

Search for New Perspective

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Abstract

The importance of Role of Teacher as an agent of change, promoting understanding and tolerance, has never been more obvious than today. It is likely to become even more critical in the time to come.

There is need for change from narrow nationalism to universalism, from ethnic and cultural prejudice to tolerance, understanding and pluralism, from autocracy to democracy in its various manifestations, from a technologically divided world to a technologically united world. This places enormous responsibility on teachers. The stakes are high and the moral values formed in the childhood, become of particular importance throughout the life.

Improving quality of education depends upon first improving recruitment, training, social status and conditions at work of the teachers. They need appropriate knowledge and skill, personal characteristics, professional prospects and motivation if they are to meet the expectations placed upon them.

The article focuses mainly on these questions in relation to Primary and Secondary education along with possible measures for improving teaching at those levels.

Our vision of the coming time is of one in which the pursuit of learning is being valued by individuals and by authorities all over the world not only as a means to an end but also as an end in itself. Each person will be encouraged and enabled to take up learning opportunities throughout life. Hence much will be expected, and much demanded of teachers for it largely depends on them whether this vision can come true. Teachers have crucial role to play in preparing young people not only to face the future with confidence but to build it with purpose and responsibility.

The new challenges facing education – to contribute to development, to help the people understand and to some extent come to terms with the phenomenon of globalization, and to foster social cohesion – must be met from Primary and Secondary school onwards. Teachers are instrumental in the development of attitudes – positive or negative – to learning. Teachers can awaken curiosity, stimulate independence, encourage intellectual rigor and create the conditions for success in formal and continuing education.

The importance of the Role of Teacher as an agent of change, promoting understanding and tolerance, has never been more obvious than today. It is likely to become

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even more critical as one decade of the 21st Century is already passed. The need for change from narrow nationalism to universalism, from ethnic and cultural prejudice to tolerance, understanding and pluralism, from autocracy to democracy in its various manifestations, from a technologically divided world to a technologically united world, places enormous responsibility on teachers who participate in moulding of the characters and minds of the new generations. The stakes are high and the moral values formed in the childhood, become of particular importance throughout the life.

Improving quality of education depends upon first improving recruitment, training, social status and conditions at work of the teachers. They need appropriate knowledge and skill, personal characteristics, professional prospects and motivation if they are to meet the expectations placed upon them.

The article focuses mainly on these questions in relation to Primary and Secondary education along with possible measures for improving teaching at those levels.

What can society reasonably expect of its teachers? What are the realistic demands that must be met with? What are the teachers entitled to get in return, in terms of working conditions, rights and status? What type of people can become good teachers? How can they be recruited and trained, and how can their motivation and the quality of their teaching be maintained?

The World Comes into the Classroom

In recent years, the sources and distribution of information have developed in a spectacular fashion almost everywhere. Increasingly, children come to school bearing the imprint of a world – real or fictitious – far beyond the boundaries of the family and the immediate community. The vast information put out by the media convey messages that compete with or contradict what children learn at school. This has detrimentally affected pupils' attention spans and consequently relationships within classrooms, in most part of the world. Children are spending more time in front of television than in school.

Thus, teachers and schools, to a large extent, have lost their leading place in the learning experience; face the new tasks of making school more appealing to children while implicitly providing them with a **Users' Guide** to the media.

Furthermore, problems of social environment can no longer be left behind at the school gates. Poverty, hunger, violence, drugs, sexual abuse have entered the classrooms with children. In the past, these elements were kept outside with the unschooled. Teachers are expected to cope up with these problems and to help develop understanding of whole range of social topics. Teachers are expected to succeed where parents and religious or secular authorities have failed. Teachers must find appropriate balance between tradition and modernity. The most important act is of balancing ideas and attitudes the child brings to school and the content of the curriculum. Thus separation between classroom and outside

world has become less rigid. Teachers also need to make efforts to take the learning process outside the classroom: physically, by practical learning experiences at sites outside the schools and from the content point of view by linking subject matter to daily life.

In the past pupils were generally obliged to accept whatever was offered by the school, in terms of language instruction, content, and organization. Today communities increasingly expect to have say in decisions concerning entire schooling organization. In this scenario, teachers must at all costs maintain a certain distance between school and the social environment, so as to give children and young people the opportunity to exercise their crucial judgment. Teachers must adapt their relationship with learners, switching roles from SOLOIST to ACCOMPANIST and shifting the emphasis from dispensing the information to helping learners' seek, organize and manage knowledge, guiding them than molding them. On the other hand they need to display great firmness in relation to the fundamental values that should guide each individual's life.

Expectations and Responsibilities

The demands on teachers' competence, professionalism and dedication impose on them an enormous responsibility. Expectations are high and needs are limitless. In many countries, quantitative expansion has resulted in shortage of teachers and increase in class size. It has put enormous pressure on education system.

