

SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE A PRE-REQUISITE FOR THE PRODUCTIVE PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

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Abstract

Teachers are social re- constructors through continuous interaction with the society. The capacity of teachers to navigate and negotiate complex social relationship and environment is a determinant factor of success in professional life. Teacher effectiveness emphasise professional practice that represents leadership, establishment of a respectful environment, content knowledge, facilitation of learning, reflection on practice that aims at student progress. The social skills possessed by the teacher facilitate the effectiveness through enhancing the skills of teacher related to planning, presentation and assessment. For accountable and focused collegial relationships and more supports for collective capacity building we have to plan for professional development programmes for teachers that foster social intelligence.

Key words:-*Social Intelligence, Teacher effectiveness, Professional development.*

Introduction

The classical notion of intelligence as the measure of cognitive abilities has undergone major changes. Now intelligence is perceived as the general capacity of an individual to adjust his thinking to new requirements. In the Indian context the Sanskrit word 'Budhi' is used to translate the word Intelligence. Budhi refers to cognitive competencies, social competencies, entrepreneurial competencies and emotional competencies. Thus integral intelligence is essential for the effective management of the self and the practical management of daily life. The exclusive human capacity to effectively navigate and negotiate complex social relationship and environment is a determinant factor of success in personal and social life. Thus social intelligence which stress on the connectivity with the social environment plays a crucial role in the survival of human beings. Zirkel (2000) believe that social intelligence is closely related to one's own personality and individual behaviour. Those with social intelligence are fully aware of them and understand their environment.

Teacher effectiveness is a measure of teacher quality that determines the quality of teaching as well as the quality of learners. Effectiveness is implemented through the incorporation of certain values, knowledge and skills that underpin competency based professional characteristics. Teacher effectiveness emphasise professional practice that represents leadership, establishment of a respectful environment, content knowledge, facilitation of learning, reflection on practice that aims at student progress. A teacher who meets the needs of all students in the classroom by balancing wide range of learning experiences through multiple instructional strategies ensures the learner achievement. To perform this task in an organised way in a healthy environment the teachers should possess social intelligence. Social information processing and social skills are important factors teacher effectiveness. (Albrecht, 2006).

Some indicators of Social intelligence

The human brain is a social brain which is evolved with ability to function with global perception. This holistic perception engages individuals to demonstrate pro-social attitudes, social performance skills, empathetic ability, emotional expressiveness and confidence. Social Intelligence provides the ability for understanding the motives, emotions, intentions and actions of other people and influences the behaviour of other people. The ability to act wisely in human relations is the most important skill to be possessed by a teacher. Howard Gardner (1983) named this intelligence as interpersonal intelligence. Socially competent teacher can comprehend his environment optimally and react appropriately. Personality integration and cooperation with others is made possible through feeling of solidarity expressed as fellowship, brotherhood, and universal love. According to Goleman (2006), psychologist Edward Thorndike developed the original conceptualization of social intelligence in 1920 as a mental ability distinct from abstract and mechanical intelligence.

Murata (2008) says that social intelligence consists of eight elements.

- Primal empathy- Feeling with others and sensing nonverbal emotional signal.
- Attunement- Listening with full receptivity and attuning to a person
- Empathy accuracy- Understanding others thoughts feelings and intentions.
- Social cognition-Knowing how the social world works
- Social facility-Builds on social awareness to allow smooth and effective interactions
- Synchrony-Interacting smoothly at the nonverbal level
- Self presentation-presenting the self effectively
- Influence -Shaping the outcome of social interactions
- Concern-Caring about others needs and acting accordingly.

Silvera and his colleagues introduced three components of social intelligence, social information processing, social skills and social awareness (Silvera et al., 2001) Educators with high levels of social intelligence are able to mould individuals from different age groups to lead a wholesome life (Dincer, 2007). So social intelligence is a pre requisite for teachers.

Socially intelligent teachers and positive classroom climate

A socially intelligent teacher will be highly confident in the social system of the classroom. Such teachers demonstrate a genuine interest in the students. These teachers can deal with student problems in an appropriately assertive fashion. They can easily understand the group dynamics of the classroom and can identify the personality traits of learners. A teacher who is well aware of the social norms, roles and scripts can interact with social energy. They have enormous power but their democratic interactions regulate the power relationships and determine positive outcomes of the classroom. In such a classroom students are neither too intimidated that they never challenge teachers nor become so infuriated that they revolt. As a social facilitator teacher should enhance social cohesion in the classroom.

