

SKILLS OF KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The term quality education (academic excellence) has become mantra of present day education system, whether it is elementary, secondary or higher education. Learning, teaching and interaction are basic components of an education process. Higher education plays a key role in society's progress and the economy's development. In the 21st century requirements, quality higher education must aim to develop good, thoughtful, well-rounded and creative individuals. Foundation of human skills reveals, no two persons are similar in behaviour, which leads to human diversity. Education system has 'Learner's Centered Approach.' Learning is a permanent change in behaviour through education, training, practice and experience. Learning is an important exercise for acquisition of knowledge. Due to learning, it is possible to enhance the thinking process. Skill is the specific capacity to physically manipulate objects. In higher education skills have the great importance and utilization of different skills for learning is the need of time. Knowledge acquisition skills are helpful for active participation of students in learning process. Knowledge acquisition skills will assist to make higher education more creative, productive and effective. In the present paper an attempt is made to highlight significant skills required for knowledge acquisition or learning in higher education.

Key words: Acquisition, Higher Education, Knowledge, Learning, Skills.

1.1 Introduction: India has been forecast to be one of the youngest countries in the world gearing towards knowledge-based leadership. National Education Policy-2020 (NEP) is drafted with a long term vision of making India a Global Knowledge Superpower with a focus on intensiveness, participative and holistic approach. The NEP-2020 is aimed to make India a global knowledge superpower with equitable access to the highest-quality education for all learners. All stakeholders in education system viz. students, parents, institution management, faculty members, industry and society on the whole, look for high quality education. As we all know that institutions of higher learning are responsible for creation of new knowledge by engaging in research and systemic / technological / management innovations. In modern time we should choose or develop a "Golden Path" addressing the modern need of education to generate employable human capital as well as achieve the core purpose of the education. Learning is a continuous process while training is a short term task. So learning is an unending exercise. Teaching is a cause while learning is an effect. Visual learning is extremely effective in learning. Moreover online learning has helped in interacting students with teachers in different parts of whole world. Education is something that makes human a rational and civilized – human being.

1.2 Objectives of the Study:

- 1.2.1 To know and understand foundation of human skills.
- 1.2.2 To study learning process and how learning occurs.
- 1.2.3 To highlight skills of knowledge acquisition in higher education.

1.3 Data Base: The present research paper is based on secondary sources of data. It consists of reference books, journals and web-sites. The data has been collected in order to fulfill the objectives of the present paper.

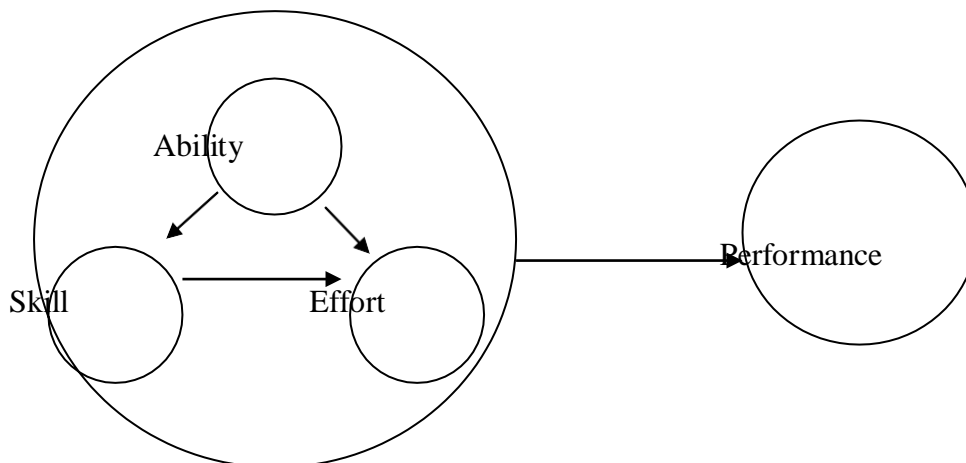
1.4 Foundation of Human Skills: The basic foundation of human skills is the individual differences and this foundation is also accepted in education field. Every person differs not only physically, but more so mentally. Therefore, no two persons are similar in behaviour. Not only two individuals differ but even the twins do differ, though they may look identical. That is all are not equally proficient or efficient in a given field that leads to human diversity. Human skills are abilities to work with understand and motivate other people both individually and in groups.

A skill is an ability to do something, which is learnt through practice. So it is stated that practice

makes a man perfect. Skills are not in born, but learnt by imitation and practice. The basic determinants of human nature or behaviour cover wide variety of factors. Such as personality motives, attitudes, values, beliefs and abilities including the presence of perception and learning. It is because a person’s behavior is greatly and deeply influenced by his perception of objects and people and his learning experience.

