

Contemporary Issues in Teaching and Learning: Innovations for School-Level Evaluation

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the current issues, challenges and innovations in teaching, learning and to suggest other useful innovations that can be attempted in imparting knowledge to the students. While almost all six to fourteen year olds in India are enrolled in school, their performance is far below expected levels. The common view is that the problem can be addressed by filling gaps in the system such as inadequate infrastructure or teacher shortage. This column argues that these inputs can ensure "schooling for all" but not "learning for all", and suggests teaching by level rather than by grade to improve learning outcomes. Such type of issues are today we will discussed in this article

I. THE VISIBLE CHALLENGE: INADEQUATE INPUTS

If you ask teachers or officials about the biggest challenge for improving learning outcomes they will probably point to the numerous gaps in the system. Some schools continue to lack adequate infrastructure: several states still face a severe shortage of teachers. Many will complain about the poor quality of institutional support for teachers' professional development. These commonly identified challenges related to inputs and institutions are visible even to the common man. The usual assumption is that if these gaps are filled, children will learn and learn well. This "theory of change" explains the push from within the government as well as from outside to ensure the timely provision of adequate inputs, and to point out the urgent need to build institutions that support schools and teachers.

II. THE INVISIBLE CHALLENGE: CHILDREN FALLING BEHIND

But there is another less visible, but dangerously debilitating and potentially worsening problem that plagues Indian classrooms. This may be at the root of why children are not learning. Going back to the typical Standard V classroom, try to imagine the challenge for the teacher. In our typical school, the Standard V teacher uses the Standard V textbook, trying to cover the material and activities that the textbook lays out. But whom should she teach? And how should she do it? Should she focus on those children who have basic skills, who are more likely to attend school regularly and are therefore easier to teach? What should she do with the other half of the class who are not even at Standard I or II level? This is a problem faced by almost all primary school teachers. Try to imagine the daily challenge for the teacher in her classroom. Try to imagine what this "low learning trap" does to children.

Sadly, it appears as though educated citizens, education experts, planners and policymakers, central, state and local governments do not see this problem. A typical Indian school (government or private) focuses on completing curriculum and is not structured to provide extra help to children who are not moving ahead at the expected pace or to those who are falling behind. Without the learning support that is critical, a large fraction of Indian children slip through the cracks. The problem is made worse by textbooks and curriculum whose pace and content accelerates through the primary school years. An excellent paper by Pritchett-Beatty in 2012, titled "The Negative Consequences of Overambitious Curricula"¹ lays out the issue very well - "If the official school curriculum covers too much, goes too fast and is too hard compared to the initial skill of the students and the ability of the schools to teach this can produce disastrous results. An overambitious curriculum causes more and more students to get left behind early and stay behind forever". Unlike the problems of access and inputs that are visible, the situation of low learning worsens quietly within classrooms and schools and is invisible to the world outside.

III. INNOVATIVE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

Multimedia, is the combination of various digital media types such as text, images, audio and video, into an integrated multi-sensory interactive application or presentation to convey information to an audience. Traditional educational approaches have resulted in a mismatch between what is taught to the students and what the industry needs. As such, many institutions are moving towards problem-based learning as a solution to producing graduates who are creative; think critically and analytically, to solve problems. In this paper, we focus on using multimedia

technology as an innovative teaching and learning strategy in a problem-based learning environment by giving the students a multimedia project to train them in this skill set.

Currently, many institutions are moving towards problem-based learning as a solution to producing graduates who are creative and can think critically, analytically, and solve problems. Since knowledge is no longer an end but a means to creating better problem solvers and encourage lifelong learning. Problem-based learning is becoming increasingly popular in educational institutions as a tool to address the inadequacies of traditional teaching. Since these traditional approaches do not encourage students to question what they have learnt or to associate with previously acquired knowledge (Teo & Wong, 2000), problem-based learning is seen as an innovative measure to encourage students to *learn how to learn via real-life problems* (Boud & Feletti, 1999).

The teacher uses multimedia to modify the contents of the material. It will help the teacher to represent in a more meaningful way, using different media elements. These media elements can be converted into digital form, modified and customized for the final presentation. By incorporating digital media elements into the project, the students are able to learn better since they use multiple sensor}' modalities, which would make them more motivated to pay more attention to the information presented and retain the information better.

