



Imbibing online pedagogy in teacher education to adopt neo-normal era

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Abstract

There are some studies regarding pedagogical content knowledge of the teachers who are servicing in schools (secondary or primary), some studies focused on the attitude towards information technology and new ideas of teaching methods. Researchers have worked on the online-method of teaching especially in new-normal situation. This study is about the process of imbibing online classes in teacher education during teacher training program of the aspirants for primary teacher ship in this new normal or neo-normal situation. The data received from the interviews, conducted among the randomly (random stratified) selected 50 trainees of two govt. teacher training institutions show an ongoing dilemma in the student-teachers, practicing online classes and continuing with the D El Ed (teacher training) course in this stagnating pandemic situation. Building one up as an elementary teaching professional from online classes is the challenge in the neo-normal teaching-learning situation. Everybody confesses that it is next to impossibility to develop a natural inter link between content knowledge and teaching skill-development, founded on psychological insight for each learner-centric phenomenon. Some of the interviewees are unable to take online classes seriously because of mental block owing to traditional back pull. Some face deprivation because of the inaccessibility due to the lack of provision or poor if not nil, internet connectivity in their living places.

Practical classes lose the real spirit of interaction and get hampered during online method of training. This study is focusing on the effective online methods of teacher training program during the lockdown period.

Keywords: D El Ed, neo-normal era, online pedagogy, teacher education

Introduction

Teachers are the 'man makers', as Swami Vivekananda said that education is man making. So the question is: Who is going to make the teachers? The answer is: 'Teacher Educators', since they get training through teacher education system (Oruc, 2011) [5].

Nowadays we are living in a pandemic situation which has created some behavioral changes among us. Schools and colleges are still closed but studies are going on Though online method (Joshi, Vinay & Bhaskar, 2020) [2]. There is a big question, raised by the guardians and the students: how the practical classes will be effective and meaningful through online classes or whether the teacher educators adequately capable of conducting fruitful online practical classes. In the field of teacher education the teacher educators and trainee teachers are facing these types of questions (Lahiri, 2020) [3]. If the schools do not run in schools, then trainee teachers will not be able to act in the real situation of the schools and cannot prepare themselves as efficient teachers of future classrooms. So, the need of the hour is that the teacher educators should take up some steps to ensure good classes through online mode that will build the capacities of the trainee teachers during the course time (Sen, 2013). Before discussing on the effective online training process in teacher education especially in primary teacher education, the concepts of Online pedagogy, teacher education, and new-normal era will be clarified.

New-normal Era

In the year of 2020, during the outburst of COVID 19-virus, That has led us to the pandemic, we all have entered into a new-normal society where wearing mask, using soap and

sanitizer regularly, maintaining social-distancing are normal practices. We have been acquainted with the frequent lockdown and people-curfew, window-shopping and Specially online classes (Joshi, Vinay & Bhaskar, 2020) [2]. In the rough situation of pandemic many people got jobless and committed suicide due to sudden breakdown in income. Educational institutions have become dependent on online method of instructions and examinations. This situation has created a new propaganda of human behavior to cope with the pandemic and it seems normal to all of the people (Lahiri, 2020) [3].

Online Pedagogy

Online pedagogy is nothing but a technology-supported process of learning-teaching in accordance with the ICT-enabled-teaching learning techniques, based on eclectic tendencies in teaching that requires the teachers and the learners to participate from various physical places in a networked or virtual environment. Aside from space, participants can be separated here by time also.

Online pedagogy is not bound in a particular method. There are many different types of ways/techniques which are user-content based for distinction of users and the distinctions also follow the tutor-training methodologies. The ongoing developing technologies, the various online learning methods, the connection of the organization with the institutions and learners vary the definition of online pedagogy. This internet based service is in micropublishing form (Velasquez, Graham & West, 2013) [8].

Teacher Education

Teacher education (TE) or teacher training refers to the

policies, procedures, and provisions, designed to equip (prospective) teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classrooms, schools, and wider community (Oruc, 2011) [5]. Teacher education in India can be divided into two broad areas: pre-service teacher education which focuses on preparing student-teachers for a career in teaching, and in-service teacher-education/training & field interaction that is provided by the government through authorized agencies like Samagra Shiksha Mission (Former Sarva Shiksha Mission - SSA)/ National/ State Council for Educational Research & Training or NGOs and other social organizations.

