Cognitive Reflection and Diligence: An Empirical Study of Student-Teacher Correlation

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to attempt an understanding of the crucial relationship that exists between learner and teacher. It is crucial because it is one of the predominant parameters to develop an entente primarily with the subject besides the modus operandi of teaching and learning the subject. The learners have certain apprehensions already in them which, perhaps, create a distance by default towards learning English (L2). To develop interest or create an impact in gearing towards learning English (L2) is in itself a challenge. It is, thus, pivotal to build mutual trust and respect which as invested would yield corresponding attitude towards the subject as much as towards the teacher. The influential role of a language teacher is extremely crucial to develop a liking for the subject, if not a passion for it. Through the mode of discussion, the paper takes into consideration the specific instance of learning English (L2), in the paradigm of ELT, with particular reference to teacher-subject-student, the trio correlation. The study ranges within certain rural and semi-urban areas of West Bengal. The students at UG and PG levels of Engineering and Management streams are the target learners. This interpretation and understanding indicates the need for reducing cultural gap which already exists with their parents. Hence, the role as a mentor doubly increases in developing a steady and perpetual relationship which is at the base of learning and teaching.

Key terms: *attitude towards learning, ELT, cultural gap*

Introduction

In the past decades, many scholars have questioned the effectual relationship between student and teacher. Since the inception of learning – teaching the mutual dependence of student teacher has been one of the decisive factors of the output and outcome of teaching and learning process.

We know about the Guru Kula system of education; the Ashram system of education and today's ICT enabled learning. Whatever the environment had been or is prevalent the relationship between learner and facilitator is of paramount importance right from the initiation of the process of learning and teaching. Today when we talk of learner

autonomy or self-learning the role of the teacher is that of a Facilitator. In this too, the teacher facilitates to inspire the learner to dream, to aspire, to think in terms of higher order thinking skills or to develop people skills. The aspirations, the dreams of the learners from different ethnic, socio-economic background have their root in the same classroom environment. The mind knows no color and division. It dreams. The brightness of the dream shines with the color of treatment. The teacher is the great motivational source in shaping the color. The student –teacher relationship can catalyze the process of learning as much as it can be demotivational.As facilitators we need to comprehend the difference between a student and a learner. A learner is always a student but a student might not be a (willing) learner.

This paper takes into consideration some factors to understand the nature of this interdependence in three ways**:**

1. Examining the key determinants

2. Combining the determinants with expectations and achievements

3. Using this newly constructed typology to predict the future educational behavior of students (the likelihood of applying to practical situations both in professional and personal life).

Studies on student-teacher relationship has been focusing on how the treatment of subject – the what and how of a subject, the methods/approaches help in the learning process; studies have also reflected upon the treatment of learners in dealing with the subject as well as how a learner is treated by the facilitator in and off the classroom. All these have undoubtedly been instrumental in further explorations of student-teacher mutual bonding with different levels of expectations(high/low/moderate). This includes, for e.g.developing self-esteem, self-concept, influence of socio-economic background.

This study aims to analyze the influence of well-knit personality to improve the learner's academic as well as moral values by maintaining a supportive, caring and free of egoism relationship. The next section of the study aims to explain how the impact of student-teacher bonding so created in the process can leave a permanent mark (positive or negative) and in predicting future educational behavior.

The final section presents the conclusion. My goal in conducting this study is to provide more specific examples and empirical findings of how student–teacher relationships are effectuated.

1. Determinants of learner and teacher bonding:

1.1 Reliability

It takes time to build trust on someone. If it is the case of an educator, it is little more time-consuming to understand how to approach and to what extent and the limitations. In general, that which is very easily developed within a short span and understood as popularity is, perhaps, presumption. Reliability in turn is dependent on certain key considerations. This paper takes into account two such considerations among innumerable other factors.

1.1.1 Punctuality

In our system of education, the classes are

structured in accordance to bell schedule which signals the Factory Model of Education. The essence of freedom is somewhere already curtailed. Next, it has to be borne in mind that, a teacher who arrives ahead of allotted time for the class and the teacher who is habitually late in class have different effect on the learners in gearing towards the subject (already under apprehensions). In fact , it has been observed that, a psychological mind set prevails to reach a little late after the bell goes and in many cases even much later (little early before the bell goes for the next schedule). While in some other case, if there is /are student/s less than 3 or 5 in a class many teachers do not consider it important at all to conduct the class owing to less presence. The students present suffer a setback.

