

# Change - The Wind of New Age Teaching, its Impact on Modern day Teaching and Learning

Adya Pathak

**Abstract:** *Engaging in a constant pendulum of Teaching and Learning, teachers and students across the globe continue to swindle between the two sides yet try to seek a balance of the two. This research paper presents a comprehensive study of how teaching and learning for teaching, as processes have witnessed several changes catering to curriculum passage from teachers to students, the important aspects of shaping up students' psyche, key elements in attracting and retaining class attention as opposed to earlier, new strategies employed versus the old ones performed to teach theoretical portions, possible obstacles and the overall impact on the students, parents, teachers, schools, and the overall environment of the education sector, for which 106 educationalists, including 48 teachers, 40 students, 15 parents and 3 academic counsellors were mainly surveyed from the Indian subcontinent and across the globe.*

**Keywords:** Teaching, Learning, Teachers, Students, Education sector

## 1. Introduction

A teacher for the ages, is the simple vision I have drawn within the periphery of my career. To be celebrated is a choice of a 'maybe' for me but to be remembered, is an affirmative 'yes' and that has been inspired by being an active learner. Witnessing several trajectories of students and teachers in the education space and the span of my life as teacher so far, gives an understanding of how essential it is, to keep learning and reinventing different techniques of teaching through the process of learning, after all, as 'The Grand Narrative' by Giroux [1], goes, it is us teachers that take responsibility for the knowledge we organise, produce, mediate and translate. The hard part is, mainly to learn to unlearn, to adapt to the idea of change. Learning newer things, requires overcoming the forthrightness of the things we already know, the things we think we know and focus more on the process of learning things that we want to learn.

Changing is often hard, for it puts us out of a place we become accustomed to either physically or mentally, this place becomes our comfort zone owing to attributes that could trigger an innate sense of familiarity, safety and complacency. Looking at the different elements of the holistic habitat made for learners, (for the sake of researching, learners can be segregated into students and teachers) that get influenced by the changing techniques of learning, as follows:

- **Curriculum:** The syllabus, the material to be taught, in the order of what is essentially important in perspective of what needs to be taught versus what should be taught.
- **Time:** The number of hours allocated towards teaching the curriculum, in comparison to the number of hours required and contributed towards delivering the curriculum.
- **Attendance:** Overall number of students sitting in the classroom to attend the session, the mandatory prescribed attendance versus the students attending the classes willingly.
- **Student-teacher learning ratio:** The focus and attention span each teacher is expected to give an individual student versus the real time focus and attention each teacher can give to one individual student at a time.

- **Environment around learners:** The school, teachers, parents, peers' expected integration with the student learning while the weight of their actual contribution towards the betterment of teaching and subsequent learning.
- **Teaching Techniques:** The monotonous method in which schools expected teachers to deliver, in comparison teachers adopting new strategies to bring more ways of making the content and curriculum of teaching more interesting.

## 2. Methodology

The methodology adopted was divisible between keen observation, analysis, and then filling up a questionnaire. The respondents also segregated between 2 pools, wherein pool 1 consisted of teachers, more on the lines of peer review while pool 2 consisted of educationalists from the academic front such as students, parents, counsellors, etc. The teacher fraternity observing each other's classes, making notes on what are the 4 to 5 elements working in the teaching pattern, and what is it that can be improved, based on a pre-decided protocol inclusive of steps of planning the sessions to execution of these sessions, to conducting assessments and gauging the teaching performances via eventual results in each cycle of assessments, followed by filling in the questionnaire at the end of the term. There was another online questionnaire for the students, their parents to seek the differences in the attendance, results and several other parameters of their children. The questionnaire had both, open-ended and close-ended responses to allow a detailed study with effective analysis, keeping the nuances of the responses stored.

## 3. Results and Discussions

**Pool 1: Teachers' Peer review:** The reviews us teachers came up with at the end of the term showcased about the different observations made basis each other's teaching styles, inclusive of the planning of the material in the curriculum, the priority of delivering the said curriculum and its pace during the execution, the impact of the newer techniques of teaching adopted on the students and therefore how the teaching styles that have worked can be adopted and

moulded into different modules basis the subject that is to be taught. This review and the survey post it for the teachers, was mainly useful in deducing to the following discussion points:

- **Concentration**, not attendance: For the longest time, it was essentially the physical presence that is the attendance that has been a measure of performance of a teacher, higher the number of students present physically in the classroom, higher the teacher's credibility, but as observed in the face of new learning and teaching done in the lectures conducted now, it is now an essential for any lecture delivered to be deemed 'good' only when there is also the mental presence of the student, displayable via the level of concentration they are demonstrating in the classroom via engagement on the topics taught, which is also prominent alongside the physical presence of the student for the sake of attendance being a mandatory school/board criteria. This achievable by making the classroom more interactive, and not just to answer questions but the overall participation and interest in what is being taught. The best way to go about it, is by bringing in relevant, trendy and recent case studies in the theoretical subjects, such as Economics, wherein the highest engagement comes by letting the students essay roles of globally renowned economists, such as Adam Smith [2] from the medieval world to understand global history of market economics, or the famous (ex)-RBI governor Raghuram Ranjan [3] who is time and again in news post his tenure, for his stance on the Indian Economy, to understand native economics before the covid-19 outbreak, and so on and so forth.
- **Subject**, not syllabus: Another prominent point the peer review amongst us teachers, was the handling or passage of the curriculum. Most teachers have known to be undertaking the syllabus, delivering it as per the requirements for the tests and assessments in a timely fashion, term after term. A strong realization of the fact that many a times the priority of what is needed to be taught is higher than what should be taught, brought the need to see how us teachers were teaching the curriculum. There would be times, in a subject like Mathematics for the 12<sup>th</sup> graders, essentials would include complex chapters such as calculus, differentiation and integration, now as per the syllabus to be poured down from teachers to students it would remain focal of the two topics to be taught assuming the students are all well-versed with algebraic expressions which is taught in the earlier years of schooling. However, it has become evident via this research, that teaching algebra for one session before launching into calculus has improved the students' understanding of the subject and thereby also their performance, and therefore the focal point of teaching shouldn't be the syllabus but the Subject.

#### Pool 2: Educationalists – Students, Parents, Schools:

Another aspect met via the survey was the opinions, analysis and impact on the students, parents and schools, with relation to the changing ways of teaching and learning in the recent times. The most notable findings were as follows:

- **Collective Classroom:** Majority students are of the opinion that their learning has improved drastically when they feel heard and included in the classroom. While this is always achievable for the front row seaters who are invariably attentive and also solidly noticeable or even the students at the last rows who do not have as much concentration and therefore garner attention from the teachers, it is usually the large number of students in middle-rows that get lost in translation, which means that they feel invisible and many a times, they start to build a shell around themselves. Focusing on all the students just the same, therefore is crucial and to bring them out of the shell, and help them prosper academically, especially in theory subjects like 12<sup>th</sup> standard Business Studies, activities like engaging the classroom in either a debate arguing against or defending the exemplary celebrated business personalities pertaining to the various chapters, let's take the principles of Business management chapter wherein the classroom chose to be either for or against the context of the 14 Principles of Management by Henri Fayol [4] or activities like theatrics basis their understanding of why Business is a Science by F.W Taylor [5] and other several such activities to take the classroom as one single unit.
- **Individual Introspection:** It has been a clear case for most students to be able to expressive on a one-on-one, individual basis as opposed to a larger group. Students find learning easier when they form connectivity with their teachers outside of the periphery of the classroom, which means beyond the teaching sessions and learning hours allocated towards the subject, within the stipulated time given by the schools. Conducting and engaging in sessions, meetings after classes to come up with newer ideas, resolution to questions and doubts, helping them ease into letting out their fears and insecurities, makes teachers their confidant, and teachings their confidence which boosts their participation in academic and other activities at school.
- **School Seniorities:** In the recent past, schools have proven to be more and more supportive and adaptive to change, this can be explained via Malcolm Gladwell's Theory of Change [6], where he explains the rule of 'Vital Few', being the people who start something unique which ends up spreading like fire and that is exactly approach that works best for teachers at schools, given the schools are also supportive. Like in an instance or 2, mentioned early in the paper, essaying prominent personalities of the economics world and conducting debates on business concepts given by the pioneers of the business world are the kind of activities that are relatively unique for the otherwise theoretical, long and at times complex subjects. These activities have received great feedback from the school management as there has been an incredible spike in the students' performance and also the attendance in the subject as they now think of the session as a more in practice or practical class, indicating that these attributes of the technique have let the idea stick on long enough to be contagious and memorable, which also fulfils the 'Stickiness Factor' Gladwell's theory [7] and since then, the school has also suggested other theory subjects' teachers to implement similar techniques in their classes giving my idea a larger environment to catch and thereby also making a

compelling factor of the 'Power of Context' portion of the Theory of Change by Gladwell [8].

- **Parents & Peers:** It is a known phenomenon that the earliest impact on the child psyche comes from the first environment they are in, which is with the parents and slightly shared with peers, the habitat increases in bandwidth. Therefore, accounting for their opinion on the new age teaching and learning happening is also essential and as opposed to earlier, parents and peer groups also prefer to have teachers as more than a sole point of academic growth for their children, they also prefer teachers to have a nurturing bond, to help the child have a holistic student life at school.