A sense of personal connection and rapport with the students make the classrooms pleasant place for learning. If the learners think that the teacher cares about them they will be more positively oriented to the learning process and the teacher (Feldman, 1989, Meyers, 2003) If the teacher is proficient in handling the classroom problems, they can prevent spontaneous conflicts in the classrooms. Staying in touch with student's perceptions and feelings can alert the teacher to potential problems and teacher can address the problem before they surface unexpectedly. The teacher's enthusiasm and personal warmth increases the students' affinity towards the teacher and promote a mutually dependent classroom climate.

Teaching skills of socially intelligent teachers

Teacher effectiveness depends on the skills of teacher related to planning, presentation and assessment. The task of teacher as a guide for children in developing self understanding and interconnectedness becomes successful if the teacher possesses basic skills related to social intelligence. These skills are mentioned below.

- (i) Collaborative skills-The skill that empower a teacher to cooperate with the school, home and community. Collaborative skills of teachers promote moral support, confidence, teacher reflection and leads to continual professional development. This energises teachers to work creatively with others enjoying team spirit.
- (ii) Leadership skills-A teacher who is aware of the social roles assume a role in the society that models certain desirable behavioural patterns. They get recognition by peers as someone to follow. They make transformational influencer on others and guide others through encouragement and supports.
- (iii) Reflective pedagogic skills-The ways in which new knowledge is created and how ideas are generated and communicated is important in developing contextual understandings. The creation and selection of teaching methods, presentation skills and use of technologies and learning activities depends on the social exposure and experience of a teacher. If the teacher works as a member of a wider professional learning community, he will act as a better scaffolder. They can critically examine their own conceptions, they reflect on their own teaching and exemplify virtues they seek to impart to students and collaborative inquiry makes them reflective practitioners.
- (iv) Interpersonal relationship skills-Teachers need to be proficient in interpersonal skills to engage in meaningful communication with others. They need coping and adaptability skills to facilitate learning. Active listening, analytical reasoning, and problem solving skills help teachers to make negotiations, take appropriate decisions and these skills are essential in managing others. These management skills help teachers to manage persons as well as activities of the profession.
- (v) Assessment Skills-Assessment is the crucial aspect of learning process. Teachers have to assess themselves, peers, and students objectively. A socially empathetic person can assess impartially and intelligently to reinforce others and the self. Positive attitudes of the teacher will increase the probability for utilising assessment for improving positive outcomes. Prejudices may affect the assessment in a negative manner; the effective teacher will monitor the inner conversations to evoke positive and supportive social conversations by avoiding destructive criticisms. Effective teachers encourage pupils to judge the success of their own work and to set themselves targets for improvement. They also offer critical and supportive feedback to pupils.

Improving social intelligence for teacher effectiveness

Teacher effectiveness is to be identified through various engagements of the teacher as well as through the attainments of the learners. This includes organisation, rules and procedures, positive relationships, engagement and enjoyment, a culture of thinking and learning, preparing students for new learning, presenting new learning, deepening learning, applying learning, helping students reflect on and celebrate learning and professional practice.

To make the teacher effective in these areas, social intelligence is to be promoted through various ways.

- (i) Observe and interpret very subtle facial expressions that signal particular emotions or intentions in others.
- (ii) Detect and understand hidden meanings in verbal expressions of other people.
- (iii) Interact with students and colleagues verbally and through gestures in a way that they feel comfortable, relaxed, and understood.
- (iv) Tell and enjoy jokes and be relaxed in classrooms.
- (v) Motivate students for positive actions by verbal and nonverbal encouragement.
- (vi) Coordinate action with the behaviour of other people.
- (vii) Boost the self confidence by monitoring own actions.
- (viii) Show respect for others, positive attitude and an abiding interest in students.
- (ix) Avoid unnecessary arguments by seeing the other person's point of view.
- (x) Be impartial and objective in all assessment procedures.

Conclusion

Teaching is an interactive process in a social system. Teacher is the manager of the classroom. The bad reputation and negative comments about teacher are usually associated with the inability of the teacher to act socially intelligent. For accountable and focused collegial relationships and more supports for collective capacity building we have to plan for professional development programmes for teachers that foster social intelligence. Some training may be provided as part of the refresher courses related to conflict resolution skills, interpersonal skills, reflective pedagogic skills and assessment skills to augment the teacher effectiveness. When the teachers model themselves as social facilitators the students get a chance to assimilate the needed social skills by interacting with those teachers. The knowledge, values and skills of the teacher are oriented towards student progress and is possible in a framework of socially cohesive and conducive classroom climate. As teachers are social engineers, the social intelligence of the teacher determines the construction of a value embedded society. Thus the quality and efficiency of the future society emerges from the teacher effectiveness of the current educational system.

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