
UNIT 6 ROLES OF A TEACHER

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6.1 INTRODUCTION

Every person performs a whole set of social roles. A teacher assumes the roles of a worker, husband/wife, parent, a member of his/her religious group, and a citizen. In describing the roles of teachers, however, we shall not deal with various roles performed by teachers as persons, but only look at the roles performed by them as teachers. Thus, it is relevant here to examine the process of teaching in its complexities.

Teaching is a complex activity. It is a process in which students are provided with a controlled environment for interaction with the purpose to promote a definite learning in them. The environment provided to students is constituted by the content, the teacher who organizes and provides specific learning experiences, different ways and means of providing learning experiences and the school setting. All these components, called instructional components, interact in an interdependent and coordinated manner, in order to bring about the pre-specified desirable changes in the students. It is this interaction between human and non-human components that makes the process of teaching-learning a highly complex activity.

Conventionally, the word 'teaching' denoted a teacher-centered activity in which teacher imparted knowledge and students passively received it. The teacher's presence was very important in the whole process and he/she had an authoritative and unassailable role in the class. In modern era teaching is viewed in a broader perspective. Teaching is viewed as a comprehensive process, and there has been a tremendous change in the way of understanding teaching and a teacher's roles. Teaching is conceptualized as an active interactive process that goes on between the consciously designed environment and the student, (where teachers may or may not be present), with a definite purpose. It includes all the activities organized by a teacher to bring about learning, be it inside or outside a classroom, with or without the presence of the teacher. One of the analyses of teaching describes the whole process as comprising three different stages:

Pre-teaching → Teaching/Learning Process → Post-teaching

Pre-teaching consists essentially of the planning of a lesson. The planning of lesson needs to be seen in broader terms, not merely the designing of a lesson plan. Planning includes identifying the objectives to be achieved in terms of students learning, the strategies and methods to be adopted, use of teaching aids and so on. The second stage includes the

execution of the plan, where learning experiences are provided to students through suitable modes and evaluation of students learning is done. Post-teaching includes inferring from performance evaluation of students the extent of students' achievements and problems, reflecting on the performance of self and also on deciding on changes in the way of proceeding with the entire process of teaching-learning if required.

As is obvious from the above analysis, the roles that teacher has to play at different stages are different ranging from a designer, to a participant, to a decision maker etc. In this unit we will delve deeper into these roles giving specific illustrative situations.

6.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through the unit, you would be able to:

- define the concept of instruction;
- identify different roles of a teacher in the entire process of instruction;
- explain the role of a teacher as an instructional input;
- explain the role of a teacher as a manager;
- explain the role of a teacher as a facilitator and counsellor;
- explain the role of a teacher in the community as an extension work of school responsibilities;
- point out the specific role of a teacher in each of the particular situations presented to him/her; and
- analyse the multitude of roles of a teacher, in the complex process of instruction.

6.3 ROLE OF THE TEACHER AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL INPUT

In order to understand the role of a teacher as an instructional input, the concepts instruction and input are briefly explained:

Instruction is the complex process by which learners are provided with a deliberately designed environment to interact with, keeping in focus pre-specified objective of bringing about specific desirable changes. Whether instruction goes in a classroom, laboratory, outdoors or library, this environment is specifically designed by a teacher so that students interact with certain specific environmental stimuli, like natural components (outdoor), information from books, certain equipment (laboratory) etc. Learning is directed in pre-determined directions to achieve certain pre-specific goals. This does not, however, mean that, in the pre-determined environment no learning other than what a teacher has decided upon as instructional objectives does not take place. The variety of experiences that students go through with a teacher, among themselves provide learning opportunities.

Input essentially means all those elements which help the process to start and which gets transformed into a product as a result of the process. The product or the transformed input is the output of the process. These concepts are essentially borrowed from industry, where raw materials are the inputs, which go through a process (such as manufacturing) and are transformed into the finished products of the industry which become the outputs. For example, in a soap factory the chemicals and other ingredients are the raw materials that are the inputs in the process and they get transformed as the soap/the output by following a pre-determined process. In this illustration, the worker who puts in his labour is also an input.

In the context of such a complex process of instruction, let us analyse the teacher's role in the following situation.

- i) A teacher introduces a lesson.
- ii) A teacher explains a concept.
- iii) A teacher clarifies doubts of students with suitable illustration.

- iv) A teacher draws a diagram while explaining.
- v) A teacher puts questions to students.