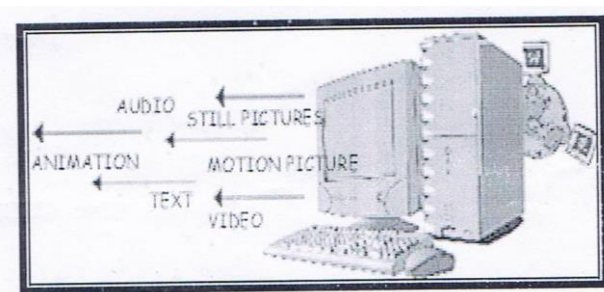
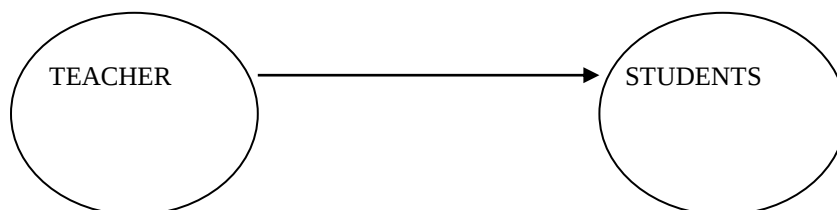


Chart 1 - Multimedia Elements

Creating multimedia projects is both challenging and exciting. Fortunately, there are many multimedia technologies that are available for developers to create these innovative and interactive multimedia applications (Vaughan, 1998). These technologies include *Adobe Photoshop and Premier* to create edit graphics and video files respectively. *Soimd Forge and 3D Studio Max* to create and/or edit sound an animation files, respectively. They can also use an authoring tool such as '*Macromedia Director or Authonvare* to integrate and synchronise all these media elements into one final application, add interactive features, and package the application into a distributable format for the end-user.

Another advantage of creating multimedia projects in the classroom setting is that when students create multimedia projects, they tend to do this in a group environment. By working in a group, the students would have to learn to work cooperatively and collaboratively, using their group skills and a variety of activities to accomplish the project's overall objectives.

Traditional and multimedia learning the difference chart 2 - traditional method - a one way flow



IV. VARIOUS MULTIMEDIA TOOLS

Tools	Methods	Examples	Metaphors
Mspowerpoint, Astound graphics and Flash Slide Show Software	Easy to prepare and it can be prepared with many of the popular multimedia elements like graphs, sound and video		Slide Based
Macromedia, Flash Authorware, BPP I Learn and i Pass	Presentation is created using icons to represent different media elements and placed in a flowline		ICON BASED
Windows Movie Maker , Winampp, Macromedia Director	Presentation is created using movie-making concepts of casts, sounds, pictures and scores		MOVIE BASED
Adobe Acrobat Reader	Easy to prepare and with word documents if u have Acrobat Reader 5 with many popular multimedia elements like graphs sound and charts		

V. OTHER INNOVATIVE TOOLS SUGGESTED

The researchers suggest some of the methods can very well be applied by the modern teachers. As the researchers feel that basically the core objective of teaching should never be deviated by the use of an innovative method. The following methods which are suggested are an extension to the traditional methods of teaching.

MIND MAP

Mind maps were developed in the late 60s by Tony Buzan as a way of helping students make notes that used only key words and images, but mind map can be used by teachers to explain concepts in an innovative way. They are much quicker to make and much easier to remember and review because of their visual quality. The non-linear nature of mind maps makes it easy to link and cross-reference different elements of the map.

Mind Maps are also very quick to review, as it is easy to refresh information in your mind just by glancing once. Mind Maps can also be effective mnemonics and remembering their shape and structure can provide the cues necessary to remember the information within it. They engage much more of the brain in the process of assimilating and connecting facts than conventional notes.

The key notion behind mind mapping is that we learn and remember more effectively by using the full range of visual and sensor tools at our disposal. Pictures, music, color, even touch and smell play a part in our learning armor will help to recollect information for long time. The key is to build up mind maps that make the most of these things building on our own creativity, thinking and cross linking between ideas that exist in our own minds.

As the recent research point that any particular information explained with the help of graph charts make a high impact in the minds of the people and keeping this as the core aspect the teachers may try to picturize the concepts and show the same to the students

The main issues and challenges of contemporary Indian education are as follow. The fore most issue is the unsatisfaction of youth. Teachers are unable to satisfy the youth by their knowledge and methods of teaching their knowledge level and education system is not providing the satisfaction and due to this the youth stands against the teachers and system.

The second reason is discipline in schools and colleges. This reason is given of our so called leaders and social contractors. Who instigates the youth time to time for their own benefits.

Third can be the problem of unemployment. Some of our educators think that now this problem is an issue for education system but when a youth looks his or her brother or sister unemployed even after getting bachelor or post graduate degree . the}' are unemployed, this give the birth to a revolt.

