



The New Generation Teacher: Teacher as a Facilitator

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Abstract

Innovation in education and the expansion and influence of information communication technology has provided students with many windows for self-learning. The new theories of learning, the constructivist approach, and the theory of individual difference emphasize that students should be helped to learn based on their ability, pace, and interest and to build their knowledge based on their experiences and the teacher should help the students achieve their objectives by creating an active learning environment. In such a situation, it becomes important for the teacher to be a facilitator instead of a knowledge provider. In the changing educational scenario in the twenty-first century, the teacher needs to be more skilled, for this innovation in teacher education and teacher training must be welcomed by ensuring their proper place so that the necessary skills can be developed in the future teachers. Therefore, future teachers must be trained as facilitators.

Keywords: Constructivist Approach, Facilitation Skills, Facilitator, Teacher Training, Interpersonal communication skill, Organizational Skill

Introduction

Constructivism is a widely prevalent theory of knowledge in academic circles. In essence, it proposes that humans generate knowledge and meaning from their experiences. Constructivist learning is an active process where learners should learn to discover principles, concepts, and facts for themselves. Knowledge is thus a product of humans and is socially and culturally constructed. This means that learning is not just an internal process but also involves external factors such as social activities. The learning experience is both subjective and objective and requires that the culture, values, and background become essential in shaping meaning. Constructivism advocates a learner-centered, activity-centered interactive pedagogical approach. It emphasizes the importance of the learner being actively involved in the learning process, unlike previous educational viewpoints where the responsibility rested with the instructor to teach and where the learner played a passive, receptive role.

Background

In past centuries, constructivist ideas were not widely valued due to the perception that children's play was aimless and of little importance. However, Jean Piaget differed from these traditional views. He saw the play as an important and necessary part of the student's cognitive development and provided scientific evidence for his views. Hence, the formalization of the theory of constructivism is generally attributed to him, who articulated mechanisms by which knowledge is internalized by learners. He suggested that through processes of accommodation and assimilation, individuals construct new knowledge from their experiences. It is important to appreciate that constructivism is not a particular pedagogy. In fact,

constructivism is a theory describing how learning happens, regardless of whether learners are using their experiences to understand a lecture or follow instructions.

Brooks and Brooks (1993) state that “in order for learning to take place in schools, teachers must become constructivist, that is, in the classroom, they must provide a learning environment where students search for meaning, appreciate uncertainty, and inquire responsibly.” The **NCF (National Curriculum Framework) 2000 and 2005** by NCERT strongly support the constructivist and learner-centered approach in school education. NCF 2005 states that teachers should behave like a facilitator and let children make their knowledge by learning. When the students ask the questions and discover the answers for themselves, they learn by themselves. The importance of the facilitator's role in education is to open the doors to learning rather than simply providing information to students in a rote format. The trend in facilitators as teachers operates on the premise that students learn better when they are guided and allowed to discover knowledge on their own rather than constantly being spoon-fed facts and information. Having a balance of traditional teaching as well as facilitators.

