

Developing Teachers as Counselors – The Empowerment Model

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Abstract:

Although India's Education scenario has radically improved over the period of last decade, the learning outcomes of India's children show little progress. One of the important lessons from two decades of research has repeatedly highlighted that teachers are the fulcrum that determines whether any school initiative tips towards success or failure.

This paper explores the impact of training to create a pool of Teacher-Counselors who would facilitate and manage the various transitions and phases in students' lives. 16 out of 44 teachers in one of the Rural Grant in Aid High Schools of Banaskantha District were selected for the process. Pre and post assessment was carried out using 16PF and Draw-A-Man Test. Teachers found to be low on self-level attributes namely – emotional wellbeing, self-esteem, social skills and stress tolerance were selected for the first module – 'Self-Management and Personal Empowerment'. Designed to bring them on par with the other teachers and hence empower and sharpen their skills in reaching out to students via self-learning.

The findings during the sessions, after the training and as described by the students was encouraging and reflected a paradigm shift in the Teachers' own social skills and emotional maturity. The outcome was an enabling class environment with focus on learning and teaching effectiveness. The post training assessment on the 16PF suggested, positive changes on Factors H (social boldness) & Q3 (perfectionism). The above study signifies the emergence of a new model in education enlarging the role of a teacher to build the students holistically through personal empowerment and improved teaching techniques.

Keywords: *Teacher Counsellor, Teacher Effectiveness, Social-Emotional Development,*

I. INTRODUCTION

India's Education Scenario has improved radically over the period of last decade. The District Information System for Education (DISE) reported in 2012 that 95% of India's rural populations are within one kilometer of primary schools. In 2008-2009, rural India accounted for more than 88% of India's primary-school students, of whom over 87% were enrolled in government-run schools. The 2011 Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), which tracks trends in rural education, indicated that enrollment rates among primary-school-aged children were about 93%. Also the implementation of RTE Act guarantees a quality education to a wider range of students than ever before.

However, behind such promising statistics, the learning outcomes of India's children show little progress. The country ranked 63 out of 64 in the latest Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) study, with some of its best schools ranked about average among those surveyed. The 2011 ASER stated that only 48.2% of students in the fifth grade can read at the second grade level. The number of students completing their primary education with inadequate numeracy and literacy skills is startling. This reflects a lack of progress in the foundational elements of countrywide, high-quality education.

Another major reason as Anurag Behar, CEO of the Azim Premji Foundation, an education non-profit, noted that "the average school teacher in India does not get adequate pre-service or in-service education, nor does she get the support to overcome these problems." Compounding this is the relatively low educational qualifications of many teachers

themselves. In 2008-2009, on average, 45% of these teachers had not studied beyond the 12th grade.

This particular aspect is also highlighted in one of the studies undertaken by Linda Darling Hammond, 2010 – In Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness, titled 'How teacher performance Assessment Can Measure and Improve Teaching. One of the important lessons from two decades has highlighted the repeated finding that teachers are the fulcrum determining whether any school initiative tips towards success or failure. One of the few areas of consensus among education, policy makers, practitioners and the general public is that improving teacher quality is one of the most direct and promising strategies for improving public education outcomes especially for groups of children who are historically taught by the least qualified teachers.

In the similar lines, another study by Tanxilong, Wang Hailing in their article titled 'Highlight Professional Skills Training Mode Reformation in Primary and Secondary Teachers Training', stressed upon the importance of professional skills a teacher should have to solve the 'how to teach' problem.

In the given context, the Indian government, at every level, recognizes the need for educational reform and has made a conscientious effort to achieve it; however there is still a huge gap in realizing this goal. To meet this goal and attain quality, it is crucial to focus upon **Teachers' Effectiveness** on development of social skills and emotional self-regulation among students as *children's Social-emotional development is linked to academic success*. This calls for a role shift in

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Teachers – from teaching to counseling. The teacher will have to be trained as counselors also. They should be familiar with the basic principles by which problems can be identified and appropriate interventions in order to help students grow emotionally and cognitively.

II. METHODOLOGY

Aim:

The training program aimed to create Teacher-Counselors to facilitate and manage the various transitions and phases with students' lives.

