

Knowledge and Erudition Insights into Knowledge Society

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Pedagogy in Learning Society: A Special Reference to Behaviourism and Constructivism

Dr. Deepkumar J. Trivedi

Abstract

Understanding the role of education and the ability to renew and innovate requires to understand the links between the development of knowledge in the fields of research and its transmission through education and training. In all this, communication is vital in generating and disseminating ideas, and that's where the reference to pedagogy in learning society emerges. The present chapter, refers to a brief understanding of how behaviourism and constructivism become important area references in the entire process of observing the role of pedagogy in learning society. It mostly refers to theoretical grounds of understanding. Behaviourism is an important educational philosophy and constructivism needs to be studied as a paradigm shift offering a view that learners construct knowledge for themselves. The noticeable outcomes of constructivism are shared here with its basic theory.

Keywords: Education, Innovate, Knowledge, Research, Training, Communication, Pedagogy, Learning society, Behaviourism, Constructivism

Introduction

Education and training are the main vehicles for self-awareness, belonging, advancement and self-fulfilment. Education and training whether acquired in the formal education system, on the job or in a more informal way, is the key for everyone to control their future and their personal development. Education and training remain one of the

determining factors in equality of opportunity. The position of everyone in relation to their fellow citizens in the context of knowledge and skills therefore is important. This relative position i.e. learning the relationship can become an increasingly dominant feature in the structure of contemporary societies.

The ability to renew and innovate may depend on the links between the development of knowledge in research and its transmission through education and training. In all this, communication is vital in generating and disseminating ideas, and that's where the reference to pedagogy in learning society emerges.

To understand the role of pedagogy in learning society further, we may begin to learn through the very concept of education. Education is a deliberate process of drawing out learning, of encouraging and giving time to discovery. It is an intentional act. At the same time it is, as John Dewey (1963) puts it, a social process—'a process of living and not a preparation for future living'. Being concerned with learning that we set out to encourage—a process of inviting and arguing truth and possibility—it is also based on certain values and commitments such as respect and kindness for others and for truth. Education is born of the hope and desire that all may share in life and can be more.

For many associated with education and learning, it is also a matter of pride, grace and wholeness, wherein we engage fully with the gifts/skills we have been given. Education is rooted in human nature; it is a matter of head, hand and heart (Brühlmeier 2010). We find identity, meaning, and purpose in life 'through connections to the community, to the natural world, and to spiritual values such as compassion and peace' (Miller 2000). To educate is to set out to create and sustain informed, hopeful and respectful learning environments, where learning in real sense can flourish. It is not just limited to 'knowing about' things, but also about changing ourselves and the world we live in. Basically, education is a grippingly practical activity, wherein something that we can do for ourselves (what we could call self-education), and also for others. Many are involved in this process, carried out by parents and carers, friends and colleagues, and educators.

The Roles and Relationships of Pedagogues

Plato did talk about pedagogues as 'men who by age and experience are qualified to serve as both leaders and custodians of children (Longenecker 1983: 53). Their role varied but two elements were common. The first one was to be a companion—carrying books and bags, and ensuring their wards were safe. The second one, more fundamental of concerning boys was to help them learn what it was to be men. Pedagogues

have been moral guides who obeyed the discipline. The pedagogue has been responsible for every aspect of the child's upbringing from correcting grammar and diction to dealing with his or her sexual morals. Referring to a pedagogue's advice, Seneca said, "Walk thus and so; eat thus and so, this is the proper conduct for a man and that for a woman; this for a married man and that for a bachelor". (Smith 2006: 201)

It is very interesting to see relation of the pedagogue to the learner which is quite fascinating one. In a conversation between Socrates and a young boy Lysis, Socrates asked, 'Someone controls you?' Lysis replied, 'Yes, he is my tutor [or pedagogue] here.' 'Is he a slave?' Socrates queried. 'Why, certainly; he belongs to us,' responded Lysis, to which Socrates mused, 'What a strange thing, I exclaimed; a free person controlled by a slave!' (Plato 1925, quoted by Smith 2006).

