

## **Meaning of Teacher Thinking in Curriculum Transaction**

### **Introduction**

Teacher education programmes are designed to prepare teachers at different stages of schooling. The programmes are different at pre-school, elementary and secondary stages and also in the areas of special group of children, health and physical education and the like. These programmes are designed to provide a professional touch through their course components. Field experience, for example, that is woven around other components opens the space for trainees for professional engagement. Precisely, internship is a significant and inseparable part of the course that provides the much needed space for field experience. Infact, field experience is the pathway that opens the door to professionalism. Field situations provide the teacher trainee the needed context to participate a variety of activities like seeing the school from the position of a teacher, meeting and discussing with teachers, observing school assembly and classroom teaching, conducting classroom teaching, organizing student activities, critical reflections on school activities, schedules and staff meetings, and similar activities. Pre-internship and internship are the specifically designed pathways for the trainees to gain field experiences. Pre-internship is an academic programme that exposes the teacher trainees to the various day-to-day activities of the school so that they get familiarised with the school programmes. Pre-internship is of shorter duration that enlists specific activities for the participation of the trainees so that they develop the

needed 'readiness' to participate in the subsequent internship programme.

As part of the pre-internship programme, I along with the D. Ed students of DIET, Kollam, Kerala were on a visit to a near by Government Primary School. The DIET, Kollam is located at Kottarakara town. I took the trainees to the Primary School for illustrating the process of teaching English at Primary class through a demonstration lesson. The lesson was planned for class IV students. Though the school has both English and Malayalam medium students, the demonstration lesson on English was planned for Malayalam medium students. Usually, both the mediums - English and Malayalam - are housed in separate classrooms. However, in this case, teachers informed us that the students of both the groups of class IV sit in the same classroom. Situations where there are large number of students of English and Malayalam medium exist in the same class, the normal tendency is to create two divisions of students of the same class. It is quite interesting to find that it is a hybrid of both English and Malayalam medium students housed in the same classroom of IV for academic engagement. It appears that this is the prevailing trend across schools in the State. When I explained my intention to interact only with the Malayalam group on the process of English teaching, the teachers of the school insisted on interacting with both the groups together. The teachers further added that 'the Malayalam group has merely 5 students, and they do not respond

to your queries and rather prefer to maintain their silence. Your effort will be a failure'. On checking, it was revealed that class IV Malayalam group consists of 10 students and I proceeded to perform the demonstration lesson with the same group.

### **The Process of Demonstration**

The process of demonstration was formulated around action song, discussion, miming, colouring and drama presentation. The teacher trainees participated in the demonstration as observers. I started the demonstration lesson by interacting with the children in English. I was very careful in using simple language suitable to the children's level. Even in my presence, these 10 children were in their natural form keeping busy in their own way. For example, one girl was searching something, Two of them were fighting each other. Another one was on his own world and so on. I asked these children to sit close by and they were seated on two benches. I initiated a dialogue with the children by pointing to the duster on the table and asking, "What is this? Why is it on the table? Is not it dusty? Who will keep it on the black board?" One girl volunteered and she hung it on the corner of the black board. I continued by asking, "Is the fan working? Where is the switch? Who will switch it on?" I asked one boy to switch it on. When I found that he was unable to reach the switch, I helped him to stand on the chair to reach it. Then, I asked them to arrange their articles like bags, books, etc. I noticed at that time that two boys were not listening to what is happening in the class. I asked their names and started gradually attracting the attention of children. I asked them to guess my name and gave them a clue by saying that my name starts with the sound "su". One child said, "Sundaram". I replied, sorry. Another said, "Sundaran". I said that it

is not correct. A little girl stood up and said, "Suresh". I smiled and said "thank you" and shook hand with her. Then I said, I am Suresh and told them to give the little girl a clap. I spent almost 10 minutes with the children by this time and asked them whether they like songs? All of them said "Yes". Then I invited them to come and stand around me. I started the song, 'I am eating, I am eating, I am eating just now'... with action and gestures. It is an action song related to the activities at home. Though all of them appear very much interested to participate in the action song, they do not seem to have that much confidence.

Then I moved on to the occupations of the parents, a component of the lesson. I asked them to tell the occupation of their parents. One boy told that his father is a carpenter. I wrote the word "carpenter" on the blackboard. Another child said that his father is a driver. A girl said her father is a tailor. Children, in turn continued to name the occupation of their father. I wrote all the occupations mentioned by the children on the blackboard. I, then, mentioned that I am a teacher and what is my work? Children said, teaching and in the same way, they stated the work of other occupations. I kept on writing the words on blackboard as carpenter - arpenry, driver - driving, tailor - tailoring, teacher - teaching, farmer - farming, cook - cooking. I, continued on by asking the question, what is the work of a shoe maker? They did say, shoe making. We continued this activity for some more time and then, turned to miming. First, I started miming as a driver and then, all children started acting as drivers. One could watch moments of joy among these children and they continued miming various occupations. Subsequently, they participated in Malayalam folk song by dividing them into two groups. The folk song is structured in such a

form where one group asks questions and other responds with answers. For example, the group one sings- “What are you doing at home?” Doing at home? the group two sings - “We are washing at home.” Washing at home.» Group one sings - “How is washing? How is washing? Group two sings - “Washing is like this. Washing is like this. Group one marches towards the other group and returns by singing and Group two too makes the same movement while singing the reply song. The children continue to get actively involved in the action song and their behaviour reflects their enthusiasm. Following this the children’s attention was directed to the idea of helping others. I asked them whether they like to help others. I asked them, do you help your mother? I told them the story of an old man who seeks help to cross the road. I asked them, what help does the old man need? What will you do if the old man asks your help? Children started responding to this question in Malayalam and also in English. It was quite striking to find that these Malayalam medium students were making efforts to speak in English, but they tried to express their ideas using broken words. It was a good sign.

Later, I lead them to the activity of colouring the illustrations. They open the text and locate the black and white illustrations of various activities. I tried to introduce them to these illustrations by asking questions; What do you see in this picture? Who are they? What are they doing? While introducing the characters of illustrations, children were asked to colour the illustrations. During the process I interact with each child in tune with their reflections on the illustrations subsequently, I turned their attention to the idea of drama and introduced them to certain related basic concepts such as stage, curtain, actors, characters through brief discussion on

each. Then I started narrating the story of shoe maker with actions to involve the children in the story. A few of them volunteered to act out the story. This opened the opportunity for children to actively participate in the process.

### **Patterns that Matter**

My reflections on interactions with the children tells that the conditions we set for them to interact and involve are what matter. Whether it is action song or discussion on occupations or miming or helping others or colouring or drama presentation, the activities teacher creates set the conditions for the involvement of children. Children’s actions and talks during the interactions, obviously reveal their psychological investment in the process of learning. Psychological investment seeks that children’s attention, interest, motivation, ability and the related behaviours are invested in the process of learning and development. Children’s behavioural patterns well articulate their psychological investment in learning situations. My experience in this situation tells that the children’s participation in terms of their actions; talk, laughter, spontaneous reactions, the type of responses they make and they like to speak of their active involvement in the process. It means that what the teacher does for the learning of children reflects the teacher’s thought on activities, engagement, nature of interactions, learner involvement for learning and development of children. It means that teacher thinking is a defining factor in teaching-learning situations. Obviously, we need thinking teachers and teacher thought is the defining root of teacher’s professionalism. My inner voice tells that professionalism of teacher is what matters, if the concern is, for the learning and development of all children, and certainly not for a few who can.