CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION FOR TEACHING PROFESSIONALS

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Abstract

The author would like to suggest few points to novice teachers that how to transform into a Teacher in this thematic article   We all know that the world's second oldest profession is our Teaching Profession. The academic ethos and teaching profession have come a long way since the time when there were no universities but only learned men seeking reliable and fundamental knowledge. Teaching is not a Job; Teaching is not a Work; Teaching is not a Business but a Profession. Teaching got its legitimate status as a profession in the landmark work of A.M. Carr-Saunders and P.A. Instead of telling the advancement of technologies, usage of computers, hi-fi class room setup the author would like to share the views on Professional Development in the context of "Technology of Education"

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Introduction:

Wilson (1933) who identified sixteen professions including teaching. Teaching is based on a body of knowledge. The practitioners of teaching pass through a rigorous path of discipline orientation before they are brought into the scope of teachers' profession. They commit themselves for the cause of teaching throughout their life. We all know that the world's second oldest profession is our Teaching Profession. The academic ethos and teaching profession have come a long way since the time when there were no universities but only learned men seeking reliable and fundamental knowledge. Teaching is not a Job; Teaching is not a Work; Teaching is not a Business but a Profession. Teaching got its legitimate status as a profession in the landmark work of A.M. Carr-Saunders and P.A. But education has become a trading commodity in the present scenario. Bottle stores are under the control of Government and our education system is in the hands of traders starting from diluted norms of Apex bodies. A school teacher or a lecturer is a comedy piece in cinemas; cracking jokes, making fun at teachers in press; even a 20 second TV advertisement clippings spoil the character of a teacher just for fun. Why should we blame others? Take our own school children, very much interested in keeping nick names. Our teachers are good at teaching subjects but most of us having "Cyber-phobia". We struggle to grow professionally and keep updated. Yes, money can buy anything even a Ph.D degree because we are living in a commercialized global village. The drafting committee of the World Education Forum has expressed the concern in the following term: "Corruption is a major drain on the effective use of resources for the education and should be drastically curbed" Where are we? Where do we stand? Instead of telling the advancement of technologies, usage of computers, hi-fi class room setup the author would like to share the views on Professional Development in the context of "Technology of Education"

Profession:

If teaching is a profession then it has to lay down its norms of behaviour for teachers and also devise its own ways to guarantee that these norms are followed. Every profession is accountable. It is accountable to society. Academic freedom bestowed upon teachers is premised upon the societal responsibility that their profession carriers. Their job involves dispassionate search for truth and its transmission and application as recorded knowledge. They are a model to their clients- namely the students -who are highly impressionable. They have to discharge this

responsibility through wise yet stern self-discipline. The public image and standing of the teaching profession will improve if its responsibilities are honestly discharged. Quality of education particularly at the elementary level is poor in our country. Improvement in the quality of schooling is a matter of serious concern in our society. Though the quality of education is poor due to many factors but the general perception of the people is that teacher is responsible to a great extent for poor quality of schooling. As a consequence, the status and dignity of teachers in our society has been declining steadily over the last a few decades. The status and dignity of the teacher was very high in the past we all know. The sagging status and dignity of the teacher is matter of serious concern for all concerned. Teachers' organisations in India have a long history, longer than that of the trade union movement. The earliest known effort in the direction of organising teachers in the South was the founding of the Women Teachers' Association in Madras in 1890. Five years later, the Madras Teachers' Guild, an organisation representing both male and female teachers was founded. Fourteen years later, in 1909 the first federal organisation known as the South India Teachers' Union was founded.

Critical Pedagogy and Citizenship Education

Why critical pedagogy, why not just pedagogy; because in citizenship education pedagogy has proved not to be sufficient if its aspirations for increased democratic participation and social transformation are to be realized. Engage in an honest and detailed examination of the way existing power structures shape experience, resulting both in unearned privilege for some and unfair disadvantages for others; offer students the respectful treatment, valid voice, and relevant curriculum that is their due as human beings. This pedagogical approach goes far beyond those employed in teaching about citizenship education. In the United Kingdom the aim of citizenship education is to provide young people with the knowledge, skills, and understanding that they need in order that they may ". . . play an active, effective part in society as informed, critical citizens who are socially and morally responsible". Critical pedagogy is well suited to meet these goals in a number of ways.