Gap of reliability is not only broadened, but it **kills** the following in the process: students' expectations, trust, aspirations and dreams, energy and motivation, respect for the teacher and the subject in concern, curiosity, value of time, future such endeavor, moral growth, evaluations of teaching effectiveness.

As **major effects** it incurs the loss of faith, admiration and respect, true learning as it fails to ignite learning to value importance of time, reliability of evaluation, and focus.

Analysis:How does it affect future behavior of the learner?

The learners would develop a casual approach towards the responsibilities that come on their way in life. The value of work and passion towards work would not develop. It would be work for the sake of work. The passion, the zeal would lose their meaning. The pure satisfaction that comes struggling through odds which ultimately drive one to reach their destination /goal would remain inexperienced.

Just as slow accumulation of drops of water creates large water bodies, likewise, lack of punctuality from its start to the end of a session would create havoc in delineating one's responsibilities and gearing towards a disciplined life. It falters in delivering a structured curriculum effectively and al full length. The question of doing reference work or expanding beyond the structured syllabi becomes a far cry. Learners fail to explore wider horizons in practical life. Expansion of work, related experiences, training and up gradation (self-development motivation) becomes stagnant and narrowed down.

The learners need to learn how to do in-depth study, consult references and go beyond the syllabi. Contrarily, ignorance would encourage them to cut short the designed syllabus (self-made syllabus) to somehow pass the examination using malpractices, excessive dependence on 'suggestions' a week before exam, inability to answer questions if twisted or are not in the usual systematic pattern.Lot many things are intertwined in this which lessens reliability, not only on the teacher but the entire system falls flat.

Reliability of the following factors that are intricately involved in this entire process is put to question:teaching objective, learning objective, educational objectives as a whole, curriculum and syllabi, fundamental values like respect of time, evaluation (examination) objective, test criteria, administering test process (especially, invigilation and script correction), and assessment criteria.

The higher order thinking skills do not find a place to ground their feet as the learners become dependent on age-old question pattern or question based on critical thinking can be competently dealt with and/are often marked as 'tough questions' or 'out of syllabus questions' (which in reality , might not be the case).These ultimately fall back on the entire process of learning-teaching and the impressions that a learner carries about the teacher is a tougher hit to the objectives of education as a whole.

Being in time in classroom can help earn respect. In fact, it can add meaning to student life as much as it adds color and feather to the role of teaching (Facilitating). It teaches the value of time spent effectively and in turn the value is carried forward in future in all situations. The transfer of learning takes place. No research, no survey can inspire us cent per cent but for introspection and being self-geared to the process. That is perhaps the reason, we fondly remember the teacher who have been influential in our lives and still continue to feel inspired at their thought. We indeed respect them.

It is up to us how we expect our students to remember us!

1.1.2 Dress Code

Dress code can potentially control a learner's notional direction and sense of attraction. If the latter becomes more prominent, the eye develops a habit of concentrating more on physical appearances than on study itself. The curiosity accelerates. In this sense, it needs clarification as what is meant by 'dress code'. It does not indicate to fixed uniform but it intends decency.

'*Style is the dress of thought*' is a powerful impression in language analysis. It would not be impertinent, perhaps, to say that fashion psychology is equally an integral part of communication while interacting with the learners. Physical appearance of an educator can stimulate mental and physical performance. Being presentable and accentuating affluent presence are two different things. From time immemorial, teachers have remained the role model and a source of charming and charismatic appeal in terms of how they carry their personalities. Dress has its own cultural specifications, social significance depending on circumstances, contexts, time and occasion and a behavioral psychology.

Analysis:How does it affect future behavior of the learner?

Learners hail from different socio-economic background. A language teacher is keener on these while preparing for a day's learning-teaching process. A careful watch in today's environment would give a glimpse of tremendous restlessness, rapidly fading of ethics and values of life. We are heading towards those days where these terms would seem a thing of past and non-existential. By this, I do not mean that all blame is to be put on teachers for this. But, let us rebuild and reinstate these values instead of being a part of it and suffocate ourselves to decay and degeneration. Loud accessories correlated with gaudy and expensive dress/attire (irrespective of gender) is likely to have a negative impact. Dressing down a little too much on the job would, undoubtedly, negatively influence learners by causing disappointment and arguable social withdrawal which would affect attention and focus on the job assigned.

