

Teacher Autonomy

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Introduction

The concept of teacher autonomy refers to the professional independence of teachers in schools, especially the degree to which they can make autonomous decisions about what they teach to students and how they teach it. In recent years, teacher autonomy has become a major point of discussion and debate in American public education, largely as a result of educational policies that, some argue, limit the professionalism, authority, responsiveness, creativity, or effectiveness of teachers.

While teacher autonomy is most frequently discussed in terms of what teachers teach to students and how they teach it, the issue may also manifest in other ways. For example, some schools are entirely led and managed by teachers-i.e., the schools do not have formal administrators; teachers assume administrative roles, usually on a revolving basis. In addition, the composition and negotiation of teacher contracts may also vary significantly from place to place. For example, local teachers unions will negotiate annual contracts with school districts in some states, while most states have statewide teacher contracts that are negotiated by state teachers unions. Depending on its provisions, teaching contracts can directly affect professional autonomy, given that contracts may, for example, determine the specific number of hours that teachers can work each week or limit the roles that teachers can play in a school or district.

This as a whole includes learner's involvement, reflection and setting upon the appropriate target (Kelsall, 2011). It enables the learner to think critically and apply reflective decision-making actions

Nai Talim: An Experiential and Skill Based Learning

independently (Little, 1990). This ensures that one is ready to take charge of one's own learning serving their own need and purposes (Dam, 1995). Thus shaping up of learners thinking critically needs proper guidance with expertise in handling mind. Therefore, a teacher's role becomes important in bringing proximity of thinking differences radically among his/her students. However, we should not forget that teachers are also not free of making choices. As they have limitations set upon by many factors like curriculum designs, administration and socio-cultural aspects.

Teacher's Role in creating learner autonomy The learner should be able to apply those taught contextual knowledge into his/her quotidian routine. For instance, the practice of washing hands before taking lunch by the learning child should also be applicable by him/her at outside school environment.

Meaning of Autonomy

Autonomy means the ability to take control of one's own learning, independently or in collaboration with others. An autonomous learner will take more responsibility for learning and is likely to be more effective than a learner who is reliant on the teacher. Learner training in the classroom encourages autonomy and is an important element of language teaching. For example an autonomous learner will set their own goals, reflect on their progress, and seek opportunities to practise outside the classroom.

In the classroom

Asking learners to keep diaries to reflect on the way they learn best, and teaching them how to use tools such as dictionaries can encourage autonomy. Asking the question, 'could the learners do this for themselves?' about any activity planned for class will help create the conditions for the development of greater learner autonomy in class.

Meaning of Accountability

One of the most prominent issues in education policy today, accountability is a key element in the success of education improvement

Nai Talim: An Experiential and Skill Based Learning

systems. Literally the process by which students, teachers, and administrators give an account of their progress, accountability is a means by which policy makers at the state and district levels-and parents and taxpayers-monitor the performance of students and schools. Accountability systems include a range of mechanisms, from simply requiring schools and districts to report on progress to policy makers and the public, to placing consequences-rewards for high performance and sanctions for poor performance-on the results of performance measures.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 1999. *Testing, Teaching, and Learning: A Guide for States and School Districts*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

What is Teacher Autonomy

Teacher's autonomy :- Its means teacher are responsible for making decisions related to his/her teaching.

Learner's autonomy :- Its means learner are responsible for making decisions related to his/her learning choices.

The concept of "teacher autonomy" is a common topic of discussion and debate in education. Advocates of greater teacher autonomy may argue that because teachers are in the best position to make informed decisions about a student's education, teachers should be given as much autonomy as possible when it comes to determining instructional strategies, curriculum, and academic support. In this view, for example, more regulations, tougher job requirements, greater administrative oversight, or more burdensome teacher-evaluation procedures will inevitably stifle the instructional creativity and responsiveness of teachers, which could produce a variety of negative results, including lower student performance or higher job dissatisfaction and attrition rates among teachers. Critics of teacher autonomy tend to cite evidence that teaching quality and effectiveness is uneven, and that problems such as achievement gaps or low graduation rates indicate that measures need to be taken to improve the effectiveness of teachers and public-school instruction, including more administrative oversight,

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increased educational and professional requirements for new teachers, stronger evaluation systems for job performance, or penalties for poor-performing teachers.

Accountability is a new addition to the vocabulary of public education. It is used by school administrators, teacher institutions, classroom teachers, and the public general. It is often quoted by parents and other people who have some business or something to do with teaching

Accountability on the part of the classroom teacher is very important. It is a measure of the teacher's dedication to his job. Is he doing the job that he should do ? Is he doing the job commensurate to higher rates of pay and compensation he is asking for now. The public wants to know the government is using the money efficiently for public education. Parents think that if the school are going to ask for more funds and levy more taxes for the support of education the schools should show government funds are used to the best for public education.