Review of the Literature

As mentioned earlier, there are many studies regarding online pedagogy and education system during pandemic situation. Now, these studies will be discussed summarily. One and a half billion students around the world, according to UNESCO, were engaged in remote learning at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. Some students were able to access the Internet to do so, but not all. The majority of students around the world, who have access to smartphones, are able to use these as learning devices. Others are more fortunate and have tablets, laptops or desktops. Their instructors, some with no previous experience of teaching online or at a distance, discovered new approaches to teaching and learning in virtual classroom situations. Imaginative work was undertaken to overcome the very real challenges in this current reality. (teachonline.ca, 2020).

Faculty sought help from colleagues with previous experience in teaching online, looking for evidence for what worked in their discipline. They were inspired by examples for creative arts and music, where Zoom rehearsals and performances produced remarkable and life-changing events. Some discovered open education resources, materials, labs, videos, simulations, games, that helped them find new ways of engaging their online learners (teachonline.ca, 2020). In the research of Joshi, Vinay, Bhaskar (2020) [2] the findings revealed four categories of barriers that are faced by teachers during online teaching and assessments. Under home environment settings, a lack of basic facilities, external distraction and family interruption during teaching and conducting assessments were major issues reported. Institutional support barriers such as the budget for purchasing advanced technologies, a lack of training, a lack of technical support and a lack of clarity and direction were also reported. Teachers also faced technical difficulties. The difficulties, grouped under lack of technical support, included a lack of technical infrastructure, limited awareness of online teaching platforms and security concerns.

Teachers’ personal problems including lack of technical knowledge, negative attitude, course integration with technology and lack of motivation are identified as the Fourth category to damper their engagement in online teaching and assessments (Joshi, Vinay, Bhaskar, 2020) [2].

The survey of Lahiri (2020) [3] unfolded the parental opinion regarding the ongoing teaching-learning in Kolkata. Teachers, offering online classes, clarify the doubts during live streaming of lectures and over WhatsApp, and social networking sites. In trace of cases, they may be contacted over telephonic calls and emails. This new pedagogy is

often one way lectures, giving a little scope for the discussion and stimulates debates, contrary to any physical classroom. Many a time, the session goes flat and background and inevitable noises from various ends of student ports and technical glitch create an annoyance. The sudden shift of medium and mode left teachers perplexed, especially, for those who were all set in classical chalk-and-talk approach for teaching. But, this pandemic raises the question: Is a certificate in teacher education (B.Ed) sufficient to carry out the teaching-learning process throughout one’s professional life? Surely not, it is required to have continuous professional development (CPD) for the school teachers to learn new teaching techniques and innovative pedagogy (Lahiri, 2020) [3].

Objective of the Study

It could be said that after a pandemic situation people have learnt a lot about online classes and gone through it but still there is no positive mindset for the effectiveness of this online pedagogy. So that the present study is going to gauge the way of accepting and imbibing online pedagogy to develop the competency among the trainee teachers until the institutions are open. So the objectives of this present study could be stated clearly, as

- To find out effective ways of online teacher training programs
- To gauge the efficacy of online pedagogy in teacher training programs.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relation between the online practicum courses, being delivered in D El Ed and acquisition of teaching skills through hands-on-activities.
2. There is no significant relation between engagement of the trainee teachers in online classes and Learning Outcome of online teacher education lessons.

Methodology

This study is a survey to find out the way of online teaching which is practiced in the teacher education institutions and what should be the right way to practice this online pedagogy for effectiveness of this.

Sample and Sampling

50 trainee teachers were interviewed and observed to collect the data. They were chosen from two government primary teachers’ training institutes of Burdwan District in West Bengal. Random stratified sampling process was used to select the sample from 1st and 2nd year classes of those institutes.

Table 1: Breakup of Sample

Institute	Year	Sample size	Total
1	1st	12	25
	2nd	13	
2	1st	13	25
	2nd	12	
Total			50

Technique and Tools

Through self-administered questionnaire the samples were interviewed. The questionnaire had four (4) dimensions e.g. Motivation to use PPT/ Video through Smart Phones,

Improvement of skill in using Internet and Smartphones, Patience of teacher educator during Online Instructions, Online discussion among the Teacher Educators and Trainees which were correlated with engaging trainees in online class of D El Ed Program.