Objectives:

- To develop Teachers' understanding of the self, role, others and systems and acquire a realistic appraisal into one's own strengths and weakness.
- To develop Teachers' as counselors, those are locally accessible to help students for their academic and personal growth.

Sample:

16 out of 44 teachers in one of the Rural Grant in Aid High Schools of Banaskantha District were selected for the process. The screening for the selection was done based on the attributes (self-related – emotional/mental health and self-worth and role demanding) that are required for being an effective teacher such that she/he is able to contribute and make the difference in the students' life.

Tools Used:

1. 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire by Raymond B. Cattell (1946) which measures 16 factors of personality.
2. Draw-A-Man Test by Florence Goodenough (1926).

Measures:

Identifying Teachers – Training Needs Analysis (TNA) 2011 - Developing 5 modules of 2 days each based on the TNA

- **Module 1: Self-Management and Personal Empowerment:** The sessions focused upon self-awareness, strengths and identifying the development areas. Also on personal productivity, perception value believes, balancing personal and professional roles and strategies of overcoming stress.
- **Module 2: Child Psychology, theories and classroom challenges:** The sessions helped drawing out the physical (Hurlock), social (Erickson), cognitive (Piaget), emotional (Freud) and behavioral (Skinner) universe of students.
- **Module 3: Plan, Apply and Review (PAR) Model of Teaching:** Principals of learning, the Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic models, motivation theory, experiential learning cycle and the PAR model with rubrics.
- **Module 4: Effective Teaching Habits:** Identifying the students' current study habits and help them to know their current study habits and how to improve upon their memory, concentration, time management, goal setting, relaxation techniques and overcoming exam anxiety.
- **Module 5: Behavioral and Soft Skills training:** Focused upon verbal and non-verbal communication, health and fitness, personal grooming, team building and leadership skills.

Procedure:

Teachers were introduced to the purpose of study. Their Behavioral Profiling through demographic information sheet, Draw-a-Man and 16PF was done. Based on the outcome of the assessment the above 5 training modules were designed and imparted through – Theories and concept discussion, games, role plays, audio-visual presentations, small group discussion, psycho-drama, skits, questionnaires and computer aided techniques.

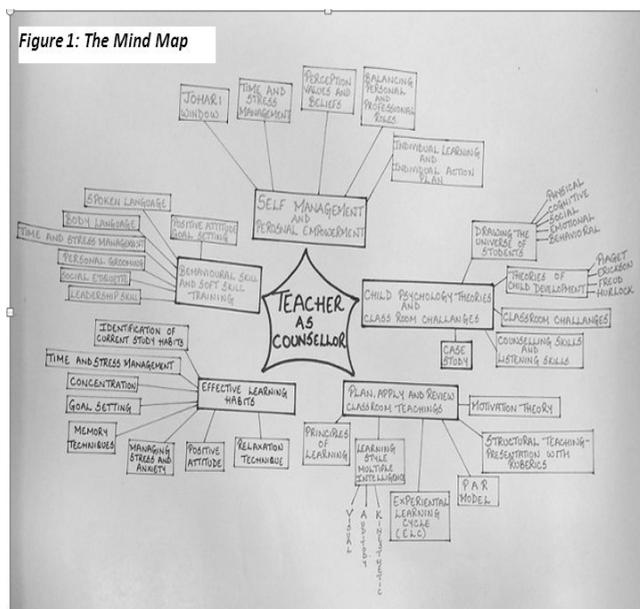
Case studies were also developed by teachers based on the experiences after applying the learnt techniques in the classrooms. Further, the teachers were given specific assignments individually and collectively after the end of each session. These assignments helped to mark continuity between sessions and also to review whether the teachers are facing any difficulties in transferring / practicing the learning in their real life situations. Each session began with the review of the past sessions and sharing of the application of their learning.