Let us find out how it affects a learner:

1. It limits a learner's educational attainment.

2. It links to depression as socio-economic hardships put the learners in an underprivileged position.

3. It creates a psychological barrier – a sharp demarcation, an awareness and differentiation in their own circumstances – to their elite peers.

4. It develops a sense of social distance – even in cases, a strong desire to possess all these that are practically unaffordable at the moment.

5. Negligence of study and over indulgence on cosmetic appearance.

6. Division of a teacher's personality – to some students the teacher in all their loud make up , gaudy dress and loud accessories appear perfect while to some others the teacher remains unapproachable and to some others the response is a mixed one or/are neutral. In all these cases, the objective of teaching loses its significance where the process of learning – learning become shadow priorities.

7. The sense of wellbeing and the urge of cosmetic appearance get mixed up in the process and thus produce a paradoxical effect.

8. It lessens much of the time for strategically lesson planning of teaching because attention is surely to be distracted to maintain the makeover. However, it doesn't imply in any sense that teaches aren't entitled to beautifying themselves. The sense is only that it doesn't hamper the actual process or that the learners feel distanced.

9. In certain cases, improper and odd dressing can have perverse effect on the learners.

10. When it comes to learning-teaching, the situation is more formal than being casual.

Proper dress code in sharp contrast to tattered or low waist jeans, informal Tees, see-through or tight-fitting clothing in a formal atmosphere restricts the educators in forbidding their learners to put them on in their own situations. This habitual action continues in their turn of life and professional situations until one day s/he is put to question by authority.

Perhaps so, there is a steady decline of standards of good taste among the learners where very often they can be found in flip flops, slippers, under garments showing. These misaligned situations, if not controlled, it would surely impact learners' future behavior and the society and its culture as a whole.

It loses reliabilities in terms of social codes of conduct and culture, professionalism, positive psychological growth, mutual respect and relation between learner and teacher – in fact, provokes perverted thoughts, attitude it provokes the Institution, bonding among peers (because of difference of opinion and attitude towards the same). If we as facilitators provide our learners the scope to raise questions on us, subsequently we cannot help modifying theirs.

1.2 Diligence

First, we take a look at the origin of the word. The word originated in Latin in the late seventeenth century. The meaning stands for close attention. When it comes to the realm of learning – teaching 'diligence' applies to all possible areas. How is then 'diligence' related to learning and teaching?

Let us first take a look at how and what situations affect diligence of a Facilitator –

1. Facilitator is not confident about one's own standards of teaching.

2. Does not spend time on strategically planning of lesson and/or reflect on the improvements required.

3. Confides oneself in self-satisfaction and do not thrive for further developmentswhich is a continuous process.

4. Does not have the inner urge for updatingand introspection and thus lags behind in application according to the need of the time.Instead, develops negative complexes.

5. Is self-complacent with their achievement of the past and is extremely rigid; professional update in accordance to need of the hour loses its significance.

6. Rigidity (excessive in certain cases, not willing to listen toor take suggestions from other colleagues as a mark of wounding self-ego and thusrefrain to heed).

7. Focus aberration – teaching aims to facilitate towardsachieving learning outcomes and proper application in respective situation/s. When the proper focus gets shifted unethical preoccupations occupy their place.

Example 1 – indulging in student unrest and thus instigating the learners to suit one's own purpose and**/**or applying unfair means to ignite commotion and despondency.

The true significance of education and the objective of learning-teaching are thus lost into oblivion.

Example 2 – trying to gain meretricious popularity by being too student friendly to the extent of closing one's eyes to the abnormalities of any situation, which contrarily, should have been directed to the right track.**'Diligence'** is thus highly affected.

The learners who have come with the real purpose of learning are thus subjected to mal adjustment, loss of mind, troubled mind and occasional breakdown and instability. On the contrary, learners who have managed to the ways of profit –making without sincere effort to learn and educate them are only experiencing exploitation. This is harmful and painful both. If these are not controlled and checked undoubtedly they pose threats.

