

Pedagogical Inputs for Child Development

MEENU DEV*

Abstract

Children are natural learners. They construct their own knowledge and actively engage with the world around by exploring, responding, inventing and working things out to frame their own meaning. Modern pedagogy, strongly influenced by Piaget's cognitivism and social interactionist theories of Bruner and the social and cultural theories of Vygotsky, has laid a new foundation for pedagogy, where sequential development of individual mental processes such as recognise, recall, analyse, reflect, apply, create, understand and evaluate are scaffolded. Students learn as they internalise the procedures, organisation and structures encountered in social context as to their own schema. They learn to integrate their prior knowledge with new knowledge and also develop their meta-cognition, ability to learn how to learn. The NCERT National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2005), too, emphasises on learner-centred approach to achieve the objectives of the curriculum and child development in all aspects.

INTRODUCTION

Development refers to the biological, psychological and emotional changes that occur in human beings from birth till the end of adolescence as the individual progresses from dependency to increasing autonomy.

Human development is the scientific study of the changes that occur with age, from conception until adolescence. Development takes place in all manners — cognitive, emotional and social. Child development in all spheres of life is a natural

* Assistant Professor, College of Teacher Education (MANUU), NUH, Mewat, Haryana-122107.

phenomenon. Teacher can help a child shape his/her innate abilities to attain desirable behaviour. Teaching methodology and effective pedagogy are tools in the hands of teachers, who can facilitate the learner to achieve the goal and nurture qualities. Selection and utilisation of right approach and effective pedagogy and attitudes of the teacher play an important role in child development.

EFFECTIVENESS CONTESTED

The terms 'effectiveness' and 'pedagogy' are contested. The ultimate goal of any pedagogy is to develop students' learning. Pedagogy, though a contested term, involves activities that evoke changes in the child. Watkins and Martimore (1999, P.3) define pedagogy as any conscious activity to enhance learning.

Teachers' thinking and ideas are manifested in their overall pedagogic approaches garnered from the kinds of teaching and learning experienced as children themselves.

Knowledge of theoretical schools of thoughts and associated knowledge of pedagogies — both are important for a teacher to help the child develop. Children are natural learners. They construct their own knowledge if they are actively engaged with the world around — exploring, responding, inventing and working things out and framing their own meaning.

NEW INPUTS

Modern pedagogy, influenced by the cognitivism of Piaget, the social-

interactionalist theories of Bruner and the social and cultural theories of Vygotsky, has laid a foundation for pedagogy where sequential development of the child's mental processes such as recognise, recall, analyse, reflect, apply, create, understand and evaluate are scaffolded. Students learn as they internalise the procedures, organisation and structures encountered in social contexts as to their own schema. They learn to integrate their prior knowledge with new knowledge and also develop their meta-cognition, the ability to learn how to learn.

NCF 2005 vs. CHILD DEVELOPMENT

The National Council of Educational Research and Training's (NCERT)'s National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2005), too, emphasises on 'learner-centred approaches' to achieve objectives of the curriculum. Curriculum is the key reference point for teachers, particularly in child development. Teachers' pedagogic approaches, strategies and practices serve to enact the curriculum for child development.

The implementation of pedagogy in the context of curriculum and child need involves quality teaching by the teacher who can use different teaching methodology and pedagogy for the all-round-development of the child. Learner-centred pedagogy, critical pedagogy, participatory learning, experiential learning, problem-solving, investigatory approach, concept-mapping, social inquiry approach, creative writing, peer

learning, collaborative learning and cooperative learning are the different teaching methodologies for child development.

LEARNER-CENTRED PEDAGOGY

Teacher can use different pedagogies as per needs of the child and content. Learner-centred pedagogy means giving primacy to learners' experiences, their voices and their active participation. It requires a teacher to plan learning in keeping with children's psychological development and interest, responding to their physical, cultural and social preferences and needs. School pedagogic practices, learning tasks and text created for learners focus on the socialisation of children and on the 'receptive' features of children's learning.

The aim of education or schooling is development of the child in a desirable manner for survival in society. School being a miniature society, the child learns what is required to survive in the society, for which all-round development is necessary. The uses of right pedagogy and right approach have a unique place in the development of children. Learning should be active and social in character. Children learn only in an atmosphere where they feel they are valued. Fear, discipline and stress are not suitable for learning. Teachers recognise that they have to sustain the attention of each child. The ways in which children learn and develop vary greatly from one child to another. There is a need to explore

individual and viable child-centred pedagogy.

Paulo-Freire uses the term 'Critical Pedagogy' as a venture for an opportunity to learn by reflecting critically on issues in terms of their political, social, economic and moral aspects. It entails the acceptance of multiple views on social issues and a commitment to democratic forms of interaction in which the schools function.

A critical framework helps children see social issues from different perspectives and understand how such issues are connected with life that is helpful for the all-round development of the child. Critical pedagogy facilitates collective decision-making through open discussion and by encouraging and recognising multiple views.

SHARING TEACHER-TAUGHT EXPERIENCES

Participation is a powerful strategy. It loses its pedagogic edge when it is ritualised. It helps teachers meet their own ends. True participation starts from the experiences of both learners and teachers when children and teachers share their experiences without fear and reflect on them, provide opportunity to learn about others who may not be part of their own social reality. If children's experiences are to be brought into the classroom, it is inevitable to address issues of conflict. Learners must be encouraged to comment, compare

and think about elements that exist in their own environments. It brings out social and moral development of the child.

Experiencing learning involves four steps — concrete experience, observation and reflection, formulation of new concepts and ideas, and validating new ideas. The process of learning starts with action. The learner then reflects upon and provides adequate explanation. This type of learning allows divergent learning styles in the classroom to be helpful in the cognitive development of children. Teachers can use project method for concrete learning.

Child-centred pedagogy, critical pedagogy, participatory learning, problem-solving approach, investigatory approach, social enquiry approach, co-operative learning, etc. All are tools in the hands of teachers for the all-round development of the child.

PROBLEM-SOLVING

Problem-solving approach helps develop higher cognitive abilities of thinking as well as transfer and participation of knowledge to new knowledge. It

makes learning more meaningful and permanent and invites students' participation in the construction of new knowledge. It is helpful in developing higher cognitive abilities.

CREATIVE WRITING

Creative writing can be used to teach all subjects such as language, science, social science and mathematics. Creative writing helps develop abilities of reporting, arguing, explaining, persuading, reflecting, coping and evaluating. It gives opportunities of free expression of thought, feeling and emotions involving all those methods requiring learners' initiatives and efforts. It develops the decision-making power of the child. Teacher can use this approach at all levels for students to develop their power of expression and self-confidence.

Peer learning is also an educational practice, in which a student interacts with other students to attain his/her educational goal. It enhances the value of student-to-student interaction and results in advantageous learning outcomes as well as social and moral development of learners.

REFERENCES

- NCERT. 2005. *National Curriculum Framework*. New Delhi.
- NCTE. 2009. *National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education*. NCTE, New Delhi.
- AGRAWAL, M. 2004. Curricular Reform in Schools: The Importance of Evaluation. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 36 (3): 361–379.
- WATKINS, C. AND P. MARTIMORE. 1999. 'Pedagogy: what do we know?' in: Mortimore P (ed.), *Understanding Pedagogy and its Impact on Learning*. Paul Chapman/Sage, London.
- FREIRE, PAULO. 1968. *Pedagogy of the Opressed*. Seabury Press, New York.