Teachers were provided with relevant training and teaching material for the year and were followed by a two days Refreshers Course. After 3 years Draw-a-Man and 16PF were re-administered to see the shifts and changes of training if any

Results:

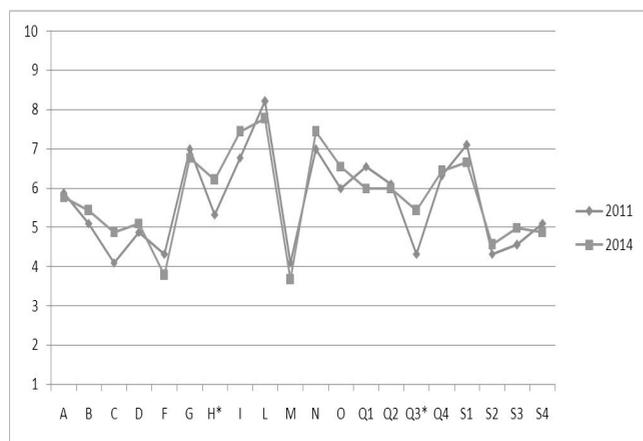
Table 1: Comparison of The Critical Behavioural Attributes

Behavioral Attributes	Score	
	2011	2014
Reasoning Ability	5.1	5.4
*Emotional Wellbeing & Sensitivity	5.4	6.2
Self Esteem and Self-Worth	5.2	5.2
Openness to Change	6.5	6
*Social Skills	5.6	6
*Planning and Organizing	5.6	6.1
Stress Management	5.3	5.1



As highlighted above, teachers as a group had higher scores on emotional well-being and sensitivity, showed improved social skills and enhanced planning and organizing abilities. The above findings are further reflected in the t-values of two factors of the 16PF.

Graph 1: Comparison Of Different Factors Of 16pf Of Teachers Between 2011 And 2014



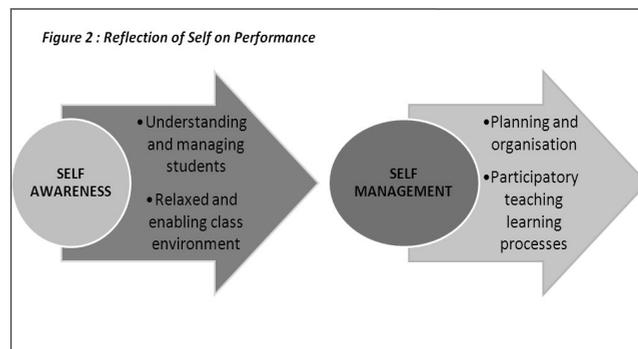
The above given findings highlight a positive change in their personality with significant changes in 2 attributes.

As seen from the above graph, Factors H & Q3 were significant at the 0.05 level. Thus, a higher score on the H factor (Social Boldness) indicates that the teachers got more emotionally expressive, shed their inhibitions and got more socially confident. Secondly, a significant increase in the Q3 factor (Perfectionism) indicates that the teachers showed more control over their feeling and were concerned about their social image & self-respect. This indicates increase in leadership qualities and a better adjustment, discipline and social appropriateness.

Table 2: Comparison of different factors of 16PF of teachers between 2011 and 2014

Sr. No.	Factors	Sten Scores		t-value	Level of Significance
		2011	2014		
1	A - Warmth	5.89	5.78	0.244	Not Significant
2	B - Reasoning	5.11	5.44	-0.45	Not Significant
3	C - Emotional Stability	4.11	4.89	-1.57	0.5
4	D - Dominance	4.89	5.11	-0.61	Not Significant
5	F - Liveliness	4.33	3.78	1.35	0.5
6	G - Rule-Consciousness	7	6.78	0.51	Not Significant
7	H* - Social Boldness	5.33	6.22	-2.3	0.05
8	I - Sensitivity	6.78	7.44	-1	0.5
9	L - Vigilance	8.22	7.78	0.76	0.5
10	M - Abstractedness	4.11	3.67	0.61	Not Significant
11	N - Privativeness	7	7.44	-1	0.5
12	O - Apprehension	6	6.56	0.95	0.5
13	Q1 - Openness to Change	6.56	6	1	0.5
14	Q2 - Self-Reliance	6.11	6	0.23	Not Significant
15	Q3* - Perfectionism	4.33	5.44	-2.23	0.05
16	Q4 - Tension	6.33	6.44	-0.36	Not Significant
17	S1 - Anxiety	7.11	6.67	1.84	0.1
18	S2 - Alertness	4.33	4.56	-0.39	Not Significant
19	S3 - Extro Version	4.56	5	-1.18	0.5
20	S4 - Independentness	5.11	4.89	0.56	Not Significant

The post training assessment at workplace established that the teachers went through the training demonstrated enhanced self-awareness and self-management, which, in turn have improved their role effectively and enhanced their teaching performance.