#### 4. Conclusion

Another way to look at the amalgamation of teaching and learning, and the overall impact of the new age teaching on the various facets of the education segment, is by the '2R' platform as I call it, which is basically, as Taris, Van Horn, Schaufeli & Scheurs, all call it – Resilience and Reciprocity [9], implying that we teachers have to rise above the obstacles, such as of what we know, and go back to try again (and fail again, if needed) and continue to invest in new ideas like the ones mentioned in this paper, to seek recognition from students and school management to meet the range of expectations and demands place on us. They have also introduced this in terms of us teachers as a fraternity building an environment where we find ourselves a friend from the fraternity who can help us in determining the critical aspects of our teaching. All in all, teaching is directly proportional to the learning curve of a teacher and this change causes a constant impact on all educationalists and therefore becomes an area to be implored and explored time and again.

#### Annexure 1: Survey Questionnaire

##### Demographic Information (all):

- Age: \_\_\_\_\_
- Gender: ( ) Male ( ) Female ( ) Other
- Occupation (please mention parent/student if you are not a teacher): \_\_\_\_\_
- Sector: ( ) Academia ( ) Business ( ) Service ( ) Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

##### Section 1: Teachers Peer Review – Attendance Related (Teachers ONLY)

- On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the ability of your fellow teachers to attract and hold attention of the students in a classroom? (1 - Very Poor, 5 - Excellent)
- How have new age teaching methods have spiked the rate of attendance in the classrooms? (Open-ended)

##### Section 2: Teachers Peer Review- Subject/Syllabus related (Teachers ONLY)

- Do you think new age teaching methods have spiked the rate of attendance in the classrooms? ( ) Yes ( ) No
- What has a higher priority for you, finishing the syllabus timely from exam perspective or educating the children on the subject for their overall academic growth? (Open-ended)

##### Section 3: Educationalists (Students ONLY)

- How easy is it for you to communicate openly with your teacher? (1 - Very Difficult, 5 - Very Easy)
- How does your teacher help you feel heard and included in the classroom? Mention if this helps your learning. (Open-ended)

##### Section 4: Educationalists (Parents & Peers ONLY)

- How important is it for a teacher to be empathetic towards your child? (1 - Not Important, 5 - Extremely Important)
- What is a holistic environment for the child and how can you help in providing it? (Open-ended)

#### Annexure-2: Survey Responses

##### Demographics:

###### Age distribution:

- 12-18 years: 40respondents
- 30-60 years: 60 respondents
- Over 60 years: 6 respondents

###### Gender distribution:

- Male: 39 respondents
- Female: 67 respondents

###### Occupation distribution:

- Teacher: 48 respondents
- Parent (Business): 8 respondents
- Parent (Service): 7 respondents
- Students: 40 respondents
- Others: 3 (counsellors)

###### Industry Sector distribution:

- Academia: 91 respondents
- Business: 8 respondents
- Service: 7 respondents

##### Section 1: Teachers Peer Review – Attendance Related (Teachers ONLY)

Q: On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the ability of your fellow teachers to attract and hold attention of the students in a classroom? (1 - Very Poor, 5 - Excellent)

###### Response:

- 1: 5%
- 2: 10%
- 3: 20%
- 4: 30%
- 5: 35%

##### Section 2: Teachers Peer Review – Attendance Related (Teachers ONLY)

Q: Do you think new age teaching methods have spiked the rate of attendance in the classrooms? ( ) Yes ( ) No

###### Response:

- Yes: 61%
- No: 39%

##### Section 3: Educationalists (Students ONLY)

Q: How easy is it for you to communicate openly with your teacher? (1 - Very Difficult, 5 - Very Easy)

Response:

- 1: 7%
- 2: 8%
- 3: 10%
- 4: 20%
- 5: 55%

#### Section 4: Educationalists (Parents & Peers ONLY)

Q: How important is it for a teacher to be empathetic towards your child? (1 - Not Important, 5 - Extremely Important)

Response:

- 1: 10%
- 2: 18%
- 3: 22%
- 4: 30%
- 5: 20%

### References

- [1] 'The Grand Narrative' by Giroux [1], from the book 'Counter narratives, Cultural Studies and Critical Pedagogies in Postmodern Spaces' 1996
- [2] Adam Smith [2], as per his book 'Wealth of Nations' 1776
- [3] Raghuram Ranjan [3], in his book 'I do what I do' 2017
- [4] 14 Principles of Management by Henri Fayol [4], 12<sup>th</sup> NCERT Textbook
- [5] Why Business is a Science by F.W Taylor [5], 12<sup>th</sup> NCERT Textbook
- [6] Malcolm Gladwell's Theory of Change [6], in his book 'The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference' published by Little, Brown 2000.
- [7] 'Stickiness factor' by Malcolm Gladwell's Theory of Change [7], in his book 'The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference' published by Little, Brown 2000.
- [8] 'Power of Context' Malcolm Gladwell's Theory of Change [8], in his book 'The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference' published by Little, Brown 2000.
- [9] Resilience and Reciprocity [9], Taris, Van Horn, Schaufeli & Scheurs, 2001.