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Improving Instructional Practices: Where to Begin?

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Education in general and higher education in particular stands at the threshold of reformation with increasing calls for redress and the ensuing policies in the local context. The wide array of problems, resulting from a large variety of sources, leaves individuals as well as the organizations attempting this daunting feat simply wondering where to begin? This paper precisely takes up this question, and identifies that the primary and immediate change is needed in the way teachers undertake classroom teaching. Based on empirical evidence collected from teachers involved with tertiary education and a critical review of the background literature related with effective instruction, a framework for training teachers is proposed in the backdrop of increasing faculty training and development initiatives. The framework comprises two recommendations: first, teachers need to be provided orientation towards the teaching process with its stages from start to end with a clear understanding of the teacher and students' roles; and second, they must be made to reflect upon their teaching philosophy which governs and ultimately shapes their instructional input and decisions.

Keywords: teacher factor, teaching process, teaching philosophies, classroom-instruction, framework for teacher education

Introduction

Faculty training and development has become a mandatory activity with academia across all educational levels including higher education. Higher Education Commission [HEC], institutions of Quality Enhancement Cells (QEC), ISO Certification or other quality assurance mechanisms, accreditation bodies, local and international, all have begun emphasizing upon the need to induce quality in education through faculty development. Several NGOs and private organizations have also stepped up to offer services to facilitate the teachers in updating their pedagogical knowledge and skills that has become almost mandatory condition for teaching with respect to the changing global and professional demands. The teaching practices in the local context reflect a traditional outlook on the methodology used for imparting education. Consequently, the students' performance and outputs leave a lot more desired from the higher education institutes, primarily to be able to produce the professionals who can assume the future roles and responsibilities. There is a growing demand on the academic institutes especially the higher education to align their teaching and learning to produce graduates who have sufficient technical knowledge and skills to undertake their careers, along with the capacity to exhibit higher order thinking skills for solving myriad of complex problems emerging in the professional, social and economic spheres of life and who remain lifelong learners. This goal is difficult to attain with the ongoing conventional teaching-learning practices. This paper takes a look at the local education context and identifies a need to train and develop teacher in order to bring about a positive and the much needed change in the classroom teaching. The global developments and insights connected with education are taken as the foundations for initiating teaching improvisations in the local context. The paper presents two fundamental concepts that teachers must be informed about while they are preparing for their professional practice that may get reflected in their teaching assignments and in their classroom routines later. First, a complete understanding about the instructional process with all the distinct stages right from the start to the end, along with a clear idea regarding the teacher and student roles throughout this process; second, the need to reflect upon their

existing teaching philosophy that governs their professional practice, and ultimately shapes the attitude they demonstrate as teachers about teaching. The framework is an outcome of the contradiction that may be conveniently observed in the standard literature on teaching and the way teaching is practiced in the real classroom situation. A fact which is also established from the impact that has been estimated of the teacher education programmes, held in large numbers, undertaken by teachers without any major change in their classroom instructional practices.

Methodology

The paper is structured in three parts: first part summarizes the background studies that provide the underpinning for the proposed framework; second part outlines the proposed framework with teaching process and teaching philosophy as the recommended areas where teacher education inputs are to be planned; and the last section provides the empirical evidence necessary for validation of the recommendation made in this study.

The research study is based on triangulation of theoretical concepts excerpted from the existing literature and empirical evidences collected from teachers. The theoretical groundwork is drawn from the relevant literature in the field of education and instructional practices in the classroom. The framework development is based on this critical analysis; and, later, evidences were gathered through purposive sampling of teachers engaged in teaching at tertiary level classrooms to answer the questions posed in the study.

The teachers were selected from three separate in-service teachers' training; however, they were all planned around the concept of effective classroom instruction. These training programmes shared common training objectives and the trainer, and the participants constituted an almost homogeneous group as they were all affiliated with higher education institutions as teachers. Three intact groups were taken to complete the study. The constitution of participants in three groups was based on non-random process because the purpose was not to differentiate among the groups rather to perform a combined observation of all participants taken together.