Result

The dimensions of the questionnaire e.g. Motivation to use PPT/ Video through Smart Phones, Improvement of skill in using Internet and Smartphones, Patience of teacher educator during Online Instructions, Online discussion among the Teacher Educators and Trainees were correlated with engaging trainees in online class of D El Ed program, and the correlation of the data was analyzed through SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

The result was;

Table 2: Result of Correlation

	df	OnlineEngage
Motivation	49	0.21*
Improvement		0.21*
Patience		0.20*
Discussion		0.22*

Interpretation of the above result is;

Motivation to use PPT/ Video through Smart Phones is positively correlated with Engaging the trainees (r=0.21) at 0.05 level of significance. Improvement of skill in using Internet and Smartphones is positively correlated with Engaging the trainees (r=0.21), at 0.05 level of significance, Patience of teacher educators during Online Instructions is positively correlated with Engaging the trainees (r=0.20) at 0.05 level of significance.

Online discussion among the Teacher Educator and Trainees is positively correlated with Engaging the trainees (r=0.22) at 0.05 level of significance.

So, the hypotheses were rejected that means the above mentioned components have positive effect on trainee teachers' involvement in online classes and there is also a positive relation with acceptance of online classes in teacher training course.

Overall Responses on effectiveness of online classes were measured by percentage (According to that students engagement in online classes were analyzed);

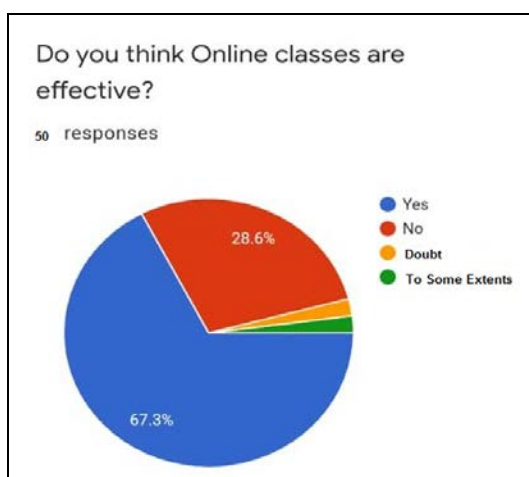


Fig 1: Pie Chart of responses regarding the effectiveness of online classes

Another way the dimensions were measured in percentage, the Pie Chart shows percentage of responses regarding the dimensions;

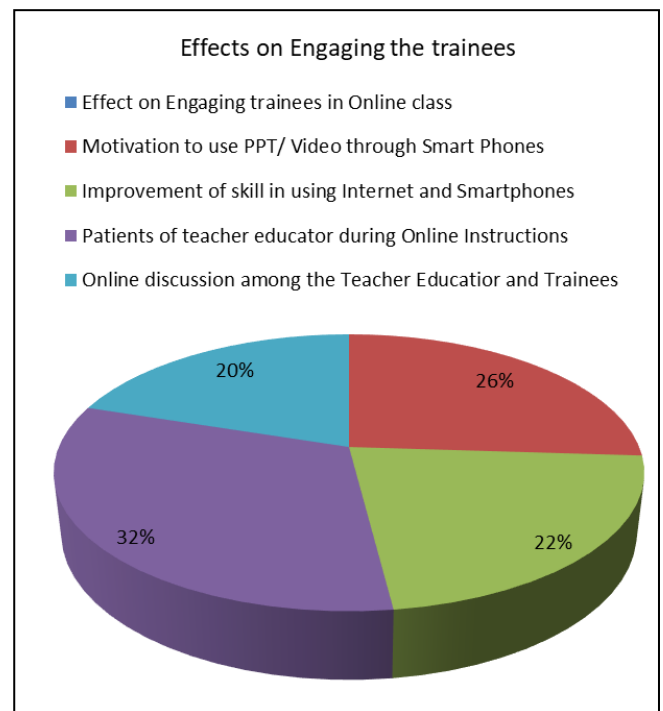


Fig 2: Pie Chart of responses regarding the dimensions

Discussion of the Result

In terms of the analyses of the collected data, it was observed that some teachers seriously disagreed with the (method) system of online classes on the ground that they cannot use it properly and some students are denied access to it for lack of provision and gadgets and, also for their situation in remote areas where net-connectivity is unavailable.

