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RESEARCH ARTICLE

TAKING TRIARCHIC TEACHING TO CLASSROOMS: GIVING EVERYBODY A FAIR CHANCE

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Abstract

This study throws light into Sternberg's theory of Successful Intelligence and its classroom implications. Some students learn well when taught in conventional ways, but others do not. They may be intelligent but not in the usual way. As the goal of teaching should be to reach all students, when we do not reach to all students, we risk creating self-fulfilling prophecies that doom certain students to mediocrity who could be good or even excellent achievers. But as educators, teachers want to maximize the probability of each student's success in school. It is in this context that Triarchic Teaching , an approach for teaching successful Intelligence finds relevance. This approach helps the teachers to achieve this outcome by structuring wide range of activities so that students have a chance to try different patterns of abilities, discover their strongest abilities, and master as much as they can or all of them. The application of Triarchic teaching in classrooms thus helps to improve analytic, creative, and practical abilities in students thereby enabling them to be a success both in their academic and real life.

It is seen that in most of the schools, two kinds of memories are at premium: memory abilities (those abilities used to memorize, recall, and recognize information) and to a lesser extent, abstract analytical abilities (those abilities used to analyze, judge, evaluate, compare, and contrast fairly abstract concepts). The ability tests measure these skills, and then achievement tests assess the degree to which the abilities have been applied successfully. The problem is that these abilities are not necessarily the ones that matter most in the life activities for which school is supposed to prepare our children.

In schools thus children with analytical intelligence may get easily recognized but children with other kinds of abilities, such as creative and practical are neglected. This neglect may result in derailing them from the fast track very early in their life, never getting the reinforcement and opportunity to show what they really can do. Implementation of Triarchic teaching , an approach for teaching successful Intelligence helps to remedy this situation by developing the other kinds of abilities, such as creative and practical ones in students along with analytical skills and ultimately leading them to success.

Successful Intelligence in School

Sternberg's theory of Successful Intelligence or Triarchic Theory of Intelligence emerged as a deviation from the conventional intelligence. He stated that intelligence results from information processing components being applied to experience for the purposes of adapting, shaping, and selection of environments. According to this theory,

intelligence and the intellectual skills that constitute it and form the basis of intellectual achievements are forms of developing expertise; they can be developed just like any other forms of expertise. Abilities are not fixed, but rather, flexible. Successful intelligence can be defined as the ability to achieve success in life, given one's personal standards, within one's sociocultural context; in order to adapt to, shape, and select environments; via recognition of and capitalization on strengths and remediation of or compensation for weaknesses; through a balance of analytical, creative, and practical abilities (Sternberg, 1997). It is the integrated set of abilities needed to attain success in life however an individual defines it, within the individual's socio cultural context. It is possible through instructional interventions to improve analytical-thinking skills, creative-thinking skills, and practical-thinking skills.

Triarchic Teaching for Building Successful Intelligence Abilities

Triarchic theory can be applied to improve students' achievement in school (Sternberg, 1997; Sternberg et al., 2000). There are three aspects for successful intelligence: analytical , creative and practical and thus teaching for successful intelligence or Triarchic Teaching comprises of three areas :

1. Teaching for Analytical Thinking
2. Teaching for Creative Thinking
3. Teaching for Practical Thinking

Each of the areas and its application in classrooms are discussed in detail below.

Teaching for Analytical Thinking

Analytical Intelligence, involves the conscious direction of mental processes to find a thoughtful solution to a problem. In problem solving the goal is to move from a problem situation to a solution, overcoming obstacles along the way. The six skills in problem solving are as follows: Identify the problem, Allocate resources, Represent and organize information, Formulate a strategy, Monitor problem solving strategies and Evaluate solutions

Taking it to the classroom

The goal of teaching for analytical skills is to encourage students to formulate and ask questions, not just to answer them. Thus, teachers should encourage students to pose what they see as fundamental questions about whatever topic they are studying and help the students decide what resources to use or to how much time to take. She should let them decide how to allocate resources to a task and help them to organize their thinking and at the same time encourage them to be a reflective rather than impulsive problem solvers. Teacher should provide step by step monitoring and feedback. Finally the teacher can encourage evaluation by explicitly asking students to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of their own work and others. The importance of constructive critique should be emphasized by the teacher.

