



## COMMUNITY TEACHING: PROPOSITION, ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES

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### ABSTRACT

*In a discussion with Lin Norton, a Professor from Liverpool Hope University USA, I developed three scintillating similarities; 'teacher like a guide', 'student like a traveler and 'education like liberating force'. The symbols are common but reflect manifold connotations. We are using such symbols in academia but the analysis of the practice and the outcome simply reflects big naught, let's say very feeble outcome, which we can seldom take to be authentic. Most of us, in our academic institutions, simply teach, boast ourselves to be good teachers, to be authority on the subject, pedantic professors and great researchers but to the receiver's party i.e. the students, it echoes just like an empty vessel. Another tribe boasting to be learner centered, updated and democratic believes in 'Learning' and they talk of the learner centered teaching. They say 'we care for learners'. Our teaching is to the benefit of everyone from the first to the last person of the class. It is perfectly right and command greater applaud and tribute.*

### INTRODUCTION: -

My submission in this paper is that we should focus our teaching not only to one generation, one class, or one institution but to the generation and the generation beyond generation. Teaching and learning is an exercise in academic disciplines and the schools of scholars. Boyer (1990) proposes four domains of scholarship: "Discovery, Integration, Application and teaching." (cit. by Anne Hofmeyer et al.). Discovery relates the traditional concept of subject research. Integration involves making connections across the disciplines and placing specialties in larger context. Application not only relates to applying the disciplines and

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placing specialties in larger context but goes beyond the application of research by developing vital interactions where one informs the other.

‘Teaching’ concerns with educating and attracting future scholars by communicating the excitement at the heart of significant knowledge. “Learning is a process of knowledge construction rather than knowledge reproduction” (Maclellum, 2001). I strongly believe that learning for the sake of learning or simply gaining knowledge (*swantah sukhay*) is of no use. Learning should be disseminated in geometrical progression day by diem. It flourishes only when it is shared with others. Learning should be shared with the public at large only then it can approve the tests of time. We know that bad paths make good drivers so the use of learning on the jerky murky streets of society can lead a teacher to be a stronger being. The term “teacher” to me, refers not those people only who are teaching within the boundaries of any academic institution, equipped with requisite educational qualification and on the pay rolls under any academic administration. Certainly those are teachers but the concept may be expanded to one and all in society who can disseminate knowledge. It is said that a human being keeps on learning incessantly from the cradle to the grave, so anybody can be a teacher. With this assumption, I propose the concept of community teaching and community learning. Community learning relates with the masses. It may be termed as the mass academic communication. In community learning and teaching our target group is not defined and confined. The unit is not prescribed. The flow of communication may lead to one illiterate and the other donning the rarest of the degrees. Learning teaching environment in the twenty first century bases itself on access and use of information. It is communication which demonstrates understanding, sharpens creativity of the participants, inculcates the habit of critical thinking, embellishes them with the faculty of sound judgment making, problem solving and coordinating, organizing and developing soft skills. It caters to the development of ability for lifelong learning sustained by intellectual curiosity.

My basic hypothesis in this discussion is teaching to all and sundry at the informal level where the flow of knowledge becomes seamless. No formal academic; teaching learning paraphernalia is required for this purpose, only our insight and self motivation can work. We can start teaching the masses where and when it stands suitable. Suppose a person is trained in science and technology he /she can take up the issues of general technology and basic sciences, and can update the people around the people around with the recent knowledge in the field concerned. Being a management professional one can share the management skills to the different audience around. Management skills may be applied in any circumstances and at any level without any established and archetypical stake and resources. Managerial facts and issues can be shared with the family members, domestic helps, men in streets and those whom we interface in our day today life. People from the legal profession can share civil information and enlighten the masses on the legal issues and related facts. Those from the medicines are always at demand, and they can share the issues of sanitation, public health and