The teaching profession is one of the highly organized in the world. More than 50 million teachers in the world belong to some or the other teachers' organization. These organizations can be very instrumental in establishing a climate of confidence in the profession and a positive attitude towards new approaches to education. In all the instances, there are means of communication with practitioners throughout the education system. The planning and implementation of reform should be an opportunity for seeking a consensus on its ends and means. No reform has succeeded against teachers or without their participation.

Teaching: an Art and a Science

The powerful relationship between teacher and learner is Central to teaching process. Knowledge can of course be acquired in variety of ways, and the use of both, distance learning and new technologies in the classroom have proved to be very effective. Yet for the vast majority of learners who have not mastered the skills of thinking and learning, the teacher remains an essential catalyst. The capacity of independent learning and research is key to continued individual growth; this capacity is only possible after some period of interaction with a teacher or intellectual mentor.

The teacher's work is not confined simply to transmitting information or even knowledge, it also entails presenting that knowledge in the form of a statement of problems within a certain context and putting the problem into perspective, so that learner can link their solution to the broader issues. The teacher pupil relation aims at fully developing pupil's personality, with emphasis on self reliance. From this point of view the authority vested in teachers is always paradoxical, since it is not based on the assertion of their power but on the free recognition of the legitimacy of knowledge. This function of a teacher as a figure of authority will probably evolve, yet it remains essential as a source of the answers to the

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questions raised by the pupil about the world and as a key prerequisite for the full success of the learning process. Besides, it is becoming increasingly necessary in modern societies for teaching to help form individual judgment and a sense of individual responsibility, so as to enable pupils to develop the ability to foresee changes and to adjust to them; in other words to continue learning throughout their lives. Pupil's critical faculty is helped to develop through working and dialogue with the teacher.

Teachers' great strength lies in the example they set, of curiosity, open – mindedness, willingness to put their assumptions to test and to acknowledge mistakes; most of all they must transmit a love of learning. A rethinking of teacher education is necessary, in order for it to bring out in future teachers precisely those human and intellectual qualities that will facilitate a fresh approach in teaching.

The Quality of Teachers

Teachers have been recruited in large numbers to cope up with the rapid increase in the world school population. Recruitment is frequently carried out with limited financial resources and it is not every time possible to find good qualified candidates. Catering for pupils who have serious social or family difficulties implies new tasks, for which teachers are often ill prepared.

The importance of quality of teaching and hence of teachers cannot be overemphasized. It is at an early stage of basic education that principal attitudes towards learning as well as self image of the learner are formed. The role of the teacher at this stage is very crucial. For the teacher to be effective a broad range of teaching skills as well as human qualities of empathy, patience and humility are required. When a child's or adult's first teacher is poorly trained as well as poorly motivated, the very foundations on which all subsequent learning will be built will be unsound.

We feel that reasserting the importance of teachers in basic education and improving teachers' qualifications are the most important tasks and all the governments in the world must address to it.

The measures needed to recruit future teachers from among the most motivated students, improve their training and encourage the best among them to take on the most difficult posts need to be determined by in relation to the specific circumstances of each country.

Thus, improving quality and motivation of teachers must be a priority in all the countries. Some of the areas in which steps can be taken are listed here.

1. Recruitment
2. Initial education
3. In-service training
4. Teacher educators
5. Supervision
6. Management
7. Participation by people from outside the teaching profession
8. Conditions of work
9. Teaching materials

Learning What and How to Teach

The world in general is evolving so rapidly that initial training of teachers will not see them through the rest of their lives. They need to improve and update their own knowledge and techniques throughout their lifetime. A careful balance has to be struck between content knowledge and competence in teaching. CCM (content cum methodology) workshops are to be organized periodically.

Teacher education tends to stand apart from other forms of training, isolating teaching from other professions. This state of affairs should be put right. Opportunities should be created for teachers carry out periods of work and co operative activities outside the classroom so that the school becomes more closely related to the world of work for which the teacher is supposed to be preparing the pupils.

Working Teachers

Ways can be found out for teachers to consider themselves as the part of the community, so that their involvement will be increased. They will be more sensitive and responsive towards the needs of their communities.

School and home collaborative has raised pupil achievement considerably. Apart from it, few other very important factors for motivating the teachers are,

1. The school administration
2. Drawing teachers into decision making on educational matters
3. Favorable conditions for effective teaching

Recommendations

The last part of this article is to provide set of measures we feel appropriate for changing the entire scenario of primary and secondary education, giving new perspective to the teachers.

1. Psychological and Material situation of teachers differs from country to country. But needless to say that upgrading of their status is essential.
2. Concept of Life Long Learning is to play Central Role
3. Imperative Requirement of upgrading Knowledge and Skills
4. Importance of Teamwork

5. Teacher Exchange Programme and Partnership between Institutions in Different Countries**Selected References**

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