As above we discuss a fact comes out which is our next issue. That is education is but not for knowledge our education guides students to get good marks not to get knowledge our teachers emphasis on the marks or how they will complete their syllabus not on providing new knowledge to students. Next should come the policy of state and central government about the education. Education is a subject on which state and central government both can make rules and regulation, in some matters state government says that it is the work of central government and central government says it is the work of state government and between these two authorities our education suffers. If we talk about the mass there is great unawareness about the education if some child emphasis on going to school and there are many unemployed person or a person who could not get any government job who say "hum ne teer mar live jo tu marie ga." These types of people should know that education is a way to get a job. But education is for knowledge and that should be our target.

Poverty can be next issue or a challenge to which our education system is facing. Nowadays the cost of getting education is very high so poor of our society find themselves lost in getting education.

Political unwillingness is also a great challenge for our education system. Politicians think that they got five years to fulfill their wishes. Matters of education are just kept in pending.

Casteism creates a wall between lower class and upper class. Once I was in another college there I saw a teacher taking fee from the students (you will say what is surprising in this in most of the schools teacher takes fee from the students). But when a student came to give fee. the teacher asked to put the amount on the table. That boy put the amount on the table and went. When I asked about the matter, the teacher replied I was busy in some other work so I could not take the amount in hand. But reality was different, that boy belonged to SC category and that \was untouchable for the teacher... This happens in our schools and in colleges.

Dearness is another challenge for the education system. Fee of colleges and schools is rising day by day¹ with public schools raising their fee structure in every session but the wages of laborer is not increasing at the same speed. So poor people find themselves unable in admitting their children in those schools. And government schools do not compete with the public schools or CBSE schools.

The next challenge is our **corruption** which has become the right of all government officers and whole system. In many schools it is found that the fund which was sending to the school disappeared on the way.

A story is enough to describe facts. Once a school principal demanded for funds for digging a well for students. Government accepted the grant for above. But the amount that reached the principal was less than what was given by government (eaten up mid way!). So he too ate up rest of the amount and took the transfer form that place. When the next principal came there he found that no well was dug in the school. He wrote an application to higher authorities that well is not providing the water and it needs money. You can easily understand the rest of the story. This is the problem: you will find this type of stories around yourself.

¹ I don't want to say much about this.

Privatization of education is great issue. Some learned people say that government officials take higher salaries but not work according to that. But in private institutes teachers remains in very critical conditions which is not good for the education system. Next issue can be the issue of **unawareness** of teachers about the methods and techniques of teaching. Even they are not interested in these. Teaching is the profession in which a teacher needs to polish his /her knowledge day by day. And because it is the profession daily updating of methods and techniques is compulsory. I think this is the demand of the profession but our teachers are so rigid that they don't want to change themselves,

Next can be according to me. the issue of **character of teachers**. Our teacher's character is going downwards. A teacher is the only person who can change the direction of the society. He is the person who is the center point of any education system. This influences much our society than any other part of the society. This effects much our education than all the above points. But nowadays news in different form can be read in newspapers that a teacher kidnapped his /her students or a teacher raped his student. And due to this many students left their schooling on the mid way.

All these issues and challenges did not rise in a day they took a long period. If we look back in time, ancient time India was on the top in education and **knowledge**. This was the country in which students used to come from all over the world to acquire the knowledge and education. No country of the world was even near to it. Then what happened to our great country?

The story starts form the invaders first Muslim invaders who came to the country to loot it and tried to destroy the culture and knowledge of the country. After them came the British invaders. The\ left our country in the condition of a beggar gave us many things like poverty, corruption, injustice, **unemployment** and many other problems which are now standing up as a challenge for our education system.

And, now as we see in the society that the level of our social, moral, culture values and ideals are going downwards towards hell. We are acquiring western culture and social values which are totally different from ours. We believe in spiritual education and they believe in physical or worldly education. Then how can \e develop our current education system because it provides us only the mob of unemployed youth??

Students do not want to go to study.... they try to get good marks by unfair means and teachers do not want to teach.....and they pay their total attention to coaching classes.

Private college owners sell the degrees and marks on high rates or bids. This happened due to the mentality of college owners because most of the college owners came in this field belong to the business families or people who had some useless land and little money to invest, they came in this sector due to high profit and not to serve the society, which is natural. Then how we can think that those people will serve the country and society, because such people think treats with school as a factory. principals/HOD as a managers and teachers as workers.

But at last I shall bind up with these lines that people who are in this field or who are the part of this holy course should think that this occupation is like that doctor's job who gives light to the blind and this job is the part of that holy job of God because God made man but we make them civilized.