In all the above situations a teacher is a participant in the process, a part of the stimuli provided to students to bring about learning. In other words, teacher is directly involved in teaching-learning process, as a part of the instructional input. The other inputs are the content that gets transacted across students, mode of transaction as used by a teacher and other audio-visual aids used by the teacher to promote effective learning.

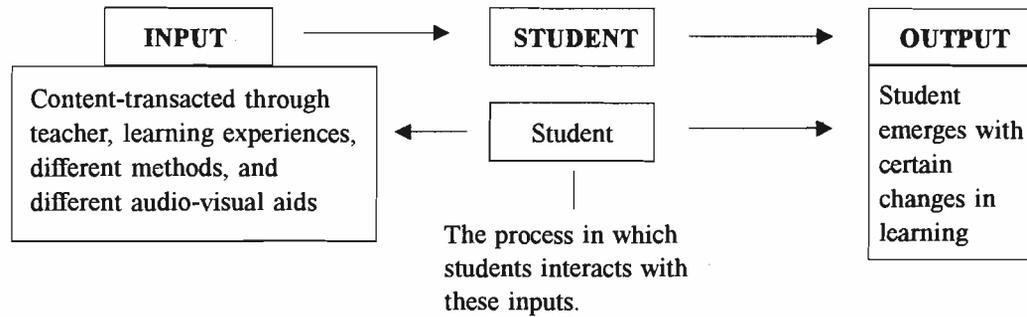


Fig. 6.1: Teaching - An Interactive Function

The Fig. 6.1 makes it clear that there is a face-to-face interaction between students and the teacher. In fact this is what is commonly understood as teaching - an interactive function.

Check Your Progress

- Notes:
- a) Write your answers in the space given below.
 - b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1. What is the role played by a teacher when he/she takes his/her students for a study tour?

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2. Explain the role of a teacher as an instructional input in 5-8 sentences.

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6.4 ROLE OF THE TEACHER AS A MANAGER

A manager is basically at the helm of any organization. She/he has to take decisions, control the situation, be spontaneous and resourceful to change decisions for better functioning of the organization if situation so demands, etc. We all are familiar with managers of a company, of a school or a college, etc. Let us apply our knowledge of managerial competencies in the case of instruction, and see how a teacher performs the role of a manager.

Teacher—Role and Development Teachers, like executives in other settings, are expected to provide leadership to students and to coordinate a variety of activities as they and students work interdependently to accomplish academic and social goals of schooling. Teacher's role as a manager is concerned with all the three phases of teaching namely, pre-teaching, teaching and post-teaching, which have already been discussed in the introduction to this unit. Let us see teacher's role in different phases separately for easy comprehension.

6.4.1 Role of the Teacher in the Pre-teaching Phase

Pre-teaching phase essentially comprises the activity of planning teaching-learning process. Planning is actually a simplification of a complex process. The following are the specific activities involved in the pre-teaching phase:

- i) Analyzing the content.
- ii) Deciding on the portion of the content to be selected for instruction.
- iii) Deciding on instructional objectives for the chosen content on the basis of the knowledge about:
 - a) level of students
 - b) their socio-cultural context
 - c) time available.
- iv) Studying different learning experiences that are suitable for achieving the set objectives.
- v) Deciding on the best alternative from a repertoire of learning experiences and deciding the best sequencing of these, to bring about pre-specified learning. For example, a lecture followed by a discussion, followed by showing some visual aids and again followed by a discussion, etc.
- vi) Deciding the method of evaluating learning, (a written test, oral test, a performance test etc.) and the specific item of evaluation (question in case of oral and written tests, aspects to be observed and assessed in case of performance test).

In these above activities, the teacher is not participating in the instructional process. She/he is an outsider and a decision maker, and a designer of the way. The process of instruction has to be organized. In all these situations, the teacher's role is strictly speaking that of manager, and not of an input although management is an important input in effective implementation of different activities.

6.4.2 Role of the Teacher in the Teaching Phase

In the earlier section, we have seen how the teacher becomes a part of the teaching-learning process, and is identified as an instructional input. In the following paragraph you will see how a teacher plays the role of a manager during the instructional/teaching-learning process. Examine the following situations:

- i) Sensing that students are becoming bored, a teacher decides to stop teaching
- ii) Realizing that a student has not understood a point fully, a teacher decides to simplify the explanation with more examples.
- iii) In order to make a lesson more interesting, a teacher decides to narrate a related story.
- iv) As students start making too much noise and could not be managed by a teacher, she decides to let them go out and play.
- v) As the prepared plan does not prove effective to make students understand the point, a teacher decides to deviate from the plan and tries out another sequencing of learning experiences.