The data were collected from these teachers by using a self designed tool appropriate to capture the reflective log and thought process of the participants. The suitability and validity of the tool was established through logical validity process. The tool comprised open ended questions, self-developed check list, reference framework to verify the alignment of their teaching activities and to identify the stages of teaching-learning process. The qualitative analyses of the collected data were carried out using coding, sorting and sifting techniques, and then similarity and contrasts were developed with reference to the framework. The descriptive analysis was also conducted through quasi-statistics technique.

The research study answered two basic research questions:

RQ1: Are teachers at tertiary level completing all the three stages of teaching-learning process i.e. from information transmission/acquisition to application of acquired knowledge?

RQ2: What teaching philosophy, consciously or unconsciously, is being used at tertiary level education by the teachers for their classroom instruction?

Literature Underpinning

Our world is changing and so does everything within it. The global developments and transitions have affected the educational context too. It is imperative for all concerned with education to align themselves with the changes in the environment as indicated by Hargreaves (2003) that rules of teaching must change since the rules of the world have changed. However, the local education context seems quite static and the problems posed are increasing in their numbers and becoming serious in nature. The change agents 'Teachers', despite education and experience, have to a large extent failed in bringing a change in their pedagogy which can enable the students to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to be contributing members of their professional organizations as well as their communities and societies. There are a myriad of problems constraining the education sector in attaining its objectives and responding adequately to

the ever-changing world for which it is primarily responsible for providing good citizens and skilled workforce. The most significant factor through which the educational institutes achieve their fundamental goals is the teacher. All other factors somehow seem to be either directly or indirectly influenced by the 'Teacher-Factor'. This has been very aptly captured by Ann Lieberman in her preface to Andy Hargreaves' book Changing Teachers, Changing Times (2003) in these words:

"...reforms of curriculum, organization, and methods of teaching will not matter unless we understand what it is that teachers do with students, and how they come to learn it and transform it into activities, relationships, and interactions in the classroom. Understanding how teachers grow and develop- what sustains as well as what impedes their growth – is what ultimately matters as we seek to understand how to change practice. Teachers are not only inhabitants of a classroom, but live, as do their students, within a broader culture, in their school as well as in their society. These contexts within which they live and work, their personal and professional commitments, engagement with colleagues, as well as the tone and temperature of their school must be considered if we are to understand teachers and involve them in efforts to change their practice and their schools" (p. xi).

It has been extensively discussed and established in literature and discourse on education that, excluding human resource, most of the features across academia are almost same. It is the human capital which is at the heart of the distinction which one institute enjoys over the other. Among the entire human resource in academic context, the most influential and the biggest segment is that of the faculty. Hence, tapping this vital resource is central to any effort in inducing reform in education sector as pointed out by Goodlad (1990) that educational reforms are integrally connected, and dependent largely on teachers in terms of their preparation and professional practice. There appears to be a general perception among the teachers and teacher educators and school administrators that student centered and updated pedagogies have been accepted and introduced by the teachers within their classroom contexts; but, gaining hardcore evidence to substantiate this fact from teachers' classroom practices is indeed an eye opener.

With the rapid expansion in higher education in the past decade coupled with a rising emphasis on accountability, teaching and learning quality has moved to centre stage worldwide. (Ho et al. 2001).The quest for excellence in college and university teaching is now a global concern. Universities pay increasing attention to the quality of the pedagogy practiced in their classrooms (Hativa et al. 2001). "Quality, outcomes and cost-effectiveness of methods of teaching and learning in colleges and universities are being scrutinised more closely" (Topping, 1996). The university and college teachers are perceived as transmitters of excellence in higher education by improving undergraduate teaching and learning (Ramsden, 1987). Quality in Education heavily rests with the 'Quality of Teachers' and their 'Quality of Teaching' (Zaki, 2006). Academic literature and research have clearly identified 'Teacher' as the primary agent of quality; and any attempt to enhance the academic standards or students' learning need to focus on the 'Teacher-Factor' first.