Writing about Pedagogy

In education, pedagogy has a very important place, especially in the process of learning and knowledge acquisition. It decides and executes the how and why of the process of teaching and learning being formed and also what kind of material to be used. To make learning meaningful there are deliberate efforts to use the art and science of teaching into the classroom process effective at different levels of education. So to discern regarding various pedagogies and its effectiveness is an imperative to education. We can say that pedagogy refers to a systematic process for advancing in learning. It comprises of the conception of substantive knowledge and its coding in symbolic form in such media as-text, film, art and a process for engaging such codified knowledge that is designed to alter a person's comprehension of self and world. Pedagogy may be explained as a deliberate attempt to influence how and what knowledge and identities are produced within and among particular sets of social relations. In the field of education various pedagogies developed and implemented, based on development in the aspects of psychology, philosophy and sociology. These pedagogical involvements are different in its curricular intent, material, instructional process and the role of student and teachers. The most prominent and commonly accepted one, we can say, is behaviourism.

Behaviourism

Behaviourism as a Philosophy of Education has been chiefly influenced by the likes of Pavlov, Thorndike, John B. Watson and B.F. Skinner. They played a valuable role of applying the principles and techniques of behaviourism into routine lives. Behaviourists consider the child/learner to be an organism that acts, thinks and feels and is already programmed with the necessary skills for learning when they reach to school. It is

understood that conditioning happens in education automatically. Learning is a kind of change in observable behaviour that takes place as a result of experience. There is focus on stimuli and responses which can be easily observed. Learning is influenced by behavioural ramifications. Positive boosting increases the possibility of repeating the desirable behaviour, whereas negative reinforcement can affect the likelihood of repeating the desirable behaviour.

At the time of applying the theoretical aspects of Behaviourism to learning milieu, it is easy to understand that we have many behaviourist relics through the history of learning. A dismemberment of the conventional teaching approaches used for many years would reveal the impactful influence that Behaviourists have had on learning. The process of directed instruction, through which a teacher is providing the knowledge to the students, either directly or through the setup of "possibilities" can be taken up as an example of the Behaviourist model of learning. Using exams to examine and evaluate observable behaviour of learning, the use of rewards and punishments in our school systems, and the breaking down of the instruction process into conditions of learning, are further examples of the Behaviourist reference. The main emphasis of behaviourism are as follows:

- **Emphasis on Behaviour:** Learners are most likely to learn when they in real sense of terms, have a chance to act or behave. The student learning must be evaluated; only measurable behaviour changes can confirm that learning has actually taken place.
- **Practice and Drill:** Repetition of stimulus-response habits reinforces those habits.
- **Rewards:** Many theorists punctuate the importance of rewards or reinforcement for learning.

General Educational Innuendo of Behaviourism

Here, knowledge transmission of teacher is the whole for the creation of teaching learning space and process. This aspect was helpful to those that are conventionally accepted and acknowledged, they are:

- rote learning,
- knowledge transmission,
- Unquestionable stand of teacher etc.

The emerging need of the society has transformed the role and method of education, which resulted to a paradigm shift concentrating towards constructivism.

Constructivism

Constructivism refers to the idea that learners construct knowledge for themselves. Each learner, individually (and socially) constructs meaning, as he or she learns and progresses with. Constructing meaning is learning; there is no other kind. The noticeable outcomes of this view are twofold;

- We have to concentrate on the learner while thinking about learning.
- There is no knowledge independent of the meaning attributed to experience by the learner, or a specific community of learners.

