



A Versatile Teacher – A Timely Alternate To Ancient Teachers

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Abstract:

In education, a teacher is a person who provides schooling for pupils and students. A teacher who facilitates education for an individual student may also be described as a personal tutor. The role of teacher is often formal and ongoing, carried out by way of occupation or profession at a school or other place of formal education. In ancient days, the teachers were worshipped as gods. Learners call them “GURUS” and the word 'GURU' had a magical impact on the students. The students willingly surrendered themselves to the teachers and had unquestionable trust, faith and respect on their teachers. Whatever the teachers taught was accepted wholeheartedly because it was new and interesting to them as here was no much growth in information acquisition. But today the educational scenario is completely different and the learning process has undergone rapid changes in which the educator has to take an entirely new 'avatar' altogether.

In education, a teacher is a person who provides schooling for pupils and students. A teacher who facilitates education for an individual student may also be described as a personal tutor. The role of teacher is often formal and ongoing, carried out by way of occupation or profession at a school or other place of formal education. On teacher evaluations, it was found that teachers who have a positive disposition towards the course content tend to transfer their passion to receptive student. Teachers cannot teach by rote but have to find new invigoration for the course materials on a daily basis. Teachers have to keep in mind that they are teaching new minds every term or semester.

In today's context teachers are called facilitators and less respected- a teacher, to be respected has to become versatile to the growing changes around him or her. So this paper envisages the various scenarios, situations and circumstances which demand a teacher to be versatile to obtain receptive audience (students). This paper also discusses how a teacher must become versatile and also highlights how the new avatar gains respect and honour which the GURUS in ancient days did.

KEYWORDS : Teachers, Ancient Gurus, Ancient Learners, Versatile

**“I like a teacher who gives you something to take
home to think about besides homework.” – Lily Tomlin**

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**“A Teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.”
- Henry brooks Adams**

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ANCIENT GURUS Vs ANCIENT LEARNERS :

In ancient days, the teachers were worshipped as gods. Learners call them “GURUS” and the word 'GURU' had a magical impact on the students. The students willingly surrendered themselves to the teachers and had unquestionable trust, faith and respect on their teachers. Whatever the teachers taught was accepted wholeheartedly because it was new and interesting to them as there was no much growth in information acquisition. The students went away from their homes and lived with the teachers in order to learn. They readily took upon themselves any task shown to them by the teachers as they had high regard for their Gurus and also unquenchable thirst to know the unknown. They (students) toiled against all odds to satisfy not only the teacher but also the teacher's family. There was no question of privilege, preference or partiality among the students. Irrespective of the religion the princes and the poor alike, all students lived together and learnt together. The learners got their first ever lessons only from their teachers. The role of the teachers was as important as the role of the parents in the lives of the Learners.

CURRENT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Today the educational scenario is totally different. The learning process has undergone a sea change and an educator has to exclusively take a new 'avatar. In the era of learner autonomy, self learning practices, CALL, Internet etc., the teacher interference is ruled out to a major extent. Students are well informed about everything through various E-resources. Any information about anything is just a click away. Can a teacher (ENGLISH TEACHER) still retain his /her honour, respect and glory like that of an ancient Guru? Is it possible for a teacher to be important in midst of such technological boom? The paper will answer.

STATUS OF A TEACHER TODAY

In the present set-up, teachers can no more be dictators or leaders. They take up almost the role of facilitators. Teachers today are not addressing a group of KNOW-NOTHINGS but KNOW-ALLs. In most cases the teachers in the class are considered to be puppets of reciting what the students already know or what the teachers have learnt long back from their professors. With respect to self-financing colleges, the teachers are just dealers for the managements and just class engagers for the students. Some learners consider teachers to be just inspectors, examiners, tabulators and invigilators but nor TEACHERS. In midst of such vicarious situations, Can a TEACHER be a TEACHER? The paper answers.

LEARNERS TODAY

Today's learners are self-acquainted and are not ready to accept blindly whatever is presented to them. As they are exposed to the current affairs of the world, they are already well informed even before coming into the contact with the teachers. They are inquisitive and critical in their thinking. They expect absolute freedom and pleasure in learning process. They don't want to be controlled or dominated. Everything that is taught to them must be proved and made acceptable. The learners feel that it is their basic right to question the teacher and argue against any idea that they cannot accept. Dry theory or advising is not in fashion. This absolute change in the attitude of the learners shocks the teachers who expect the traditional respect and faith.

