

# TEACHING AND EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** There is poverty extreme poverty, in the world, despite increased literacy rates. This means education has fallen short of its promise, because it has left a very large number of human beings deprived of basic needs of existence. In addition, bizarre diseases, related to the aberrations of the mind, have increased considerably over the years, despite the growth of research in medicine. Why is there dissatisfaction with education despite increase in literacy rates and such elaborate discussions throughout the world on how to make learning interesting and effective? The answer to this is obvious. We link education to passing examinations and going to the next class but not to excellence of existence. Teachers rarely realize that knowledge is not power. Thinking does not come automatically to human beings. They can at best manage arbitrary or elementary thinking. Creative and purposeful thinking has to be taught in schools much more than providing random information

**Key words:** *education, teaching, literacy*

“Real education is that which enables one to stand on one’s own leg,”<sup>1</sup> said Swami Vivekanand, while speaking on the purpose of education. Education thus should be for the living and for making a living

There have been many thoughts on what education should inculcate in students. Should it inculcate values, the ability to ask questions, to absorb the goodness of civilization and culture, or to pursue knowledge for its own sake? Education should have all these aims. However, they are just a small segment of what change it should bring about in children. Human beings want to lead a life of happiness and abundance. They go to schools and colleges to acquire the necessary skills to achieve them. “Only the educated are free,” said Aristotle, as reported by Diogenes Laertius<sup>2</sup>. Education must ensure this freedom for every human being who attends a school.

There is poverty extreme poverty, in the world, despite increased literacy rates. This means education has fallen short of its promise, because it has left a very large number of human beings deprived of basic needs of existence. In addition, bizarre diseases, related to the aberrations of the mind, have increased considerably over the years, despite the growth of research in medicine.

## EDUCATION

Why is there dissatisfaction with education despite increase in literacy rates and such elaborate discussions throughout the world on how to make learning interesting and effective? The answer to this is obvious. We link education to passing examinations and going to the next class but not to excellence of existence.

Educationists are also guilty of the most elementary mistake of not opening a dictionary and seeing the origin of the word education. The word

originates from Latin word *educare*, which means to 'lead out'<sup>3</sup>. The word's origin suggests that education should draw out information and ideas from students. It has been pumping information into students for centuries.

This pumping has not helped. The very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collecting of facts<sup>4</sup>. In addition, education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man<sup>5</sup>. This idea has been repeated by many greats in history. We have tended to ignore it because teachers have an itch to teach. So they regurgitate the contents of a book at every opportunity, without having the means to know if the students understand what is being taught to them.

### **KNOWLEDGE**

This desire to teach also arises from a belief that knowledge is power. That is why we pile on knowledge without thinking if it constitutes power or not. It is easy to teach and it is there<sup>6</sup>. Education pours so much knowledge that there is no time to think.

In addition, teachers rarely realize that knowledge is not power. It is information gained through education<sup>7</sup>. This could be good or bad, useful or useless, and it may or may not suit a purpose. A person who wants to be chef must learn to acquire information on looking. He cannot acquire any other information if he does not have sufficient information on his prime objective.

### **WISDOM**

Yet, even knowing everything about cooking is not of much help. It may not help in baking a loaf of bread. leave alone help in creating a nutritious and balanced meal. We need proper thinking for creating nutrition and taste in our food without losing its balance. Thinking does not come automatically to human beings. They can at best

manage arbitrary or elementary thinking. Creative and purposeful thinking has to be taught in schools much more than providing random information. The world has millions of books. A human being reads about two hundred books in his life time. It is a proverbial drop from the ocean of knowledge. The choice of this drop cannot be wrong. Neither can it be absorbed mechanically, because a child's depends on how what he acquires in our temples of learning.

Schools and colleges must inspire students to use available information in ways that it constantly elevates their minds to achieve their objectives. This is possible if students are trained to use their minds to interpret information in a creative manner. This is the essence of wisdom. We should create wise instead of just knowledgeable children.

### **CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE**

Creative minds survive any kind of bad training. The great creative individual is capable of more wisdom and virtue than a knowledgeable man can ever be<sup>8</sup>.

What is creativity? Why do some consider it to be great? More importantly, why do some confuse it with writers, painters and singers? Creativity is the use of the imagination or original ideas in order to create something<sup>9</sup>. Life remains mediocre if our ideas are ordinary. It is vital that education inspires creativity at every step of learning, instead of limiting it to painting, dancing, singing, or scientific discovery. Life is more important than all these put together.

