

Attitude of Student Teachers towards Constructivist Approach in Teaching

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ABSTRACT

A constructivist approach in teaching is very different from the traditional approach in teaching. It requires the teacher to take upon the role of a guide and a facilitator and encouraging learners to actively participate in the learning process. Attitude of teachers towards this approach will determined the way it will be adopted in classroom teaching and organization. This study aims to find out the attitude of teachers towards constructivist approach in teaching. For this, a Teachers Attitude Scale towards Constructivist Approach in Teaching (TASCAT) was administered to 524 student teachers. Findings reveal that the participants of the study have an unfavourable attitude towards constructivist approach in teaching and there is no significant difference in the attitude towards constructivist approach with respect to gender.

Keywords: Constructivist Approach, Attitude

I. INTRODUCTION

Constructivism is a theory that believes that human generates knowledge and understanding as a result of their ideas and experiences. It is founded on the premise that by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in. Constructivism is based on the belief that knowledge is not something that can be simply given by the teacher in the classroom. Rather, knowledge is constructed by learners through an active, mental process of development. Many studies have proven that children learn better when teachers used constructivist teaching. Studies conducted on students population have shown that the use of constructivist approach in classroom learning has greatly enhance the learning abilities among students and is very effective in terms of academic achievement and motivation, generating and retention of knowledge (Jong Suk Kim,2005; Watson, Aubusson, and Boddy ,2003; Artun, Huseyin, Costu&Bayram ,2013). As children are actively involved in learning, there is a lot of collaboration and exchange of ideas between them and this makes learning more enjoyable. Students develop high order thinking skills as more thinking on their part is involved and are able transfer the new knowledge to real life.

The National Curriculum Framework (2005) in its aim of improving the children’s natural desire to learn strongly support the use of Constructivist Approach in school education (Chapter 2.4.1- Teaching for Construction of Knowledge) as this approach give importance to children’s experiences, their voices and their active participation. Along the line of the recommendations of the NCF 2005, the NCTE brought out the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education in 2009. As a result, the teacher education programme was redesigned to focus on the learner, to provide a greater ‘space’ for personal, social and professional development of the teacher and to equip him/her to evolve pedagogic practices and create a learning environment that addresses the needs of learners (Mohapatra, Mohapatra&Parida, 2015).

Even as this approach may have been used by individual teachers, majority of our teachers are still comfortable with using the traditional approach. As Constructivist Approach is a relatively new concept that has been incorporated only recently in the curriculum of teacher education courses across the country, adopting this approach in real classroom situations will be a very challenging task for the teachers. The only way to help them embrace this new approach is to change their attitude towards it.

Attitudes are expressions of how much we like or dislike various things. One of the reason that attitudes are important is that they are thought to guide behavior. A favourable attitude towards constructivist approach, on the part of the teacher will contribute towards the successful implementation of constructivist teaching in the classroom while an unfavourable attitude will hinder its application in classroom situations. Therefore, it is hoped that this present study will throw some light on the attitude of teachers towards constructivist approach in teaching.

Objective of The Study

To study the level of Teacher's Attitude towards Constructivist Approach in Teaching.

Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the level of Teacher's Attitude towards Constructivist Approach in Teaching between Male and Female of DIETs

Operational Definition of Terms Used

1. **Constructivist approach:** -In this study, Constructivist approach is an approach that is used in teaching and involves components like (a) reflection; (b) learning process; (c) autonomy-community; (d) authority facilitator; (e) power-empowerment and (f) evaluation.
2. **Attitude:** The attitude is a personal disposition which impels an individual to react to an object, situation or proposition in favorable or unfavorable ways.

II. METHOD

Sample

The tool was administered to 524 student teachers of District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs). There are 7 DIETs in Meghalaya which are located in the 7 districts of the state i.e. Sohra, Nongpoh, Nongstoin, Thadlaskein, Baghmara, Tura and Resubelpira. DIETs have been set up in each of the seven districts of the State to offer a two year pre-service and in-service training to Elementary School Teachers

Method

The method used for the study is descriptive survey approach.