During the training, the Teachers shared that their toughest problem is dealing with children exhibiting challenging behaviors—children who are hostile, physically aggressive, and do not follow the classroom rules. When children exhibit these behaviors, the teachers react automatically. With the help of self-awareness training, teachers initiated efforts to understand the reasons behind students’ challenging behaviour. This resulted in creation of enabling classroom environment and increased interactions with students and their parents which decreased challenging behavior and increased pro-social skills such as self-control among students also.

The inputs on self-management get demonstrated in their class room teaching in more planned and organized manner. There were no more complaints on time constraint to complete the syllabus as children are provided opportunities to learn through VAK instead of traditional chalk and talk. This has positively impacted the learning among the students of the High School and thereby the quality aspect in teaching also increased. The connection between students’ learning with quality teaching is also mentioned by High Tower .A. M. et. al (2011) in his research work on Improving student learning by supporting quality teaching: key issues, effective strategies. Research has clearly shown that quality teaching matters to student’s learning. Teacher quality has been consistently identified as the most important school based factor in student achievement. (McCaffrey, Lockwood Koretz and Hamilton, 2003; Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain, 2000, Rowan Corret and Miller, 2002; Wright, Horn and Sanders, 1997) and teacher effects on students learning has been found to be cumulative and long lasting (Kain, 1998; McCaffrey et al, 2003. Mendro, Jordan, Gomez, Anderson and Bembry, 1998; Rivers, 1999; Sanders and Rivers, 1996).

III. DISCUSSION

The initial screening and interactions with teachers reflected skepticism regarding need for such training programmes. Unexpressed anger towards the leader of the institution hence they felt the workshop a futile exercise. At the same time high degrees of fear, insecurity and questioning fertility of such programme also among the teachers together-with the culture of gross underperformance, de-motivation and resignation.

The personality screening results of the teachers reflected that the teachers were like islands; with less connect between each other, point up anger and helplessness within and towards the system. Most of the teachers were subdued lot with low self-confidence, high stress levels, poor team dynamics and social skills. The teachers, as a group were observed as high on latent talent (potential) and low energy level and reactivity (touchiness). It was also observed that teachers were having judgmental and biased approach towards students.

CASE STUDY:

“And the Journey Begins...”

The Social Science teacher of the High School was one of the toughest participants of the workshop with complete negative attitude. Disinterest and indifference in the process was spread upon his expressions and body language which reflected that the exercise is completely futile. His colleagues shared that he does not mix-up with others in school also.

During the interactions he came out with the strong conviction that as a teacher he is doing a good job and the problem is with students only. This Teacher appeared to be an escapist.

The facilitators targeted to transform him and hence ensured that he is sharing his views, opinions and feelings in all the activities. Slowly he started to realize his mental blocks. In answer to the question “what bothers you the most during teaching?” he said that students do not talk to him and maintain a distance as they are afraid of him and he wants to change this scenario but don't know how. The collective suggestion from the forum was to make his subject interesting and work on his body language. From that point onwards he became one of the most involved participants in the process.

Post workshop, he went back to his subject and worked on the methodology for delivering the next topic in the class. His colleagues shared that he is a changed person. Now a day, he is smiling and talking to his colleagues and students. He is approaching to other teachers with his ideas and need for support in his teaching. He shares that his journey has begun, he had cut down his sleeping time from 11 hours to 8 hours and the time he is saving is being utilized in making his teaching more effective.

The Transformations observed during Training

- The 5 module workshop addressed Self Related – Emotional/Mental health and Self-Worth and Role Demand processes and issues.
- A snowballing effect on all teachers: passive spectators to active participants and openly voiced their feelings and a show cased their talents (creative and academic).
- Free flow energy, action, enthusiasm, seen even among very quiet and skeptical teachers.
- Discovery of internal and external blocks and redefinition of self and attitude.
- Healthy competition and high need to achieve and perform.
- Increased inter-personal connect and bonding. A notable degree of ‘we feeling’ was seen.
- Change of focus from ‘people’ issues to ‘task’ related issues.
- Towards the end of the workshop a high degree of empathy towards each other and with students among teachers was evident.
- Action plans, sankalps and enthusiastic teaching in class.
- Open and recognizable effect on their teaching style also got endorsed by students through their feedback.
- This seems to be the tip of the iceberg the true effect will be seen in the year to come.