### **THE EFFECT OF CREATIVITY IN EDUCATION**

Creativity opens the minds of students in wonderful ways. They learn to seek goals in life and, above all, they find ways to achieve them. In addition, these students inspire at least four people each in their homes. India has

30 million students. These students can make the entire 120 million population of India to prosperous by improving the way they think. What is true for India is relevant for the entire 170 million students of the world. They can inspire their friends and relatives to improve the quality of their thoughts.

### **THE HUMAN MIND**

The human mind is many times more powerful than any computer known to man. This mind is available to every human being, even the one who fails in an examination or in life. The world has poverty and disease because our schools use their might to stop students from thinking. Teachers deliver lectures and later conduct exams. They have no way to know if the students have understood what has been taught to them. It is even more criminal that they do not inspire the students to use their minds to create newer and better ideas from every word or concept uttered by them.

The teachers have no reason to open the minds of the students to creative ideas, because they are responsible for completing the course material and are rewarded for the marks obtained by the students in the final examination. Parents are happy with this system, because they too had gone through the same senseless ordeal of arbitrary learning. Moreover, our best engineers, doctors, managers and bureaucrats became what they did by mastering the art of learning by rote like parrots.

### **THE ROLE OF A TEACHER**

The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery "In teaching it is the method," said Ashley Montagu, "and not the content that is the message... the drawing out, not the pumping in."<sup>10</sup>

A teacher should arouse interest, curiosity and enthusiasm in students. A teacher should affect eternity. At present, he affects it by creating large

numbers of poor, deprived and ill people.

### **THE FIVE ELEMENTS OF PROPER EDUCATION**

It is now universally recognized that purposeful reading, speaking, thinking, writing and listening are the five crucial elements of quality education. At present, most of these things are not done by students. They do not read their course material. They do not speak on it. They do not think on the material in order to creatively examine it. They do not write, barring copying answers from books while doing homework or projects. In addition, listening is less than ten per cent in our schools and colleges.

Reading without understanding is like eating without digesting, and we often confuse listening with hearing. Purposeful listening requires proper evaluation of each word and concept. Talking is different from erudition; and there is great difference between speaking, and speaking with creative purpose. Speech is not to disguise thoughts, as some believe; it is to convey reality.

Writing is crucial for students, because they have to prepare for exams. Like everything else, they need sustained practice to write well in an examination. It requires the mind, hand and eye coordination to write well in a three hour examination the contents of a two hundred page book.

Thinking is undoubtedly, the finest trait in human beings. It separates them from animals. The better the quality of their thinking the greater is the distance between them and animals. To live is to think; to live well is to think creatively, and to improve with each thought and deed.

### **WHAT CAN BE DONE?**

Some educationists believe that teachers should facilitate in the process of learning. What does this mean? It

means that they should stop their conventional method of cascading the incessant flow of information, as though children are empty pitchers, which are meant to be filled to the brim. The children sit in the class listlessly, waiting for the bell to go at the end of the period so that they can free themselves from this ordeal.

Teaching does not often result in learning by this method. No human being likes to be lectured. Children are not opening their minds in creative ways in the classroom at every step of learning.

The way to go forward is by introducing group dynamism, where the students are divided into small groups and they are then introduced to a concept where they have to use their minds creatively at every step of learning.

### **GROUP DYNAMICS**

Group Dynamics is a creative extension of group discussions. Human beings discuss all the time in pubs, parties and tea stalls. Yet, these discussions do not create anything significant, because there is no common purpose of great importance. Discussions generate dynamism and energy when they have a common cause within the group, a common path and a common destination, all of which are great and rewarding. This dynamism can be easily achieved in education with a little change in the manner in which knowledge is acquired by the students.

### **THE REVOLUTIONARY TEACHING TECHNIQUE<sup>11</sup>**

A new technique has been invented in India and demonstrated on over one million students, with 99 per cent success rate. It has been invented by Dr. R.D Mohota of Nagpur after 62 years of deliberations, research and taken up by Creative Educators, a charitable organization.

In this technique, the entire class is divided into groups of six as per the previous merit list, so that good, mediocre and poor students form a part of each group.

The book, or its portion, is distributed evenly among the groups. For instance, a book of Civics, having sixty pages, may be distributed by giving each group (say there are ten groups) six pages. A book containing 200 pages may be divided into three or more parts, and taught in different stages.

The students then read the portion allotted to them. They usually understand 40 per cent of the content at this stage. They seek the help of the teacher for the remaining 60 per cent.

