

Participatory learning approach

We, the Bangladeshi teachers who gathered innovative and creative experiences from abroad, are implementing and disseminating new methods and strategies in secondary teachers' training venues with great devotion and commitment to reshape our secondary schools.



NARAYAN CHANDRA BHOWMIK

THE government is striving for excellence in education, especially secondary education. The education system in Bangladesh faces a wide range of challenges, the bulk of which can be attributed to inadequacies related to quality, so the Ministry of Education has given priority to ensuring quality in secondary education through various projects.

Sponsored by Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project, I had an opportunity to learn about "Theory and Practice of Secondary Education" in New Zealand. It is my pleasure to introduce the structure of New Zealand's secondary education, contemporary teacher education, participatory learning strategies and curriculum development, in comparison with Bangladesh. The world-class participatory learning approaches are mentioned below for adoption in our secondary education.

Co-operative learning: This is the best way of participatory learning. The strategy is that groups of students work together,

helping each other to achieve group and individual tasks. The students play different roles -- material person, recorder, participation checker, organiser. Each member of the group is responsible for his own learning and the learning of his group. There is no appointed leader but the roles are rotated. The teacher educator acts as an encourager and facilitator. Cooperative learning organises the classroom so that students can interact with, and learn from, one another, as well as from the teacher and the world around them.

Inquiry Learning: Inquiry learning is connected to the real life of students. It is a student-centred, active learning approach focusing on questioning, critical thinking and problem solving. Every student needs these skills, so all classes are involved in the school-wide inquiry-learning program.

The inquiry learning model takes advantage of students' natural curiosity. It requires well-developed questioning skills. It helps students to develop strategies and processes for collecting and evaluating information.

Students immerse themselves in the topic, context or situation they are studying. The topic is one that is purposeful and meaningful for our students. They investigate the location, historical background, current situation, issues and problems associated with the topic. They become highly knowledgeable on the topic before beginning their own inquiry.

In Bangladesh, Red Crescent activities, disaster management, scouting, study tours etc., aiming at learning by doing in the field, may be called outdoor education or experiential learning.

The above-mentioned strategies may be applicable in the Bangladesh perspective. The teenagers seek spice in education, i.e. diversity in learning approaches, so as to make their learning interesting and fruitful. Hence, teaching techniques in Bangladesh should be full of life and reality so that students can learn with enthusiasm.

We, the Bangladeshi teachers who gathered innovative and creative experiences from abroad, are implementing and disseminating new methods and strategies in secondary teachers' training venues with great devotion and commitment to reshape our secondary schools.

Now we are taking feedbacks of secondary classrooms at rural level too, just to assess the effectiveness and impact of the newly introduced methods. The great challenge is that we have large classroom with seating arrangements that are not fit for running the interactive classes. We, the stakeholders, will also contribute to overcome such vulnerability.

With the slogan "Digital Bangladesh," we have started campaigning on mobile ICT lab vans to accelerate digital learning. Now, in the 21st Century, education professionals are linking education with global explorations for good quality secondary education.

The class teacher delivers her lecture (plus), the learners are deeply engaged in class (interesting), but the teacher does not help the students (minus) to carry out the brainstorming.

Experiential Learning: This learning system can be applied to all activities where students learn through doing. A common approach is used to facilitate this in the experiential learning cycle, which begins with activity, moves through reflection, then to generalising and abstracting and finally to transfer. Experiential learning can be simply defined as outdoor education. Some typical aims of outdoor education are to (a) learn how to overcome adversity and (b) develop a deeper relationship with nature. Common definitions of outdoor education are difficult to give because interpretations vary according to culture, philosophy and local conditions. Learning in environments outside the school e.g. camping, abseiling, skiing, tramping, kayaking, cycling, sailing, navigation is called outdoor learning. Modern forms of outdoor education are most prevalent in the UK, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and to some extent in Asia and Africa.

