

# Teacher Efficacy: Teacher – Student Participation in the Learning Process of the Students

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## Abstract

Teaching is a noble profession where the teachers build a friendly environment in the classrooms; inspire students; and introduce the learning process. But with today's claim of standards and government mandated exams, education has become a process where the students are counted as commodities absorbed in the labour market and provided input only for the progress of trade and commerce. Thus, teaching is mostly restricted to an application of generating a mindless population of students who respond to an appropriate 'correct' answer without proper critical thinking and the reflective ability. The need of the hour is the participation of the students in the teaching and the learning process. The teachers, instead of just presenting the concepts, have to initiate the process of dialoguing with the students and take active role in the process of students' learning and growth. This article focuses about this paradigm shift at length.

## Introduction

Education is the basis of life. It empowers students with access to knowledge and understanding to progress in life as matured persons. Teaching is the fundamental of education. It develops the students' skill to comprehend the reality through question and critique on issues and thereby helps to gain a broader outlook of the world around.

Teachers, for centuries were the focal point of a classroom. They were seen as leaders. They carried out different roles, like school administrators, chair persons, leaders and they developed the curriculum for the students. The contemporary trend in education has limited their role as representatives rather than leaders.

Teacher leadership is actually a shared effort with students and other stakeholders to achieve better educational services. The teacher has to create the atmosphere for learning and should have the potential to encourage the student to become civilized and accepted individual in the classroom, and the society.

Student participation education manifests caring of the students, believing and striving to hatch the goodness of students, ensuring healthy atmosphere within the classroom and the school campus to spread out goodness everywhere.

### **1. Plight of Conventional Teaching**

The plight of existing conventional teaching is just making students to score good marks and awarding ranks and certificates without giving adequate attention on the imparting of knowledge and wisdom to the students. Educational institutions are largely functioning as factories that produce degree holders for the business and industry. Class room teaching has become only a ritual, which is followed mechanically.<sup>1</sup> This conventional system aims on scoring good marks with an ulterior motive of obtaining better job and lump sum pay. The pedagogical researchers blow the clarion for a change.

The business needed people to work in companies with the adequate skills required for production and marketing. Hence, our schools were constructed with a immense emphasis on efficiency and quality. This approach resulted in a system, similar to the assembly line in commodity manufacturing units, whereby students are the work-pieces, pushed from one level to the next on a pre-planned timetable. The conventional education approach obstinately strives to increase the number of students per teacher, which is just the opposite of student participatory educational system.

Students are concerned only for getting good marks and they study only for obtaining better jobs. This results in lack of creativity among the students and less innovative ideas. There is a great need and urgency to bring about a paradigm shift in education.

Hence the importance for promoting efficient participatory practices in the education system to realize the expected learning outcomes from the students has been felt. For this, not only the teachers, but also the management, decision makers, trainers, supporting staff, parents and other stakeholders should be included to realize the change from the conventional teacher centred approach.

Student participatory approach is a system, wherein the students play the

leading role and not the teacher. In the student participatory teaching system, mere memorization and repeating just like copy-paste are not encouraged. This brings about momentous improvement in the learning outcome and analytical capacity among the students.<sup>2</sup>

Swami Vivekananda was a pioneer in the student participatory teaching. He considered the students as the epicenter of learning, and the education should be according to the prerequisites of the students. He believed that “the outside teaching will be unproductive and meaningless unless the inner-teacher is opened”.<sup>3</sup>

## **2. Students are Persons with Rights**

Though students and teachers are after new trends, developments and competitions, on another side a counter approach to education is emerging highlighting students as persons with rights and dignities. Educators are demanded to involve in the teaching process. These principles would help in materializing the student participatory teaching where students are given opportunity and guaranteed environment to help them to bring out their best.

Teachers should understand and believe that each student is unique. They should examine themselves by checking whether they provide their full support for the growth and development of their students across all spheres, viz. “social, emotional, physical, linguistic, and intellectual”.<sup>4</sup>

Hence, each student must be recognized, respected, and addressed to their individual uniqueness of age, gender, culture, temperament, and learning style. Students should be made to comprehend that they are the pivotal point in their own education and development. So, they should be mentally involved and physically active in learning what they like to know and do.<sup>5</sup>

Educationists insist that the “ideas, preferences, learning styles, and interests” of the students should be given priority and consideration during the planning and implementation of teaching methodologies. Recently, the “students’ need” and not the “academic needs” are the felt needs for an effective student participatory education, which necessitates to promote healthy lifestyles among the student community. Awareness on the importance of the welfare of the students, their holistic growth, and their basic rights are now gaining momentum.<sup>6</sup>

