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## Promoting Facilitative Teacher Development through Teacher Education

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### Abstract

New age education emphasizes upon learner centered approach. Consequently teacher's role has now changed to be of supporter, motivator and director of students' self-learning endeavors. Teacher is expected to be a facilitator of students' knowledge construction process. Such change in teacher's role requires different set of attributes which need to be fostered through teacher education. Teacher education through its pre-service and in-service modes needs to focus on facilitative development of teachers. There is a necessity to restructure teacher education for facilitative competence development.

Why the teacher is needed as facilitator in new era? What is meant by facilitative teacher? How can the facilitative teaching competence be groomed through teacher education? These points are discussed in the present paper.

**Keywords:** Facilitative competence, learning environment, motivation

### Introduction

Human society is dynamic society aiming to become knowledge society in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Knowledge related issues are the center of all the developments. Global economies are shaped by research and innovations where knowledge creation, sharing, dissemination and application are the driving forces. Therefore knowledge activists are most valued in the new era. Hence education needs to prepare the students as global citizens who will be knowledge activists. Knowledge is no more confined within the four walls of classrooms and teacher is not the sole source of information. In fact varied ways and resources are on hand for the learner to construct knowledge on his own. Learner is at the center of all the educational endeavors and learning is regarded more crucial rather than the teaching. Emphasis has shifted from information reception and rote memorization to self-initiated knowledge construction efforts. Therefore teacher's roles and responsibility has completely transformed in the new paradigm of education. He is expected to be the promoter, motivator and manager of students' learning. He is not anticipated as mere lecturer; he is expected to be the facilitator who encourages the learners to reflect, discuss and construct knowledge on their own. Modern era wants teacher as facilitator who provides supportive environment for students' learning.

### Concept of Facilitative Teacher

Assorted ways and resources plus technologies are accessible for the learner today to obtain knowledge on his own. He is not reliant upon the teacher for knowledge acquisition. Teacher is not sole dispenser of information; rather he needs to motivate and support the learner in active learning accomplishments. The verb 'facilitate' by dictionary meaning is i) to make easy or easier (Dictionary of English Language, 2009), ii) to make easier; assist the progress of (Collins English Dictionary, 2003). Facilitator is someone who supports to understand general objectives and helps to plan for realizing them without taking a specific stance in the discussion. He is the one who supplies design and process to interactions in such a way that groups are equipped to function efficiently and craft high quality decisions. "A helper and enabler whose goal is to support others as they achieve exceptional performance" (Bens,

” (Bens, 2000). “Facilitative teacher is one who guides, instigates and motivates students to learn. As such, the teacher is the facilitator, rather than the source of learning” (Siblerman, 1970). Facilitative teacher successfully employs apposite instructional strategies and generates a positive learning environment. Facilitative teacher has the same level of knowledge about both education and pedagogy as well as the subject content knowledge as a teacher, but functions towards enabling students taking utmost responsibility for their own learning.

There are definite qualities that a teacher requires to acquire to be a successful facilitative teacher. Carl Rogers (1983) accentuated three distinct qualities of teacher as a facilitator; 1) Genuineness, 2) Acceptance 3) Empathetic understanding of the learner. Teacher should be real in his relationship with his students. There mustn't be any uncertainty or false stance during interaction with the students. He ought to be the real himself behaving naturally; that will promote the students to trust him for connecting and interacting confidently. Facilitative teacher ought to accept the students as they are. He should respect their differences. He needs to show true regard towards the learners and their efforts to learn. At the same time teacher shall possess empathetic understanding towards all learners. These qualities formulate an effective facilitative teacher.

### **Facilitative Teaching Competence**

Change in the role of a teacher from conventional lecturer to the learning assistant, promoter and director demands different set of attributes. These attributes can be categorized in four groups namely; (A) facilitative communicative competence, (B) facilitative socio-emotional competence, (C) facilitative process competence, and (D) facilitative professional competence.

#### **A) Facilitative Communicative Competence**

Teacher needs to be a good communicator in the modern era. One cannot facilitate the learning process until he has the command on communication. This is the basic necessity for a facilitative teacher. He has to pay attention to the verbal and non-verbal behavior of the learner for the success of the teaching-learning process. Facilitative teacher needs to be an active listener too. He needs to carefully listen so that he can perceive the students' thought process as well as problems related to learning. Facilitative teacher needs to convey his message precisely and effectively for the successful group learning process. He obliges to be interacting with the group as well as the student as the participant and influencing the learning process. That is why he should be talkative. Facilitative teacher needs to direct and motivate the sharing of ideas, information. Hence interrogative skills are demanded from the facilitative teacher. High quality questioning ability is required from him so as to promote and direct group learning.

