



REINVIGORATING THE HUMAN ASPECT OF THE TEACHER AND SOME REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: PAST AND PRESENT

Dr. Puja Sarkar¹ and Dr. Rajiba Lochan Mohapatra²

¹Assistant Professor, University of Burdwan, West Bengal.

²Assistant Professor, University of Burdwan, West Bengal.



ABSTRACT

Teaching is a profession that requires a highly skilled person who knows the 'know-how' of teaching and has the power to motivate the young mind continuously. It is never an easy task as many people think. A good teacher is a conglomeration of a bulk of qualities which requires higher potential manpower and continuous upgradation of qualities and qualifications. Among many qualities of teacher the topic here focuses on two important concepts: humane aspect and reflective practice. When we say 'humane' our focus is on the philosophical underpinning and the values one teacher must cherish to evolve himself/herself into a successful practitioner of his/her profession. And when we say reflective practices, it means the compendium of skills and processes required for bringing higher output in teaching. When we want a teacher to be more humane, what we want is a positive change in attitude and temperament so as to become more inclusive and adaptive. And making a teacher reflective practitioner requires training and mastery over skills like maintaining daily diary of teaching, accepting students' feedback, responding to a higher set of expectations etc.

Some of the humane reflective practices include:

1. An active focus on goals, how these might be addressed and their potential consequences
2. A commitment to a continuous cycle of monitoring practice, evaluating and re-visiting it
3. A focus on informed judgements about practice, based on evidence
4. Open-minded, responsive and inclusive attitudes
5. The capacity to re-frame one's own practice in light of evidence-based reflections
6. Dialogue with other colleagues, in-house and with external networks

KEYWORDS: *Humane, Reflective practice.*

PROLOGUE

Any profession or work field requires work ethics and a suitable work ambience. This is truer in case of teaching as a profession. It is because of the fact that human mind is trained here and it needs a humane climate to prosper. Building a congenial climate for teaching is now one of the toughest tasks and a teacher in twenty-first century has to feel it in pros and cons. With the change of times idealism and humanism which were once the prerogative of teaching, has become a distant reality. Professionalism and hedonism have taken their place. Competition and marketization of education has become the new trend. And hence, the humane aspect of teaching has got a back seat.

Since the ancient Vedic times, it has been India's sacred *parampara* to consider teaching as one of the noble professions. The *acharyas* of ancient times have amply proven the veracity of this profession.

These gurus by virtue of their tenacity, perseverance and loving attitude have set the benchmark very high. That is why the products of ancient *gurukuls* were always better human beings ever after. The same was the case of education during the Buddhist era. The modern Indian education system—which is said to be the brainchild of Macaulay, has really given a setback to the values and essentialities of teaching as a profession. Even after independence the Indian education system to a large extent willy-nilly continued that framework. This has caused the largest damage to this country than anything else. The mushrooming private institutions have added more damage in the name of spreading education. What India needs now is a total overhaul of the present system of education. Humane education will be the answer to mitigate these maladies. Let's know it in detail.

THE CONCEPT OF HUMANE EDUCATION

Humane education has been broadly defined as the use of education to nurture compassion and respect for living things. It is an innovative, solutions-driven effort to create a better world for people and the environment. Humane education encompasses ethics, human rights, social justice, media literacy, citizenship, and character development in a holistic, values-based learning format.

It equips teachers with the tools necessary to think critically about the real-world challenges affecting the teachers and the environment, and to work together to identify creative and impactful solutions for a better, brighter future.

Humane education encourages many character values, including compassion, respect, and tolerance. It also helps to develop sensitivity to others.

Humane education also provides opportunities for teachers to develop a sense of responsibility, stewardship, and self-esteem through its solutions-oriented approach. It empowers them to make choices that align with their values and take action as confident, capable citizens.

An effective program of humane education encompasses:

- Sound educational methods
- Clear goals and objectives
- Accurate information
- An atmosphere of openness and acceptance
- Opportunities for critical thinking

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES

Reflective practice is the ability to reflect on one's actions so as to engage in a process of continuous learning. Intelligent practice can be a critical instrument practically speaking based on proficient taking in settings where individuals gain from their very own proficient encounters, instead of from formal learning or information exchange. It is additionally an imperative method to unite theory and practice; through reflection a person is able to see and label forms of thought and theory within the context of his or her work. A person who reflects throughout his or her practice is not just looking back on past actions and events, but is taking a conscious look at emotions, experiences, actions, and responses, and using that information to add to his or her existing knowledge base and reach a higher level of understanding.

Jack C. Richards and Charles Lohhart (1996) has suggested the following critical questions for a reflective teacher:

1. What am I doing in the classroom?
2. How can I collect information about my own teaching?
3. Why am I doing this?
4. What is the result?
5. What are my beliefs about teaching and learning and how do these beliefs influence my teaching?
6. Where do these beliefs come from?
7. How do the learners' beliefs and attitudes influence their approach to learning?

8. What learning styles and strategies do learners prefer in a particular class?
9. What kind of planning decisions do I make use of?
10. What criteria do I use to evaluate teaching?
11. What is my role as a teacher?
12. How does this role contribute to my teaching style?
13. How do my learners perceive my role as a teacher?
14. How do I communicate my goals to my learners?
15. How effectively do I utilize opportunity in a lesson?
16. What kinds of interaction occur in my classroom?
17. What interactional styles do my learners favour?
18. What kind of learning activities do I employ?
19. What is the purpose of these activities?
20. What patterns of language use occur when I teach?
21. How do I modify my language to facilitate teaching and learning?
22. What opportunities do learners have for authentic language use?
23. Will I change anything based on the information gathered and how?

