PREFERRED TEACHING BEHAVIOURS OF STUDENTS TEACHERS – A POST-B.ED. STUDY FROM KERALA

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Introduction

Teaching is a performing art. Like actors on a stage, teachers play their assigned roles before their students. Effective teachers prepare what they will say and do in advance to have maximum effect on their audience. Teaching style is a multi dimensional construct which reflects teachers personal and classroom behaviors. The term teaching styles appeared around the 1970s (Biggs, 2001) when interest began to focus on the role of styles in teaching and learning. Teaching styles refer to a teacher's preferred way of solving problems, carrying out tasks, and making decisions in the process of teaching. Teaching style represent a pattern of needs, beliefs and behaviours displayed by teachers in their classroom(Grasha,1994).Teaching style is reflected in how faculty present themselves to students, convey information, interact with learners, manage tasks, supervise work in progress and socialize learners to the field(Grasha,1996). Although teachers may have a dominant style based on personal preferences, abilities, and beliefs about what constitutes good teaching in their specific discipline or individual class, the best teachers engage a varying mix of the elements of each style based on the learning styles of their students.

Significance of the study

The teacher training institutions mould the student teachers in accordance with the growing educational needs of the society. Students enter pre-service training believing that good teaching is highly related to one's content knowledge and abilities to convey that knowledge to others (Powell, 1992; Hollingsworth, 1989; Woodlinger, 1985; Weinstien, 1990). The teaching style preferences of each teacher trainee in various stages of teaching and the differences in beliefs, attitudes and values towards all elements of teaching is to be assessed for the better awareness of style development in teacher training colleges. Moreover, this paper tries to reveal the preferences of student teachers in various aspects of teaching viz.,understanding the learner, judging the curriculum, using the various educational materials including textbooks and many activities in pre-,during-,and post instructional tasks. These preferences at the end of the course

are clear indicators of the effectiveness of the teacher education programme in moulding student teachers' knowledge, expertise, and attitudes; and hence, would suggest strengths and weaknesses of the prevailing preservice teacher education programme.

The Five Teaching Styles

Grasha (1996) outlined five teaching styles which include *Expert, Formal Authority, Personal Model, Facilitator*, and *Delegator.* According to Grasha's model, Expert style are likely to possess knowledge and expertise. They tend to direct learners and emphasize factual information; oversees, guides, and directs learners; gains status through knowledge; focuses on facts, knowledge and information which preceptor possesses. Knowledge and information can be overused and intimidating; experts may not always show underlying thought processes.

Formal Authority style teachers possess status among learners because of their authority and position in addition to their knowledge. They usually follow "traditions" and standards of classroom practice while focusing on the expected rules for learners, supervises learners closely with critical eye toward standard practices and procedures, and focus on clear expectations and acceptable ways of doing things.

The Personal Model teacher is likely to lead by personal example while suggesting guidelines for appropriate behavior. They often show learners how to do things and want learners to observe and emulate their approach, emphasizes a "mentor relationship".

The Facilitator preceptor emphasizes the personal nature of the teaching– learning relationship and is more likely to ask questions; explore options with learners; and emphasize learner responsibility, independence, and initiative. They focus on learner needs and goals; openness to alternatives and options; and emphasizes personal flexibility. It is a time consuming style.

The Delegator style encourages learner responsibility and initiative but acts with the goal of providing autonomy to the learner. The Delegator preceptor will answer learner questions and periodically review learner progress. They contribute to learners professional development and confidence; two-way trust. Learners may not have capability to function in an autonomous manner; some learners are anxious when not closely supervised.

Objectives

1. To find out the preferences (Expert, Formal Authority, Personal, Facilitator and Delegator) of student teachers in various aspects of teaching.

2. To identify the mismatches, if any, in the various aspects of teaching preferences among student teachers

3. To make suggestions for enhancing teacher education practices for developing congruent behaviours and preferences among student teachers.

Methodology

The study was conducted on a sample of 268 teacher trainees including 31 males and 237 females in seven optional subjects.