How accountable is the classroom teacher ? Should he be held responsible for what the pupil does or doesn't learn singly or along with others in and out of the school ?

What are classroom teachers accountable for ? The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession subscribed to by 999, 000 members of the National Education Association says, that teachers are accountable for;

Adequate academic preparation

Continued professional growth

Enhancement of the professional knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for competent classroom practice

Knowledge of and concern for his pupils

Communication and relations with students, staff, community, and the education profession

Involvement in educational and social concerns

Active participation in community affairs

Ethical conduct

Membership in and support of the teaching profession.

Classroom teachers as members of the teaching profession are accountable for the development and implement action within the school system of policies that will insure.

Preparation of the child as a worthy members of the community. This includes the development of the academic, vocation, physical and social skills of the child; a sense of worth; an appreciation of the culture of the Filipino people; and an understanding of an ever-changing world.

Establishment of rapport with the child and maximum learning opportunity for him. This includes

The development of a curriculum that meets his needs

Conditions conducive to a learning environment

Definite learning objectives

A reasonable evaluation of the child's learning and abilities

Classroom management and organization that stimulates learning

Adequate and appropriate physical resources and equipment

Characteristics of Teacher Autonomy

1. Teaching and Assessment

In education, this means the development of course content, teaching materials and delivery methods to be accessible for and usable by students across the broadest diversity ranges. Inclusive education facilitates the access, participation and success of students. This approach acknowledges that students with disability or other needs may learn differently, but are not less academically capable.

(i) Teaching Objectives : The primary objective of teaching is to impart knowledge and wisdom. However, this is not limited to textbook knowledge. Teachers help students acquire knowledge and this is not just what is included in the syllabus. Through this process, the character is shaped and behavior is molded. Teachers help students to be strong and independent. One of the outcomes of effective

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education is independence and a strong foothold. Teachers have the capability to fire intrinsic motivation in their students and this will help students to be successful in life. Here are some study tips that you can give your students.

(ii) Teaching Methods : Teaching method depends on what fits you - your educational philosophy, classroom demographic, subject area(s) and school mission statement. Teaching theories can be organized into four categories based on two major parameters: a teacher-centered approach versus a student-centered approach, and high-tech material use versus low-tech material use.

(iii) Teaching Aid : Teaching aids are tools which facilitate the process of teaching and learning. There are various types of teaching aids, including-

- traditional teaching aids (e.g. books and blackboard);
- visual teaching aids (e.g. posters, diagrams, maps);
- mechanical teaching aids (e.g. audio teaching machines, video-projectors);
- audio-visual teaching aids (e.g. videos, films); and,
- visual material teaching aids (e.g. various types of charts) (Digital Class, n.d.).

(iv) Content : To teach is to first understand purposes, subject matter structures, and ideas within and outside the discipline. Teachers need to understand what they teach and, when possible, to understand it in several ways. Comprehension of purpose is very important. We engage in teaching to achieve the following educational purposes:

- To help students gain literacy.
- To enable students to use and enjoy their learning experiences.
- To enhance students' responsibility to become caring people.
- To teach students to believe and respect others, to contribute to the well-being of their community.
- To give students the opportunity to learn how to inquire and discover new information.

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To help students develop broader understandings of new information

(v) Classroom Environment : Creating a safe, positive classroom environment is key to effective teaching and learning. Resources in this section address how an instructor might keep students motivated, and how to prevent, detect and deal with cheating, plagiarism and other infractions of academic integrity. We examine what constitutes professional conduct and civility in an academic setting and how to deal with breaches of both. Information is also available on how instructors might create and maintain a diverse, inclusive and safe classroom environment for their students.

Motivating Students

Dealing with Cheating

Discouraging & Detecting Plagiarism

Incivility

Diversity & Creating an Inclusive Classroom

Harassment & Discrimination

Professional Conduct

(vi) Discipline : Teachers with effective classroom management strategies establish expectations, guidelines and rules for behavior during the first few days of class. Clearly explaining expectations is an essential component to preventative discipline. The goal of preventative discipline is to provide proactive interventions to potential disruptive behaviors by clearly explaining to students what behaviors are and are not appropriate. The most basic component to preventative discipline is a concise outline about classroom expectations for students as well as for teachers; students need to know what is expected of them for the remainder of the class. Such guidelines might include rules regarding talking, homework or language use in the classroom. A preventative discipline strategy also establishes the types of consequences that will follow a forbidden act or behavior. Preventative discipline strategies create a safe, nonconfrontational classroom atmosphere in which students feel that they understand what is to come.