Skill is the specific capacity to physically manipulate objects. Skill refers to the quality of the performance. Ability refers to performance on physical and mental tasks. The perfect performance of a given task demands on the right combination of ability, skill and effort. This can be configured as under:

Figure 1: Performance = A + S + E



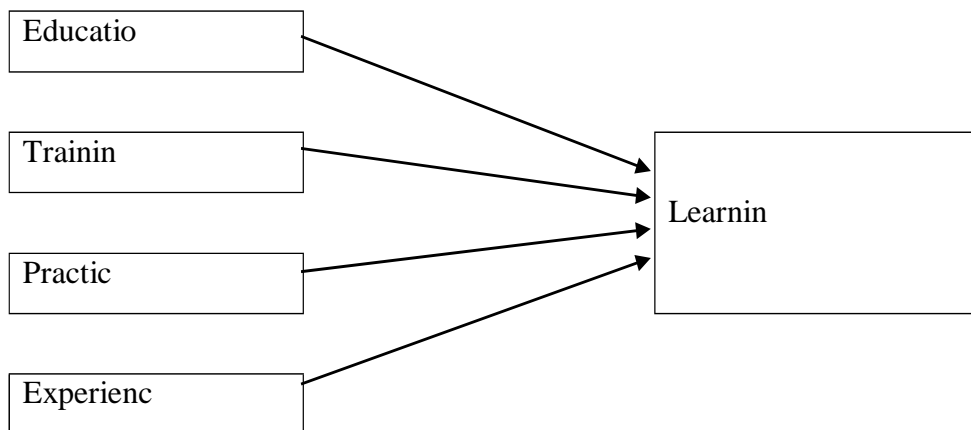
There are various human skills such as reading, writing, learning, speaking, listening, interviewing, training, decision making and so on.

1.5 Learning: “Learning is a relatively permanent change in the ability to exhibit behavior, this change occurs as the result of successful or unsuccessful experience.” This definition of learning has three important components:

- The change in behaviour must be relatively permanent to be considered an example of learning.
- Learning reflects in the potential for a behavior. Learning does not automatically lead to a change in behaviour. We must be sufficiently motivated to translate learning into behaviour.
- Many examples of behavioural change do not reflect the learning process.

Concept of Learning: Learning is one of the important human skills. Learning is not one simple activity. It takes place at different levels of consciousness and in different ways, in everything we do. Moreover, individual people learn in different ways and have their preferred learning styles. Learning is a basic requirement for most forms of behavior including behavior on job. Learning is a permanent change in behaviour through education, training, practice and experience. This is presented with the help of under mentioned figure.

Figure 2: Learning Process



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How Learning Occurs?

There are two broadly held views as to the occurrences of learning viz.: “Traditional View” and “Contemporary View.”

- The Traditional View: It is “Classical Conditioning.” The most historical approach to learning is “Classical Conditioning.” developed by Mr. Iran Pavlov – in his famous experiments with dogs. Classical conditioning is a simple form of learning, in which a conditional response is linked with an unconditioned stimulus.
- The Contemporary View: Traditional view fails to deal with more complex forms of learned behaviour that typify human beings. Hence, contemporary view of learning is as a cognitive process. Accordingly, learning is a cognitive process that involves conscious and active behaviour. The cognitive view suggests certain specific things. (a) People draw on their experiences and use past learning as a basis for present behaviour. (b) People make choices about their behaviour. (c) People recognize the consequences for their choices. (d) People evaluate those consequences and add them to prior learning, which affects future choices.

Conducive Environment for Learning: Conducive Environment for learning is more important in any educational institution. Students must study in stress- free environment. Conducive environment for learning should not be confined to classroom only. Students must have sufficient free time to involve themselves in extracurricular activities such as sports, hobby clubs, drama clubs, music clubs etc. Institute should also encourage students in participating such events. In such an environment students can carry out their studies without any stress and can learn better.

1.6 Skills of Knowledge Acquisition [Learning] in Higher Education: Higher education is the key to India’s future rise as an economic super power. If the country wants to become knowledge super power in the 21st century, this can only be achieved if a large proportion of its working age consists of skilled manpower. Indian higher education system is the third largest higher education systems in the world after USA and china. In India, LPG has created a good synergy and vibration for higher education. Psychologists have generally assumed that some laws govern the learning of all behaviours. Learning is an important exercise for acquisition of knowledge. Under mentioned are skills of knowledge acquisition or learning in higher education.