**IS THERE NO OTHER WAY IN WHICH A TEACHER CAN GAIN FAITH AND RESPECT?
THERE IS.....**

TEACHING – LEARNING PROCESS

The two important aspects of the learning process are teacher intention and learners interpretation. Teacher



intention is what the teacher wants the learner to understand and the learner interpretation is what the learner understands from the teaching. Many times the teacher intention is not properly understood and interpreted by the learner. Good learning takes place only when the teacher intention is well understood and interpreted by the learner.

WHAT IS BEING VERSATILE ?

According to Oxford English Dictionary

-Able to adapt or to be adapted to many functions and activities.

According to Cambridge Advanced Dictionary

- Able to change easily from one activity to another

According to Dictionary of Contemporary English

- Good at doing a lot of different things and able to learn new skills quickly and easily.

According to Chambers Concise Dictionary

-Turning easily from one thing to another of many sided ability.

According to Concise Oxford Dictionary

-Able to adapt or be adapted to many different functions or activities, changeable.

A VERSATILE TEACHER IS

BROAD-MINDED: Sometimes the learner interpretation is better than the intention of the teacher. During such times the teacher should be broad minded enough to acknowledge and encourage the brilliance of the learner. This broad mindedness is possible only if there is genuine love in the mind of the teacher for the learner. This affection must be altruistic and expressive. This serene love for the student if rightly applied can make both the teacher intention and learner interpretations match each other perfectly.

LEARNER-CENTERED: The teacher should come out of traditional beliefs and assumptions regarding teaching. He should not be pedagogic towards the learner. The teacher should adopt an interactive method where he/she gives more importance to the calibre and interest of the learners. The teacher should apply a Learner-centered approach in teaching. In learner centeredness learner's needs are kept at the centre of entire teaching process. What the learner needs is more important than what the teacher has with him or her.

A LEARNER: The teacher should find out the needs of the learner and he should learn and obtain a thorough knowledge of it before he presents it to the learner. So the teacher takes the role of a learner when he learns the needs of the learner. There is no end for learning and updating. Especially in the lives of teachers – learning and updating is a life-long process. A teacher must be prepared to learn for personal and professional development.

AN EQUIPPER: A teacher must equip himself ahead of the person learning from him since teaching is not a mere job but a noble profession moulding lives. Life is complex, and moulding such lives tends to be much more complex for which it is expected of a teacher to professionally and personally furnish themselves in all sorts of things. As for as an English teacher is concerned his or her responsibilities are numerous. An English teacher can teach life itself to the students.

AN INNOVATOR: Innovation has become a daily routine. This is an era of innovation, invention and creativity. Unless a teacher is well versed in being innovative, inventive and creative he or she becomes unnoticed or underestimated. To keep in line with the current, even English teachers have to be highly creative in introducing new techniques and methods to keep the students inspired. Mere syllabus will not inspire. To inspire move away from the syllabus. For example instead of teaching mere grammar in the class teach grammar through literature. Literature inspires and introduces the nuances of the language also. Instead of teaching English as a subject teach it as a tool to learn many inspiring things.

AREJUVENATOR: Just like a fresh air renews or refreshes everything of its staleness- a versatile teacher enlivens and by deciphering the mood of the learners can breathe freshness into the dullness of the class by narrating a story or an anecdote. It enables the students to beat boredom and to become more receptive



and involved.

ACCOUNTABLE: Generally accountability is something which none likes. In connection with a teacher accountability is something interwoven. Teachers are responsible and accountable about the future of the students. A teacher who doesn't play a major role in making an individual successful in his/ her life – he/she hasn't been aware of accountability. A teacher's concern is not only to take care of academics alone but also metaacademics. A teacher is a co-traveller, an escort travelling along with the students in the journey of life. So a teacher must teach life skills apart from soft skills.

When a teacher becomes versatile in nature, the learner becomes more responsible for his learning process. Reluctance and hesitation sheds away. The learning becomes livelier instead of being monotonous and mechanical. A student who wants to be independent can really be constructively independent with the guidance of the teacher. A versatile teacher does not follow or lead a student but walks along with the student. A contact is established which gives the learner a feeling of respect and responsibility.

The traditional teacher centered approach should not be followed as it is a monarchical system where the teacher becomes the monarch. Now, no learner is ready to be under the control of any monarch. The learner expects autonomy in the learning process. A versatile teacher is not monarchical hence learner centered. Learner centered approach is the best one where democratic approach is possible. The learner gets the democracy to act independently under the guidance of the teacher.

**THERE IS NOTHING PERMANENT EXCEPT CHANGE.
IT'S TIME FOR THE TEACHERS TO BECOME MORE VERSATILE...**

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