BENEFITS OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Roffey-Barantson and Malthouse (2009) introduce ten useful benefits of reflective practice which are summarized below.

1. Improving the teaching practice
2. Learning from reflective practice
3. Enhancing problem solving skills
4. Becoming a critical thinker
5. Making decisions
6. Improving one's own organizational skills
7. Managing personal change
8. Acknowledging personal values
9. Taking one's own advice
10. Recognizing emancipator benefits

PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES FOR REFLECTIVE EDUCATION

Different kinds of reflective tactics can be followed by a teacher. But mainly there are four popular types. These are Routine reflection, Technical reflection, Dialogic reflection and Transformative reflection. JohnWard and SuzaneMcCotter (2004) have interpreted these four levels of reflection in the following way.

1. Routine reflection is a kind of self-disengagement from change and the concern is on issues that do not involve a personal stake. Primary concern may include control of students, time and workload, gaining recognition for personal success and avoiding blame for failure. Critical questions and analysis are limited to critique of others.
2. Technical reflection is a kind of instrumental response to specific situations without changing the perspective. Here the focus is on specific teaching tasks such as planning and management, but does not consider connection between teaching issues. It uses assessment and observation to mark success or failure without evaluating specific qualities of student learning for formative purposes. Here he personally responds to a situation, but does not use the situation to change the perspective.
3. Dialogic reflection is a part of inquiry process involving cycles of situated questions and action, and also having consideration for others' perspectives and new insights. The focus is on students. Uses assessment and interaction with students to interpret how or in what ways students are learning in order to help them. Especially concerned with struggling students. Questions are asked with open consideration to new ideas. Seeks the perspective of students, peers and others. Here stress is given on

the development of new insights about teaching or learners, or about strength and weakness of teaching and how this can lead to improvement of practice.

4. Transformative reflection gives importance to fundamental questions and change that will happen as a result of personal involvement with fundamental pedagogical, ethical, moral, cultural, and historical concern. Here hard questions are asked that challenge personally held assumptions which ultimately lead to change of practice.

Another way of seeing reflective practice is also given here in tabular form. Let's go through it.

Reflection Type	Content of Reflection
Reflection- in- action Schon (1983,1990)	Making decisions about events in the classroom as they happen
Reflection-on-action Hatton and Smith(1995), Schon (1983,1990)	Thinking about one's teaching after the class; giving reasons for one's action and behavior in the class
Reflection-for-action Killon and Todnew (1991)	Pro-active thinking in order to guide action
Action Research Dana and Yendol-Silva(2003), Mc Fee(1993), Sagor (1993), Cochran-Smith and Lytle(1993), Carr and Kemris(1986)	Investigating in detail one topic related to one's classroom

PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES FOR HUMANE EDUCATION

Since the beginning, humane education has been home-based activities in which students can learn humane education content and behaviours through experience and reflection. Schools and other educational institutions

Humane education programs may be conducted in a variety of ways. Programs may be supplemental or add-on programs such as when a class period is devoted to humane education content; in these cases, the lesson is often devoted wholly to teach humane education content. Programs may also be infused into the curriculum or add-ins. These infused programs allow for the most effective form of Humane Pedagogy (a teaching approach inspired by Critical Pedagogy, which attempts to help students activate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of learning and determine personal values.)

Humane education may also be integrated into traditional lessons. Humane education can be an effective vehicle to also teach other content, such as literature, history, civics, or science.

The third approach is Service-learning. It is an educational approach that combines learning objectives with community service in order to provide a pragmatic, progressive learning experience while meeting societal needs. Service-learning involves students in service projects to apply classroom learning for local agencies that exist to effect positive change in the community. Barbara Jacoby defines service-learning as "a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities for reflection designed to achieve desired learning outcomes"

The fourth approach is experiential learning. It is learning through experience, and is more specifically defined as "learning through reflection on doing". Hands-on learning is a form of experiential learning but does not necessarily involve students reflecting on their product. Experiential learning is distinct from rote or didactic learning, in which the learner plays a comparatively passive role.

Some more popular pedagogical tactics of humane reflective education includes:

Volunteerism: Volunteerism is demonstrations of administration performed out of unrestrained choice without desire for reward and is commonly charitable in nature; the principal recipients are commonly those served by the understudy.

Community Service: This is like volunteerism, however it includes more structure and understudy responsibility than do volunteer projects.

Internship: This is temporary positions to furnish involvement in different fields of work; in any case, dissimilar to volunteerism the understudies gain a progressively quantifiable profit by this part of administration learning.

Field Education: Field training, similar to entry level positions, is commonly more physically advantageous to the understudy. Field instruction gives understudies co-curricular benefit openings that are connected, yet not completely coordinated, with their formal scholastic investigations.

EPILOGUE

Humane aspect of teaching is an important dimension of teaching. Without it, teaching becomes a transactional technique only. Only humane touch can make it complete. Reflection adds comprehensiveness to it. Reflection makes the process of teaching scientific and objective based. Let's try to bring the ambiance of teaching humane-based and reflection-driven.

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