- **Observation:** Observation is the oldest and more reliable way of knowledge acquisition or learning in higher education. Learning by observation is just copying the people around, who are engaged in higher education activities. We keep our teachers as role models.
- **Critical Thinking:** Critical thinking is also called as analytical or diagnostic skill. Critical thinking skill is one that involves use of scientific approaches or techniques to solve study problems. Critical thinking skill signifies student’s ability to investigate, analyze a study problem logically and objectively. This skill helps to arrive feasible and optimal solution. Critical thinking skill is actually refers to an ability to diagnose and evaluate. This skill helps to the student to establish the “cause & effect” relationship scientifically. Critical thinking skill is also signifies the ability to break down the problem into convenient components and critically examine its dimensions.
- **Making Most of Lectures:** By conducting lectures of highly qualified resource persons and different professional experts for students of higher education along with routine lectures of home faculties create learning more effective. Each lecture has specific value and this will help students to enhance their all round development.
- **Reading:** Reading and remembering are important skills of learning in higher education. The act of reading is essentially a process of thinking. Reading is a concentrative individual act and it is an involvement. There are two basic methods of improving one’s reading viz. : (a) training of eyes and (b) training of mind.
- **Remembering:** Remembering is the stage which occurs after reading. It consists of recalling of what read, and if any omission it leads to recall what omitted and after modification result will become memorable – and this effect of learning.
- **Learning Independently:** Learning independently creates sense of responsibility among the students of higher education when a person attains the maturity stage, he does not remain a more “Copy Cat” he goes behind that an he uses his experience a rich fund of knowledge in solving a given problem. Self experience of learning is the best.
- **Giving an Oral Presentation:** Oral presentation develops self confidence among students. It is an exercise

of dare and act. It is journey of self- discovery. Oral presentation is a self administered test. It is inter-personal (i.e. communication) skill. The student in the modern age needs to be an efficient and effective communicator of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

- **Working in Groups:** Working in groups is helpful to students of higher education for developing “togetherness”. Working in groups is becoming practice in many higher education institutions. For management of different curriculum, co-curriculum and extra curriculum events – by students, group formation is a part and parcel of learning. Group may be small or large but this exercise develops team spirit, comprehensive view and co-operation among the students.
- **Researching Assignments:** Assignment is a task which develops research attitude among students of higher education. It is possible to evaluate work done by others with proper investigation. Researching assignments finds working style and efforts taken by others for completion of a particular task. Self assignment by way of writing is concise and compact that creates deep impact. Learning to write is learning to think.
- **Listening:** Listening is the art of lending your eyes on others. Listening is basic to other skills of reading and writing. The first duty of love is to listen. But it is noted that, hearing is not listening. Actual listening means students responsibility to see what one wanted to convey thoughts and feelings.
- **Creative Style:** Creative style is one of the modern skills of acquisition of knowledge. Creativity is the process of using intelligence of students of higher education, imagination and skill to develop a new object, process of thought. The field of creativity is really very wide. It covers every aspects of life and its many fold activities.
- **Stress Management:** Stress in individual is defined as “any inference that disturbs a person’s healthy mental and physical well being”. Fear is the main cause of stress. Conducive environment for learning is very important in higher education. In such as environment students can carry out their studies without any stress and can learn better. In higher education need arises to teach, how to manage stress for effective knowledge acquisition.
- **E-Learning:** ‘E-Learning’ can unleash a new horizon for education system. Using the platform of ICT, E-learning can bridge the gap between population and higher education. The need of interactivity in the learning process led to the development of computer based learning materials. i.e. – learning provides increased access, flexibility of content and delivery. E-learning is productive learning, student – directed and diagnostic. E-learning has learner oriented approach and it provides new ways of interaction.
- **Coping with Examination:** Coping with examination is an essential phase of learning in higher education. Examination required a revision of what one has learnt. It should be a test what is understood than what is remembered or memorized by heart. Participation of students in the learning process makes it easier for them to face the examinations with ease, comfort and confidence.

1.7 Conclusion: The holistic and multidisciplinary education proposed under NEP- 2020 is expected to facilitate the all round development of learners with enhancement in employability potential and skills for new jobs in emerging fields. Learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together be four pillars of education. The major function of higher education is developing human resources for the promotion of social and economic growth and creation of a knowledge society. One of the key features of Higher Education 4.0 is the learner-centered approach of teaching and learning with flexibility and greater autonomy in learning. The basic foundation of human skills is the individual differences. Skills are not in born but learnt by imitation and practice. Learning is a basic requirement for most forms of behaviour. Knowledge acquisition is not one simple activity. Learning from experience is essential for sustainable development. Knowledge acquisition skills are helpful for active participation of students in learning process and they will assist to make higher education more creative, productive and effective.

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