Teaching Preferences Inventory with 20 items on aspects of teaching - viz., student quality, student responsibility, classroom communication, teaching method, learning goals, textbook use, time management, questioning, projects, lesson planning, classroom management, examination, evaluation, scoring the scripts, reinforcement, dealing classroom problems, teacher's responsibility, educational aim, teacher skill and students' evaluation about teacher - was used to quantify the preferences of student teachers. Each item has five responses that can be ranked from 1 to 5 according to the order of preference of the respondent. The five responses of each item corresponds to the five teaching styles namely Expert, Formal Authority, Personal, Facilitator and Delegator.

Analysis

The main purpose of the study was to find out teaching preferences of student teachers in various aspects of teaching, to identify the mismatches regarding teaching preferences and to provide suggestions for the better management of classroom behaviours of student teachers in teacher training centres.

Results

The mean preference scores for the five teaching styles in various aspects of teaching are given in table 1.

Table 1: *Preferences of Student teachers in various factors of teaching*

Sl No:	Factors of Teaching-Learning	Mean Scores of Teaching Preferences				
		Expert	Formal Authority	Personal	Facilitator	Delegator
1	Student Quality	3.51	2.94	1.38	2.75	4.41
2	Student Responsibility	2.13	4.26	3.12	2.99	2.49
3	Classroom Communication	3.05	3.12	3.69	3.52	1.61
4	Teaching method	2.25	2.21	3.68	3.54	3.33
5	Learning Goals	2.39	2.43	3.07	3.78	3.34
6	Textbook Use	2.33	2.85	3.16	3.25	3.42
7	Time Management	2.60	3.88	2.57	3.75	2.20
8	Questioning	3.52	3.62	3.35	3.29	1.21
9	Projects	2.70	2.18	3.60	3.15	3.37
10	Lesson Plan	2.84	2.76	2.80	3.16	3.43
11	Classroom Management	3.54	2.15	3.12	3.25	2.94
12	Exam	2.57	3.27	2.50	2.88	3.78
13	Evaluation	2.56	3.22	3.53	2.64	3.05
14	Scoring the Scripts	2.91	2.72	2.52	3.41	3.44
15	Reinforcement	3.00	2.68	3.85	2.64	2.84
16	Dealing Classroom Problems	2.30	2.57	4.45	2.71	2.97
17	Teacher's Responsibility	1.82	2.59	3.77	3.91	2.90
18	Educational Aim	2.24	1.94	3.78	3.59	3.47
19	Teacher Skill	1.97	2.09	3.74	3.69	3.51
20	Student Evaluation about Teacher	2.25	3.01	3.31	2.96	3.47

Student teachers have 'Expert style' Preferences in the areas of classroom management, asking questions and assessing student quality. The same time, student teachers are against expert style preferences in, teachers' responsibility, framing educational aims and learning goals, teaching method, dealing classroom problems, teacher skill, considering student responsibility, textbook use and teacher belief about student evaluation.

Student teachers are 'Formal authorities' in estimating student's responsibility, asking questions, and time management. However, they give least preference to Formal Authority style in classroom management, framing educational aims and learning goals, and in implementing projects, teaching skill and teaching methods.

Future teachers prefer personal style in classroom communication, dealing classroom problems, framing educational aims, evaluation, projects, reinforcement, teaching skill, teacher's responsibility and teaching method the student teachers follow Personal Style. In assessing student characteristics they are not Personal.

The student teachers adopt a 'Facilitator Style' in classroom communication, setting educational aims and learning goals, teacher skill, teaching method, teacher's responsibility and time management.

Student teacher educates prefer to delegate setting educational aims and learning goals, examination, preparing lesson plan, projects, scoring the answer scripts, teacher's belief about student evaluation on him/her, student quality, teaching skill, teaching method and textbook use the student teachers follow Delegating style. But in the areas of classroom communication, questioning , estimating student responsibility and time management they are not Delegators.

The Most Preferred and Least Preferred Teaching Behaviours of Student Teachers

The most preferred and the least preferred teacher behaviours of Student Teachers in various aspects of teaching are summarized below.