(vii) Teaching Skills : An autonomous teacher feels personal responsibilities, attends workshops & comes up with new classroom ideas. Teachers' autonomy refers to the ability to develop appropriate skills, knowledge & attitude for oneself as a teacher, in cooperation with others. Teaching skills are the hard and soft skills that help a teacher keep students engaged. These skills can also help teachers position themselves as an educator, earning the attention and respect of their students. Some teaching skills come naturally to some, whereas others may require development with practice. Developing teaching skills is only one part of becoming a good teacher.

2. Curriculum Development : curriculum development is the process by which an instructor or institution creates or adopts that plan for a course. Because this subject is so broad, it can be difficult to wade through the noise to find up-to-date best practices. There are also many schools of thought for how best to approach the curriculum development process.

(i) Suggestions of teachers : Teacher Education provides a platform to student-teachers to acquire the required knowledge, skill and develop positive attitude, values and beliefs. This can be done with the help of the provided curriculum. And the quality of teacher produced in any institution invariably depends on the curriculum offered to them during their training period. After reviewing various researches on the curriculum and significant role of teachers' in framing the curriculum the process of curriculum development was decentralized. The process of curriculum framing and preparation of textbooks be decentralized so as to increase teachers' involvement in these tasks. Decentralization should mean greater autonomy within the state/district. As curriculum is the best mean of overall development of students. And teacher is mediator between curriculum and students. She/he knows various needs of students, educational institutions, industries, parents (stakeholders). The quality of teacher education is maintained by curriculum of Teacher Education. The curriculum development is dynamic process.

(ii) Curriculum Framework : A curriculum framework is a subject-specific document that presents parameters to assist in the development of a curriculum and identifies learning outcomes for what schoolchildren are expected to know and be able to do as they relate to the knowledge and skills of a particular discipline.

(iii) Execution of Curriculum and Evaluation : The most curriculum evaluation measures found so far are defined as a section of a curriculum framework. It is very difficult to find a stand-alone framework for curriculum evaluation, especially with related methods and templates to help set up and maintain a continuous evaluation process for curricula in higher education. A stand-alone framework for curriculum evaluation can be defined as a set of guidelines of requirement analysis, aims, focuses, purposes, types, methods, etc. of curriculum evaluation, which can be used in a certain context in order to evaluate the effectiveness of a curriculum with the purpose of developing, changing or keeping the existing methods, materials and contexts.

3. Financial System

(i) Making Budget : As districts embrace new strategies to better meet the specific needs of the students they serve, they have also begun to experiment with increased school-level flexibility. Innovation schools provide one venue for increasing autonomy for schools. Innovation schools are in-district, semi-autonomous schools that have access to 6 areas of autonomy. They can use these autonomies to implement innovative strategies to strengthen student achievement, including the flexibility to use financial, staffing, curricular, professional development, and scheduling resources in the ways they deem most appropriate for serving their students.

Though in theory these autonomies should afford schools considerable new freedoms, in practice, many innovation schools are often unable to exercise these autonomies because districts and schools lack clarity about what each autonomy looks like in practice. Furthermore, they do not always have the necessary strategies and

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structures in place to implement the requested autonomies successfully.

(ii) School Finance : The management of material and financial resources is one of the

most delicate processes in management and when we talk about economic development. Much more serious this problem becomes in the education system. In this sector, and multilateral funding is Perhaps the direct funding and direct administration would be

more effective. Fund for the construction of a school example the municipality or municipalities delegated by the Ministry of Education and Science, to the local authority or a foreign donor that are in the role of the investor. Procurement can be done by the local authority or the donor and the recipient directly to the school community is to be built or

rehabilitated. Supervision of the investment was in the hands of local government or organization that has taken over the investment.

4. Professional Development : The concept of teacher autonomy refers to the professional independence of teachers in schools, especially the degree to which they can make autonomous decisions about what they teach to students and how they teach it.

Challenges of Teacher Autonomy for Professional Competence

Teacher autonomy is considered as one of the most important issues in education. Teachers need freedom and flexibility for their professional development. Teacher autonomy is generally defined as teachers having control over their own professional development and practice particularly interdependence in their own context. Teachers need to make autonomous decisions for how they plan to teach; what they practice; and how they can improve their teaching (Dikilitas & Griffiths,2017). In fact, teacher autonomy is associated with institutional and classroom management with given curricula (Benson, 2008). It enables them to develop required skills, expertise, knowledge and attitudes to be self-directed professional teachers (Sehrawat, 2014). The output of teaching and learning depends on the teachers at the university. If the teachers' autonomy is recognized and acknowledged

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by the authority of the university, their professional competences can be enhanced and thereby increasing their performances in the classroom.