It has been well-accepted that the role of the teacher changes in constructivist classrooms. The teacher would move from the role of instructor to the role of facilitator on the continuum of teaching. A facilitator helps the learner to get to his or her own understanding of the content. This dramatic change of role implies that a facilitator needs to display a different set of skills than a teacher (**Brownstein 2001**). A teacher tells and a facilitator asks; a teacher lectures from the front, a facilitator supports from the back; a teacher gives answers according to a set curriculum, and a facilitator provides guidelines and creates the environment for the learner to arrive at his or her own conclusions; a teacher mostly gives a monologue, a facilitator is in continuous dialogue with the learners. A facilitator should also be able to adapt the learning experience by using his or her own initiative in order to steer the learning experience to where the learners want to create value. A further characteristic of the role of the facilitator in the social constructivist view is that the teacher and the learners are equally involved in learning from each other as well, **Harris W.T. (2008)**. This creates a dynamic interaction between the task, teacher and learner. The teachers have to sometimes assume the role of an escort keeping in mind the importance of mentoring in the process of learning. **David Johnsen** identified three major roles for facilitators to support students in active learning environments: Modelling, Coaching, and Scaffolding. **Prakash (2016)** identified five major qualities in a teacher as a facilitator. **Guide-** The teacher is a guide philosopher and friend of the student's teacher should guide to student enthusiastically. Mostly the time students live in school and in front of the teacher. Therefore, teachers find out which qualities in our students. **Counsellor-some** problems are there for the students. The teacher understands students' problems. Study habits problems, lack of poor achievement, frustration, economic problem, and family problem teacher help students with these problems as a counsellor. **Information provider-** The teacher should update on our subject and education system, around the country, and the world. A Teacher should understand new trends and research fields of education. **Inquirer-**Teacher should inquire in school for our students. **Facilitator** – The teacher can do an important role in school as the facilitator. The teacher facilitates students with our subject material, the teacher facilitates to students by magazines, newspapers, and motivational storybooks. The role of the teacher is to organize information around the conceptual framework of problems, questions, and discrepant situations. The teacher's most essential and indispensable role is to try to understand his students and help each one in his growth and development.

Objective

To Identify Skills for Teacher as a Facilitator.

Methodology

As this is a conceptual paper so researcher comprehensively reviewed and analysed various research papers, books, articles and research thesis to get understanding of the concept of facilitation skills for teachers in respect of child centered learning environment.

Facilitator

The term facilitator is used for the possible role of the teacher, who helps students to construct knowledge in their own way and learn, understand and create meaning on the basis of their own experiences. The Facilitator / the necessary resources, information, and support in order for learners to complete a task, rather than teaching. The role of a facilitator is supportive and focused on the diversity of the classroom rather than authoritative like a traditional classroom teacher.

Difference between a Traditional Teacher and a Teacher as a facilitator

The main difference between a traditional teacher and a teacher as a facilitator is that traditional teachers use their subject matter expertise to design curricula, presentations, and learning materials, while facilitators support learners through the process and help maximize their education.

Teachers create and implement learning materials, while facilitators moderate and run activities, exercises, discussions, and work groups and individuals where knowledge is shared by and extracted from the participants themselves.

Teachers are subject matter experts who pass their knowledge forward, On the other hand, Facilitators focus on easing the learning process, arming students with strategies for cultivating ideas, fostering creativity, improving communication, and deepening comprehension. He breaks down barriers to creativity, problem-solving and communication and encourages active participation in the classroom in group work and individual.

Traditional teacher commonly uses **chalk and Talk** method in the classroom and focus on imparting knowledge & information to students and academic achievement, while facilitator creates an active learning environment in the classroom for the holistic development of students through active participation of students to create and share knowledge and experiences by interactive activities, group task, peer learning, Cooperative and Collaborative learning etc.

Teaching Skills need to be Facilitator

Teacher as a facilitator should be equipped with some important skills to create and facilitate an active learning environment in the classroom.

Prologue Skill – This skill includes giving full and detailed information to students about a task/activity/event before starting it. Before starting the classroom activities, the facilitator needs to prepare the students mentally and focus their attention on the content. New activities should be organized only by generating curiosity about the content in the students and by establishing the relation of the content of the activity with their previous experiences and prior knowledge. At the very beginning of organizing the activities, all the information and instructions should be given to the students by the facilitator clearly and should also be made aware of the whole process and desirable outcomes. In the very beginning, the students have to be introduced to the aim and objective of the activity as well as the sequence of activities by the facilitator, so that the student can easily understand what has been done. And what to do?

