

TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP: KEY TO EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

The paper makes an attempt to discuss the importance of teacher-student relationship in the process of education. Education is a conscious and deliberate effort on the part of teacher to influence the students in certain ways. The teacher serves as a model personality, creates climate to facilitate learning, and stimulates thinking process of learners. However, the learner is an essential element of the process of education. In fact, teaching and learning are reciprocal activities. The teacher affects the student, and in turn, is being affected by the learner. The present article brings out evidence to support interdependent nature of student-teacher relationship.

EDUCATION

Education means process or experience, which has an effect on the mind and character of an individual. It is a systemic process to transmit the social norms, values, skills, accumulation and cultural heritage from one generation to another. According to an educationist, Dr. R.A. Shah (1999): "Education is a process which enables an individual to develop his innate potentialities to acquire new skills, knowledge, understandings, appreciations and attitudes through self-activity under the stimulation and guidance of the teacher". Hence, education is a process in which two different parties are involved, the teacher and the learner. It involves giving and taking at the same time, such as, the teacher is imparting and the student receiving. It is a worth-while task to examine the relation between the teacher and student and their roles at greater length in order to discover a satisfactory account of the process of education.

TEACHER

Teaching is a prophetic profession and that all prophets were teachers of mankind. Allama I. I. Kazi viewed that, an ordinary man can not undertake to lead other on right path. Only highly spiritual man can lead others. Those teachers who know the path and practically adopt it can lead, otherwise, one thing is

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certain that blind can not lead the blind. Neither sleeper can wake up the sleeper. Allama further describes that a teacher has to be a teacher and not to make a show of a teacher, and he must possess a complete mastery over the subject taught by him (Umrani, 1989).

Because the teacher is an essential ingredient in the educational process, there are some reasons for focusing on his roles and effectiveness. Lindgren (1976) described that, one of the main reasons for the existence of the academic institutes is our general concern that the knowledge and values of our civilization be forwarded to the younger generation. The teacher becomes a key figure in this concern. The teacher's aim is to teach the student the knowledge and skills, which society agreed they should acquire. The teacher passes on to the learner all that was believed to be useful and worth while in culture of the society in the hope that in the future it would be transmitted to the next generation. This culture includes information, ideas, skills and attitudes towards life. A teacher exposes students to adult forms of behavior. This exposure is necessary if social learning through imitation is to take place. Redl & Wattenberg (1959) observed that when the teacher plays the role of social model, he is serving as the representative of society. The person who is charged with the task of transmitting the values and standards of the community and of culture in general, and who is perceived by students as embodying these values. Teachers as a model try to develop the moral attitudes, the thinking patterns, the life goals for living a good life. In this role they are more or less faithful mirrors of the society in which they live. Teacher also serves as a model in terms of his attitudes toward the subject he teaches and toward learning in general. The teacher, who has an enthusiasm for his subject and for learning in general, is more likely to reinforce similar attitudes on the part of his students. This view is consistent with social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), which is concerned with any learned behaviour that occurs as a result of social aspects of the environment-specifically, other people, groups, cultural norms.

The teacher's willingness to approach and cope with difficult problems encourages some students, who then serve as model for the more reluctant one. Conversely, if teachers hold

back, exhibit aversion and distaste, few students will become involved in the task at hand. They also play important roles in determining the kind of social climate that will prevail in their classrooms. The teacher's personal qualities have a great deal to do with the kind of climate he creates. The questions that teachers pose may also have a significant effect on student learning. They can stimulate creative thinking in students by asking questions that encourage speculation, exploration of ideas and other heuristic behaviours. The teacher's most obvious role is that of initiator, disciplinarian, director and evaluator of learning experiences. Teacher is expected to help maintain certain fundamental values like fairness, truthfulness, honesty, concern for others, and to develop moral attitudes, thinking pattern, life goals for becoming ideal citizens by precept and by his own example.

For promoting learning a teacher requires to perform a few psychologically oriented activities. With the knowledge of the psychology the teacher has to help students to learn more effective patterns of living and reduce anxieties, which are necessary for proper growth and lead them to become mature citizens. A teacher considers himself responsible not only for the mental growth but also the mental health of his students. He develops students' ability to make adjustment with their environments, self-understanding and helps them to realize their potentialities to maximum extent. The teaching trade involves many of the characteristics of profession, viz, involvement, competence, specialized knowledge and exercising personal judgments. It is duty of the teacher to help students to interact and relate to others and form cohesive group with a common goal, which is essential for the development of civilized person.

Teacher occupies the central position in the whole educational process. Teacher's personality moulds the personality of students. It is necessary for a teacher to possess knowledge, which enables him; (i) to exercise a healthy influence on the students in the development of their character and personality, (ii) to create confidence, to develop positive feelings and communicative skills among students, (iii) to enhance students' aspiration, showing belief in the students, and helping them to gain

competence, (iv) to inculcate among students the habit of hard productive work, and (v) to develop qualities of good citizenship and responsible behaviour.

STUDENT

Student is the most important element in educational process, because, unless someone is learning, there is no teaching. Students mean the persons on whose behalf the educational programme exists and operates. A great deal of what happens during the process of education can be explained in terms of the personalities, developmental stages, and psychological problems of students. Actually all over the world the students themselves are the living aim and end of the teaching. It is the modes of students learning, motivation, satisfaction and understanding, which in the end determine the success or failure of the methods of teaching. The student learns to play various roles in accordance with the standards of his culture from his teacher.

