Research Article

DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES AMONG PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS THROUGH HEUTAGOGICAL PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

In the present scenario, quantity vs. quality is burning topic of debate among educationist. Teaching - learning process in modern age is determine according to the requirement of learner at each and every level, same is applicable for education and training of prospective teachers and teacher educator. One of the prime aims of teacher education is to develop competent future teachers with the ability to create healthy learning environment and interactive teaching methods. As prospective teachers are adult learner and are nation builders of twenty first century, therefore heutagogical approaches are appropriate for developing professional competencies among them. The principles of this approaches is rooted in andragogy, where the learner are highly autonomous and self-determined. The present paper discusses the concept heutagogy, its characteristics and its use in developing professional competencies in prospective teachers.

INTRODUCTION

The teacher plays the most crucial role in the system of education. They are the foundation on which the stability and growth of the educational system as well the nation rests. They shoulder the responsibility of shaping the future of the nation, which depends upon the skills and efficiency of the teachers (Shukla, 2014). Teaching is categorised as a noble profession which require high degree of professional qualities and commitment. Teaching profession includes meticulous hard work and efforts in the classroom and also regular interaction with the parents of students and community members. National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE; 2009) clearly mentioned that the educational and professional standards of teachers constitute a vital component of essential learning conditions for achieving the educational goal. It further added the fact that excellence and extent of learner accomplishment is determined by teacher competence, motivation and sensitivity. Educationist from world over have started realizing that only securing enough number of teachers will not be sufficient for creating a learning environment. The important fact is that to engage good quality teachers with advance type of knowledge, skills, attitudes and competence i.e. focus is shifted from quantity to quality (Shukla, 2014).

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Therefore, stress is being laid on the qualitative aspect of the teacher education. It is being realized now that efficient and competent teacher will contribute to educational refinement and improvement that can tune with the needs of contemporary society. Today's societies need professionally qualified teachers who can make education vibrant and production oriented, the teachers who possess professional commitment and selfless devotion. Quantity versus quality is scorching topic of debate among modern educationists. For enhancing quality many innovations are applied and practiced in the modern classroom that represents shift from teacher centre to child centre education. Thus, teaching –learning process in modern age is determine according to the requirement of learner at each and every level, same is applicable for education and training of prospective teachers and teacher educator. The indispensable role of teacher in educational system is already discussed. Therefore, ensuring quality in teacher education is also mandatory for which some reforms is urgent need of time. National Knowledge Commission (2007) has observed that teachers are the chief element of school system and the nation already facing a severe shortage of qualified and motivated school teacher at different levels. There is a urgent need to re-establish the self-esteem of school teaching and afford more incentives for skilled and committed teachers. We are still following conventional methods to train our teacher.

As, the traditional pedagogical practices which are even not appropriate to teach modern students/ learner and vast changes are taking place in teaching learning process. Therefore, conventional training and teaching methods are also not very suitable to develop professional competencies among prospective teachers. Prospective teachers are adult learner. So, we can say that present pedagogical practices are not able to manifest their potentials. Hence there is a need to change our teaching –learning process for prospective teacher. Therefore it is an urgent demand to shift from pedagogy to heutagogy to keep in mind the psychological needs of adult learner. The principle of heutagogy approach is embedded in andragogy, where the learners are extremely autonomous and self-determined. Huetagogy emphasizes the growth of aptitude and capability with the aim of producing well trained learners for the intricacy of today's workplace. Hence, it is assume that heutagogy as a learning approach proves fruitful in developing professional competencies in prospective teacher that can help them to thrive well in modern educational system.

Heutagogy and Professional Competencies of Teachers

Education can be traditionally seen as a pedagogic association between the teacher and the learner. It is a teacher who always decided that what will be the capabilities of a learner and how the particulars and ability of learner could be developed. In the past few decades, there has been reasonable a revolution occurs in field of education due to researches into how people learn and further work on how teaching could and should be provided. A rapid change in society and information explosion is a matter of great concern. It suggests that we should develop an educational approach in which learner himself determines what and how learning should take place. Heutagogy is considered as the study of self-determined education which can be used for the development of educational system as it shows natural progression from earlier educational methodologies. It may provide a platform for the development of learning approaches and capability in the twenty-first century (Kenyon and Hase, 2001).

The principles of heutogogy is emerges from the andragogical approach, where the instructor smooth the progress of learning through the addiction of resources and supervision (Hase and Kenyon, 2000; Eberle, 2009). In heutagogical approach of teaching and learning, learners are highly independent and self-determine and due stress is given on development of leaner capability and capacity that aim to produce competent learner who are well prepared to face the complexities of contemporary workplace (Blaschke, 2012; Prahallada, 2013). So, we can say that this approach is one of the finest ways to develop professional competencies in prospective teacher and well equipped them to confront the problems of educational institutions. Since heutagogy aims to develop capable learner and capability is always accompanied with competencies. Therefore, competencies of prospective teacher play major role in determine the quality of education in holistic manner. To understand the professional competencies expected from prospective teachers, we must understand the meaning of "competency" and "competent teacher". Competency is the conscious use of one's own knowledge, abilities, talents, skills, attitudes, values, and behaviour patterns, in order to resolve issues and problems, overcome challenges, fulfilling one's duties and achieving the aims proposed.