Task/Activity Management Skill- Task management skills for a teacher as a facilitator refers to the ability to effectively plan, organize, and manage tasks within the learning environment to support student-centered and collaborative learning experiences. This skill is essential for creating a structured and productive classroom environment. The facilitator demonstrates strong planning skills by breaking down the learning objectives into manageable tasks and activities. He carefully sequences these tasks to create a logical progression of learning, ensuring that each task builds upon the previous one and leads to the desired learning outcomes. The facilitator manages time effectively by allocating appropriate time for different learning activities, transitions, and discussions. he considers the complexity of tasks, student needs, and available instructional time to ensure that all necessary components of a lesson or project are addressed within the given time frame. He assigns tasks and responsibilities to students thoughtfully and equitably. He considers students' abilities, interests, and diverse learning styles when assigning tasks. This helps promote collaboration, engagement, and the development of teamwork skills among students. The facilitator actively monitors students' progress during task completion. He provides timely guidance, support, and feedback to individual students or groups as needed. Monitoring allows the facilitator to assess student understanding, address misconceptions, and help when students encounter challenges. Effective task management skills help the facilitator create a structured and purposeful learning environment where students can engage actively, collaborate, and take ownership of their learning. By effectively planning, organizing, and managing tasks, facilitators optimize learning opportunities, promote student engagement, and support the achievement of learning goals.

Captivating Skill – This skill includes attracting and holding the interest of students to engage and motivate them to actively participate. This is the first step in the instructional process, where the facilitator identifies gaps in knowledge and gains an understanding of the prior knowledge of students. At this level, students encounter and identify the task at hand. During this stage, students make connections between past and present learning experiences, establish a foundation for upcoming activities, and become motivated to participate. This can be achieved through various methods such as asking questions, defining problems, presenting surprising events, or acting out problematic situations. These methods are designed to engage the students and focus their attention on the instructional tasks.

Interpersonal communication skill- Interpersonal communication skill for a facilitator helps to create a positive and supportive learning environment, promote student engagement, and foster strong teacher-student relationships. This skill enables effective communication, collaboration, and a sense of belonging among students. Active listening involves giving students undivided attention and showing genuine interest in their thoughts and concerns. The facilitator communicates with clarity and uses language appropriate for students' understanding to ensure instructions and discussions are understood. He is mindful of nonverbal cues, such as body language and facial expressions, to convey warmth and attentiveness. Demonstrating empathy and understanding, facilitator create a safe space where students feel comfortable expressing themselves. He asks thoughtful questions, encourages active participation, and provides constructive feedback to promote critical thinking and reflection. Conflict resolution skills help facilitate respectful discussions and find common ground among students. The Facilitator foster collaboration and teamwork by facilitating group discussions, promoting inclusive participation, and encouraging effective communication. He emphasizes cultural sensitivity, respecting students' diverse backgrounds and experiences, to create an inclusive and welcoming classroom environment. This skill enhances teacher-student relationships, promotes engagement, and facilitates effective classroom interactions. By actively listening, communicating clearly, demonstrating empathy, and promoting collaboration, facilitators create a positive and inclusive learning environment where students feel valued and supported.

Exploratory Questioning Skill - Exploratory questioning is used to explore a more detailed understanding of content without attributing bias or preconceived notions to it. This skill includes funnel questioning, probing questioning, seeking questioning etc. For these types of questioning facilitator make students calm in high tense atmosphere and feel more comfortable to obtain a high level of detailed understanding. In this skill, such question types as open-ended questions, general questions, closed-ended questions, clarification questions, specific questions, reflective questions, and hypothetical questions are included. This questioning technique is valuable in obtaining comprehensive information and delving into specific details during classroom activity and assessment processes.

Exposition Skill – This skill includes a full and clear explanation of content or subject with facts and the reason behind it. In a constructivist classroom, the facilitator facilitates students to learn on their own, but sometimes such situations are raised where the facilitator needs to explain the content, idea or doubts. In such a condition, the facilitator explains doubts or content to minimize errors with detailed facts and information. The facilitator establishes links between the past experience and present experiences of students and coordinates ideas.

