

TEACHING EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY: PRACTICES AND OUTCOMES

Ms. Dipali Gandhi
Dr. Shamsha Emanuel

Introduction

Child psychology is the scientific study of the individual from his prenatal beginning through the early stages of adolescence. It is a positive and progressive science which studies the behaviour of a child *vis-a-vis* the child's environment. Thus the knowledge of child psychology helps a teacher to understand the individual (Adams J., 2006). Accordingly, the process of education contains three focal points i.e. the learner, the learning process and the learning situation. The learner is the first concern of the teacher. The teacher must have the knowledge of psychology of the child's growth and development, including his environment. Pestalozzi is of the opinion that education must be based on a realistic and accurate knowledge of the students' mental processes. A teacher must be equipped with the detailed information concerning the child's needs, bases of his behaviour, mental level, interests, abilities, personality, etc. The child's behavioural pattern can be modified or can be given new direction if teacher understands the child through the knowledge of psychology.

Keeping in view, the above points the present study focuses on making the student teachers comprehend and apply selected concepts of child psychology. The following section portrays the rationale of the study.

Rationale of the study

It is rightly said that school is a miniature form of the society. School is next to home. All the activities conducted in the schools are meant for overall development of an individual. No individual is same. The teacher has to achieve the objectives of the curriculum by the teaching methods. Today, teaching has become more scientific, learner oriented and goal directed.

A number of researchers indicate that classroom practices mainly focus on cognitive domain and not on affective domain. However, there are educators and researchers of the view that 'If a teacher concentrates more on affective domain then it will become easy for a teacher to achieve cognitive domain'. The knowledge of child psychology aids the teacher in doing so.

In the present study the researchers have focused on enabling the student teachers to understand the classroom situations vis-a-vis the learner, the learning process and the learning situation. The focus was thereby on understanding the child (individual learners) through psychological activities. The study focused at relating the teaching learning situations with the learner's psychology and environment. The major concepts of child psychology were taught to the pre-service teachers through classroom activities.

The description of the research methodology is stated below.

Research methodology

Having understood the child psychology and concepts involved in understanding child psychology a set of psychological activities were used with an objective to make student teachers understand child psychology. The researchers carried out an experiment with one group. Accordingly it was a pre-experimental one group pre-test and post-test design. The null hypothesis framed and tested was "There will be no significant difference between the mean achievement scores of pre-test and post-test". The population comprised of the student teachers of B.Ed. College of Gujarat State. The sample comprised of 100 student teachers. Convenient sampling technique was used. The student teachers of the Waymade College of Education, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat comprised the sample of the study. The tools used to collect data were achievement tests namely pre-test and post-test based on Psychological concepts. In addition, qualitative data was collected using situational tests prepared by the researchers. The data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively using t- test and content analysis. The stages of the research and procedure are depicted below.

The Experiment

In the first phase of the study the researchers evaluated the psychological concepts of the Student teachers. A pre-test was prepared based on knowledge of psychological concepts and was administered on student teachers. This was followed by the treatment / experiment. In the experiment a series of psychological activities were used to make student teachers understand the psychological concepts namely individual differences, mental processes, adjustment and personality traits.

The purpose of teaching through psychological activities was mainly to sensitize the participants towards learners. Some of the psychological activities included paper folding and tearing activity, drawing a picture in a paper, adjusting in a given area of a paper, situation analysis, brainstorming vis-à-vis adolescents' activities as reported in the newspapers, simulated situations and analysis of video clipping. The activities were given to the student teachers and the sessions related to the psychological concepts were taught using collaborative learning strategies. All the activities (mentioned above) aimed at explaining and illustrating psychological concepts related to individual differences, mental processes, adjustment and personality traits. At the end of each activity student teachers had to share their understanding and experiences vis-à-vis psychology. The experiment was carried over a period of 10 days for 12 hours. This was followed by a post-test to check the effectiveness of psychological activities. The data collected was analyzed using content analysis and t test. The findings of the experiment are stated below.

Findings of the study

The pre-test and post-test scores were statistically tested using t- test. The table for mean, SD, SEm, df and t-value is given below.

	Mean	Number of student teachers	Standard Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre test	15.46	100	4.75	0.475
Post test	27.80	100	7.93	0.793

The t value calculated was found to be 7.46 and table value found 2.63 at 0.01 level. Thus the null hypothesis, "There will be no significant difference between the mean achievement scores of pre-test and post-test" was rejected. Thus participatory –collaborative learning via psychology activities were found to be effective for understanding the child/ learner psychology. The participants got insights into the importance of child psychology through psychology activities. It was observed that most of the student teachers were not aware about the basic concepts of psychology but after programme they seem to have put into the practice the theoretical

understanding of learner, learning situation and learner's activities during their practice teaching phase. Moreover, during the experiment the psychology activities worked as eye openers for some of the student teachers. They could introspect and understand the relevance of child psychology during their teaching learning process and relate the same to their learners. The study also revealed the following aspects.

1. Practical activities to teach psychology helped student teachers' understand child psychology and relate the same to their day to day lives.
2. Student teachers' developed a favorable attitude towards the subject. This was mainly because they could link the theoretical concepts of individual differences, motivation, personality differences with the practical tasks given as well as demonstrated in class.
3. The content analysis revealed that the student teachers understood the concepts of psychology vis-à-vis learning situations and also reflected the same in their lesson plans at the initial stages itself.
4. The student teachers' made less conceptual errors in their group presentations after the tasks. This indicated that the activities enabled the student teachers to understand the psychological concepts vis-à-vis classroom situations.
5. All the student teachers had a positive /favorable attitude towards the psychology activities. Infact some of the student teachers expressed "I was surprised as well as happy to learn psychology through classroom activities". The analysis of the feedback revealed that the student teachers liked the activities. This was evident from their participation during the class.

Thus from the above discussion, it can be concluded that the study was fruitful and did help student teachers to understand selected concepts of psychology and apply the same in classrooms.

Conclusion

The study revealed that practical activities and hands on experiences enable students teachers to learn better also gain insights into themselves. Understanding the child psychology is a big

challenge for a teacher. The teacher should use knowledge of child psychology to identify & understand the individual differences. Accordingly the teacher should plan their teaching learning process and thereby overall development of students can be possible.

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