## **3. Quality Education - The Right of the Students**

The International Commission on Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century of UNESCO

emphasized four pillars of education, they are: “Learning to know; Learning to do; Learning to live together; and Learning to be”.<sup>7</sup>

UNICEF emphasizes these guidelines for ensuring quality education:

“Learners who are healthy, well-nourished, and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities; Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities; Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace; Processes through which trained teachers use student-centered teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skillful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities; Outcomes that embrace knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive engagement in the society”.<sup>8</sup>

Given the current educational scenario, which puts great emphasis and stress to teachers in forging a harmonious relationship with the students and a conducive learning environment in the classroom, this study becomes significant in exploring how servant leadership becomes best for the teachers to achieve the best results.<sup>9</sup>

#### **4. Teacher Efficacy**

Teacher efficacy is significantly associated with more practical and philosophical orientation towards teaching among the teachers.<sup>10</sup> Since long back, the relationship between students’ academic performance, outcome and the teachers’ sense of efficacy has been well-established.<sup>11</sup> Teacher efficacy, with regard to the students, improves students’ learning ability, classroom management and their academic achievement. Then again, teacher efficacy beliefs increase teacher job satisfaction, teaching aptitude, job motivation and organizational commitment.

#### **5. Essentials for Teachers – Student Participation**

Conventionally, teaching required intellectual competence, integrity, independence, and a spirit of scholarly inquiry. But now, the superior prerequisite for becoming a good teacher include a great passion for teaching, encouraging, and

working with students, and above all the capability to stimulate student interest and enthusiasm.<sup>12</sup>

Conventionally teachers' role was not flexible and was confined only to a lengthy ongoing commitment to time and coverage of syllabus, whereas currently, teachers are expected to function and expose skills more than their commitment to lessons and syllabuses. Teachers have to demonstrate and extend their sphere of role and authority apart from their regular classroom responsibilities.<sup>13</sup>

Good teaching is not just providing of information and knowledge alone.<sup>14</sup> Fiedler contended that leaders should select a style of leadership depending on the situation. Choice of leadership style by teachers and educators would determine the success or failure of a teacher in a classroom setting.<sup>15</sup>

## **6. Teachers are Leaders**

Leadership is a composite and complicated role that involves and demands many important communal as well as individual progressions. Not the position as a teacher, but the vast knowledge and experience of the teacher makes them the intellectual leaders of the community.<sup>16</sup>

Teachers with leadership skills demonstrate awareness and concern on the personal aspects of teachers; safeguard the students' focus, concentration, and learning; react to the requirements of the students which eventually make the students feel supported and results in better student outcomes; and students responding more positively. Teacher leaders promote trust and develop good relationship with colleagues and peers toward positive change, build confidence in others, identify organizational conditions, manage the work, deal with processes by becoming protagonist and make the school a better place of learning.<sup>17</sup>

## **7. Teachers as Servant Leaders**

Conventionally, the teacher was the ultimate authority in the classroom; the teacher determined what to teach and how to teach; the students could not determine what learning methods should be used; and the students solely depended and followed the teachers without questions.

Whereas a servant leader is a catalyst, who involves the students in deciding the methods of teaching; selecting the teaching aids and accompanies the students in the learning process. Encompassing of service and stewardship by the teachers not only lays the initial groundwork for a positive learning environment, but also sets the

stage for a more productive community of learners, supporting one another as a choice rather than manipulation or control.<sup>18</sup>

If teachers adopt the servant leader role and accept the role as facilitators, students certainly would be ready to engage themselves in more active participation in their learning, would establish highest levels of trust, respect and honesty and be empowered for better future.<sup>19</sup>

Bass asserted that servant leadership is a theory that promises a great future.<sup>20</sup> The main aim of the teacher education is the progress of teacher-efficacy, including the vital components of promoting motivation and developing inspiration which are crucial for successful classroom performance among the teachers.<sup>21</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The very purpose and choice of teachers and academic institutions is to serve the students and ultimately the society. Educators naturally exhibit servant leadership traits in their profession. This implies that servant leadership is essential for the success of the academic institutions and to the growth of the students, which they serve; because, an ideal servant leader teacher would be able to practice and transform the ideals of servant leadership towards promoting a pleasant classroom environment where students are empowered to develop their best future.

The current situation emphasizes on teacher – student participation, instead of teacher determining the requirements of the students.

A paradigm shift is felt in the education system to achieve student participatory curriculum rather than teacher focused, which has to be concept-based and not content-based. A policy has to accept individual progress as the measure of success. Measuring the success of the students for the purpose of promoting to the next level results deviation from student participatory education.

The teacher – student participation came from working with each student's needs to progress from where they had been to a new level. As in any system of assessment, teacher decisions can result in mistakes, but it is found that the students were predominantly, more ready to engage with the work and continue to learn compared to other systems.

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