It widens the gap among peers, among learner- teacher, among teacher-teacher and this, I believe, would perhaps not be wrong to say, would cast a chain reaction among all the stakeholders.

Rationale for conducting the systematic review:

Numerous evidences in our own known environment indicate the dire need of soul-searching and introspection on the part of the facilitators. The facilitators bear the solemn responsibility of building a Nation

by shaping the learners according to their learning trajectories and careers. A learner can be shaped and guided towards competence only when the trainer is self-guided (to positivity and progress).

This situation desperately needs facilitators' self-control on the sense of self-satisfaction and stagnation. Educational interventions by the authorities, in certain cases, are in high need through the implementation and compulsion of attending trainings and self-development programs and monitoring their applications in the classroom situation the inertia of which can lead to serious infringement.

An in-depth understanding and realization of all the factors mentioned, the disadvantages faced by the under privileged suggest potential factors for low academic performance / under achievement.

Appeal to the concerned authorities to provide scope and exposure to facilitators who yearn to upgrade and update but are far from the benefits.

2. Method

As applicable, the present study is bent on Qualitative Research method. After formulating the study topic, some literature reviews were studied and relevant research reports from electronic databases were analyzed. The method of data collection also included minute observations of learner's behavior in and off the classroom situations, anecdotal records as maintained. The personal experiences in teaching has been of immense help and worked as a tool in collecting and analyzing data.

3. Conclusion

While trying to understand the learning

environment, learning scope, learning style, psychological gearing to learn (not acquire) a language, especially English (L2), the knowledge and/or understanding of the above mentioned determinants are necessary. Fear towards English (L2) is already predominant. The external adversities in stimulating their interest would increase the distance.

The understanding of the determinants is palpable because with it the expectations of the learners are either escalated and geared or marred. Psychological workings of the learners in being interested to learn are also an in-depth focus of present educational research. The prevailing conditions and intricacies in the process of presentation by the facilitator or environmental psychology have greater roles in preparing them to accept or discard the challenge. The study tries to drive home the point that a teacher becomes a facilitator when there is growth not only in learning output but development takes place in learning outcome as well. If the impact is only on learning output without nourishing learning outcome one bears merely the tag of a teacher because overall the educational objectives could not be achieved. Learning outcomes talk of holistic development whereas learning output is just the result and gradation derived from mere classroom teaching.

The student may not be a willing learner but, in order to transform the student into a willing learner the topic in this paper was attempted for observations. The points in my discussion are the outcomes of my observations from my experiences in and off the classroom situation. The observations so made are more particularly

related to the learners from the rural and semi-urban areas where certain local sentiments and beliefs reign supreme.

The study is particularly relevant in the context of rural and semi-urban learners of West Bengal. The target learners are at UG and PG level studying technical and management courses (B Tech**/**BBA**/**MBA). Exceptions in all related cases, situations and factors are applicable. These situations might be applicable (correlation) to certain similar cases that we share in our environment outside West Bengal.

Owing to huge number of theses only few of the Literature Reviews on students' aspirations and expectations and factors related to under achievements could be studied for analyzing them. Due to extremely shortage of time and scope it was difficult to manage reading all of them and hence, it is possible some significant information might have been missed. Many other factors are associated in relation to the topic of the present study.

The study aimed to analyze a range of factors, limited in range and scope, linked to under achievement of learners and steady fall of moral values and the role of student-teacher relationship in educational attainment of these learners. It needs special mention in this, that, it is not only the role of educational Institutions and the facilitator alone to bring in the desired changes, but the parents**/**guardian too needs to cooperate hand in hand as part of the stakeholders involved in the education of the children.

However, the study does not cover full range of diagnosis. I could bring out a small scale study and/or observations as discussed in my paper. Further research on this is definitely a must.

On the basis of observations as a student myself and while interacting with my learners, I tried to correlate the expectations from a teacher/facilitator. Aiming only to enable students escalate in grades dismantles educational objectives and transformation of persona becomes doubtful. In this context, I leave open on the understanding of the readers to decide what should be the focus — stimulating the relationship of a learner-facilitator or student-teacher, is what we need to concentrate upon to bring in the desired changes in learning outcomes. Or, are they mutually inclusive?

4. References

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