Heutagogy put emphasis on to the development of learning competencies and learner's capacity to learn (Ashton and Elliott, 2007; Bhoryrub, Hurley, Neilson, Ramsay, and Smith, 2010; Hase and Kenyon, 2000). There is a very difficult task for educators to develop a lifelong learners who can compete in a global knowledge economy (Rachal, 2003; Kuit and Fell, 2010). It is also true for teacher education program that to produce capable and competent future teachers. The capable teachers are those who deploy their abilities, knowledge, talents, skills, attitudes and values to meet up the challenge of giving skillful education to their students. They acquire the specialized skills required and adequate to perform their assigned duties and attain the educational goals. The European standards 7 (Source: Standard of Professional Competencies Required of Teachers 2010-11) group the ten teachers' competencies into five domains of knowledge, knowing who to be, knowing what to do, knowing how to do it and knowing how to be which is represented in Table – 1.

The competency based approach teacher education, on its being translated into actual practice will lead in improving not only the performance of the teachers but would also help them raise the standard of education in holistic sense (Peters, 2001, 2004). The above competency can be cultivated into the prospective teachers if they are self-motivated and self-determinant. The idea of heutagogy suggest certain characteristics and practices that can be used for designing a learning environment, which facilitates the learner (prospective teachers) to become a capable and competent individual that can handle any situations in their own ways.

Characteristic of Heutagogy use to Develop Competencies

Learning in heutagogical approach is self-determined, which directs the learners to obtain both competencies and ability (McAuliffe et al., 2008, Hase and Kenyon, 2000, 2007). We are already discussed about competencies and capability which is characterized by learner confidence in his or her competency. Through this approach it is believed that learner can develop a creativity to apply competencies to new and unfamiliar situations and became more adaptable and flexible in approach (Hase and Kenyon, 2000; Gardner et al., 2008). Day by day there is various modifications and changes are implemented in educational system from policy making to teaching methods of classroom. So, many of competencies discussed in the second section of this article like teaching competencies, competencies in organise and managing the school, competency of handling the group, working in team, social relationship cannot be teach to prospective teachers who are adult learner. Teacher educator can only imparted as theoretical knowledge about these competencies such a bunch of information but these competencies in real sense can be develop only when learner would be self motivated and self directed for enhancing their capabilities, where huetagogy may prove suitable approach. Following characteristics of heutagogy can be utilized in teacher education program to develop professional competencies among them:

Double-Loop Learning

Double loop theory is based upon a "theory of action" which is focused on solving of complex and ill-structured problems (Argyris 1976).

Table 1. Five domains of Knowledge

Knowledge includes:	A. Competency in science or subject matter – This deals with the knowledge and its management in the various fields of education (subjects and topics of the syllabus)
Knowing who to be:	B. Intra- and interpersonal competency –relating with the right way to treat others, through personal skills, tutoring-mentoring, guidance.
Knowing what to do:	C. Teaching competency – dealing with teaching-learning process and its management. It reflected in the schedules, specific teaching methods for various subjects and topics, diversity awareness, classroom management, teaching materials and resources and students' marks. D. Competency to organise and manage a school -. It is related to planning, to coordination and to quality management at the school. E. Competency in handling group dynamics – One's own assertiveness, interaction with others and assuring group harmony by encouraging it, mediating its inherent conflicts and controlling it, are some of its crucial aspects.
Knowing how to do it:	F. Competency in teamwork – This is related to collective endeavors directed toward a common goal. G. Competency in innovation and improvement – This relates to coping with change, with research into coping skills and conducting experiments on coping, as well as diagnosing and assessing proposals for innovative improvement. H. Linguistic and communication competency - This deals with the exchange of knowledge, ideas, thoughts, emotions and feelings (expressing and conveying ideas, both in one's own and in foreign languages) I. Digital competency (ICT) - Encompasses knowledge of current technologies, their use in education and managing hardware and networks in order to propel development of occupational skills, among other things.
Knowing how to be:	J. Social and relational competency - Focusing on the social relationships among people and participation in community life.