Fundamentals of Constructivist Learning

- Learning is constantly active process in which the learner uses receptive input (sensory) and constructs meaning out of it.
- People learn to learn as they learn: learning is mode of both, constructing meaning and constructing systems of meaning.
- The crucial action of constructing meaning is cognitive: it happens in the mind.
- Physical actions, real experiences may be obligatory for learning, especially for young age learners, but it is not adequate; we need to provide activities which engage the mind as well as the hands. (Dewey calls it reflective activity)
- Learning presupposes language: the language we use influences learning.
- Learning is a social activity: our learning is closely associated with our relationship with other human beings, our teachers, our peers, our family as well as casual acquaintances, including the people before us or next to us at the manifest.
- Learning is context oriented: We do not learn facts in isolation and theories in some abstract aerial land of the mind parted from the rest of our lives: we learn through relationships (connections) to what other things we know, what we believe in, our bias and our fears.
- One requires knowledge to learn: it is not possible to imbibe new knowledge without having any structure developed from earlier knowledge to build upon.
- It takes time to learn: learning is not immediate. For exceptional learning we need to revisit and reorganize ideas, contemplate them, try them out, play with them and utilize them.

- Stimulus or motivation is a key requirement in learning. Not only is it the case that motivation helps learning, it is a prerequisite for learning.

Types of Constructivism

Constructivism is a pedagogical approach where learning is an active cognitive process; knowledge is to be created and established rather than mere transmission. We may consider the two categories in that regard—cognitive and social constructivism.

Cognitive Constructivism

Radical or cognitive constructivists, emphasise learner-centred and discovery-oriented learning approach. In the said process, social milieu and social interaction work as motivation or stimulus for individual mental conflict. The basis for cognitive constructivism is the supposition, that the child has certain intrinsic abilities. Here the child is an isolated inquirer to develop his own knowledge. There are several criticisms on this which include: the role of the teacher is finite, role of the society is restricted, and knowledge constructed by the child may be deficient in that regard.

Some Educational Proposition of Cognitive Theories

- Cognitive processes sway learning.
- As the learners grow, they become capable of progressively more advanced thought.
- Learners systematize the things they grasp or become proficient in.
- Latest information is most easily obtained when learners can associate it with things they have already learned.
- Learners manage their own learning.

Social Constructivism

In social constructivism, learners are believed to be enculturated into their learning fraternity and relevant knowledge, based on their existing awareness and skills, through their interaction with the immediate learning milieu. Learning, that way, is considered to be a largely situation-specific and context-bound pursuit. But in social constructivism young learner (a child) is considered as a kind of social prentice. Since from his birth onwards, the learner is interacting with his milieu and with the help of others in the society, a young learner can go beyond his own existing skills and abilities. This is the significance of the concept.

- Cognitive tools perspective concentrates on the learning of cognitive skills and planning. Together, they come out with a

product and, as a group, apply meaning to it through the social learning process.

- Idea-based social constructivism sets education's precedence on important concepts in different disciplines. The larger ideas expand learner vision and become important basis for learners' thinking and on construction of social meaning in specific conditions as well as general conditions.
- Its supporters convey that knowledge, meaning, and understanding of the world can be discussed in the classroom from both the views, individual learner and the collective view of the entire class or group of learners. But in social constructivism child is considered as social learner. Right since from his birth, the learners is interacting with his surrounding environment and with the help of others in the society, the child can go beyond his own existing abilities.
- The perspective concentrates on the relationship between the group of learners and their environment. When a mind becomes functional, the owner interacts with the milieu. Hence, if the environment and social relationships among members of the group change, the tasks of each individual also do change. Learning, therefore, cannot take place in isolation from its surrounding environment.

Pedagogy is the stuff of teachers' routine. Basically it's about teaching. Let us take a broad view of teaching as a multi-faceted activity, which encompasses more than just 'generating' education. Let us try to understand it through another way:

- The Art of Teaching—the sensitive, creative, innate part
- The Craft of Teaching—skills, abilities and practice
- The Science of Teaching—research-informed or research-based decision making and the theoretical corroborate.

We should know that these are grounded in ethical principles and moral commitment and teaching is never simply an instrumental activity, a question just of method and technique.

Learning and Life

While discussing pedagogy as a process of bringing learning to life, let us focus on following aspects:

- **Animation:** bringing 'life' into conditions. This is often achieved through offering new experiences in new environments.
- **Reflection:** creating moments and spaces to explore lived experience.