Table 2: *The Most Preferred and Least Preferred Teaching Behaviours of Student Teachers*

Sl No:	Factors of Teaching-Learning	Most Preferred	Least Preferred
1	Student Quality	Be responsible	Emulate teachers methods & approaches
2	Student Responsibility	Try to attain goals in a systematic way	Acquire facts, contents and principles
3	Classroom Communication	Explanation through examples	Reduce interferences of teacher
4	Teaching method	Life-oriented	Curriculum- oriented
5	Learning Goals	Multi faced development	Expertness in the content
6	Textbook Use	Encourage students as a model to different activities	As an introduction to learning
7	Time Management	Strictly followed	Schedule time by students themselves
8	Questioning	Evaluate the attainment of learning objectives	Not so often (rarely)
9	Projects	To foster life skills and values	Based on clear project design
10	Lesson Plan	Foster independent thinking	Definite learning objectives
11	Classroom Management	Thought provoking atmosphere	Systematic attainment of objectives
12	Exam	To express the self acquired ability	Life orientedness
13	Evaluation	Individual and rational responses	Facts and ideas
14	Scoring the Scripts	Self-acquired knowledge	Life-oriented answers
15	Reinforcement	Individual qualities	Group activities
16	Dealing Classroom Problems	Consider various aspects of problem like a caring parent	Depend more experienced persons in problem solving
17	Teacher's Responsibility	Support and encouragement to students	Impart knowledge
18	Educational Aim	Mould a ideal person	Systematic development
19	Teacher Skill	In explaining comprehensible manner	In explaining the content
20	Student Evaluation about Teacher	Make a sense of responsibility among students	Deep knowledge in the subject

Student teachers least preferences towards curriculum orientation and content orientation in teaching have to be further explored in relation to their pedagogic and content knowledge. Findings suggest need for teacher education to provide the skills and attitudes for appropriate use

of textbooks for educational purpose. Student-teachers may further strengthen their ability to use classroom questioning for formative purposes. Likewise, the least preference for clear project designs indicates that teacher education has to further strengthen student- teachers' expertise with out-of- classroom learning through projects and assignments. Their tendency to delegate the planning and evaluation responsibilities to students suggest the failure of teacher education programme to challenge and alter student teachers previous notions of education as a powerless system to mould the future citizens. In lesson planning, the high preference for fostering independent thinking and the least preference for attaining definite learning objectives indicate that even the present thrust on lesson planning in teacher education has not made student teachers experts in this task. Higher preference for exam as a means to express self acquired ability of students is not befitting to a professionally prepared teacher.

Suggestions for Enhancing Teacher Education Practices

1. Teacher education to provide the skills and attitudes for appropriate use of textbooks for educational purpose

2. Further strengthen student teachers' ability to use classroom questioning for formative purposes

3. student- teachers' expertise in out-of- classroom learning through projects and assignments require more attention

4. Attitudinal development has to be given proper attention by teacher educators, especially in their comment about the educational system

5. Turn student teachers into experts with pre-instructional tasks, facilitating in instructional acts, formal authorities in post instructional evaluation, personal in day to day informal interactions with students and parents, and delegating in ill-defined aspects of education

Conclusion

The findings from the study suggest that teacher education programme has succeeded in making future teachers realize that they are facilitators of student development using the various resources and techniques. However, their preference of personal styles, especially with respect to teachers performing tasks suggests that teacher education programme has not been effective in developing the expertise for facilitating student development via various instructional acts. The seeming preference for delegation especially with respect to evaluation related tasks, suggests

that teacher education programme has not inculcated the expertise to conduct formal evaluation in a way that facilitate student progress.

Teaching is an extremely complex activity that involves continual decision making and continuous interaction among teacher, pupil, task and contextual variables (Haigh&Katterns,1984). While good teacher preparation programs do exist, there has been no systematic way to ensure that all teachers acquire and continue to develop the knowledge and skills they need and teacher training programs fail to address style development which concentrating identifiable set of classroom behaviours and role of contextual variables in teaching learning process. A successful teacher education programme is expected to turn student teachers into experts with pre-instructional tasks, facilitating in instructional acts, formal authorities in post instructional evaluation, personal in day to day informal interactions with students and parents, and delegating in ill-defined aspects of education including distant aims and future oriented goals.   Teaching style is an attempt to provide a focus on the person and preserves the distinctiveness of the teacher as a separate but responsible agent in the classroom gestalt. According to Grasha(1994),teachers often use a blend of several teaching styles. Effective teachers are flexible and are able to change their teaching style to suit the circumstances and the student's learning requirements.

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