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World Trade Organization: Facilitator of fair trade

If WTO is able to develop a developing-nations-friendly image, and if its activities are equally beneficial for developed and developing nations, it will be able to reach the benefit of globalisation and free trade to every corner of the world.



HAFIZUR RAHMAN KARZON and FARHANA HELAL MEHTAB

THE multilateral trading systems, GATT and WTO, have attained significant successes, which give overwhelming confidence to the countries promoting the ideals of free market and free trade. According to them, free trade can generate enormous economic growth and productivity.

"Between 1950 and 2001 the volume of worldwide export increased 20-fold, with the volume of manufacturing exports increasing by 39 percent, while the global gross domestic product (GDP) expanded seven times. In 2001, world trade reached 24 percent of global GDP (Renato Ruggiero, *The WTO at Ten*, 2006,

Cambridge University Press.)"

Free trade promoting countries are criticised because it has been alleged that they created the Breton Woods system to benefit each other, not to reach the benefit of free trade to every corner of the world. The liberal hegemony, through their knowledge, technology and network, have extended their control to institutions, markets and resources. WTO is not beyond their hegemony.

They use, it has been alleged, the WTO as a tool to preserve their incredible economic power. In the area of political economy, the west created structural inequality through the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO. Free trade may be a good example where the contradiction of developed countries is clear. They pur-

sue an open policy in manufactured goods and financial services as they gain in these areas, but block agriculture and textile because of their apprehension of losing.

The capitalist idea of free trade and free market got momentum because of WTO's success in increasing world GDP and global export. But this success has bred inequality, income difference and increasing poverty.

According to the Human Development Report 1999 of UNDP, one-fifth of the world's people live in the highest-income countries and they "have 86 percent of world GDP, 82 percent of world export market, 68 percent of foreign direct investment, and 74 percent of telephone lines. The bottom one-fifth, living in the poorest countries, have about 1 percent in each category."

The number of people living on less than \$1 a day increased by 20 million within 11 years. The benefits of globalisation, unfortunately, are not equitably shared. People of different sectors held an unprecedented demonstration at the WTO meeting in Seattle against the inequality and income difference. The World Bank and IMF meetings in Prague in September 2000 were extensively scrutinised by people.

Marx and Engels's analysis clearly indicates that globalisation and free trade are not new, but are inevitable concomitants of capitalism. Marxism predicted this one hundred years ahead of globalisation and the creation of GATT/WTO system. Monopoly capitalism, according to Lenin, had developed a vertical world economy where the developed "core" exploited the least developed "periphery." According to Raul Prebisch, the countries of the "core" become richer and the peripheral countries become poorer because of "declining terms of trade."

The assertion of the Marxist world-system theory seems to be true as the capitalist "core" advocate for opening up of the borders of the peripheral countries for manufactured goods, but protect their agriculture by giving subsidy. The impasse of the Doha Development Round may be in a sense a good example of the rich-poor and core-periphery conflict.

The US, EU, Japan and other developed countries are insisting on more tariff-cuts for manufactured goods. But developing countries (under the leadership of China, Brazil, and India) try to protect their agriculture and insist

that the US and EU not give trade-distorting subsidies to agriculture. This conflicting interest of the developed and developing countries has created the impasse in the Doha Development Round.

Marxist theories can be credited for explaining inequalities, income differences and drawbacks of globalisation and the WTO. But the democratic character of the WTO is beyond the Marxist forecast. Unlike the World Bank, the IMF, and the Security Council of the UN, the WTO requires consensus for taking decision. The dispute settlement system of the WTO is recognised as the most effective enforcement mechanism in existing international order. These make the developing nations interested in WTO.

It is true that the World Trade Organization, as close associate of the World Bank and IMF, has worked to preserve the interest of the developed countries. But at the same time it cannot be overlooked that the character of the WTO is very democratic. In the World Bank and IMF the developing nations do not have a strong voice, whereas they have a stronghold in the WTO.