First, active citizenship education demands a pedagogy that embraces a reasoned critique of contemporary society that goes beyond simplistic and one-dimensional criticisms. Learning about society and how to make it better is never a neutral and apolitical matter and while critical

pedagogies that offer a narrow and restricted voice dominated by a particular set of political values can be accused of indoctrinatory practice we cannot escape the fact that indoctrination is also the potential result of avoiding critiquing social, cultural, political, and moral questions, avoidance that may serve to perpetuate social injustice and undemocratic behavior.

Second, the aims of critical pedagogy resonant strongly with those of active citizenship education particularly those based upon challenging injustice and inequality. Here education for active citizenship has an important role to play in the pursuit of social justice and equity.

Third, a theme running through any number of policy documents lauding the principles and practices of citizenship is that civic knowledge and understanding and critical thinking skills are not enough to protect our democracies or to challenge socially unjust and undemocratic behavior. What is required is *action.* Active citizenship education as a route to social transformation is curriculum as "praxis" through which teacher and student think reflectively *and* act critically upon that reflection by transferring learning into action inside and outside the classroom.

Active Citizenship

Fundamental to the employment of a critical pedagogy is to acknowledge that every aspect of our work as educators is profoundly infused with the political from the structural imperatives of education and schooling manifest in funding, curriculum, and assessment policies to the overt and hidden messages transmitted to students through school and classroom organization, management, rituals, rules, and dialogues. Knowledge and understanding of this offers two possibilities; we can either accept unquestioningly that as educators we are allocated a subordinate role in maintaining the status quo or we can adopt a pedagogy that invites us and our students to question, argue, and to engage in the process of democratic social change. Education is not reducible to a mechanical method of instruction. Learning is not a quantity of information to be memorized or a package of skills to be transferred to students. Classrooms die as intellectual centers when they become delivery systems for lifeless bodies of knowledge. Yet, it is not clear that teachers see themselves as individuals and collectives that have a significant role in working with other stakeholders to create democratic social change; why? The idea of employing a critical pedagogy can be daunting and intimidating for teachers because while it

should provide opportunities, and the right, to participate by its very nature it also provides opportunities for the right to disagree. But critical pedagogy does not just encourage critical thinking, because it encourages action students and teachers may find themselves involved in exploring and acting upon issues critical to the practice of democracy and social justice that have previously been the unchallenged territory of the teacher. Teaching active citizenship education through a critical pedagogy requires that as educators we move carefully, thoughtfully, and methodically beyond our comfort zone to become educators who ". . . combine scholarly reflection and practice in the service of educating students to be thoughtful, active citizens". This requires courage, the courage to take risks and to embrace and promote a professional culture of moral and ethical participation focusing upon a commitment to democracy and social justice not only through what we teach, but through who, and what, we are as teachers. This involves accepting that the effective teaching and learning of active citizenship education is profoundly rooted within our personal characteristics, values and belief systems and in the relationships and affiliations that we experience with others. This raises an important question: how do we teach students the democratic principles of active participation in what are essentially controlled and authoritarian school environments? This is a genuine problem for schools for although many advocate democratic and participatory citizenship they are patently not democratic institutions. What can schools do to encourage education for active citizenship; the author suggests that this requires the following

1. *Curriculum as praxis*: Critical pedagogy is at the nexus between critical reflection and critical, informed, and committed action, that is curriculum as praxis. Education for citizenship using a critical pedagogy ought not to begin, or end, with measuring or with test scores or with pledging allegiance, but with action. This demands a curriculum model that not only invites critical self-reflection on the part of teacher and learner it pre-supposes a commitment to making a difference in society.

2. *The creation of a socially just teaching and learning environment*: Teaching is a social practice built around relationships and as such is a values-based moral and ethical occupation; if we accept this statement it seems somewhat incongruous that we have to engage in the task of advocating that teachers teach for social justice and that our classrooms ought to be socially just

environments. To place the issue on its head, how can we not teach for social justice? Social justice is a fundamental principle of both education for active citizenship and critical pedagogy. A socially just teaching and learning environment is a community within which students feel valued and respected, it is an environment that at its core demonstrates in a genuine and tangible manner a concern for welfare, for the rights and dignity of all. In this environment students are provided with opportunities to analyze established customs and rules, to critique underlying assumptions about how society functions in terms of whose voices dominate, are marginalized, or are ignored; where social and political power, authority, and status lies and why and how best to effect democratic change. Many teachers will argue that they work at creating this kind of environment; however, as we saw earlier, the rhetoric of commitment and goodwill has failed to transform the pedagogy of teaching and the learning experiences of many students. Creating a socially just teaching and learning environment requires that this principle is integrated into pedagogy, curriculum, organization, management, re-sourcing, and assessment of learning and that its impact is visible in terms of values, attitudes, and behaviors.