Post Training Observation: School and Home

- The teachers introduced new teaching concepts and methods in their classroom transactions.
- Teachers are trying to understand the challenges faced by students in terms of their poor performance or learning difficulties and guiding them to resolve same. This has resulted in initiating a strong base of rapport with their students.
- Teachers shared that with the help teaching techniques like – VAK (Visual, Audio and Kinesthetic), Graphic Organizer, (ELC) Experience Learning Cycle, ESH (Effective Study Habits) – students’ understanding and grasping the topics/ concepts comparatively faster than earlier.
- Syllabus delivery time is effectively managed by teachers through dividing the course in small topics, so that the syllabus can be completed within time. Teachers are developing low cost Teaching Learning Material in line with VAK and using the same effectively.
- The teachers are able to manage their stress and time better now. The interaction and sharing among peers has increased. This interaction helps them to find the solutions with help of each-other.
- A few teachers gave the feedback that this workshop has helped them realize that the body language, food, positive attitude and pronunciation are also too important in teaching learning process and it does effect student’s learning.
- The teachers are demonstrating enhanced self-confidence and improved communication skills in their personal and professional arenas.

Students’ Feedback on Teachers

- Students shared that they are enjoying the session taken by their teachers. They also said that it is a pleasant surprise to see teachers using pictures/charts/cards and other materials for teaching the topic. It is something new and it helps understand the subject/topic better.
- A few students shared that earlier the teachers used to talk in the class and they used to listen and note down but now teachers are listening and guiding and students are doing most of the talking. Students said that they like this change in teaching methodology. These days they are learning in different methods like doing activities in small groups /peer learning together with project works where the teachers become a facilitator/guide.
- Some students shared that earlier they were apprehensive to ask questions due to the teachers rude responses but now they feel comfortable to ask questions/difficulties/problems without hesitation with their teachers.

A quality teacher is one who has a positive effect on student learning and development through a combination of content mastery, command of a broad set of pedagogic skills, and communication / interpersonal skills. Quality teachers are lifelong learners on their subject areas; teach with commitment and are reflective upon their teaching practice. They transfer knowledge in their subject matter and the learning process through good communication, diagnostic skills, understanding of different learning styles and knowledge about child development and the ability to marshal a broad array of techniques to meet student needs. They establish an environment conducive to learning and leverage a valuable resource outside as well as inside the classroom. The same is also reflected in the study by

Dr. Prakash Chandra Jena - "Teaching through Mentoring Model: Best Practices for Improved Learning" in 2012.

A new paradigm is needed to construct a consistent vision of quality teaching – one that is anchored in a system of performance assessments and leveraged through the design of clinically based pre-service programs, comprehensive induction and collaborative, professional learning's. Analysis of longitudinal data reveals that teachers exert an accumulating influence – a series of superior teachers can overcome the learning deficits between low – income students and their more advantaged peers.

IV. CONCLUSION

An educational institution performs a significant function of providing learning experiences to lead their students to grow holistically. The key personnel in the institutions who play an important role to bring about this transformation are teachers.

Students are highly emotional by nature and very often situation comes where a normal student may also get emotionally unstable. In such situations teacher has to comfort the students in the best possible manner and therefore s/he has to transit between the roles of teacher and counselor constantly. Therefore it is imperative that teachers are also trained as counselors.

As stated by NCTE (1998) in Quality Concerns in Secondary Teacher Education, ? The teacher is the most important element in any educational program. It is the teacher who is mainly responsible for implementation of the educational process at any stage. Dr. Vijaya Kumari S.N in her study – "Soft Skills and Teacher Accountability in the Context of Quality Education", 2014 highlights that the main responsibility of shaping the behaviour of students is in the hands of teacher. Teachers in fact, are the designers of the future of their students and thus, the society. This shows that it is imperative to invest in the preparation of teachers, so that the future of a nation is secure.

In sum, the dream of learning society can become reality only when the dream teachers are well equipped with moral, professional intellectual, practical and communication skills to convince the students through their efficient teaching.

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