Academic institutes have undergone major changes in infrastructure as well as their academic philosophies and modalities due to the happenings in the socio-economic arena globally. The workplace, for which the workforce is trained in these academic institutes, has completely changed with the professional work becoming more technical and scientific. These environmental changes have ensued serious consequences to the way academia prepared their students for various professions. Today, graduates entering job market and pursuing professional careers require a completely altered list of knowledge, skills and attitudes which on one hand serve as the eligibility criterion for starting their professional lives and as their competitive on the other. Contemporary educational research and analysis of education, in general, and of higher education, in particular, stress the need for the traditional pedagogical practices to be aligned productively with the environmental changes and demands. Academic and professional institutes bear greater responsibility in training students for addressing economic, political, societal and global problems and providing better solutions for improving quality of work and life , theirs and of others around them . This implies that universities must be connected with their larger environments

and "should produce human resources trained to meet the needs of the economy, to concentrate on practice and on lifelong learning" (Commission of the European Communities, 2005). The prospective employers, especially from the corporate world and industry, are insisting academia and university faculty to stop considering students as 'passive recipients of theoretical information' and instead train them on the application of acquired knowledge on work related and actual methods for the development of the crucial professional skills; also to train them on the processes of enquiry, problem-based learning skills. Moreover, the academic quarters world-wide are receiving calls for developing higher order thinking skills, problem solving abilities and educational experiences of students to revolve around responsibility and judgment. Consequently, "Institutions of higher education have come under increasing pressure to change their instructional practices" (Kozma, 1985).

Today, higher education contexts reveal a greater realization of the fact that desired outcomes of education and the quality of the product is impossible with the present conventional methods; and the awareness that the improvement of undergraduate education heavily depends on the faculty and their instructional input (Chickering & Gamson, 1987).The need to align pedagogical practices with the changes in the demands of the professions, the developments in science and technology, the advancements in the teaching-learning methods is both imminent and inevitable. Also, "the social background of the students has become more heterogeneous, as has their academic preparation, and these changes challenge traditional teaching practices" (Kozma, 1985). The traditional teaching practices can no longer achieve all the objectives of higher education, nor the specialized content or skills that are to be imparted in engineering, medicine and business education. The outdated pedagogy practiced by the faculty of higher and professional institutions and the undertaken academic activities having no link with the wider world came under attack, and these words, though focusing on engineering education, can provide an insight on the status of higher education in general, "the reality is that better teaching methods exist. The literature in general education, technical education, and educational psychology is replete with methods that have been shown to facilitate learning more effectively than the traditional single-discipline lecturing approach. Unfortunately, these developments have so far had relatively little impact on mainstream engineering education. Although their content has changed in some ways and the students use calculators and computers instead of slide rules, many engineering classes in 1999 are taught in exactly the same way that engineering classes in 1959 were taught" (Felder et. al, 2000, p.26).

The academic contexts have started to resonate with the idea of academic interventions which could improve the current teaching-learning practices. However, these reforms can be of 'Incremental' or 'Fundamental' nature. According to Larry Cuban (1993):

"Incremental reforms are those that aim to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of existing structures of schooling including classroom teaching.....Applied to classroom, fundamental changes would aim at transforming the teachers role from that of a central source of power and knowledge to the role of a coach who guides students to their own decisions, who helps them find meaning in their experiences and what they learn from one another and from books.". (pp. 3-4)

The framework for the reform put forth in this paper emanates from the category of fundamental reforms. There is a need to bring a fundamental change in the way teachers think, feel, and approach teaching. This is the underlying reason for most incremental reforms introduced in the local context to end up in complete failure. Even, education research and literature is replete with the fact that educational innovation, instructional advancement and academic improvement largely depends on the teachers' attitude towards teaching and their skills in carrying out this activity (Fullan, 2001; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Smiley et al., 2004). A study regarding the analyses of 13 lists of characteristics of effective professional development, published over a decade, reported that enhancement of Teacher's content and pedagogical knowledge was the most frequently cited trait (Guskey & Kappan, 2003). A number of studies and projects have been carried out to improve higher education through improvement

