STUDENT DRIVEN TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS

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Abstract:

Teaching is complex and challenging enough to keep learners learning all through the classroom experience. The main aim of teaching is that learning must take place but learners of today do not want to be bound in the classroom. The main reason for this is that they are not sufficiently involved in the class. This paper has highlighted the problems teachers face in class due to the changed attitudes of students towards classroom teaching and suggestions are made to incorporate newer methods of dealing with students through the curriculum. The methods are originally thought of and can be used for all levels with minor changes considering the level of students. The nomenclature is given by the paper writer herself and the procedures are purely attributed to the thought analysis which followed from the behavior of students in class. Although some methods like concept mapping and SWOT are mentioned in this paper but the mention of how to use them is purely the writer’s contribution. Reverse order teaching, the use of art in the teaching – learning process, concept mapping used to improve interaction, forced sharing method for bringing in application of concepts, reflective practice through various methods and last but not the least linking curriculum to social awareness are all explained in this paper with the sole aim to bring in more of student’s involvement in classroom activities.

For generations teachers have ruled the platform in class, taking the lead in controlling the teaching – learning process in classrooms. The time has come...
when this role is to be reversed and given in the hands of the students. Students of today are very much aware of what is going on in society and they have strong opinions about it. Often it is seen and heard that students have had informal discussions and arguments about events happening in their day to day lives. Today youngsters have a say in everything. The skills of assertiveness and decision making come easily to the students of today, they need no special training. They can reason out better and can also pose challenging situations to the teacher. Students naturally evaluate situations and also provide constructive feedback which can be implemented effectively if given a chance. Most students are also very observant and they pass comments on all issues which they may label as “time pass” but if we analyze it there has been lot of thought that has gone into the comment or remark passed. Leadership skills and skills of presentation are incidentally learned by most and they pick up most skills without a proper workshop. Another phenomenon which is seen is that students are restless in class; they just want the bell to ring and be free. They feel that their freedom is curtailed in class. They prefer to do independent learning and feel proud about their work instead of being taught everything all the time. Students of today can be termed as “SMART”.

The question here is, “have the teachers adapted to this change?” We have spoken endlessly about why this change has come about but we have not properly mulled about how to cope with this change. Yes use of technology is one way to involve student positively, but how many of our students have technology to participate in the teaching – learning process. That day is far away when very child will have a laptop and internet connection at his beck and call. In this situation what are the methods we can adopt to keep the learner interested in classroom activities, moreover may we should say the curricular activities. Teachers are always worried about finishing the portion in time, and so also students, but the latter is more interested in getting rid of the classroom
activities, which means listening to the teacher all the time. How can we as teachers become more student friendly and bring in a “STUDENT DRIVEN TEACHING – LEARNING PROCESS”.

Teachers must adopt methods which can bring in more participation from students. It must give them the feeling that they are important and they are needed for classroom transaction to happen. Once this feeling sets in the minds of the students, they will automatically feel that they are a part of the whole teaching – learning process. Institutions have adopted stricter ways of attendance and forced the child to be physically present in the class but no one can control their minds, it is they themselves who can do it. Each classroom has a different ambience and different dynamics and it is impossible to have one set of solution for all, however some ways to get students contribute and be involved in the class has been worked out in this paper and it is made sure that the students are the most important part of the teaching – learning process.

**Reverse order teaching:** It is the common practice among teachers to start the lessons by starting to explain the concepts involved in that part and they do it through the latest technology if possible or through the chalk talk method. This method reverses the order by making the students start first. The procedure can be as follows:

- Teacher gives a brief outline of the unit
- Student formulates questions which come to his mind while going through the outline
- Student refers to sources of information to fill the gaps in his mind
- Teacher interaction for further clarifying doubts if required
- Student creates worksheets
- Distribution of worksheets in groups
- Discussion in groups
- Evaluation is done by students’ projects
- Presentation done by students

The teacher in this case acts like a director; a director gives the right direction to learning. Most people say that the teacher is a facilitator of learning. The role of the teacher needs to be minimized as students are active. The teacher may not have a set direction; she must be flexible enough to take the course of the direction of learning. In this method the curriculum cannot be rigidly followed lesson wise or unit wise, but must provide greater flexibility. It is seen that in this method the students first formulate questions which arise in their minds. Most students if given a chance can ask endless questions. Questions need answers so students will be motivated to refer to the reference material and the teacher at this stage should build the creative mind by cultivating the sense of inquiry. Teacher intervention may be required for highly complicated matter, as without this stage students may get demotivated and may give up. This stage of teacher intervention can also serve to consolidate the matter understood by students, and bring in the right context of perceiving the content. Teacher then takes students to the next stage where creation of worksheets is done. The students create worksheets under the guidance of the teacher in order to test their own understanding. The worksheet must be made for the students and by the students. It is interesting to note here that the Bloom’s Cognitive Taxonomy (Remembering ---------------Creating) can be used to create different levels of worksheets for “Differentiated instruction”. All students have different abilities and may have different learning styles. This stage is referred to preparation of a worksheet, which could cater to the differences in class. This is done to ensure “Inclusive learning”, which could be followed by splitting students into heterogeneous groups. The groups are mainly discussion groups where the concepts are discussed and all kinds of students are taken care of. Students act like mentors to see that all students in their group come up to the same level of
understanding by conducting different activities within the group. The process does not stop here all this can be tried and applied through student projects, the topics of which are decided by the students themselves. The project can be presented to the whole class for further discussion.