- **Action:** working with people so that they are able to make changes in their lives.

Animation

It is important to link 'animating' to 'learning' because of the word's connotations: to give life to, to quicken, to vivify, to inspire. The job of animators (animateurs) is that of 'acting with learners, or with other learners, in situations, where learning is an aspect of what is happening, ensuring they get chance to work with their experience. It is a pretty good description of what many pedagogues, youth workers and informal educators do several times. They work with people on different situations and vivid relationships so that they are more stimulating, encouraging and satisfying. However, we can also look to what Dewey (1916) described as enlarging experience and to making it more vivid and inspiring. It is about encouraging people to try new things and provide opportunities that open up fresh new experiences in life.

Reflection

There has been a tradition of looking to learning from experience and, thus, to encouraging reflection. Dialogue or conversation is central to the practice of informal educators and animators of community learning and development. With this, there has been a long tradition of starting and maintaining with the concerns and interests of those they are working with, while at the same time creating moments and spaces where people can come to know themselves, their conditions and what is possible in their lives and communities.

Action

This learning does not stop at the classroom door, but is focused around working with people. It is to make sure that they can make changes in their lives – and in communities respectively. This is education as life. Rooted in responding to situations and not subjects, it basically involves a committed and action-based form of education. This is not formal, not conventional, not designed or prepared merely for the objective of cultivating skills. It is something which relates people definitely to their community. It also has for one of its objectives, the improvement or modification of methods for social action. We are the people who want change but we want it to be rational and understood. Actually, this is a process of joining in with people's lives and working with them to make informed and committed change.

The learning society does not emerge overnight. It cannot come about by declaration. It has to emerge through ongoing process. So, what we can consider in this relation, has few possible references to consider:

Encouraging the Acquisition of Latest Knowledge

One general and universally acknowledged principle can be observed that the advent of the learning society involves encouraging the acquisition of latest knowledge. Therein, employing the knowledge skills acquired by individuals throughout the life must be based on unlearning up new methods of recognising skills, and also paper qualifications and initial training, starting at national and local level is very important. Here, support for mobility or transaction also plays a vital role in encouraging the enhancement of knowledge. Geographical mobility broadens the individual's horizon, stimulates intellectual agility and raises the general level of learning. It can only reinforce the ability to learn, which is necessary to develop. Education and training should also draw on the new communication technologies and tackle their full potential. In the long run, every class can have the necessary equipment, which can allow young learners access to the world of newer technologies.

The pedagogues can also think of possible support to identify learner centric developments as following:

Recognition of Skills

We may look forward to trying to identify "key skills" and the best ways of acquiring, assessing, evaluating and certifying the learners.

- Shortlisting a number of well-defined areas/domains of knowledge of a general or more specialised nature
- Formulate validation systems for each of learners/learning types;
- Introduce new, more flexible and lucid, methods of recognizing skills.

Movability: For the sake of mobility, the obstacles (administrative, legal and those connected with social protection) acting as a brake on exchanges of students, trainees, teachers and researchers should either be removed or be minimized.

The Use of Multimedia Educational Software: We may think of setting up a mechanism to maximise and brand educational software and other global products for use in education and also for the training in order to facilitate the dissemination of knowledge.

Training: Training for existing and prospective occupations in the service sector should be encouraged. There should be emphasis on the need for it to be multidisciplinary or multi-faceted. For example, training for jobs in the tourism and environmental protection fields, which are now fully coming into their own, needs to be promoted.

Proficiency in Languages: Proficiency in languages has become a prerequisite and the language proficiency must be supported by the ability to adapt to working and living milieu characterised by salient cultures. Languages are also the key to knowing other people. Proficiency in languages benefits to build up the feeling of being associated with all its cultural richness and diversity. In order to make for proficiency in languages, it is desirable for foreign language learning to start at early age. It often seems essential for such teaching to be placed on a well-planned placement in early education.

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