in teachers pedagogical knowledge and skills, like the model for the improvement of university teaching that was carried out at Physics Department at Tel Aviv University in which a specialist worked with teachers in need of teaching improvement and the results of the study show an increase in quality of instruction and in faculty motivation and attitudes toward both instruction and students (Hativa, 1995). Owing to the far reaching consequences of teaching and the possible benefits effective teaching can bring to the various stakeholders of higher education, the need for teachers to engage in conscious and reflective teaching is all the more emphasized, as indicated by these words "society expects its teachers to care for students, to care about their learning, to be knowledgeable about curriculum content and to know how to induce learning in others" (Jeans, 1992). This view, then, holds teachers largely responsible for ensuring students' learning which is clearly established from the statement, "in recent years the emphasis in both research and government policy has been on improving the quality of teaching with a view to improving learning (Johnston, n.d.). It is evident that teaching needs to coincide with learning implying that the way teaching is carried out, the learning naturally assumes similar shape; and the way learning occurs the teaching must conform to it. This fact was further endorsed by Ramsden (1987) that it is important for the teachers to understand the learning process and consider the way students learn, their perceptions and competencies related with the learning process, which will surely help teachers in devising a suitable instructional strategy.

Proposed Framework

Understanding of the Teaching-Learning Process

Any effort towards improvement of teaching-learning needs to carefully analyse the teachers' teaching philosophies as "all teachers bring to the classroom or lecture theatre an inbuilt informal theory of teaching. This theory, which may be either consciously stated, or implicit in what the teachers do, has implications for the way in which students learn" (Johnston, n.d.). Thus, teachers' professional development is not merely concerned with equipping them with improved instructional methods; rather it has more to deal with fundamental changes to be brought about in their concept of teaching and teaching excellence. Every teacher has a unique conception about teaching based on the experiences he or she goes through as a student or teacher. Therefore, teaching philosophy, under which a teacher approaches the curriculum and the learners, varies tremendously from individual to individual (Biggs, 1989; Bowden, 1988; Fox 1983; Martin & Balla, 1991; Ramsden, 1992). Hence, it is extremely vital for the teachers at higher education to take a fresh look at the individual and collective pedagogy that is ultimately shaping up the academic output and outcomes. The evaluation of instruction at any level begins with analysing whether the teaching-learning routine conforms to the basic process of the teaching-learning as established in the literature of educational psychology. The teaching learning process (see Figure.1) is a journey from the information reception to knowledge formation which is carried out in three stages.

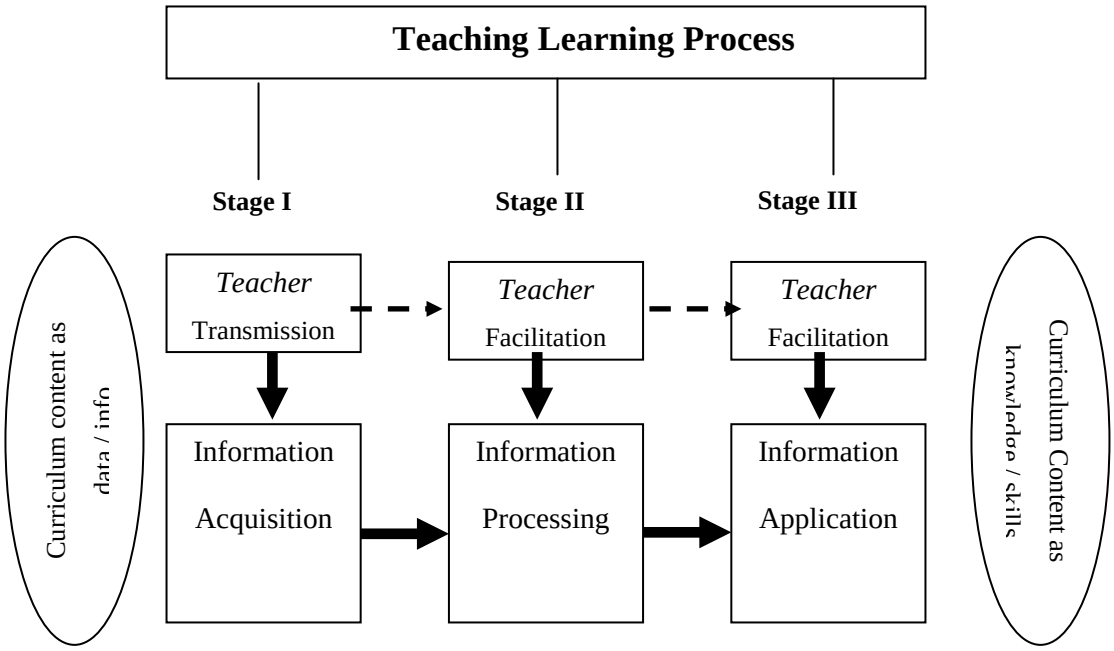

Figure-1: Complete teaching-learning process with teacher and student's roles at each stage of the process.