Observation Skill – This skill includes the ability to carefully and systematically observe students, classroom dynamics, and instructional practices to gather information and make informed decisions about teaching and learning. These skills involve actively and objectively perceiving, interpreting, and documenting various aspects of the teaching and learning process. Effective observation skills help the facilitator to understand student needs, adjust instruction, and create a positive and engaging learning environment. Facilitator strives to maintain objectivity when observing students, setting aside personal biases or assumptions. He observes students as they truly are, without judgment, allowing for fair and unbiased assessments of their abilities and progress. This skill enables the facilitator to gather valuable information about their student's strengths, challenges, and progress. By applying these skills, teachers can tailor their instruction, provide timely feedback, and create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that meets the diverse needs of their students.

Organizational Skill – This skill includes the ability to effectively plan, structure, and manage the learning environment to support the principles and practices of constructivist teaching. Constructivism emphasizes student-centered learning, active engagement, and the construction of knowledge through meaningful experiences and interactions. A facilitator takes on the role of a guide and creates opportunities for students to explore, discover, and construct their knowledge. This skill helps the facilitator to design engaging learning experiences, organize resources and materials, manage tasks and groups, practice effective time management, provide individualized support and differentiation, organize assessment and feedback, and engage in reflection and documentation for continuous improvement. These skills support student engagement, critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and independent inquiry.

Evaluative skill- This skill for the facilitator involves the ability to design and implement various assessment strategies to monitor student progress, provide feedback, and guide instruction. Facilitators prioritize formative assessment, conducting ongoing assessments to gather feedback on student understanding and progress. This helps them identify strengths, challenges, and misconceptions, guiding instructional decisions and enabling timely feedback for students to make adjustment and improvements. The facilitator goes beyond traditional testing by incorporating diverse formats like performance tasks,

projects, portfolios, self-assessments, peer assessments, and reflective journals. These assessments allow students to demonstrate understanding, apply knowledge, and showcase their learning process. Facilitators actively involve students in the assessment process through self-assessment, reflection, and goal-setting. He encourages peer assessment and collaborative evaluation, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility for learning. Using a range of assessment strategies, including observation, questioning, discussion, performance tasks, and collaboration, facilitators gain a comprehensive understanding of student learning, foster critical thinking, and encourage active participation. Through reflection, facilitators evaluate the effectiveness of assessments and their impact on student learning. they continuously refine assessment strategies to better support student growth, optimize the learning experience, and ensure alignment with learning objectives, instructional practices, and student needs.

Conclusion

The facilitator plays a crucial role in preparing students mentally for learning by providing detailed information, generating curiosity, and relating tasks to their prior knowledge. They also plan, organize, and manage tasks to create a structured and productive learning environment. This involves breaking down objectives, sequencing tasks logically, allocating time effectively, considering student needs, assigning tasks thoughtfully, and monitoring progress. The facilitator engages students by identifying knowledge gaps, connecting past and present experiences, and using various techniques such as questions, problems, surprises, and role-playing to motivate participation. They create a positive learning environment, promote engagement, and build teacher-student relationships through active listening, clear communication, empathy, feedback, conflict resolution, collaboration, and respect for diverse backgrounds. Additionally, facilitators use different types of questioning techniques to explore detailed understanding without bias, creating a calm and comfortable atmosphere for comprehensive information gathering. They provide clear explanations, minimize errors, establish connections between experiences, and coordinate ideas when necessary. Observing students, classroom dynamics, and instructional practices allows facilitators to gather information, maintain objectivity, understand student needs, adjust instruction, provide feedback, and create an inclusive learning environment. Effective planning, structuring, and management of the learning environment based on constructivist principles are essential. This includes designing engaging experiences, organizing resources, managing tasks and groups, practicing time management, providing support and differentiation, assessing and providing feedback, and engaging in reflection for continuous improvement. Facilitators also design and implement various assessment strategies, prioritizing formative assessments, involving students in the process, using diverse formats, encouraging self-assessment and reflection, and continuously refining assessment strategies. Overall, facilitators aim to create an optimal learning environment, foster engagement, and support student progress and achievement.

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