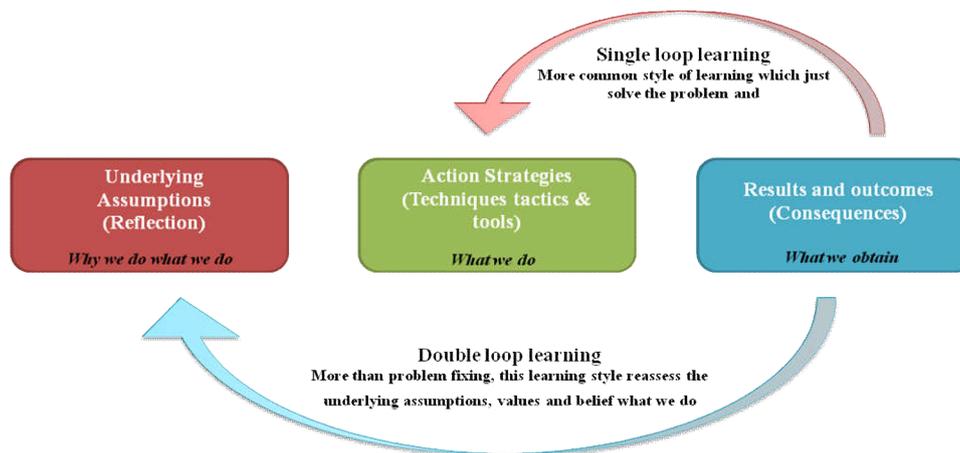(Source: Standard of Professional Competencies Required of Teachers 2010-11)

Figure 1. Single and Double loop learning process

The four basic steps are involved in the process of action theory learning: (1) detection of support and theory-in-use, (2) creation of new meanings, (3) construction of new actions (4) simplification of outcomes. The process of double loop learning includes the application of each of these steps. In this process, assumptions fundamental present views are questioned and theory about behavior tested publically. The final outcome of double loop learning supposed to be increased efficacy in decision-making and improved receipt of failure and mistakes (Argyris, 1993; Argyris and Schon, 1996; Hase and Kenyon, 2000; Hase, 2009). The double loop learning occupy challenging of learner own concept, theories, values, assumptions rather than just encounter and reaching with problem as found in single loop learning. In this situation learning is an active process through which individual either seek education or experience or gain feedback and do assessment as they move through life experiences. Through the process of double-looping, learners become more attentive of their favorite learning style and can easily adjust new learning condition to their learning styles, thus making them more capable learners.

As it focused on capability of learner, heutagogy moves educators a footstep closer in the direction of better think on the needs of mature learners in complex and varying work environments (Bhoryrub et al., 2010).The internship programmes of teacher education that primarily aim to develop teaching competencies in prospective teacher may prove more effective when based on this principle. If they allowed to handle the real classroom situation without any training of teaching and asked to reflect on the problems they may find some better solution to handle the problem when they became trained in teaching competencies they can apply these instructed competencies in more efficient manner.

Self Directed

We, already discussed that paradigm is shifted from teaching to learning. There is vast explosion of knowledge in every field most of things are governed via ICT (Information and Communication Technology). Therefore, competency of subject knowledge, digital competency can develop effectively via huetagogical approaches because no conventional instructional practices in teacher education programme can

inculcate these competencies in prospective teachers unless or until they are willing to expand their subject and digital knowledge or to do innovations. Creating competent prospective teachers who would be self directed capable learners is call of today.

Reflective Learning

It is a way of permit students to footstep back from their knowledge to help them develop critical thinking skills and improve on future performance by analyzing their experiences. It is a very important feature of heutagogy which represents learning skill linked with knowing how to learn (Hase, 2009). It may prove very fruitful in developing competency of inquiry (competency of science teaching) among prospective teacher and enable them to master in problem solving skills may prove very helpful to at each stage teaching specially in teaching of science subjects.

Flexibility

Heutagogical approach advocates the flexibility in learning where teacher provide resources but learner design the actual course by negotiating the learning. Thus learner himself determines what is of interest and relevance to them. It proves helpful in modifying and adopting new and modern teaching competencies according to the demand of contemporary needs. It seems very useful in developing competency of innovation and improvement which highly significant for science teaching.

Action Learning

Action learning or action research methods are consistent with heutagogical approaches that focus on the problem of learner and their immediate resolution for the benefit of learner (Prahallada, 2013). This can develop capacity lifelong learning. Therefore, prospective teacher can update and modified their competencies according to the need of new situation or problems. It provides lots of help to teacher to solve their local problems relate to school management, handling with problematic learners, dealing with community or parents thus play significant role in developing the competencies in organize and manage the school, handling group dynamics and social relations.

Conclusion

Teachers are the most important assets for any educational system. They are the founders, creators and executers of the educational system. Therefore, quality concern of teacher education catches the immense attention of educationists in present time. When we talk about the professional competencies of prospective teacher in twenty first century, it is realized that traditional practices may not seem most effective to resolve the debate of quantity versus quality debate in teacher education. To input quality we need self directed capable prospective teacher who constantly effort to became more competent to meet the challenges of changing scenarios of education system. In this situation heutagogical approaches may prove effective way of learning to develop professional competencies in prospective teachers. Heutagogy is one of the ways of learning emerges from constructivism. Constructivism gives importance of individuals' personal experiences and

freedom for construction of new knowledge in his own way Singh and Yaduvanshi, 2015; Yaduvanshi and Singh, 2015). Hence heutagogy provides opportunities and flexibility to prospective teachers to develop and appraise their professional competencies according to the flux of their educational setup. So, we can say that they became aware about their potentials of 'how to learn' by becoming skilled and proficient lifelong learner. Hence, the ultimate goal of heutagogy that is self realization is achieved.

Acknowledgement

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