After reading the portion allotted to them, students discuss the portion within the group and try to solve problems. The students are able to understand and resolve seventy per cent of the problems at the stage. The teacher facilitates in making them understand the remaining thirty per cent.

After the discussion, each group comes and presents its portion to the rest of the class. This is followed by questions asked by the other groups; these questions are answered by the group which has made the presentation. Other groups, in turn, present their portion to the rest of the class and answer questions asked by the remaining groups, till the entire course is completed.

For Mathematics, the teacher explains the basic concept or problem. He then asks the students to raise hands who have understood the concept. These students then explain to the other students in groups of five. The teacher gives an exercise soon after to establish that the concept has been understood by every student.

## **RELEVANCE OF THIS TECHNIQUE**

The technique is effective. It reduces learning time to half and doubles memory, learning and school results. It also creates joy in the process of learning.

The above happen because the technique empowers the students by opening their minds in creative ways and by making them masters of their own destiny. The technique ensures purposeful reading, because students cannot make their presentation without it; neither can they do it without making notes for presentation, which also ensures creative and purposeful writing. The students have to speak while discussing, presenting and while asking questions and answering them.

One very important aspect of this technique is the improvement in concentration in the classroom, from a mere ten per cent today to many times more. Concentration is universally considered one of the vital qualities for human development.

However, the most important aspect of this technique is that it improves the quality of thinking. Thinking is man's only basic virtue, from which all others proceed. His only basic vice, is the refusal to be creative while assimilating information.

In many cases refusal to think rationally and creatively creates timidity; this makes our troubles worse than they need be. We start fearing public opinion, which is always more tyrannical towards those who obviously fear it than towards those who feel indifferent to it<sup>12</sup>. This technique reduces the tyranny of public opinion. It also lowers self-doubt.

## **WHO BENEFITS FROM THIS TECHNIQUE?**

The major beneficiaries of this technique are the students. They improve their ability to think in order to find what they want and how they can

get what they want. The habit of thinking creatively, formed early in life, helps them to keep searching for creative solutions throughout their lives.

The technique helps teachers, because they have to speak half as much as they have to in the conventional method of teaching. This reduces their stress and preserves their vocal cords from damage, a recurrent problem with them.

The technique benefits owners of schools, because it improves results by at least one hundred per cent. It also improves school admissions and attendance.

It helps society, because wisdom means reduced poverty and disease. Wise minds also reduce hatred, stupidity and inefficiency. The technique helps parents, because it makes their children better and healthier human beings. Goodness comes when students learn things and hold fast to that which is good. They then, not only become good, but also become the cause of good in others.

At present, parents are forced to interfere, because their children do not measure up to their expectations. Child psychologists tell them to respect them and not trespass their solitude. This technique will solve this problem to a considerable degree. The march of intellect spreads its fragrance in many wonderful ways; this technique is one such way, and it may probably be the best known to the world so far.

## **EDUCATION AND FREEDOM**

Only the educated are free, and it is only the ignorant who despise education. This may appear simplistic; however, quality education is vital for human growth, provided it inspires creativity and dispels ignorance. Freedom is experienced by people only when they are masters of their destinies. This comes when powerful actions are backed by great ideas.

Without them, human beings remain ignorant, and ignorance is the primary source of misery and vice.

It is the duty of education to create wise children. This cannot be achieved if a definite order is not in place. The miserable life, that a vast majority of human beings live reveals that education has not achieved this objective. It is now time to change all that. There is reason to do so and there is a technique to achieve it.

### THE ART OF TEACHING

To know how to suggest is the art of teaching. To suggest how to use the mind well is the finest quality a teacher can possess. At present, for every person wishing to teach there are thirty not wanting to be taught.

We have changed this terrible fact that children are bored in a classroom. We shall have to make the classroom a place of creative excellence, where children use their minds to understand words and ideas and then create new significance out of them. For this, we shall have to change the mindsets of the teachers. They will have to be creators of excellence in children. This will happen if every child creates his own domain of excellence by using what is available to him.

### CONCLUSION

We as global citizens do not want to produce robots, which carry out jobs mechanically. We need vibrant human beings who use their minds in creatively to find ways to do them in better and more beneficial ways. We want to have tomorrow's world with wise human beings and not inculcate the wrong habit of following orders. We have to carry out social audit of our educational system as to whether we are on the path of achieving the objectives of creating productive and good human beings. Without it, we are wasting our financial as well as human resources.

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