#### **B) Facilitative Socio-emotional Competence**

Teacher has to be real in his relationship with the students. Genuineness is one such virtue which differentiates the facilitative teacher from the ordinary ones. There should be integrity between his thoughts and his deeds. He needs to have relationship oriented approach with the students. If he is able to develop firm emotional relationship with the

students then only he can facilitate the group learning successfully. This is only possible if he is trustworthy for them to share their thoughts and ideas. Teacher should always appreciate students' learning attempts. He should never discourage the students in any condition. He should always stay away from criticizing them. He needs to accept the students as they are. He should have faith in the individual differences among the students. He needs to regard the student very highly so that they can feel secured. At the same time he should show respect for their abilities as well as their ideas, thoughts and views. Motivation is the most crucial aspect for the Facilitative teacher. It is the most essential part of the group facilitation process. He should always keep on encouraging the students to be active and highly motivated during the process. He should be able to use positive reinforcement in a tactful manner.

#### **C) Facilitative Process Competence**

Facilitative teacher has complete command on how to plan and execute the group process. He should have in-depth knowledge about the group dynamics as well as pedagogies, andragogy along with synergy. He should be able to conduct the process as per the plan. During the process he shall be able to cultivate the shared responsibility among the students as the participants of the group process. The top priority for a facilitative teacher is to create conducive learning environment for the group learning.

#### **D) Facilitative Professional Competence**

Facilitative teacher is resourceful teacher. He should have exhaustive and advanced knowledge of the subject. He has to possess pedagogic expertise also. Teacher needs to be tactful to an effective facilitative teacher. Time management is a vital aspect of the group facilitation process. He needs to have the resource management ability too. He must be smart enough to perceive the verbal and non-verbal communication so as to conduct the group process successfully. He needs to offer cues for directing as well as enhancing the process. Facilitative teacher should have to contain himself as a neutral participant. He should stay away from offering his subject expertise or personal views. Rather he should encourage the students to actively participate, share and construct knowledge on their own. These areas of facilitative teaching competence need to be properly nurtured through teacher education program via its pre-service as well as in-service modes.

### **Teacher Education promoting Facilitative Teacher Development**

Teacher education has to focus on the facilitative development of teachers. It needs to foster the facilitative characteristics through theoretical and more precisely through its practicum components. Curriculum development as well as curricular transaction shall consider facilitative development as core component. Purposive planning and execution of practical components are necessary with reference to facilitative teacher development. Complete makeover of the teacher education program is unfeasible and irrelevant in Indian context. Hence gradual transformation of teacher education curricula is inevitable. Initially specific facilitative development practicum can be introduced. Later the entire curriculum can be competency based which will focus on

facilitative competence development.

Here is an example of facilitative development program which can be introduced in the current teacher education

course. Such program may be of orientation-cum-workshop nature. A model of such facilitative development program is proposed here.

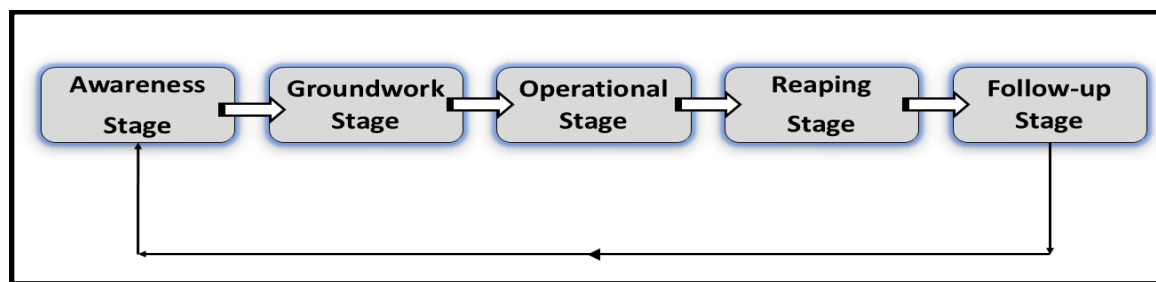


Fig. 1: Facilitative Development Program

### I) Awareness Stage

Student teacher is made aware of the paradigm shift in education. He gets acquainted with the changing role and responsibility of the teacher in new paradigm. He realizes his role as facilitative teacher. He perceives the vitality of facilitative competence required for facilitating learning processes in classrooms. It is the commencement of facilitative development program as student teacher is made conscious about various facilitative traits. He gets opportunity to unlearn and relearn the concept of teaching profession. Orientation and discussions are held so as to persuade the student teacher to appreciate his role as facilitative teacher.