Another method of involving students is by asking them to create a **concept map** of the unit in hand. The teacher in this case does not give a brief outline but the student on his own reads understands and creates the concept map putting in the relevant connections. The concept maps are then collected and given to groups **where the creator does not belong**. Students look at it critically and change giving rightful justifications. A combined effort is gathered to create couple of concept maps which could then be finally approved the teacher. This could provide several insights into the unit in hand and also heuristically students may discover new connections, which may be an eye opener for the teacher. Thus learning can be fun and may become more enriching. **Pictorial representations on concept maps** make them more interesting to look at as well brings in more color and more meaningfulness.

The paper presenter has also thought of some small yet meaningful methods of involving students in class. Before the child started to write he began to draw, therefore the skill of art can be used by the teacher, for representing the concepts in a pictorial form as well as showing applications of content. The child may not be able to express in words but may be able to draw so give him a chance and then if needed insist for words. All domains can come in if the teacher uses art as a form of teaching. **Integration of art with teaching** will be an innovative method to look at our concepts. A group of students could be made into **question chains** which can be created in class along with **answer chains** with another set of students. Students create questions and their counterparts answer. The question chains act like experts of the topic. They are responsible to answer any queries of the answer chain. The roles can be
switched and the cycle can go on. **Forced sharing method** can be used with students when a teacher has finished achieving objectives of knowledge and understanding and want students to apply their knowledge in other situations. Each student has to forcefully share an application which should not be repetitive. This would ensure that students do apply their knowledge to different situations.

**Reflective practice** can be a method to create well balanced individuals in society. Students nowadays do not reflect on their action. SWOT analysis is an old technique of reflection but has its worth. The strengths and weaknesses identified in an individual will fall in the internal reflection and the opportunities and threats fall in external reflection of the environment which supports the child. Reflective practices help in the building of the child’s personality and also make him feel worthwhile. Diary writing and personal sharing with peers and the teacher should be encouraged. We are slowly becoming closed individuals. Sharing of personal problems according to most individuals makes one vulnerable but this is not so. This has also gone to such an extent that people are not even sharing ideas, they want to get full credit on a platform then only the sharing takes place. Free sharing of ideas, feelings and knowledge must be encouraged at all levels. There is an urgent need for improved interaction to enhance the teaching – learning atmosphere. Reflection as a supportive device helps in the effectiveness of the teacher.

The society is the main responsibility of educational institutions. Teachers must therefore **link curriculum to social awareness.**
Identifying plug points for social awareness

Feedback ← Action programme

**Model for integrating social awareness**

Teacher must be agents of social change. We must have read this a number of times, but this remains in print, but teachers have to translate this into action. Much has to be done to bring in social consciousness among teachers and make teachers voiced their opinions in the direction of social change. Since our teachers prefer to be neutral most of the items we have a neutral and cold society. All problems definitely have solutions but people’s apathy towards problems will lead us nowhere. Therefore day in and day out people crib about their problems thinking that one day the solution will come automatically or that finding the solution is someone else’s problem. The model suggested for social change can bring about practical connection with societal problems as well as bring in positive changes through concrete action oriented projects undertaken under the teacher’s guidance.
The 5E model of constructivist learning has impressed me for a long time but now I recently read about the 7E model. The teacher can design her lessons based on the 7E model. A brief explanation of the 7E model¹ is given as follows:

Phase 1: Elicit: Determining prior conceptions: “What do you know about…..?”

Phase 2: Engage: Arouse student interest by using a discrepant event, telling a story, or showing an object or picture.

Phase 3: Explore: Have students work with manipulatives (teaching aids), have students make predictions, develop hypotheses etc…

Phase 4: Explain; Introduce concepts and terms, verbalize the concept and summarize the results of the exploration phase

Phase 5: Elaborate; Have students apply newly learned concepts to new domains. Pose a different (but similar) question and have students explore it using the concept.

Phase 6: Evaluate: Use the formative assessment from the Elicit phase and assess. Expectations vary according to the student’s beginning point

Phase 7: Extend: Lead students to connect to different concepts

**Conclusion**: All the innovative techniques mentioned in this paper can be used for higher classes as well as lower classes but it needs an attitude for change. The timetable must be flexible and there must be an atmosphere that motivates teachers to try out innovative practices in institutions. All teachers can be innovative if needed but the atmosphere sometimes curtails their creativity.