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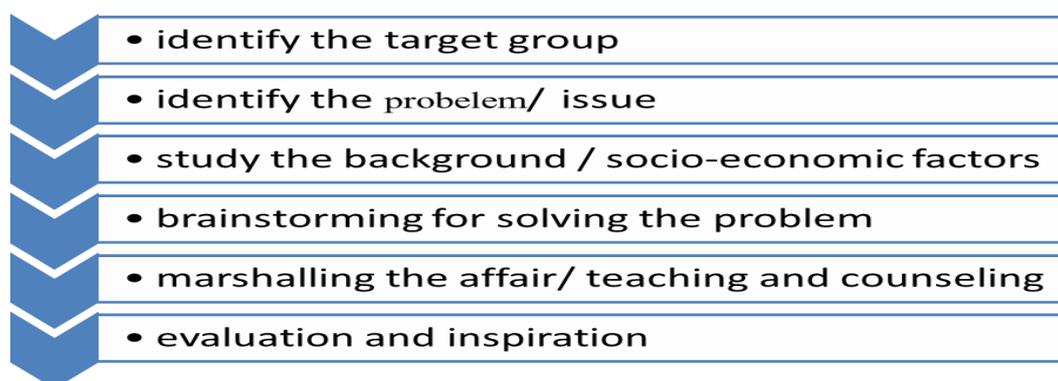
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first aid to the public. Notwithstanding these core professions and professionals even a common citizen can enlighten the people around with the rational facts, and motivate them towards the investigation of issues and facts and tackling the circumstances in daily chores of life rationally and logically. Every citizen of the world is a teacher and every member of society is a student. It is the chance and the time that chastens the ability and creates favorable climate for interaction.

Now question arises, how to perform these practices of teaching? How to approach those who fall under the 'junk surface'. I use the term junk surface because it is generally seen that the minds of the target group in the proposition mooted by me is not always receptive. Here we should have to resort to the spirit of an aggressive salesperson. We should use every facet of business communication for adhering the 'community' to attract their attention. Here the teaching turns to be communication. Generally for successful communication at any level the formula of C3+ YPV is applicable. By C3, I mean clarity conciseness and coherence, and by "Y", I suggest "You Point of View".

In the context of Community Teaching, I put "You Point of View" at the top, because in this case there is a deep trench between the parties of sender and receiver. We should shed our condescension and first weigh the level of the learners. After that we should select the mode and thought accordingly. Clarity and conciseness are the passwords of any successful communication, Coherence is the spirit of methodological attempt in any field of life. In community teaching we should avoid the use of difficult and bombastic words, redundancy, malapropism and jargons etc. We should develop a flair for simple and popular words. Our capacity of telling the difficult things in easy way wins the heart of the learners and they easily get motivated for their tasks. It also brushes up the junk surface and communication barrier.

For diluting our problem we can also take resort to action research. For the pedagogical action research in our community teaching we can adopt the following process.





## Issues and Challenges:

Identifying the target group is rather more essential issue. We cannot approach everybody, and neither can we motivate everybody to join the community teaching campaign. When we analyze the audience and receptors of our innovative plans we find that there are three types of people, first those who accept everything without any logic and reasoning and leave the schedule in between without any consideration of the time devoted in past and without any expectation of the palmy days to come after the end of the programmed; secondly we have a category of audience that in the mice-spirit keeps on cutting (criticizing) everything; good or bad. As third instance we find the group of those people who accept our plan after a proper meditation, after 'weighing and considering everything'. To persuade the people of all the categories we need to hone up our communication skills. We should steep ourselves to the level of the takers for successfully communicating to them. By doing so we can identify the problem areas and issues concerned. While taking up the problems we must take into account the socio- economic factors very carefully. In the present socio-economic pressures most of the time a person behaves and reacts unexpectedly.

We can peer review and discuss the problem faced during the motivating of the target audience. Here action research is applicable. We know that "action research is action and research. Action research combines twin aims in a single process" (Dick, 2000). At the end when our programmed concludes we certainly get the pleasure of 'finding honey in rock'. It seems freshening and cool. We would analyze, evaluate and disseminate it. We should also share our findings with the fellow colleagues and motivate them to adopt the same in their locality.

At the successful completion of the slot of community teaching with any community we should:

- (i) Blend the content, teaching activity and medium for canon formation.
- (ii) Co-relate the tailored subject matter with the real life problems.
- (iii) Design collaborative activities with multiple channels for communication
- (iv) Develop case studies.
- (v) Share our experience with our colleagues.

## CONCLUSION:

By community teaching we can get optimum benefit from the very common and visibly insignificant resources. It can be taken as an alternative system of education. It can empower the disadvantaged and the underprivileged especially urban poor, rural poor, tribal, poor, women and marginalized from any point of view. It can develop appropriate skills leading to

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gainful employment in collaboration with the local industry. By community teaching those who have been blessed with the privilege of receiving higher and professional education can beautify the life of their poor brethren and strengthen them for achieving the skills for employment and self employability. Community teaching is for the community, of the community and by the community in the form of alternative system education.

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