



INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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Introduction

The role of the present day teacher has become very challenging, complex and multifaceted. The present teacher is expected to be up-dated and conscious of various explosions- i.e. explosion of knowledge, explosion of population, explosion of frustrations, explosion of expectations and explosion of technology etc.

The educationalist and psychologists have made efforts to solve these problems. The behavioral technology has contributed significantly in this direction. The teaching process can only be developed and improved when teacher education institutions can prepare effective teachers. For effective teaching we have need to develop “Innovative Teaching Practices” for training our teachers.

1. Concept Mapping

Concept maps were created by D. Novak (Novak & Gowin, 1988), professor at the University of Cornell, in the 1970s. He developed this tool based on the meaningful learning theories of Ausubel. Novak bet on concept maps as a high efficiency tool to evaluate, organize knowledge, and improve the meaningful learning or teamwork (Novak, 1982). A concept map is a diagram that collects a group of concepts. These concepts are significantly related by means of linking words with the aim of building meaningful sentences denominated propositions. In these diagrams, concepts are usually represented as boxes and their relationships are showed by arrows labeled with the linking words

Definition of a Concept Map:

- A concept map is a type of graphic organizer and help students to organize and represent knowledge of a subject. Concept maps begin with a main idea (or concept) and then branch out to show how that main idea can be broken down into specific topics.
- A concept map is a visual organizer that can enrich students' understanding of a new concept.
- Concept maps are graphical tools for organizing and representing knowledge. They include concepts, usually enclosed in circles or boxes and indicated relationships between concepts by a connecting line linking two concepts.

Benefits of Concept Mapping:

Concept mapping is used to the students for many purposes: i.e.

- Helping students to brainstorm and generate new ideas.
- Encouraging students to discover new concepts and the propositions that connect them.
- Allowing students to communicate ideas, thoughts and information.
- Helping students to integrate new concepts with older concepts.



- Enabling students to gain enhanced knowledge of any topic and evaluate the information.
- It helps children to organize new information.
- It helps students to make meaningful connections between the main idea and other information.
- They are easy to construct and can be used within any content area.

Construction of Concept Map

Concept maps are typically hierarchical in nature, with the subordinate concepts stemming from the main concept or idea. This type of graphic organizer always allows change and new concepts to be added. The Rubber Sheet Analogy states that concept positions on a map can continuously change, while always maintaining the same relationship with the other ideas on the map.

1. Start with a main idea, topic, or issue to focus on

A helpful way to determine the context of your concept map is to choose a focus question—something that needs to be solved or a conclusion that needs to be reached. Once a topic or question is decided on, that will help with the hierarchical structure of the concept map.

2. Then determine the key concepts

Find the key concepts that connect and relate to your main idea and rank them in to most general, inclusive concepts come first, then link to smaller and more specific concepts.

3. Finish by connecting concepts--creating linking phrases and words

Once the basic links between the concepts are created, add cross-links, which connect concepts in different areas of the map, to further illustrate the relationships and strengthen

students understanding and knowledge on the topic.

There are several ways to construct concept maps. It include following steps

1. Identify the major ideas or concepts to be presented.
2. Organize the ideas into categories.
3. Remind students that your structure may be change as you continue to read and add more information.
4. Use lines or arrows on the map to represent how ideas are connected to one another.
5. Limit the amount of information on the map to avoid frustration.
6. After students have finished the map, encourage them to share and reflect on how they each made the connections between concepts.
7. Encourage students to use the concept map to summarize what was read.

2. Co-operative Learning

Co-operative learning is a systematic pedagogical strategy that encourages small groups of students to work together for the achievement of a common goal. Co-operative learning stresses the importance of faculty and student involvement in the learning process. When integrating Co-operative learning strategy in to a course, careful planning and preparation are essential.



Understanding how to form groups, ensure positive interdependence, maintain individual accountability, resolve group conflict, develop appropriate assignments and grading criteria and manage active learning environments are critical to the achievement of a successful Co-operative learning experience.

- **Meaning of Cooperative Learning**

Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec 1998 p.1:5).

Cooperative learning is a team process where members support and rely on each other to achieve an agreed upon goal. The classroom is an excellent place to develop teambuilding skills you will need later in life. Cooperative learning is a successful teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn, thus creating an atmosphere of achievement. Students work through the assignment until all group members successfully understand and complete it.

- **For interactive Cooperative learning the student teacher (as a member)**

- Develops and shares a common goal.
- Contributes his/her understanding of the problem, questions; insights and solutions.
- Responds and works to understand others questions, insights and solutions.
- Empower the others to speak and contribute and to consider their contributions.
- Is accountable to others and they are accountable to him/her.
- Is dependent on others and they depend on him/her.

- **Five Basic Elements of Cooperative Learning**

1. Positive Interdependence
2. Face-to-Face Interaction
3. Individual and Group Accountability
4. Interpersonal and Small-Group Skills
5. Group Processing

- **Some Activities for Co-Operative Learning**

1. Jigsaw
2. Think-Pair-Share
3. Three-Step Interview
4. Round Robin Brainstorming
5. Three-minute review
6. Numbered Heads Together
7. Team Pair Solo
8. Circle the Sage
9. Partners

- **Examples of Co-operative learning strategy**

1) When we are teaching a large lecture course in teacher education programme or a subject, we are divide the class in 5-6 groups and provide them one of the topics or concepts which we will be teaching in the coming weeks. Each group's job is to discuss the topics or concepts in groups. Then they do their preparation of the topics. After preparation one member of the group teach the topic to other group members and to provide the rest of the class an overview of the topic or concept in whatever form they would like.



2) Co-operative learning strategies must be extended to home work assignments and other performance assessments e. g. tests, in which we allow students to work in the groups on particular questions.

3) Co-operative learning can also be used in the written process, where students meet regularly in groups to develop a research proposal at M.Ed. level. Here they can develop ideas and shape their writing via peer editing and several other group-based strategies.

• **The conditions which must be met in Co-operative learning are as follows**

- 1) First, each group member must participate.
- 2) Second, the presentation or product must reveal the contribution of each group member.
- 3) Third, grading will consist of group grade, as well as individual grades, the latter being based on a written product each group member turns in and which reflects their own contribution to the final presentation or product.

• **Use of Cooperative Learning**

Research has shown that cooperative learning techniques:

- Promote student learning and academic achievement.
- Increase student retention.
- Enhance student satisfaction with their learning experience.
- Help student to develop oral communication skills.
- Develop students' social skills.
- Promote student self-esteem.
- Help to promote positive race relations.

Thus, the professional success of every teacher is depends up on update professional knowledge, fullest devotion, commitment and dedication along with his efficiency and effectiveness. In the present day world, with the advancement of technology these qualities can be inculcated through education. As teaching occupies an honorable position in the society, each and every teacher and teacher educator must make himself familiarized with above trends and other new trends in teacher education. The existing situation needs to be modified by effective professional education which will initiate the teacher to revolutionize his teaching and lay a strong foundation of professional growth of the student teachers.

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