

Making Teaching Meaningful Through Innovations - An Overview

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Abstract: Swami Vivekananda-one of the renowned saints of India, in his list of God's gifts, includes teaching, as it illuminates human minds and removes darkness from the world. The first Prime Minister of India Mr Jawaharlal Nehru says that no nation can think of prosperity of any kind in any field, unless people of the nation are educated. All those who are of real concern for civilized and cultured survival of humanity and the welfare of the nation have much insisted on quality education being imparted. It is education that determines the fate of any country. One of the greatest challenges for every teacher is to capture the attention of students during the teaching-learning process. However, for a teacher who is totally committed to teaching knows that even though capturing students' attention is quite challenging, it is not something improbable. Any class instruction in the absence of appropriate method and approach is of no value from the perspectives of students. Innovations add value to experience. Application of approaches and methods cannot be logically and ethically termed as innovations, but innovations are born out of one's own experiential observations. Innovations can be well tried by means of making meaningful, practical and beneficial modification in the pedagogical strategies, ultimately aiming at making teaching-learning process as effective as possible.

Keywords: Quality education, challenges, pedagogical strategies, teaching learning process.

1. INTRODUCTION

The introduction of the paper highlights some innovations that could be implemented in order that teaching- learning process might be made more effective. Some innovative ideas put forth here might help teachers contemplate over many pedagogical strategies that pave way for inventions and reinventions in the methods of teaching.

2. CREATIVITY IN TEACHING

Use of effective and essential tools stimulates creativity. Imparting instructions through relevant games or forms of visual exercises ignite the young minds and lure their attention towards learning. This enables teachers to identify the creative abilities of young learners and motivates them to make creative contributions. Creativity, irrespective of subjects, retains the interest of learners and yields the desired output. Teaching without creativity is monotonous and mechanical. The purpose of education is not just to impart education, but to instil in learners the powerful spirit of using their intellectual potentials in the best possible ways. The ultimate purpose of education is to make learners think independently, stand independently and face challenges independently. Creative teaching plays a pivotal role in achieving the academic targets.

Audio & Video Tools:

Use of audio-visual tools adds value to teaching-learning process. The text books prescribed for learners need to have models, filmstrips, movies and pictorial material. Use of info graphics or other mind mapping and brain storming tools enable learners to run riot with creativity and imagination. These methods, besides developing their ability to listen, help them understand the concepts better. Use of history materials, conduct of live online discussions and playback recordings

of public lectures make teaching quite innovative. There are a lot of smart apps for preschoolers that you can very well be utilized promote imagination and creativity of learners. Learners ever and anon can be encouraged to make power point presentations on challenging subject related topics.

Connotative Teaching:

Denotative teaching just fulfils the teaching objectives, whereas connotative teaching makes learners think and rethink and respond suitable, as it contains association of thoughts and ideas. Lessons could be linked to real world learning. Infusion of experiences obtained from the real world into instructions makes moments of teaching fresh, enriches classroom environment and makes learners understand the world better. Connotative teaching makes pedagogical tools used in class easy and effective. It sparks and excites young minds and provokes them to act intellectually. It also increases interest and involvement of both the teachers and the taught. The total involvement of both the teachers and the taught is very essential in making teaching-learning process as effective and as meaningful as possible.

Brainstorming Sessions:

Sufficient time and space for brainstorming sessions could be provided in classrooms. These sessions pave way for the flow of creative juices. When the forceful act of agile minds is turned towards a single idea, it results in the birth of numerous ideas and it involves all learners in intellectual discussions and debates. These sessions provide a suitable platform for learners to voice out their thoughts and ideas without any sort of hesitation. However, some ground rules need to be framed before involving learners in brainstorming activities. Teachers can go for simple brainstorming or group brainstorming or paired brainstorming.

Extension of noble service:

Teaching, of all professions, is rightly considered a noble profession. Time and space cannot block dedicated teachers. Some lessons, when they are taught outside the classroom, can be best learnt. For example, a poem on Nature can be taught under a tree amidst nature. When students find the atmosphere quite conducive, it has its own uniqueness. Field trips relevant to the lessons enable learners to understand lessons better. The relation between the teachers and the taught when the instructions are given somewhere outside the classroom gets cordial and there occurs a tranquil atmosphere quite suitable for learning lessons. Creating a lively ambience for learning is one of the main factors behind successful teaching-learning process. This enlivens learners and illuminates their minds. Role play is very effective for students of almost all ages.

Role Play:

Teaching through role play is yet another way that enables learners to step out of their comfort zones and develop their interpersonal skills. This method facilitates learning and quite suitable for task-based teaching. Through role plays, all learners can be involved in the process of learning.

