



CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH IN TEACHER EDUCATION: A STEP TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATION

Jeenti Malakar, Research Scholar, Department of Education, Tripura University

Abstract: Teacher Education; the concept itself is vast than it seems; a programme which prepares teachers, who are capable of building characters in such a way so that they can contribute towards society. In this ever changing world where people are dealing with challenges in every step of their life, teacher education has also gone through numerous challenges. A holistic approach is always a necessary step to provide quality to the whole process. Looking at things from one perspective restricts the knowledge and hence cannot help in educational sustainability. The constructivist approach is one such approach which is a paradigm shift from the teacher centric mode of educating the learners. Learner here is allowed to construct ideas or knowledge on their own out of the existing one. They actively participate in the process of teaching-learning. Teacher Education; pre-service or in-service both focus on building up teachers who are updated with all the new knowledge, techniques, approaches, etc. to deal or cope up with dynamic nature of the society. To provide quality education to the learners, teachers need to understand that knowledge cannot be gathered in isolation which suggests that learners need to be guided to be the part of larger community in the process of constructing knowledge. Sustainable development in education encompasses the goals of equipping learners with the knowledge, skills and attitudes which is required to address global challenges, promote social justice and foster environmental sustainability. This approach thus is a step towards Educational sustainability which focusses on shaping a sustainable future of the prospective teachers. This gives a different outlook to deal with the challenges that people all over the globe are facing. This paper is descriptive in nature and focusses on the pivotal role played by constructivist approach in the field of teacher education.

Key Words: Constructivist Approach, Teacher Education, Sustainable Development

1. Introduction

It is well said that no knowledge is final or something which is cumulative in nature; theories are made and challenged by some new theories. Constructivist theory or approach is also a theory which adds a different perspective to traditional mode of teaching learning. Constructivist approach focusses on active participation from learners side; encouraging learners to construct knowledge on their own. In the teacher education programme teachers are expected to become game changers or path breakers in this ever changing society. Constructivist approach gives a different perspective to the educators to indulge in such a process where there is flexibility; no set rules to reach the expected outcomes. Student-teachers will get the chance to develop their constructivist understanding towards teaching learning process. Teacher educators and student teachers will construct their understanding out of their own experiences which further provides different perspective to deal with numerous challenges. Teachers give their students a critical vision to solve problems, providing high quality education. And high quality education is necessary for sustainable development of Education which is possible only when quality education and proper training is provided to the teachers. Sustainable Development does not only mean meeting the needs of future generation in terms of resources. It also means bringing sustainable

development principles into the process of teaching learning. For providing quality education in the field of education, first it is necessary to build teachers who are capable of building characters who can contribute positively to the society. Constructivist approach in teacher education programmes can help in fostering critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and a sense of responsibility among educators, thus preparing them to create transformative and sustainable learning environments. This study aims to provide insights into the potential of the constructivist approach to contribute towards sustainable development in education.

2. Significance of the study

People around the globe discuss about development, sustainability, new approaches and many more. Although the literal meanings of the above mentioned concepts are different from each other but all these are interrelated in many cases like in terms of education ;its process, techniques and approaches. New era comes with new or updated techniques and approaches alongside the new challenges to overcome. Approaches need to be such so that the learners get to test knowledge in new situations. Teacher Education is one such field which holds the responsibility to prepare such teachers who again will be accountable for moulding the generation studying at schools, ultimately contributing towards sustainability. Constructivist approach thereby will help in giving concrete experience and allow in the process of observing and reflecting on own experience of the learners. This study is significant because it focusses on the importance of integrating constructivist approach within the context of sustainable development. The study may guide the development of teacher education programs, curriculum design and policy initiatives that promote the constructivist approach and sustainable development.

3. Operational terms defined

Constructivist Approach: it suggests learners taking active participation in the process of learning rather than absorbing knowledge passively. It reflects on their cognitive ability to use the prior knowledge or the existing one to build a new one.

Teacher Education: refers to the programme designed to prepare teachers with sound knowledge and professional skills to teach in different stages of school.

Sustainable Development: refers to the goals set to achieve the needs of the present generation without any compromise for future generations in terms of environment, resources, education etc.

4. Methodology

This research involves a narrative review process, analysing theoretical perspectives, research studies related to constructivist approach, sustainable development and teacher education.

5. Selection Process

Selection for review is done in accordance to constructivist approach and related topics and terminology. To simplify the review process, a minimum number of research articles and journals are solicited.

6. Research Questions

- i. What kind of role constructivist approach has to play in teacher education?
- ii. How does the constructivist approach align with the goals of sustainability?

7. Role of Constructivist Approach in Teacher Education

The constructivist approach has an important role to play in the field of teacher education as it provides a framework for understanding how individuals actively construct knowledge and meaning from their prior experiences. In the context of teacher education, the constructivist approach emphasizes the following principles:

- i. It encourages teachers to engage in active learning experiences rather than relying solely on passive acquisition of knowledge. This could involve hands on activities, problem solving tasks and collaborative learning opportunities. Altogether it will help the teachers to understand the whole process in a better way and apply it to their teaching practices.
- ii. The whole process relies specifically on the prior or existing knowledge that the aspiring teacher possess as this provides the foundation to integrate new knowledge by critically examining their previous experiences.

- iii. Constructivist approach also focusses on the role of social interaction which directly point towards promoting collaboration, discussion and interaction among aspiring teachers. This helps the aspiring teachers to learn something new collectively.
- iv. The approach also provides authentic and meaningful contexts by engaging aspiring teachers with real life experiences. This suggests practical experiences such as classrooms, simulations, case studies and many more.
- v. This approach further helps the aspiring teachers to refine their understanding and develop metacognitive skills and continuously improve their teaching approaches.

8. Constructivist approach and sustainable development

Four key areas that are crucial to the success of a constructivist classroom according to Kurt.S (2021) are:

- i. The instructor plays the role of a facilitator.
- ii. There are equal authority and responsibility between the students and the instructor.
- iii. Learning occurs in small groups.
- iv. Knowledge is shared between both the students and the instructor.

The above mentioned key thus complement the goals of sustainable development which highlights the following relationship between the two:

- i. The constructivist approach equips learners with the cognitive skills by promoting active learning and critical thinking which is required to understand and contribute to sustainable development challenges.
- ii. By contextualizing sustainability with learners' real life experiences, the constructivist approach helps learners develop a deep understanding of sustainability principles and apply them in real life contexts.
- iii. Learners develop the skills to analyse sustainability challenges, consider diverse perspectives and collaborate on finding sustainable solutions by engaging in problem based and inquiry based learning.
- iv. The constructive approach focusses on collective engagement among individuals for collaborative learning which again has an alignment with sustainable development goals which also promotes cooperation, empathy and social engagement.
- v. Constructivist approach encourages learners to view knowledge as interconnected and promotes system thinking. This further helps in developing an all-round understanding of sustainable development.

9. Conclusion

Thus by integrating the constructivist approach into teacher education in the context of sustainable development educators can prepare teachers to effectively promote sustainable development in their classrooms and schools. This approach will enable the aspiring teachers to become agents of change in education and who will be able to create transformative learning experiences by developing an understanding towards critical thinking, reflective practices and sustainability goals.

10. References

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