In all these situations, a teacher is part of the instructional system, but is NOT PARTICIPATING or is NOT AN INSTRUCTIONAL INPUT. He/she is, however, making quick decisions in between the process, with the objective of being effective. In other words, in order to bring about meaningful learning, a teacher, with his/her resourcefulness and spontaneity is deciding

to change the mode of operation, to suit to the needs of learners. In these situations, a teacher is functioning as a designer/manager/decision maker. In fact he/she is at a transitional stage or shifting from the role of a participant/as instructional input to a different mode as a decision maker. This shift can be understood clearly from the Fig. 6.2.

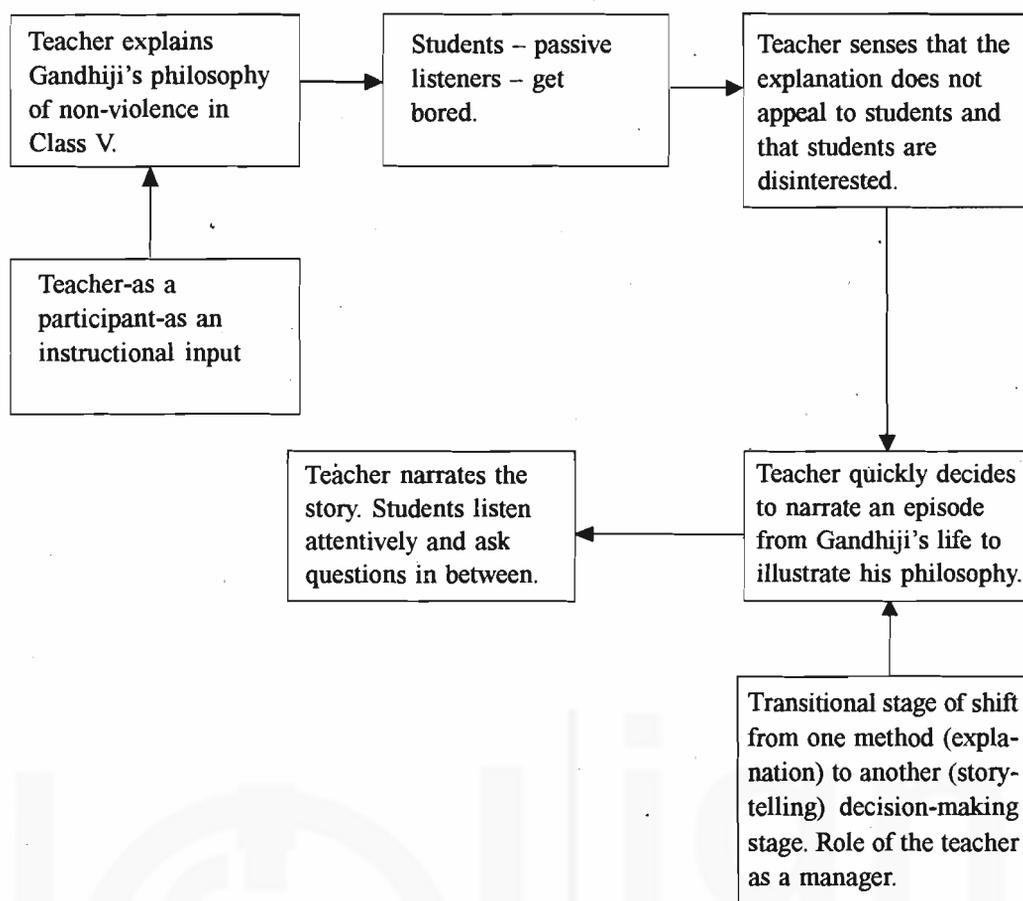


Fig. 6.2: Teacher as a Disciplinarian

You all must be familiar with such comments that people make: “she can manage the class very well” or “students are well disciplined in his class”. In such situations it is obvious that a teacher is effectively managing students with alternative solutions to problems as and when they emerge in the class. These alternative solutions depends on many factors like, age group of students, physical fitness of the group (if they are not interested in a class after a physically tiring PT period), general climate of the school (if annual day is approaching, or fun fair is due, and students are in a fun-making mode) etc. An effective teacher would succeed in maintaining discipline and managing students well without losing his/her cool and at the same time the confidence of students. A lot of knowledge of the psychology of child/adolescent is required by teacher for being an effective manager in such situations. A teacher has to be empathetic, tactful, patient and tolerant.

