

Identifying the ranges of Knowledge-An effective strategy for framing Learning Outcomes

M. P. Ravishanker* and Mumthas N. S.**

Farook Training College, Calicut, Research Centre in Education

***Email:** mpr970@gmail.com

Abstract- In India the educational reforms have been periodically done through recommendation of different educational committees constituted by Government of India. Of these the National Policy on Education 1986, and the Programme of Action 1992 emphasized that Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) should be laid down and children's learning should periodically be assessed to keep a track of their progress towards ensuring that "all children acquire at least the minimum levels of learning". This was a leading twist in terms of fixed and precise educational gains for every individual learner in Indian educational system to ensure the quality of education. These recommendations fueled movement toward outcomes-based learning (OBL) in elementary, secondary, and post-secondary educational systems in India, and beyond. This movement is, in turn, influenced by a basic urge from public to ensure a greater quality and consistency within educational systems throughout the country. It can take us to a more accountable educational system and a better educated young generation. As learning outcomes focus on the end result of learning, regardless of how or where that learning occurred, their development serves to offer the potential for increased access to learning opportunities through prior learning assessment.

Introduction

At the same juncture National Policy on Education 1986 emphasized: "The status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of the society; it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers". Such exhortations are indeed an expression of the important role played by the teachers as transmitters, inspirers and promoters of man's eternal quest for knowledge. Should this sole expectation be not taken as rhetoric but as a goal to be constantly striven for, the urgency is to address ourselves seriously to examine the issues related to the preparation of teachers as well as to trim the theory and practice of teacher education. When we analyze our country's teacher education program, in contrast with, the dynamic advancements in elementary and secondary education system where the paradigm shift has already taken a decade ago, it seems our teacher education have been below par in serving the requirements as expected. This very problem is also evident in successful implementation of the outcome-based learning. This paper here tries to pave light into the shortcomings that are evident in the teacher education programs and what measures we can take to ensure that future teachers are fully equipped for implementation of novel reforms in the education sector.

Methodology

The basic data for percentage analysis, in order to find out the extent of conceptual understanding of Learning Outcomes among the prospective teachers, was collected through survey using a questionnaire consisting 16 items dealing with the various characteristics of learning outcomes. The sample constitutes 100 B.Ed. students who have completed the course requirements and waiting for final exam. Data was collected from various teacher education colleges under University of Calicut.

Analysis and Discussion

The extent of conceptual understanding of learning outcomes among prospective teachers is listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Extent of Conceptual Understanding of Learning Outcomes among Prospective Teachers

Learning outcomes should	% of Agreement
Be attainable to learners	31
Be topic specific	58
Clear and precise for effective learning	68
Follow principles of learning outcomes.	45
Support cognitive development of learners.	51
Formulate the affective domain of learners.	54
Reflect expected outcomes	20
Be connected to process skill	55
Help in lesson planning.	71
Lead to national goal	27
Be indicator of end behavior.	28
help in selection of proper strategies and methods	64
Act as a solid framework to guide learner's studies	51
Act as framework for self-assessment of students	51
Use clear language, understandable by students and other potential clients.	54
Be assessable.	59

Table 1 reveals that the extent of conceptual understanding of learning outcomes of prospective teachers ranges from 21 percent to 71 percent for different aspects of learning outcomes. Only one fifth of the trainees know the relation between learning outcomes and expected outcomes. Nearly 70 percent of trainees are ignorant that learning outcomes should be attainable to learners and learners must exhibit or demonstrate it as an end behaviour. All the indices of conceptual understanding of learning outcomes of prospective teachers given in Table 1 throws light in to fact that the trainees are not adequately trained and equipped for modern day classroom where everything is learner centered and learning outcome based.

Conceptual understanding of learning outcomes -Essential for future teachers....