The first and foremost duty of a student is to have control on oneself and by exercising control on "self" one has to refrain from all vain desires. The student must keep in view that the purpose of education and aim of life go together. Allama I. I. Kazi firmly believes that the student would learn education only by thinking and looking up to the teacher, with curiosity of seeking education. The teacher is a benefactor of the students and it is duty of students to obey him and follow his foot prints (Umrani, 1989). Students tend to look upon teachers somewhat as they would upon a substitute parent. Their attitude towards teachers tend to be somewhat similar to the attitude they have toward their own parents, and they expect teachers to react and behave more or less as their parents do.

The learning is a complex process involving interplay of mental and emotional activities by which the learner shapes his knowledge, attitudes and feelings towards himself and others. It is the process by which the learner develops skills for meeting life's problems and reconstructing his environment. In these processes, learner needs help and guidance from the teacher.

Erikson's (1980) theory of psychological development suggests that college and university students being adolescents are in the stage of identity versus role diffusion. Identity refers to the organization of the individual's drives, abilities, beliefs and history into a consistent image of self. It involves deliberate choices and decisions, particularly about vocation, sexual orientation, and a "philosophy of life". If adolescents fail to integrate all of these aspects and choices, there is the possibility of role confusion. At this stage, students have stern need of proper guidance from their teachers to solve their problems related to adolescence.

Stanford (1967) assumed that a student will not learn unless he is motivated, and student's diligent performance of his academic work have been noted, such a, curiosity, interest, self-esteem, vocational ambition and desire to please teachers and parents.

TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION

Teaching is a series of interactions between teachers and students with the explicit goal of changing the behaviour of the student. In fact, teacher and learner are two interdependent and mutually affecting components in the process of education. The relationship between the teacher and student has been a focus of writing and inquiry for more than 2,000 years. Although the emphases of this study have changed and evolved over time, the centrality of the teacher's role in affecting student learning has remained constant (Wang & Heartel, 2000).

John Adams (1912) in his "Evolution of Education Theory" analyzed the relation which should be maintained between the teacher and student in the activities of teaching and learning. Adams summed up his theory in the following words:

1. It is bi-polar process in which one personality acts upon another in order to modify the development of other.
2. The process is not only a conscious but a deliberate one. The educator has the clearly realized intention of modifying the development of the educant.

3. The means by which the development of the educant is to be modified are twofold; (a) the direct application of the educator's personality, and (b) the use of the knowledge in its various forms.

In twentieth century, the relationship between teacher and student was also defined with the advent of cognitive psychology. Following the principles of constructivism, teachers and students were said to construct knowledge jointly. Teachers and student were believed to constitute a community of learners that engages in social discourse and produces common understandings. Teachers were seen as facilitators who guide and enrich student's learning activities, with students serving as contributors to the learning process (cited in Wang & Haertel, 2000). These studies noted the positive effects of active instruction on student achievement: teachers should be engaged and work directly with their students, rather than requiring students to learn their own. Teacher-student interactions included the questions teachers ask, the corrective feedback they provide, and the use of praise and reinforcement. Brophy & Good (1986) note that when asking information from the students, teacher must consider both the level of difficulty of the questions and its cognitive level. Information on the particulars of students and teacher interactions has led to new and more specific understandings about how teachers affect student's cognitive, affective and behavioural outcomes. Some correlational studies suggested that teachers' expectations of students' abilities affect the type and amount of feedback they give to students and the cognitive and motivational demands they place on students. These factors in turn, influence students' performances (Brattesani, Wienstein & Marshall, 1984). Not only is high performance followed by higher teacher expectations, but the reverse is also true. Werner (1989) showed that supportive teacher relationships greatly benefit students. Close, caring relationships with teachers facilitate students successful transition from elementary to high level.

Recently the researches on the psycho-social dimensions of teachers' relationships with students indicate that caring teachers who express concern for students and act as confidants, role

models and advisor can contribute to student's capacity to overcome personal vulnerabilities and environmental adversities (Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1994). Unfortunately, teachers have less close contact with students' and fewer resources are available to promote healthy development of the teacher-student relationships. Contrary to the traditional notion that adolescents are alienated and rebellious, recent work shows that they need and desire guidance from respected members of the community, specifically their teachers (Takanishi, 1993).

The psychological orientation of the educator in his relationship with learner implies a certain amount of rapport or an ability on the part of the teacher to build a warm and accepting relationship, inspiring confidence and cooperation while minimizing fear and resistance. The nature of the relationship depends upon the individuality and needs of a particular person as well as with his age and level of maturity. The relationship between a teacher and his student will vary because of differences in teacher's personality and teaching situations. Each teacher should teach in ways harmonious to his own personality. The teacher-student interactions are based on mutual compassion, love and sincerity. Imparting and receiving of education is considered a spiritual activity, hence respected in the society. The pupils take their teachers as their spiritual fathers and the teachers consider pupils as their own sons and daughters. In the words of an eminent scholar Daudpota (1937): "Emphasis was laid on the cordial relationship between the teacher and student; almost the affection that subsists between a father and a son- a relationship that is sadly lacking in the modern system of mercenary education".

The teacher's role in creating an environment and building relationships conducive to learning goes beyond the traditional academic duties to include provision of additional support and care. By developing positive, nurturing relationships with their students, teacher can buffer the impact of student's academic achievement (Wang & Haertel, 2000).

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