical thinking and creativity in students.

A life-long learning takes place in today's classrooms by inculcating values, knowledge and skills in children. Then there are objectives of education. These are generally framed by the instructor. The instructors lay out plans on how to achieve the goals of education. The instructors provides the material and decides on what is intended for the learners. This includes instruction, analysis and discussion in the classroom. Then comes the role of learning outcomes. An outcome is what is actually achieved by the learners in term of knowledge and skills at the end of an instruction, course or an activity. As the National Education Policy (NEP, 2020) emphasizes on outcome based learning and holistic development, there is a need to revise the curriculum and teaching methods at regular intervals of time. Holistic development is an umbrella term that covers numerous terms like teacher, teacher's job satisfaction, pupil-teacher ratio, students' active participation, practical activity based life-long learning approach, national curriculum for learning outcomes and multidisciplinary approach. To make the aims of NEP 2020 a reality, an activity based methods of daily classroom instruction will act as light cavalry to extinguish the major gap between output and outcome of Indian school education.

New age learning: Theory of connectivism and active learning

Educators adapting to new environments of active learning in digital age may turn to new age learning theories for guidance (Goldie, 2016). To stress on active learning approach in classrooms, theory of connectivism provides a set guidelines required to carry out the procedure. Dr George Siemens a Canadian educator began to realize how in the new age learning is technology influenced

network phenomenon to have roots in principles of complexity, chaos, network and self-organisation theory (Siemens, 2006, 2005). In Siemens's words, describes Cone (2017), the way in which people are aware of one another while they learn, connect, build and improve is changing. The growing use of technologies have made student more independent and they learn from others' ideas in their perspectives and add more to create ideas of their own. The basics of connectivism are (Cone, 2017; Siemens, 2005; Siemens, 2006):

The internet and technology changed learning Learning is focussed on connecting information and sharing Learning and knowledge rests in diversity of opinions

Learning may reside in. non-human appliances Ability to see connections between fields, ideas and concepts is crucial

The theory of connectivism urges that learning in the digital age gives freedom to the students to choose the method that suits them the best. There are a variety of resources that students can select from in building their own piece of knowledge (Siemens, 2005). A number of researches have been conducted in the area of learning to propound theories for new age and

technological advancements. Since the past five-six decades, teaching and learning has expanded horizons and new theories have been proposed to explain the learning environment (Faroughi, 2015). In classical learning theories of behaviourism, social constructivism and cognitive constructivism, the focus was on the instructor and the material introduced by the instructor. Learning was assessed in terms of change in behaviour or cognition (Skinner, 1976; Thorndike, 1932; Watson, 1928). The students were the passive recipients of

information or the treatment given to them (Mayer, 2001; Miller 2003). But with internet technology students can create, collaborate, connect and share information anytime and anywhere (Faroughi, 2015).

The theory of connectivism emphasizes that learning is more learner centric now with active participation of learners in finding the source of information, gaining knowledge, understanding, analysing and creating. As discussed earlier in the paper, active learning is an umbrella term that includes instructors, learners and methods. Active learning is a result of active learning philosophy and in words of Faroughi (2015), Jonessen (2000) explores the use of activity theory for the design of learner-centered new age

educational environment. The principles of active learning and theory of connectivism have helped in developing active methodologies for both face to face and online learning (faroughi, 2015). Some of the mentions are game based learning (Bedwell et al., 2012), blended learning (Horn & Staker, 2014), student debate, reaction to video, real life experience through situated learning methods, problem based learning and flipped classroom (Bergmann & Sams, 2012).

Coorey (2016) has described in his study certain methods, that integrate technology in the classroom, for educators seeking active learning methods for art and design education. At higher education level educators are constantly experimenting with educational software designed for active students' participation and prompt feedback. One of such technology is Clickers. Clickers offer one approach to active learning in classrooms (Ghilay & Ghilay, 2015).

Students actively participate through these remote-like gadgets that transmit students' response to instructor's computer and shares results directly (Kenwright, 2009). This technology also helps in gauging students' level of understanding of the material presented (Johnson, 2004). Clickers help students gain more solid, integrated and useful understanding of concepts and their applicability (Beatty, 2004; Ghilay & Ghilay, 2015). These programs follow the principles of game based learning and 21st century students have grown up using computer games for learning and entertainment (Martyn, 2007).

Discussion

Active learning can take up many forms and can be executed at different levels and disciplines depending upon the objectives of a course. Active teaching pedagogy includes active reading, active listening, problem solving and reflecting. The activities can be for large groups or small groups. But research evidently supports the view that active learning increases retention, makes learning permanent, prepares for real life situation and future professions. The communication, ethics, leadership qualities, social interaction and critical thinking skills of the students taught with active procedures are better than those with taught with traditional methods. Through a planned active learning pedagogy with well-defined objectives and outcomes, long term goals of education become real and observable. In active learning procedures students are actually engaged in the content rather than being just listeners. Active learning discourages rote-memorization. The New Education Policy (2020) has focussed on reducing rote-learning and increasing practical application. The policy has aimed to make education system more practical

and less theoretical. In the wake of this idea a lot of reforms have been made in educational format and core curriculum. Multiple exit and entry points in college education programs, provision of two board exams, assessment of core competencies and skills will seemingly make the system more flexible.

The central government has planned to offer pre-school education and multidisciplinary approach at middle school, secondary school and university education. The National Education Policy (NEP,2020) aims will be achieved if active learning pedagogy is incorporated in theory, method and philosophy of education. The objectives of holistic development and outcome based education are achievable when teaching-learning techniques in classrooms become more active in foundational learning stage to senior secondary stage and beyond. A national framework for redesigning the traditional education system is needed with classroom level groundwork.

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