6.4.3 Role of the Teacher in the Post-teaching Phase

Post-teaching phase, as described in the introduction of this section, is the one that involves teacher's activities such as analysing evaluation results to determine students' learning, especially their problems in understanding specific areas, to reflect on the teaching by self, and to decide on the necessary changes to be brought in the system in the next instructional period. Examine the following activities of a teacher:

- i) Teacher analyses the written performance of students (of class III) and realizes that 80% (Class III) have not been able to do single digit multiplication correctly.
- ii) Teacher goes through the plan of the lesson on multiplication and realizes that student's knowledge of addition was presumed, but not revised.

4. What is the role of a teacher:

a) When he/she draws a diagram on the blackboard to clarify a doubt.

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b) When he/she sets question papers.

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c) When he/she decides to repeat a lesson in a different way to make it more clear to his/her students.

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6.5 TEACHER AS A FACILITATOR

To facilitate means, to promote, to help forward, to make easy. Therefore, in the context of instruction, a teacher's role would be to promote learning, to help students to develop more and more by learning, by providing them a conducive environment to interact with, in order to bring about learning and further development. In this role as a facilitator of learning, student's role of interacting and moving forward is emphasised, and the teacher's role is in the background as a guide and a facilitator different from what we have already seen in section 6.3, i.e. as an instructional input.

To explain further, when a teacher is part of the environment in which students are learning, or is participating in the process of instruction, he/she is an instructional input. But when he/she is providing certain guidance in order to bring about learning of students by way of their interaction with relevant instructional components, she/he is a facilitator of learning. Look at the following pair of situations.

- i) Teacher gives a lecture on importance of keeping the surroundings of our homes clean.
- ii) Teacher shows paper cuttings/slides/video films exposing dirty surroundings and their negative impact on human life and initiates a discussion on students observations- finally leading to importance of keeping the surroundings of homes clean.

and

- i) Teacher lectures on the phenomenon of change of colour in a flower induced by difference in intensity of sunlight.
- ii) Teacher guides students to do a project work on the phenomenon of colour change in a rose, induced by difference in intensity of sunlight. Teacher does not tell them about the change of colour, but instructs regarding what is to be observed in the plant in its natural settings at different times of the day and night and the way their observations have to be recorded. She later holds discussion on their observations, finally arriving at the phenomenon of influence of sunlight on the colour of the flower.

In the above pair of situations, the roles of a teacher are distinctly different in the two situations. In situation No. 1, of both pairs, learning is based on what the teacher explains, or it is a teacher-centered method followed, where students' role is minimum. In other words, teacher's role is that of an instructional input. But in situation No. 2, of both the pairs, learning is by means of students interaction with specially designed environment of visuals and discussion (as in the first case) or in natural situation - observation and recording followed by discussions (as in situation No. 2 of the second pair). The sequences organized are student centered, where the focus is on what students observe, understand, record or discuss, with teacher guiding at required stages, to FACILITATE learning involved in the process.

There are different methods of promoting learning. Some are student-centered - like library work, project work, experimentation, home assignment etc. where major focus is on how students organize their steps of learning by interacting with different environmental components like printed matter, natural realities etc. In all such methods teacher guides students as to how to go about learning sequences, thus facilitating their learning. In other words in all student-centered methods teacher is a facilitator and not a participant. Here are more examples:

- i) After a brief initiation into the philosophy of John Dewey, the teacher gives a list of references available in school library, and asks students to write an essay on the topic.
As their work is in progress, students meet the teacher and receive guidance to move forward in the task assigned to them.
- ii) Students are asked to collect samples of leaf formation, preserve, draw them and discuss in the class, with teacher's guidance.
- iii) Students are asked to sow seeds in a pot, and observe in different light situations, ranging from absence of light to full sunlight to artificial lighting, with reporting the development of different at stages and discussions with the teacher.

So far, we have seen the roles of a teacher as an instructional input, a manager, and a facilitator. There are many more roles which a teacher performs. These we will discuss in the next sections.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

5. Explain the role of a teacher as a facilitator of learning as different from that of an instructional input.

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6. What is the role of the teacher when:

a) He/She guides student during their project work?

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b) He/She corrects a write-up developed by a student for a debating competition?

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6.6 TEACHER AS A COUNSELLOR

The role of the teacher as a counsellor is quite different from other roles described so far. To counsel is to give advice, according to dictionary, although it is more than mere advising.