Storyboard Teaching:

Rudyard Kipling rightly said "If history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten." Storyboarding is one of the ways of teaching any subject any subject which requires sequential or logical steps in case of learning by means of memorization or visualization of highly-conceptual ideas. Storyboard can very well be used by history teachers to recreate a famous event. Such visually stimulating activities ensure that even complex ideas are easily grasped by students. Use of storyboards as a form of communication enables learners to create texts, making the power of imagination as a powerful tool.

Stimulating Classroom Environment:

A congenial classroom environment makes teaching-learning quite interesting. Healthy and congenial atmosphere in class stimulates learners' minds and makes think, rethink and learn better. Children are not just statues to be erected in classes. When they are forcibly seated in a particular place or fixed within four walls of a hall for a long time, they might feel uncomfortable and any ill or uncomfortable feeling on the part of learners might block their concentration on what they learn. Creative and stimulating environment facilitates learning and makes learners explore and they are sure to get motivation out of a free and healthy environment. That also creates a positive impact upon learners and learning becomes

beneficial. Schools in association with Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) vouch for the fact that healthy environment during learning has a pivotal role in teaching-learning.

Innovative Ideas:

An open-minded attitude helps one come up with innovating teaching methods. Even though open-minded attitude paves way for innovations, sometimes some sort of reluctance may turn out to be an obstacle to innovative ideas. Teachers must keep their minds open to innovations. Teachers can act as keys to innovations that have their births in the young minds.

Learning through Hobbies:

Hectic workload may, on the part of teachers, affect effective teaching. It is not something strange or unnatural. Mind is not a machine to be continuously engaged. Some break for couple of hours and engagement in some other activity of own interest gives some relief from the regular academic stress. Some break is a way of getting minds recharged and it opens way for innovations. This is quite psychological.

Team Spirit:

Exploration of varied intellectual properties does wonders during execution of any work. As we are all aware of the end result of collaborative efforts, it is apt to make use of for the sake of beneficial learning. Learning gets its depth too out of team spirit. When some amount of quality time is spent with colleagues, the outcome is highly immense. Academic discussions ever and anon result not only in innovations, but also in intellectual and sustainable growth. Sharing of intellectual thoughts and ideas is out and out a knowledge-oriented process. Hence, collaborate and introduce innovative teaching methods are essential for academic prosperity.

Learning through puzzles and games:

Learning is a fun and learning through puzzles and games makes learning interesting. Children may not feel tired of learning. It is the greatest motivation on the part of learners and it reduces the burden of teachers too. When lessons are introduced through games and puzzles, it reaches children quickly and creates a lasting impression in their minds of what they learn.

Creating Clubs or Groups:

Clubs and groups add great advantage. Teachers may not get enough time to work on interesting topics that they are passionate about. But when they share their views and learn more from others through clubs and groups, it has its own unique values and advantages.

Books on Creativity:

A lot of research on creative ideas and techniques is much needed to make teaching-learning effective and meaningful. There are books in hundreds and fifties on creativity. Choice of good books is like choice of good friends. It enhances professional development and leadership qualities as well.

Self-happiness in Learning:

One can give one's best only if and when one truly loves what one does. Under stress and tension, none can give the best. Love and passion towards one's work keeps one relaxed and that sustains professional commitment.

Lessons through suitable Stories:

Subjects like literature and history can be very well taught through relevant stories. It facilitates intellectual interaction between the teachers and the taught. We like to watch movies because of there being mostly some interesting story to keep our minds engaged. Similarly, learning through stories becomes more interesting. Even subjects like maths can be taught through stories by teachers blessed with creativity.

Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) insists on Educational institutions taking measures for improving the quality of teaching and learning. Some of the innovative ideas highlighted in this article are sure to make teaching methods more effective and meaningful.

3. CONCLUSION

Teaching is considered the noblest of all professions. Teachers have the sole responsibility of producing role models, as a deserving role model to the young pillars of the nation. Professionally committed teachers honestly admit the fact that lessons, when taught through innovative teaching methods and suitable approaches and pedagogical techniques get imprinted in the minds of learners. Any methodology in the absence of proper approach or any approach in the absence of suitable methodology is of no use, however knowledge and experience a teacher has in his/her respective subject. There is no end to innovations. Innovation results in the birth of innovation. Teaching of any subject without employing innovations is nothing, but the monotonous or mechanical way of just passing on information. Effective teaching aims at knowledge sharing and knowledge exploring. "The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires", says William Arthur Ward.

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