It is a common occurrence and observation that teachers and students during teaching learning experience concentrate their efforts mostly around the first phase only. This practice gained currency owing to the traditional assessment systems which are revolving around the assessment philosophy of "testing of learning" instead of "testing for learning". When the major objective of teaching and testing revolves around "how much", then the comprehension and application of the transmitted information for the teacher and acquired information for the learner becomes an insignificant matter. Thus, when in an education setting teachers' energies and time are spent largely on the completion of the course outline and the transmission of information through handouts, notes and books etc. using direct teaching method, it can be taken as an indication of the teaching learning confined to the first stage only. This can be further established through the student-behaviours of passively receiving information in the class and later rote memorization of the concepts for exams. As long as the teaching learning process is limited to the first stage, there will remain a dearth of instructional strategies and classroom procedures that enable students to understand and apply the acquired information for the ultimate knowledge conceptualization and skills development. Felder et. al. (1996) helped us in understanding the intent of the traditional direct teaching approach and also the motive behind the much –desired new instructional framework in these words:

> "In the traditional approach to higher education, the professor dispenses wisdom in the classroom and the students passively absorb it. Research indicates that this mode of instruction can be effective for presenting large bodies of factual information that can be memorized and recalled in the short term. If the objective is to facilitate long-term retention of information, however, or to help the students develop or improve their problem-solving or thinking skills or to stimulate their interest in a subject and motivate them to take a deeper approach to studying it, instruction that involves students actively has consistently been found more effective than straight lecturing."
>
> (p. 8).

Mapping Lower & Higher Level Cognitive Skills on

the Teaching Learning Process

The teaching- learning process (illustrated in Fig. 1) is undertaken to achieve certain objectives which are targeting the development of certain "skills that cover a broad level of spectrum of complexity and difficulty" from knowledge to evaluation (Bloom et.al., 1956 as described in Ormrod, 1998).

Levels 1–3 are commonly known as *lower-level skills* and Levels 4–6 are *higher-level skills*. If these cognitive levels are mapped on the teaching learning process above, the three stages and the six cognitive levels as below

Stage 1 is concerned with ***Knowledge*** level
Stage 2 is concerned with ***Comprehension***
Stage 3 incorporates ***Application, Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation***.

This alignment of cognitive skills with the stages of teaching learning process provides an at a glance opportunity to review the educational context and to establish the level at which the entire teaching learning efforts are being made. Quality of Instruction at higher education depends on ensuring that the teachers and students complete the process, and pass through the three stages as outlined above. This, then, becomes the only way to ensure development of the six levels of cognitive abilities in students that are demanded by all quarters from the academics. Thus, teachers who are planning for effective instruction that ultimately satisfies all the stakeholders of higher education, must plan their classroom instruction across the three stages, and targeting more consciously the necessary levels at each stage of the process .

Realizing Four Instructional Philosophies

As pointed out earlier in the paper, every teacher carries out classroom teaching by consciously or unconsciously following a teaching philosophy (see Fox, 1983; Baird, 1992; Svensson and Hogfors, 1988). The Table 2 below presents four teaching philosophies as coined by Fox (1983), the ideas have been extended further to vividly portray the differences; and to enable teachers to identify the philosophy they are currently practicing, and the direction in which they are required to invest efforts in order to improve their instructional plan.

Table 2: Comparison of four Teaching Philosophies

Parameter	Transfer	Shaping	Travelling	Growing
Underlying Philosophy	Teaching is transferring a commodity and students are treated as empty vessels	Teaching is training of students' mind in a predetermined form	Teaching is a journey of exploration both teacher and student explore it together	Teaching is flexible in its outcomes, direction and process
Teacher's Role	Master who controls and owns teaching learning process	Master Artisan who controls the process, determines the shape of the finished product by setting outcomes	Mentor who guides the students throughout journey	Adviser who responds critically to the contextual issues where learning takes place
Student's Role	Passive waiting to be "filled" without an idea about "with what"	Passive but knows the "outcomes" of the learning process the	Active and reflecting upon the content and teaching process	Active and make decisions about the direction and outcome