Conceptual understanding of learning outcomes has particular relevance for understanding the factors that contribute to high-quality teaching behaviors. This study sought to explore the relationship between teacher's pedagogical content knowledge and learning outcomes in classroom. Just as undergraduate students lack the experience of how a classroom functions from a teacher's perspective, a B.Ed. trainee lacks the experience of how a classroom functions from an instructor's perspective. Trainees although have spent sixteen weeks in school internship during the formal teacher preparation program will not be fully equipped with all strategies and ideas to successfully attain the learning outcomes. In order to make the trainees fully equipped in terms of learning outcomes and outcome-based learning there should be a definite shift from traditional teacher training strategies and techniques. Enhancing the pedagogic content knowledge of trainees is a good move in this direction. This can be accomplished by giving due weightage to the range of knowledge (Biggs, 2003) such as

- Declarative knowledge: knowing what, or knowing about – the ‘content’ of knowledge
- Procedural knowledge: knowing how to do things
- Conditional knowledge: knowing when to do things
- Functioning knowledge: knowing how to employ the first three types of knowledge to solve problems and function as an effective professional.

A teacher when address the topics to be handled in classroom on the above basis can develop a better view on the subject matter in a student perspective. This can help in developing better indented learning outcomes (ILO) and selection of appropriate learning activities for ILOs (NCFTE, 2009). This approach can be more helpful in knowledge development, skill development, value/attitudinal change in the learner. In our teacher education Programme we have to put more focus on analysis of content based on the range of knowledge connected with respective intended learning outcomes. This can be achieved by making the trainees answer questions on why, when, what and how of the specific content. The questions given in Table 2 can help a teacher to comprehensively analyze a topic and create a method, strategy and approach in classroom which promotes the learner's own knowledge and understanding, where teacher playing the role of a mentor whenever necessary.

Table 2

Possible Type of Questions Used for Analyzing the Topic

1.	What do you intend the students to learn about this topic?
2.	Why is it important for the students to know this?
3.	What else do you know about this topic that you do not know intend students to know yet?
4.	What difficulties/limitations are connected with teaching this topic?
5.	What do you know about student thinking which influences teaching this topic?
6.	Are there any other factors that influence your teaching of this topic?
7.	What teaching procedures would you use, and why, for this topic?
8.	How would you ascertain student understanding of, or confusion about, this topic?

All the above eight questions guide us to analyze the content are on the basis of different range of knowledge. This deep understanding of the content by teacher will help him/her to plan their lesson in more learner oriented and learner friendly manner. This strategy also helps the teachers to look in to the content on the perspective of learner which is very important in present day class rooms.

Conclusion

Learning outcomes helps a teacher how content knowledge is to be used in lessons, keeping in mind that teaching occurs in many settings. In common, teaching is direct face-to-face interactions with students. Learning outcomes are imperative as far as effective teaching – learning is considered. It helps in the selection of the types of content and pedagogical knowledge that a teacher can employ in his lesson to ensure that all learners master the content of the course. It is also very much supportive in analyzing student preparedness, availability of resources, making choices about content-based activities for instruction, choosing of appropriate questions assessing student progress and support the professional development of teacher. Prospective teachers are to be adequately trained in framing learning outcomes by focusing the ranges of knowledge. Hence, they are equipped with the skill of framing learning outcomes which are specific to a particular subject area and level, develop around written descriptions of authentic teaching situations, with due consideration towards need and utility of the topic in learner's life. Learning outcomes though are topic specific, it is comprehensive and caters many distinctive purposes in ensuring the learning of the learner.

Hence, we can conclude that,

- LOs provide sufficient context to make both the task of teaching and its instructional purpose clear
- Teachers should find the direct link between learning outcomes and their own practice.
- Learning outcomes helps formulating strategies to make learners to engage in thinking about and working through tasks of learning, hence very high levels of success.
- Learning outcomes are ideally suited for selecting specific content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge connected with topic and level of learner.
- Learning outcomes demand particular practices to particular topics, designed to be attained for a targeted learning group.
- Learning outcomes act as bridge between knowledge, practice and end behavior of learner.

References

- Biggs, J.B. (2003). *Teaching for quality learning at university*. Buckingham: Open University Press/Society for Research into Higher Education.
- National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009). New Delhi: National Council for Teacher Education
- Ministry of Human Resource Development (1986). *National Policy on Education*. New Delhi: MHRD
- Ministry of Human Resource Development (1992). *National Policy on Education-Programme of Action*. New Delhi: MHRD