Because of the democratic character and effective dispute-settlement system developing nations like China, Brazil, South Korea, Malaysia, India, South Africa, Mexico, and Argentina have become major policy-players in the decision-making of the WTO.

After being tested by the Asian financial crisis and some dispute settlement cases the WTO has developed a developing-nations-friendly image, whereas GATT is known as a "rich man's club." The liberalisation of financial services and of the telecommunication industry, two important sectors, is where the WTO has been successful.

People of all countries, both developing and developed, have been benefitted by this WTO activity. If WTO is able to develop a developing-nations-friendly image, and if its activities are equally beneficial for developed and developing nations, it will be able to reach the benefit of globalisation and free trade to every corner of the world.

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Alternative Dispute Resolution

Disposal of suits/litigation through ADR is bound to enhance the quality of social justice and thereby contribute to the promotion of harmony and peace in society, both of which are pre-conditions for meaningful development in social, cultural economic and other spheres.

Md. D.M. SARKER

ALTERNATIVE Dispute Resolution (ADR) is an alternative route for reaching a speedier and less-expensive mode of settlement of disputes. It includes mediation, settlement of disputes, arbitration and other ways that are voluntary and not compulsory.

Most countries of the world have adopted ADR mechanism and achieved tremendous success in reducing backlog and increasing access to justice for the poor. The concept of ADR was first inserted in Section, 10(3) and 13(1) of the Family Court Ordinance of 1985, wherein there is provision for compromise or reconciliation even before pronouncement of judgment.

However, there was no implementation of these provisions until a special pilot project was taken on "Mediation as a measure of ADR" in June, 2000, under the supervision of the then chief justice of Bangladesh. Under that project, three assistant judge's courts of Dhaka were specified as exclusive Family Courts for the purpose of mediation.

At that time, a circular was issued from the High Court Division of the Supreme Court providing credit of two trials for one successful mediation in a family dispute and the credit of one trial for two unsuccessful mediations. This circular inspired the Family Court judges to give more efforts to mediation in Family Court cases, achieving success in disputes resolution through "mediation" in the family courts.

The great success in realisation of dower money and amicable, peaceful and quick settlement of disputes through mediation in the Family Courts inspired the government and the policy makers as well to widen the scope of ADR through other legislation.

Accordingly, ADR mechanism was introduced for the first time in general civil litigation in 2003 by the Code of Civil Procedure, (Amendment) Act, 2003 and by the Artha Rin Adalat Ain, 2003, with effect from July 1, 2003 and May 1, 2003, respectively. The Code of Civil Procedure (Amendment) Act, 2003 embodied two new sections (89A, 89B) designed for ADR mechanism in all civil suits and cases.

On the other hand, the mechanisms of ADR in the Artha Rin Adalat (Money Loan Court Act, 2003) are (a) settlement conference, which is to be presided over by the trial judge and to be held in camera and (b) arbitration, which is to be presided over by a neutral arbiter and to be held in camera.

The latest amendment in this regard is incorporation of ADR at appellate stage in non-family civil disputes. A new section, 89 C, was inserted in the Code of Civil Procedure by Act No. VIII of 2006. The use of ADR in Artha Rin cases is a success story. Besides, ADR is gradually progressing and becoming a popular forum for the litigants of civil cases.

Alternative dispute resolution in today's world is a widely accepted and appreciated method for reducing the number as well as cost of suits. Many developed and developing countries have gained tremendous success in reducing backlog by adopting ADR.

Disposal of suits/litigation through ADR is bound to enhance the quality of social justice and thereby contribute to the promotion of harmony and peace in society, both of which are pre-conditions for meaningful development in social, cultural economic and other spheres.

Actually, mediation, conciliation/reconciliation, arbitration and other forms of ADR are important vehicles for promoting social harmony. Our country should develop the system of ADR without any delay, and this should be of prime importance in view of the fact that ADR process can be of great help in strengthening the legal framework, which, in turn, can certainly bring about changes so that people can get justice speedier.

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