Approach	Linear	"finished shape" Circular	Spiral	Hybrid
Process	Done once	Repeated	Repeated by changing strategies	Combines different modes of teaching and learning

The comparative features and the role of teachers and students in each of the four philosophies vividly establish that in order to execute effective instruction at higher education the teachers need to shift towards the Travelling and Growing philosophies. This shift will enable them to complete the three stages of the teaching learning process and to facilitate their students in developing their higher order thinking skills. This scenario implies a huge paradigmatic shift in the existing philosophy underlying teaching practices among contemporary educationists involved with higher education.

Data Analysis

Validation through Empirical Evidence

The recommended framework (above) is deeply rooted in the standard literature related with the need to improve teaching- learning through teachers by bringing a fundamental change in the way they perceive teaching and the manner in which they undertake it in their classrooms. The framework which comprises instructional process and the instructional philosophy is to be translated and transmitted to teachers through teacher training and development activities and forums.

This framework is well supported with empirical evidence collected from teachers. The findings of this empirical validation justify the need for incorporating these recommendations in teacher education. The principal investigator, with three intact groups of teachers undergoing Teacher Training Programme on Effective Teaching, collected information about the following:

- The teachers' classroom teaching - the instructional process and its major stages and strategies.
- The teachers' teaching philosophy – the source from where they acquired it and the conscious realization as to what they were doing and why?

Profile Analysis

There were three groups of teachers [as participants] who went through the same teacher-training programme at different points in time as part of their mandatory professional development activity organized by their parent institutes within their organization. The organizations and the teachers all belonged to tertiary education and the three groups went through the same in-service teacher training programme conducted by the same Trainer (the principal investigator who is a teacher educator also). The participants' profile collectively was that; total 73 participants (teachers), divided into three groups as 30 (41%), 25 (34%) and 18 (25%); with gender distribution of 39 (53%) males and 34 (47%) females. There were 8 (11%) participants with PhD qualification, while others had masters, 45 (62%); and bachelor's degrees 20 (27%). The participants' range of experience was 12 years. Majority of them were engaged in undergraduate teaching in different subjects and disciplines.

Capturing Classroom Instruction Routines

Teachers were asked to provide information before the start of the training around the following question:

Q: What is your classroom instruction routine? Indicate the major activities and happenings in a chronological order from the start of the class to the finish.

The participants were provided papers to write down the qualitative information probed through this question. They were given thirty minutes time during which the principal investigator surveyed the group to ensure that they have understood what was asked from them, also through one-on-one interaction basis their fears were removed and they were again clarified about the purpose of this

information- gathering exercise [this was already explained when the task was introduced and according to the plan of the workshop this activity was carried out as pre training evaluation which was to be later used by the participants themselves to make comparison with the post training evaluation]. This strategy enabled the investigator in gaining confidence of the participants, and in making an effort to make them share their actual classroom routine. This was a conscious effort on the part of the researcher to increase the credibility of the information provided by the participants.

Capturing Teaching Activities

Following this stage of information gathering, the participants were probed to collect further data regarding the two research questions indicated earlier in this section. The teachers were involved in an activity through which information was captured through a carefully planned activity completed in Four Steps which are detailed below:

Step 1: Teachers were asked to make a list [recording sheet provided] of all the teaching activities and routines that they used in their classrooms while teaching.[This list included those instructional routines that were used on regular basis and even those that were not used very often.]

Step 2: Teachers were asked to indicate [on the same sheet in the prescribed column] instructional routines that they have acquired from their own teachers i.e. the techniques that were used by their teachers to teach them. This step allowed the participants, immediately, and researchers, later, to establish whether the teachers have brought some innovations to their classroom teaching, or they were following the same old methods many of which have become totally obsolete.

Step 3: Teachers were explained the Teaching Process as represented in Figure-1. The teachers' understanding of the topic and related confusions were targeted through interactive question- answer session and through examples and illustrations.