3. *The creation of* "democratic learning communities": Here students, parents, carers, and the wider community are jointly involved in the formation of an active community of learners who collectively engage in projects designed to ensure that education for active citizenship takes place within authentic and meaningful contexts and where democratic participation is a desired outcome.

4. *Emphasizing the affective domain of learning*. This means emphasizing in our teaching and our students' learning the development of attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and values and the changes in judgment and behavior that result. While the cognitive ability to understand, apply, analyze, and evaluate is crucial, enhancing student emotional and social competence is also critically important

Conclusion

. . . mental illness . . .crime . . . [adolescent] suicide . . . the most common form of infant mortality in the United States is parental beating . . . misinformation [which] takes many forms, such as lies, clichés, rumour, and implicates almost everybody, including the President of the

United States . . . [And] the air pollution problem, the water pollution problem, the garbage disposal problem, the radio-activity problem, the megalopolis problem, the supersonic-jetnoise problem, the traffic problem, the who-am-I problem and the what does it all mean problem. How much has changed? Alexander (2007) described a world characterized by a widening gap between rich and poor and social changes:

. . . ranging from increased marital breakdown to precocious consumerism, the loss of intergenerational contact and the poverty of the inner lives of those children whose days outside school are dominated by television, the Internet and battery-driven toys which leave nothing to the imagination. If we include issues such as religious fundamentalism from left and right, institutionalized racism, sexism, homophobia, the fear of terrorism and ethnic strife, and global economic crises to that list, we cannot help but conclude that now more than ever we need schools and teachers who are prepared to radically embrace the principles and practices of citizenship education as a vehicle for social transformation. However, approaches to teaching a form of democratic and active citizenship education that integrate a critical pedagogy and which are participatory and emancipator are likely to remain patchy and ad hoc as long as the discourse of greater radicalism in education lacks popular appeal and institutionalized support; discourse of derision and the construction of a powerful moral panic generating intense suspicion, mistrust, and skepticism of their aims. In appropriating the language of democracy, social justice and citizenship neo-conservative and neo-liberal ideologies of education that have dominated discourses since the late 1970s have done their job well. Yet, and in spite of this context, as educators we really have no choice but to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities they need in order that they can develop balanced and coherent understandings of their cultural, social, and political world. Creating 21st century communities that are economically prosperous and socially just and equitable within which people engage in positive and principled ways with the democratic process requires providing learners with the knowledge, skills, and understanding that equips them to face the unpredictable challenges and opportunities that this future offers. In employing a critical pedagogy of education for active citizenship teachers should seek to raise the critical consciousness of pupils in a way that opens up for them the thought that as individuals and members of communities they have the potential to make a tangible difference to their society in pursuit of equity and social justice. A critical pedagogy of

citizenship education ought to provide young people with the skills and the knowledge to change society, not in some arbitrary anarchistic way in pursuit of some vulgar form of utopian relativism or in support of a specific cultural or political ideology, but in accordance with the principles of informed, democratic participation and social justice. If we want pupils to engage with the processes of education for participatory and democratic citizenship then we have no alternative but to take these principles seriously and to ensure that they are integrated into classroom organization, into curriculum, and into pedagogy. What is clear is that a pedagogy that focuses primarily upon education about citizenship, a pedagogy that minimizes controversy and critique by concentrating upon what is safe and consensus-based, is unlikely to produce individuals who are critically, actively, and responsibly engaged in their communities. It is within the grasp of each of us not simply to advocate a rhetorical approach to democratic and active citizenship education, but through a critical pedagogical approach to live democratic participation, equity, and social justice through what we are as teachers and what we do in our classrooms. It can be done, as individuals and as communities of teachers and learners all we need to do is to make the choice for unless as educators we work toward creating a nation of engaged, informed, and active citizens our democracies will not be secure.

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