Tool

In order to find out the attitude of the teachers towards constructivist approach in teaching, the investigator had constructed and standardized the Teacher's Attitude Scale towards Constructivist Approach in Teaching (TASCAT). TASCAT consist of 40 items. The TASCAT is a Likert five point Summated Rating Scale. The categories of responses were 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'undecided', 'disagree', 'strongly disagree' and '4', '3', '2', '1', '0' were the scores for positive statements and the scores are in reverse order for negative statements. The Areas of the Scale has been divided into six components. Viz. (i) Reflection; (ii) Learning Process (iii) Autonomy-Community (iv) Authority-Facilitator; (v) Power-Empowerment and (vi) Evaluation. The scale has face and content validity as the items initially framed were given to 20 experts for analyzing and editing the items of the scale. The reliability of the scale was computed by Karl Pearson's split half method. From the half test reliability coefficient, the whole test reliability coefficient was estimated by using Spearman Brown prophecy Formula and it was found to be 0.913. In addition, Cronbach Alpha was also calculated for finding out the internal consistency of the scale and the reliability was 0.907. The norms were also established for interpretation of obtained scores. This was done by converting the raw scores into percentile ranks.

Statistical Analysis

To find the mean difference between groups, 't' test was used.

III. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The data collected from the samples was analyzed and the findings are shown below:

Table 1: Attitude of the student teachers towards Constructivist Approach

Sl. No.	Raw Scores	Interpretation	N	%
1	113 and above	Highly Favourable	104	19.85
2	107-112	Favourable	106	20.23
3	103-106	Moderate	87	16.60
4	97- 105	Unfavourable	117	22.33
5	96 and below	Highly Unfavourable	110	20.99
			524	

The above table shows the attitude of student teachers of DIETs of Meghalaya (N=524) towards constructivist approach. It shows that 22.33% of the entire sample have an unfavourable attitude and 20.99% have a highly unfavourable attitude while 20.23% have a favourable attitude. 16.60% have moderate attitude and 19.85% have a highly favourable attitude towards constructivist approach in teaching.

Testing of Hypothesis

Ho1- There is no significant difference in the level of Teacher's Attitude towards Constructivist Approach in Teaching between Male and Female of DIETs

Table 2: Difference between Females and Males of DIETs

Gender	N	Mean	σ	Computed 't' value	Table 't' value	Significance
Female	378	104.90	9.79	2.34	2.59	Not Significant at .01 level
Male	146	102.62	10.03			

The result from the above table indicates that there is no significant difference in the level of Teacher's Attitude towards Constructivist Approach in Teaching between Males and Females. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. It can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the attitude between male and female student teachers of DIETs towards constructivist approach in teaching.

IV. DISCUSSION

Result shown in table 1 indicates that in general, a majority of the student teachers of DIETs (22.33%) have an unfavourable attitude towards Constructivist Approach in Teaching. This implies that they are still in favour of traditional approach with the teacher as the authority in the classroom. This study is in line (more or less similar) with the findings of Taşkin-Can (2013) who found that, in general pre-service science teachers still hold teacher centred belief. In other words, they are still inclined towards traditional approach than constructivist approach. This study is in contrast to the findings of the study conducted by Uredi (2013); Hursen and Soykara (2012); Guha and Paul (2014) where it was found out that majority of the teachers have a positive attitude towards constructivist approach. The study shows that, in general, the student teachers of DIETs have an unfavourable attitude towards constructivist approach in teaching. This may be due to the fact that student

teachers are products of a traditional system of education and cannot see themselves as applying another approach other than what they are being taught. As this approach has been only recently introduced in the curriculum of the teacher training institutes, they are yet to grasp its full implication in teaching situation. Moreover, teaching or learning or being aware about Constructivist Approach may not necessarily result in having a positive attitude towards it.

V. CONCLUSION

Changing the role of the teacher from the only authoritative source of knowledge to that of a guide and a facilitator will allow students to learn from their own experience which will surely make learning a more enjoyable experience thereby preventing students from leaving school mid-way. Even though shifting to Constructivist Approach may appear to be a challenging task, yet, with more awareness and knowledge about this approach, it is hoped that student teachers, teachers and teacher educators across the country will be more inclined towards this approach and hopefully will be able to implement it in real classroom situations. As our attitudes are based on information, so the more information we gather about the attitude object (in this case about constructivist approach), there will be more possibilities for attitude change.

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