In this new normal, teachers of secondary levels or KVS have also found their way of teaching-learning process through online classes. Students and parents have joined them as the stakeholders and have the new technology to install and login to the software. Interestingly, there are schools running online classes as per routine, whereas some do not offer these distance mode classes and some choose to have infrequent and sporadic classes. Some of the private colleges have started their online classes for teacher education (Lawal, 2012) [4]. The mode of transaction of these lessons are over emails, social networking sites, streaming lectures at real time, recorded lectures, Google meet, webex, zoom app, presenting power-point presentations, group chat in whatsapp or telegram (Lahiri, 2020) [3]. A few government teacher training colleges have started online classes, but no excellence comes through this. The one-way lecture method; lack of question-answer method, demonstration and two way communication or group discussion have made this online teaching a dull and futile exercise. As teacher education is a practicum based program and schools are still locked down, the teacher educators should prepare them with their own efforts through online method of teaching (Velasquez, Graham & West, 2013) [8].

Conclusion

Teachers are the makers of personality and character of a person, so that they must get proper training to do so (Oruc, 2011) [5]. Nowadays the pandemic situation is going on. Though the lockdown period is over, some states (Maharashtra) of the country have announced night curfew. The primary schools in the state are still closed. People are prepared to get vaccinated and all are habituated with mask and sanitizer during this new-normal era (Joshi, Vinay & Bhaskar, 2020) [2]. People have also become familiar with online method of education, shopping, transaction, communication etc. So the teachers must be prepared for this new era or new-normal era through proper guidance and training. In this situation the only way of training is online instruction method. Online instruction method must be effective in every way to influence the stakeholders to accept it as a viable alternative in pandemic situation. Some suggestions, obtained in course of the study are given below:

Keep motivating the trainee teachers with inner and outer motivations. As there are the internal assessments in the institutes, so teacher educator could motivate them through regular evaluation by giving them task oriented grades. Teacher educators could draw the pictures of real situation of job acquisition and job satisfaction, so the trainee teachers could understand the necessity of this training program.

Make them skilled in the field of using internet, installing various applications for the classes, logging in and out, presenting own views or concepts on the study matters; a teacher educator could do this after enough practicing himself. Many of the students or the trainee teachers may open their private information or photos during online class presentation, or many of them would not be able to use smartphone properly during the class, so the teacher educator could schedule a session or class to make them skilled in this field.

Delivering the concept through power point presentation (PPT) or video is an interesting tool to keep the class motivated and concentrated. The teacher educator could take the initiation to elaborate and present the ideas and concept of the study matter through PPT or video by sharing the window or the screen of the smart phone. Then the trainee teachers would be instructed to make PPTs or Videos of their own and present their understandings on the subject matters. That will help the trainee teachers update themselves.

Keep them engaged with the tasks and study by giving them some light homework or preparing presentations, so that the trainee teachers would regularize with their studies and training program. Teacher educators could evaluate them every day and thus will know their progress regularly. During the online class the teacher educators also could give them opportunity to deliver their presentations and invite group discussion on them, followed by question answer sessions. If scheduled and managed wisely as a part of online classes, it would benefit the teacher education through online mode.

Keep patience while instructing them through online class because there could be internet crunches, connectivity problems or accessibility hindrances. Besides, many of the trainee teachers would not be able to listen to the words due to several interruptions in their home atmosphere. In all such undesirable situations teacher educators should keep

patience and repeat words/instructions and wait for responses/reactions/feedback during the online class.

Practical experiences may be shared during the online teaching, so that the trainee teachers can be assessed. Teacher educators can take the help of video/WhatsApp calling and sharing the same with other trainee teachers for peer assessment/group assessment.

Video sharing may help in practical classes, if teacher educators and trainee teachers share their videos and audio during board work or presentation of learning teaching materials (LTM).

Many of the teacher educators are using these ways to make their online classes interesting and useful in the online teaching learning platform during this new normal era.

Pandemic situation prevailing, D El Ed Institutes shall remain closed for an indefinite period, but teacher preparation courses cannot stop for moment. In this context, till the institutes are open for real classroom teaching, virtual classrooms are the only substitute. So, all student-teachers and their educators must be online-literate for online D El Ed course with greater emphasis on teaching skill development through virtual classroom situation.

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