In the context of a school, the teacher is the counsellor and the student either approached the teacher when she/he has a problem, which cannot be solved by self, or the teacher senses, the problem and offers help to the student to solve the problem.

Teacher as a counsellor addresses not only problems related to school, studies etc. but also those related to friends, family, health, etc.

The most important attribute of a teacher to be an effective counsellor is his/her sensitivity in identifying students with problems. This is because, in a school set up, students seldom approach teachers with their problems to get any help, as they are apprehensive about disclosing the intimate nature of their problems. It is only with serious effort that a sensitive teacher after identifying a student with some problem can establish rapport with him/her and make him/her come out with the problem that he/she is confronted with. After having understood the nature of the problem, the role of the teacher is to help a student realize his/her potential to solve it. Counselling works on the principle that every individual, if guided properly, can realize the strengths of self to solve problems of self. Hence, a teacher does not have always to give solutions. What he can do is to make clear the different paths to solving the problem and in the process makes a student move forward in solving the problem. Examine the following situations:

- a) A sensitive teacher observes that a student is inattentive and very sad in most classes. She calls the student alone and opens a dialogue. After two or three sessions, problem comes out, the student's grandmother to whom she was attached, has passed away and this had made a great difference in her life. The teacher empathizes with her and talks about life and death in a very objective way and then suggest the different ways that she (the student) could engage herself while at home. The teacher also helps the student to think about the hard reality of absence of someone dear and to come out of the negative feelings saying that: "Yes, you can do it, every one has the inner strength to face death of a dear person, though it is very painful". With many such sessions, a student emerges as a reconciled person, overcoming her sadness, and starts to be attentive and alert in the class.
- b) A student Sheela, who according to the teacher is a bright and hard working, is not doing well in tests. The teacher senses that there is some problem and opens an intimate dialogue with her. After spending some time the teacher understands the problem of Sheela becoming over anxious about tests, doesn't sleep well before tests commence, therefore is unable do well in tests. The teacher starts with importance of mental health for doing well in general, and in tests especially, indicating how sufficient hours of sleep are indispensable for performance. Then she goes on to indicate the different ways of relaxing during days of test, which is essential for doing well in tests. Apart from all these, the teacher boosts Sheela's morale by pointing out her inherent capabilities by using which she can emerge as a very successful person.

It is apparent that in the above situations there are certain attributes in the teacher, which make him or her an effective counsellor.

They are:

- being a keen observant
- being sensitive
- being empathetic (being able to see the problem from the student's perspective)
- being objective

And apart from all these, being loving and friendly to win the confidence of students so that they would open up is also an attribute in a teacher.

6.7 TEACHER IN THE COMMUNITY

The concept of role as we have seen in the introduction, involves both behaviour and expectations regarding behaviour. To ask, "What is a teacher's role in the community?" is atleast in part to ask, "What are the social expectations that the community has of a teacher?"

When we examine teacher's role in the community in the Indian context, certain ground realities have to be kept in mind. They are:

- i) We still have poor enrolment and retention at primary level.
- ii) Our literacy rate is very low.
- iii) Our population growth is frightening.
- iv) Economically we are backward.
- v) Women's literacy is very low.
- vi) Our awareness about health is very poor.
- vii) Majority of Indians are rural people and are farmers.

In the above context, a teacher has a very dynamic role in the community. The various aspects of this role include:

- i) One of the major roles is to promote the importance of education among parents particularly those in rural areas so that they enroll their children in schools.
- ii) Teacher has to be part of the adult education programmes organized to educate adults who have not had an opportunity to go to schools in their childhood.
- iii) Many of our rural folk need awareness programmes regarding vaccination, birth control measures, woman's health during pregnancy and child birth, cleanliness in and outside home, contagious diseases, personal hygiene, etc. Teacher, being an educated person should either directly inform people or lead them to proper sources of information like a doctor.
- iv) The role of teachers in national literacy campaigns goes without saying. In rural areas, it is very relevant to put in whatever effort one can, as a teacher towards literacy programmes.
- v) Teacher, whether in rural or urban setting, is also expected to participate in election work, and census data collection as an educated citizen.
- vi) Community members especially, parents of students expect a teacher to be a model for their children than they are themselves. They want a teacher to avoid any behaviour which might be bad for children to imitate.
- vii) In a rural community where a majority of the adult population is likely to be illiterate, a teacher also has to play the role of a guide, philosopher and a counsellor. Generally, people would approach a teacher for seeking solutions to their problems.

