

Constructivist approach as child centred pedagogy: An experiment with elementary teachers

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Abstract

This study used an experimental method to examine how Constructivist trained teachers have different teaching pedagogy in relation to the conventional approach teachers. The purpose of this study is to determine to what extent the Constructivist trained teachers were in favour of using more child centred practices in their classroom. This paper will also discuss how the trained constructivist teachers have different or we can say more favourable attitude towards pupils in their classroom teaching. Data was collected using Teaching Attitude Inventory of S.P Ahulwalia. It has been found that the constructivist approach teachers were more in favour of using child centred practices and were pupil centred in their teaching pedagogy, when compared to the Conventional approach teachers.

Keywords: teaching pedagogy, child centred practices, pupils

1. Introduction

Teaching is the process of attending to people needs, experiences and feelings, and make specific interventions to help them learn particular things. Interventions commonly take the form of questioning, listening, giving information, explaining some phenomenon, demonstrating a skill or process, testing understanding and capacity, and facilitating learning activities such as discussion, simulations and practice.

According to Flanders (1970) says, "The act of teaching is an activity which involves the teacher and the pupils and the interchange between them is not one way but two ways or reciprocal. McKay (2000) the teacher's role is to be a collaborator, who participates with the children in constructing reality by engaging in open-ended inquiry that elicits and addresses student's misperceptions. The teacher interacts with the students to come to new understandings. Group work and class discussions are the critical activities in a classroom.

The Lecture Method

This 'Tongue and the Ear Method' is by and large the most widely used method of teaching and learning and consists of dispensing of information by the teacher to the students. The teacher is active and the student is passive. The method conceives that the completion of the prescribed course content by the teacher in this fashion is the main purpose of education. The teacher's proficiency is judged by the quantum of information transmitted and not by its assimilation by the students. Teaching thus becomes both the means and the end and learning is not the core concern.

The Constructivist Approach and Learner as Constructor of knowledge

The constructivist philosophy views knowledge as contextual

and subjective. It cannot be transmitted to passive learners. Knowledge is always the result of a constructivist activity and students construct knowledge in the particular context in which the cognizing individual is operating. Constructivism provides a new theory of learning and also a new theory of teaching where learner is the main actor.

Constructivist like Driver and Easley believed that children construct knowledge by reconciliation of new information with their prior knowledge. Piaget's view of constructivism is based on the developmental stages of the learner. He believed that individuals construct knowledge individually based on the past experiences and through adaptive process. Vygotsky on the other hand believed that construction of knowledge occurs through interaction in the social world.

In traditional methods focus is on teaching strategies and teacher. Learners are passive receptors of knowledge. In such classrooms, lecture method predominates and teachers stress on completing the voluminous syllabus. In constructivist paradigm teacher facilitates the process of knowledge construction by students.

Constructivism allows academic freedom to students and encourages cooperative learning and sharing of thinking among peers. Students use problem solving method; investigate projects, experimental learning, concept mapping and field surveys for constructing new ideas. In the process they question the existing ideas, formulate and test hypotheses, draw conclusions, compare their findings and results with those of others, verify and validate their own beliefs. Students develop the habit of self-directed learning.

2. Objectives of the study

1. To study the effect of teaching pedagogy on Attitude of in-service teachers towards Child centred practices.
2. To study the effect of teaching pedagogy on Attitude of in-service teachers towards pupils.

3. Hypothesis of the study

1. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of Attitude towards Child-centred Practices of Constructivist trained and Conventional approach teachers.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of Attitude towards Pupils of control and experimental group teachers.

4. Methodology

Random sampling technique was used in the present study and two group of teachers were chosen, the experimental group

(using constructivist approach of teaching) and the control group (using traditional approach of teaching). Data was collected from the elementary in-service teachers using Ahulwalia Inventory of Teaching from the two government schools of Delhi chosen randomly. A sample of 20 teachers from each school chosen for research and analysis.

5. Results and discussion

a) There is no significant difference in the mean scores of attitude towards Child- centred Practices of control and experimental group teachers.

Table 1: Mean scores of Attitude towards Child-Centred Practices of Control and Experimental Group Teachers.