### II) Groundwork Stage

Planning of facilitative teacher regarding group learning session is demonstrated. Teacher educator himself plans and performs as facilitative teacher. Student teacher observes planning and execution of group learning event. Facilitative teacher (teacher educator as facilitative teacher) does the groundwork work such as classroom settings, organization of learning resources and technological assistance, time management, etc. Student teacher can view the facilitative teacher while doing preparatory work. Therefore student teacher becomes geared up for the performance stage. He comprehends the group design and group processes to follow. It enables provoking of his thought process to perform as facilitative teacher.

### III) Operational Stage

Authentic group learning occurs at this stage. Teacher educator performs as facilitative teacher while the student teachers as participants. Participants are directed regarding classroom settings as well as the group learning procedure. Facilitative teacher hastens the learning plan by creating conducive learning environment. He upholds the group learning process by motivating participants, placing questions, putting forward hints, cues, etc. He ensures that the group learning process goes ahead towards its preferred outcome i.e. accomplish predestined objectives. Student teacher experiences the group learning process. Discussion is conducted at the concluding of every session. Student teachers reflect & express their observations a propos group learning steps, facilitator's approach and stance as well as cognitive processes behind it. This facilitates to understand the character of facilitative teacher along with participants of group learning process. Such sessions are conducted with different group learning strategies on varied topics. Student teacher is now competent enough to spin out the

attributes required to be a successful facilitative teacher. Consequently amplified understanding is attained about how to perform as facilitative teacher. Moreover student teacher himself carries out group learning in peer groups. He obtains hands-on experience of planning and performing as facilitative teacher. This offers vivacious exercise to act upon in actual classroom settings.

### IV) Reaping Stage

It can also be called as manufacturing stage where the student teacher executes as facilitative teacher in real classroom scenario. He does all the preparations from confirming instructional objectives, lesson planning, selecting the suitable group learning strategy, determining group design and classroom settings as well as fix on the timely instructions till deciding the assessment plan. He predestines his role as facilitative teacher in group learning process. Student teacher as facilitative teacher manages various resources and supports required for the process. He carries out the group learning process as per the design. He ensures that the group process escorts to knowledge construction and accomplishment of predetermined objectives. He has a comprehensive reflection about his performance and discusses the same with his peers as well as teacher educators. It becomes quite significant in analyzing and improving his performance. Such experience of group facilitation ultimately promotes facilitative competence in student teacher.

### V) Follow-up Stage

Follow-up commences after practice teaching session. Student teacher reflects and discusses his on the whole planning and performance in practice teaching stage vis-à-vis group facilitation. Teacher educator analyses the performance as well as his thought process. He draws out the voids and slips in student teacher. Teacher educator ensures whether the facilitative attitude is well cherished. He investigates the intensity of facilitative competence of student teacher relating to facilitative characteristics. This is done with the assistance of various evaluation tools of both quantitative as well as qualitative type. Consequently the student teacher acquires a clear idea regarding his present status as a facilitative teacher. Accordingly the remedial program can be structured as per the necessity.

It is apparent that teacher education has to foster the facilitative development through its pre-service and in-service mode. Such models of facilitative development program can be instrumental in this direction.

## Epilogue

Teacher of new world is expected to be facilitative teacher who can motivate and direct students to learn by themselves to promote lifelong learning skills among them to be knowledge activists. Different set of attributes are required for the teacher to be facilitator. Teacher education needs to understand this issue with utmost priority and take relevant action. It needs to restructure its curricula in the direction of facilitative competence development. It needs to foster facilitative competence among teachers through its various components. Diverse approaches and models of facilitative development shall be developed and implemented rigorously. Gradually teacher education programs should transform to be competency based emphasizing facilitative development.

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