It is evident that the expectations of the community of a teacher, especially in a rural area are manifold. The teacher's role, therefore, is multi-dimensional. It is also obvious that to carry out all these varied roles in a community, a teacher has to have attributes like:

- Service-mindedness
- Selflessness
- Being conscientious
- Not being too money-minded.
- Being loving to people
- Being empathetic and patient
- Being a good listener.

Check Your Progress

- Notes :** a) Write your answers in the space given below.
b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

7. In which activities of the community can a teacher be of great help?

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8. What are the attributes required of a teacher to be effective in community participation.

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6.8 LET US SUM UP

We have, in this unit, discussed the different roles of a teacher in the complex process of instruction, and also in the extended context of the community. To examine the roles within the instructional process, we categorized the process into pre-teaching, teaching and post-teaching phases and discussed the different roles played by a teacher in each phase, giving a few examples.

In the pre-teaching phase, a teacher's role is essentially that of a manager/planner/decision maker. In this phase, teacher decides instructional objectives, ways and means of achieving these objectives, and ways and means of measuring the extent to which the objectives have been achieved. In the teaching phase, or when a teacher actually puts his/her plans into action teacher becomes a component of the entire process. In other words, she/he becomes an instructional input. At the same time he/she also becomes a manager when he/she decides to change his/her plans, or when he/she contemplates on students responses to take the next step of action etc. Apart from these roles teacher also has to play the role of a facilitator whereby he/she remains in the background and actually catalyses or guides learning by students. Here a teacher does not become directly a part of the system but plays an indirect role. Beyond these roles is a very important role of a teacher i.e. that of a counsellor. Whenever a student has any problem, be it something personal or otherwise, academic or emotional, a teacher has to help a student to deal with through adoption of suitable measures and responses.

The above mentioned roles performed by a teacher are in educational setting of a school and students. A teacher has also a role to play in the community — as a model, as a leader and as a participant in various activities like literacy mission, adult education, women's development, health awareness, population control etc.

6.9 UNIT-END ACTIVITIES

1. List a few activities of a teacher:
 - a) as a manager
 - b) as an instructional input
 - c) as a counsellor
 - d) as a community participant.
2. During your school and college days you might have observed the different roles performed by your teachers. Analyse the various roles of five teachers whom you remember and write which were the roles that they most often performed.

6.10 POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

To be taken up in Counselling Session and Peer Groups.

1. What are the specific competencies required of a teacher for performing the roles of a manager, participant, facilitator, counsellor and community participant?

6.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. When a teacher takes his/her students for a study tour, he/she performs the role of a facilitator or a guide.
2. As an instructional input, a teacher organises the teaching-learning environment for transaction of learning experiences. He/she introduces a lesson, explains a concept, clarifies students' doubts and evaluates their performance.
3. A teacher performs various roles in the pre-teaching phase. These roles are different from the roles he/she plays in the post-teaching phase. His/her roles in the pre-teaching phase are basically planning in nature. He/she analyzes the content, decides on the portion of the content to be selected for instruction, decides instructional objectives for the chosen content, sequences the learning experiences, decides on methods and media to be used and decides on the methods of evaluating students performance.

In the post-teaching phase, he/she analyses evaluation results to determine students' learning, evaluates his/her teaching, and decide on the necessary improvement to be brought in his/her teaching.

4.
 - a) When a teacher draws a diagram on the blackboard to clarify a doubt, he/she performs the role of a designer.
 - b) When a teacher sets question papers, he/she performs the role of an evaluator.
 - c) When a teacher decides to repeat a lesson in a different way to make it more clear to his/her students, he/she performs the role of a decision maker.
5. As a facilitator, a teacher helps his/her students to be effective learner by providing them conducive environment to interact with. When he/she participates in the process of instruction or becomes a part of the learning environment, he/she then is an instructional input.
6.
 - a) When a teacher guides students during their project works, he/she performs the role of a guide.
 - b) When a teacher corrects a write-up developed by a student for a debating competition, he/she performs the role of instructional input.
7. A teacher can be of great help to the community in the following activities:
 - Adult Education Programme
 - National Dietary Campaign
 - Family Welfare Programme
 - Election Work
 - Census Data Collection.

8. The following attributes are required of a teacher to be effective in community participation:

- Service-mindedness
- Self-lessness
- Conscientiousness
- A good listener
- Being loving to people
- Being emphathetic and patient.

6.12 SUGGESTED READINGS

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