Variable	Compared group of teachers	N	Mean	S.D	Df	t value	Result
Attitude towards Child centred practices	Control	20	37.4	4.53	38	5.4**	Significant
	Experimental	20	44.9	4.24			

Note: ** p > .01

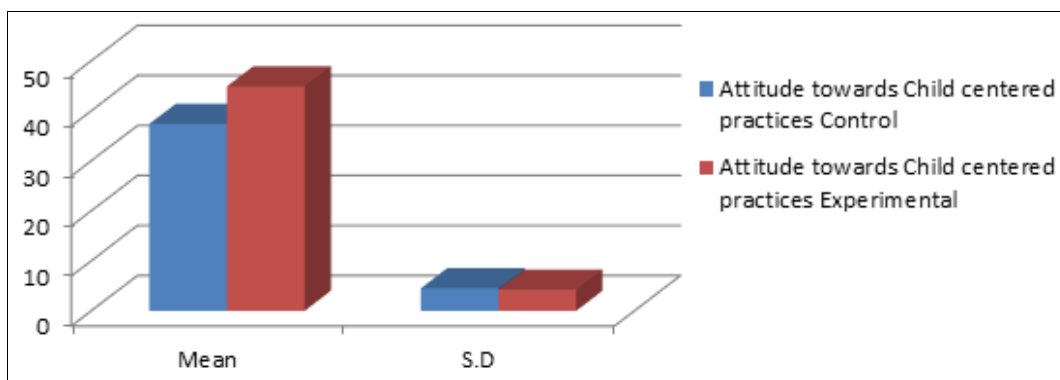


Fig 1: Mean scores of Attitude towards Child-Centred Practices of Control and Experimental Group Teachers.

Table 1 shows that the mean scores of Attitude towards Child centred practices of control and experimental group teachers are 37.4 and 44.9 respectively. Calculated t value is 5.4, which is more than the table value 2.71, at 0.01 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Henceforth, it can be concluded that attitude of teachers did differ significantly

in relation to their attitude towards child centred practices among the conventional and constructivist trained teachers.

b) There is no significant difference in the mean scores of Attitude towards Pupils of control and experimental group teachers.

Table 2: Mean scores of Attitude towards Pupils of control and experimental group teachers.

Variable	Compared group of teachers	N	Mean	S.D	Df	t value	Result
Attitude towards Pupils	Control	20	37.35	2.58	38	2.84**	Significant
	Experimental	20	40.65	4.49			

Note: ** p > .01

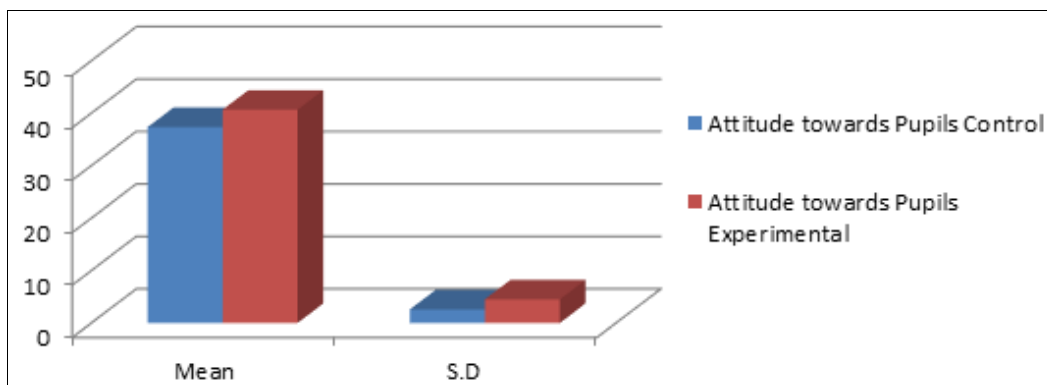


Fig 2: Mean scores of Attitude towards Pupils of control and experimental group teachers.

Table 2 indicates that the mean scores on Attitude towards Pupils of control and experimental group teachers are 37.35 and 40.65 respectively. Calculated t value is 2.84, which is higher than the table value 2.71. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Henceforth, it can be concluded that attitude of teachers did differ significantly in relation to their attitude towards pupils.

6. Conclusion

From the above findings, it can be said that the Constructivist trained teachers had favourable attitude towards child-centred practices and towards pupils, when compared to the Conventional group teachers, who were using traditional approach of teaching thereby indicating more learner/pupil oriented classroom in case of the constructivist teachers.

Changing from a teacher centred environment to one that is student centred can be challenging. As teachers who are in service, have long tradition of using traditional approach of teaching, changing their teaching pedagogy is a challenging task for them. But it has been proved in various research studies that Constructivist approach brings high achievement scores of students when compared to traditional approach of teaching.

Hence, it is the requirement of the time that changes in pedagogy of school subject for reconstruction of concept should be initiated. The teachers at the grass root level should take an initiative to train themselves with the learner centred approaches so that the ultimate goal of teaching-learning can be fulfilled with effectiveness.

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