Teacher autonomy reflects teachers' capacities to lead such lives or to some conditions of contextual freedom that facilitates the exercises of their capacities (Benson,2008). Teacher autonomy can be achieved through engagement in critical reflection which helps for liberation and empowerment of teachers with enhanced interest and ability to overcome contextual constraints in teaching and learning context (Vieira, Barbosa, Paiva, & Fernandes,2008). Teacher autonomy makes the teachers capable and professionally sound. It helps them to be accountable in their professional careers. More importantly, they can share their experiences through the professional platforms for their professional competences.

How to Develop Teacher's Autonomy

Development of democratic environment : India is the solitary country in the world where greater importance is attached to the teacher. Schools are places where democratic ideals such as equality, freedom, justice are instilled in individuals. Teachers are the ultimate instruments of change. For democracy to continue to thrive, children must be taught to value it as a way of life. The necessary skills for building democracy do not develop automatically in children. Teaching democracy means preparing children to become citizens who will preserve and shape democracy in the future. Therefore democracy should be a key aspect in every form of education at the earliest age possible. Children should learn about taking responsibility for their action. These educational outcomes are only possible through action. While key concepts of democracy should be understood by children, living and acting in a democratic environment is the only and the best exercise. Schools, institutions, children's clubs and organizations and even families that respect democratic principles and have real democratic structures function as the best models to help children learn what democracy is about. The qualities like tolerance, acceptance,

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a wider view, global awareness, reflection and equal justice rests within the teachers to shape the child in all possible ways to face this competitive world of today. Teachers' beliefs, thoughts and decisions on educational matters occupy the major part of the psychological context of teaching process. Teacher educators should democratize their pedagogy so that their trainees learn understandings and skills of democratic practice throughout their training experience. The appropriate balance between critical components skills, knowledge and dispositions, on one hand, and an open, dynamic and critically engaged curriculum, and teaching and learning conceptual framework, on the other hand has not yet been attained.

Development of accountability : A successful teacher is one who is able to foster creative thinking, develop skills and instills a desire for lifelong learning among students. In any society a teacher has a very important and respectable place because teaching is a noble profession. Teaching as a profession is different from other professions because of its multitude of dimensions. Teachers are the largest professional group engaged in human development activities. As the teachers are torch bearer of a learning society, so they have to aware the learner to face the challenges in this era of Globalization, Privatization and Liberalization along with the technical advancements in educational sector. Therefore a teacher has to be realistic and to forgo the transmission model of teaching, and the reflective, committed and accountable to the profession and have to multidimensional. For the educational development the teachers need to be professionally equipped with various skills, competencies, commitment, determination and accountability to give his best.

Encouragement to teacher : Encouragement is one of the most powerful tools a teacher can use. It is often the key to unlocking untapped potential in children, especially those who have trouble learning. Below is a look at the power of encouragement and some simple steps that parents and educators can take to encourage students during the learning process.

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Administrative Provisions : Administrative provision should be made to develop autonomy of teachers. Teacher should be clearly aware in which areas they have autonomy to take decisions. There should be a policy for teachers autonomy at the administrative and policy levels. Knowledge of limits and use of autonomy within their boundaries.

Teachers Empowerment : Teachers play a vital role in imparting education and shaping the life of students. Their role cannot be overlooked as they contribute maximum towards a students learning. Empowering teachers means empowering them with right knowledge, skills, and competence that would enable them to meet the demanding and challenging needs of the ever changing society. This should be a continuous process where they should develop and gain lifelong experiences which will give them encouragement and support and engage in continuous professional development. An empowered teacher has enough resources and freedom to provide every student with the education that they deserve. The importance of being empowered can also be illustrated by its role in increasing teacher motivation, improving problem-solving skills and making students empowered.

Conclusion : Also in field of professional autonomy, the idea of reflective journal sharing among teachers has produced qualitative results. Research by North (1987) has suggested that the journal given to teachers were not only for personal reflections but were also for sharing ideas and stories. This helped them to develop a body of local knowledge, or what has called "practitioner's lore" (p. 23)-a body of practical knowledge that arises from the network of teachers. Dimensions of teacher autonomy The various dimensions of teacher autonomy as proposed by McGrath (2000) assumes overall three senses. Firstly, the self-defined professional action. Secondly, the self-defined professional development and thirdly, the freedom of control by any other institute or person. However, some of the researchers like Smith (2000) has ruled out the autonomy proposed in terms of

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professional actions and freedom of control. These researchers have strongly stressed out over the self-defined professional development of teachers. The one who is aware of his/her pedagogical knowledge and skills in terms of 4 Ws (Who, Why, When and Where) and 1 H (How) through teaching practices acquired self-consciously (Tort-Moloney, 1997). This most accepted second dimension of autonomy comes from learner autonomy, which enables the teachers in providing professional independence of behavioral teaching.

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