Teaching for Creative Thinking

Creative ability is the ability to generate novel and interesting ideas. A creative person often makes connections between things other people do not recognize spontaneously. Most teachers do not know how to encourage creativity in their students. Following are the twelve strategies to develop creativity: redefine problems, question and analyze solutions, sell creative ideas, generate ideas, recognize strengths and limits of knowledge, identify and surmount obstacles, take sensible risks, tolerate ambiguity, build self-efficacy, uncover true interests, delay gratification and model creativity.

Taking it to the classroom

Teachers should encourage creative thinking by helping students select their own topics for papers or presentations, choose their own ways of solving problems and rechoose if they discover that their selections were mistakes. Questioning should be made a part of the daily classroom exchange. Students should be taught how to ask

the right questions (good, thought provoking and interesting ones) and lessen the emphasis on rote learning. If students do some creative work teacher should ask them to explain why it is better than the existing ones. She should also encourage them to identify and develop their ideas into high – quality projects. Teachers can open up channels for creativity by learning from as well as teaching to their students. When students deal with obstacles it is up to the teacher to be with them and enabling them to overcome the obstacles in their own way. A teacher can boost them by telling them stories of creative people who were initially blamed but later recognized. Sensible risks from the part of the students are to be encouraged and rewarded. Teacher should teach her students that uncertainty and its attendant discomfort is part of a creative life and thus help her students to tolerate ambiguity by coming up with better ideas. A strong belief in one's own creativity is very essential and so teachers should help students believe in their ability to be creative. Students field of interest are to be identified and encouraged. Making the students work on a task for weeks or months, helps them to learn the value of making incremental efforts for long- term gains and thereby valuing delayed gratification. The most powerful way for teachers to develop creativity in students is to present model creativity. Teachers who demonstrate creativity in their actions give students permission to be creative. Helping students to cross-fertilize their thinking, giving students time to think creatively, rewarding creativity and creative efforts, encouraging creative collaboration and helping students imagine their viewpoints are some supporting measures for creative thinking in the classroom.

Teaching for Practical Thinking

The sign of good practical thinking is not that a person never makes mistakes, but rather that he or she learns from those mistakes so that the mistakes are not made again and again. Teachers should consider the nineteen stumbling blocks to practical thinking (Sternberg,1986; Spear-Swerling,1996). They are lack of motivation, lack of impulse control, lack of perseverance or excessive perseverance, using the wrong abilities, inability to translate thought into action, lack of product orientation, inability to complete tasks and to follow through, failure to initiate projects, fear of failure, procrastination, misattribution of blame, excessive self pity, excessive dependency, wallowing in personal difficulties, distracting and lack of concentration, spreading oneself too thick or too thin, inability of unwillingness to see the forest for the trees, lack of balance between analytical , creative and practical thinking and too little or too much self confidence.

Taking it to the classroom

In order to encourage students' Practical thinking teachers should motivate them and encourage them to control their impulses by rewarding them when they do so. Teachers can help students persevere in their work until they have done their best and to recognize the right environment fit to the person. She should encourage them to develop and implement plans and help them to acquire a product- based orientation. Both the teachers and students should know the time to wrap up the things. Teachers should try to develop a commitment mentality in the students and help the students to explore their mistakes in order to correct them. Students should be made to set sub goals on long term projects in order to avoid procrastination. Assigning responsibility in students helps the students to understand their thinking processes, criticize themselves and take pride in their best work. Help the students of excessive self pity, dependence and enable them to handle difficult situations. Teachers can help unusually distractible students by providing them with an appropriate work environment and encouraging them to create such an environment for themselves. The students should be enabled to find the right distribution of activities for themselves and then maximize their performance within that distribution. They should be made aware about what they are doing and where they wish to go. Ideally, teachers should teach students to balance the three kinds of thinking: analytical, creative and practical. One of the best gifts teachers can give students is meaningful self confidence and thereby encouraging them to seek challenges.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The ultimate goal of triarchic teaching is to contribute to the thinking of a triarchic thinker. It tries to keep a balance between all the three thinkings; analytical creative and practical and rather tries to overcome the conventional method of teaching and assessing students. The major advantages of Triarchic teaching are as follows;

- Enables students to capitalize on strengths and remediate or compensate for weaknesses

- Enables students to encode learning material more deeply and elaborately
- Enables students to encode learning material in multiple ways
- Motivates students more strongly
- Prepares students better for actual job requirements

Thus to make the theory of successful intelligence work teachers should generate examples in their subject areas, applying the theory across their teaching spectrum.

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