Step 4: Teachers were asked to classify their list of teaching activities developed in step 1[on the same sheet, in the prescribed column] into the three stages of the teaching learning process as explained to them in step 3 above. The principal investigator again established one-on-one interaction; and through questions and clarifications from the researcher as well as the participants, individual and collectively, helped them in identifying the nature of their classroom instructional activities. This step provided evidence as to the teachers' conscious awareness, or lack of it, about what was the purpose behind their pedagogical practices, simultaneously it allowed to identify the teaching philosophy of the teacher as elaborated in table 2.

Analysis, Findings and Discussion

Instruction Process and Stages

The analysis of the open ended questions by using coding suggest that teachers at tertiary level do not complete the three stages of teaching-learning process i.e. information transmission/ acquisition, information processing, and information application. The analyses of the data revealed that majority of the participants' classroom instruction was limited to completing the first stage only *[Stage-I]*, which deals with information transmission by the teachers and passive reception or acquisition by the learners.

Absence of Modern Pedagogy

However, in the absence of modern pedagogies for the information transmission it was quite difficult to ascertain whether the students actually received the transmitted information or not. Very few participants reflected that they reached to the second stage*[Stage-II]*, information processing stage, where they provided opportunities to their students to process the information acquired in Stage-I. It was their conscious facilitation in second stage that enables students to comprehend the acquired information. This difference was accounted to their education in good institutions which were already following updated educational practices.

Impact of Higher Education Abroad

Besides participants who received their education at good institutions, those who had acquired higher education abroad were found to be using a variety of pedagogies. Exposure to good institutions characterized by quality teaching – learning both within and outside country left an impression on these individuals which unconsciously influenced their decisions as a

teacher.This fact coincides with the earlier idea that every teacher brings to their classroom a theory an philosophy of teaching.

Underlying Instructional Philosophy

The analysis of the data also revealed that underlying philosophy of the teachers corresponds to the "Transfer" category as indicated in Table.2 above. The teachers classroom instruction reflected that they viewed teaching as merely transmission of information related to the curriculum content as if it was some commodity to be passed on to the learners. Learners' needs and profile are not taken in view, rather they are seen as individuals who have no idea or feeling regarding the information passed on to them and they way it is conveyed.

Teacher Centric Classroom Instruction

The data also revealed that the entire teaching-learning process revolved around the teacher, hence the conventional teacher-centric education model instead of the desired learner-centred is being followed.

Planned role of teacher

The teachers play a dominant role and exercise complete control over the classroom environment, and follow a very pre planned routine with no possibility for deviation from students. The students' role is merely to wait passively for the information to be transmitted by the teacher which they must receive and accept without question and mostly even without compulsion or motivation.

Linear approach towards classroom instruction

Thus, the approach of classroom delivery is linear in nature and process is done once without any iterative or cyclic movements. Most of the teachers adopt this philosophy unconsciously, and adopt the methods they were exposed earlier during their own education process.

Conclusion

The quality of higher education is heavily dependent on the quality of the teaching learning process, which in turn relies on the teachers' teaching philosophies and practices. The findings of the research reveal that teachers are not completing all the stages of classroom instruction that are necessary for quality teaching. The empirical evidence gathered through the study clearly established the fact that the teachers were merely transmitting content to their students who had no opportunities for information-processing and information -use of the classroom input and the curriculum content transmitted to them by their teachers. Hence, the major philosophy underlying contemporary teaching as suggested by respondents is 'Transfer' without any concern for students' needs or problems. Also this pre-planned transmission brings an element of rigidity in instructional plan and the instructor.

The ideas discussed in this paper advocate strongly the need to work upon teachers' basic understanding of the teaching activity in order to help them in addressing the demands of teaching at higher education by assuming the right philosophy. Their orientation to the approach, which is essential to execute this job, needs to then look at the technicalities of the instructional process and its targeted objectives. This realization would force them to use instructional techniques which can produce results and enable them to achieve the objectives of education and fulfil the demands made on them. The tertiary level education community, especially the individuals and organizations involved in policy making related with instruction and teacher education have several implications on their current activities based on the ideas presented in this paper.

The core problem impeding higher education reform has been clearly established. Unless this core problem gets addressed, most efforts aimed at improvement in higher education largely remain futile. The solution lies in creating awareness among teachers about 'what it means to teach effectively' and that 'what philosophy is most suited to teach effectively at higher education'. The teacher education programmes serve as the vehicle to make efforts towards this end.

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