

# Teachers' Orientation to Explore Intrinsic Potential for Excellence

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Academic excellence can be achieved by continuously developing new skills and competencies with focus on fundamental ability to verbalize, write, listen, interact and share knowledge effectively. Teachers need to cope with challenges of changing time so as to provide equipped and eligible citizen to nation. To meet the expectations of higher education, they have to be creative enough for innovative performance required to keep going when the going really gets tough during this period of modernization. Higher education in India is the second largest system throughout the world and quality education is a must to avail global opportunities through excellence, equity and expressions. Teacher is the centre of entire system; therefore enhancement in quality of teaching brings forth overall improvement by enriching the young generation multidimensional. Swami Vivekananda has said about education that it is brining out of human beings the abilities which already exist within. Experience and education together help people to identify their strengths and then convert the latent to talent through guest for knowledge without any resistance. Then the motivated teacher can play the catalytic role as a dynamic leader in ever expanding higher education system. Once the potential utilized properly during fast developments in the world of science, technology and electronics then education in the current millennium can break gap between the content and application. Hence the teachers must understand the psychology of students, learn about the advancements in teaching pedagogy, equip themselves with latest subject knowledge to develop the students as enlightened and self reliant citizens.

Radha Krishnan commission (1949) has stated that teacher competence is one of the crucial factors and should be given continuous training for improvement of their performance. Kothari commission (1964) recommendations also included the concept of teachers preparation for the profession by making teacher education integral in main stream of academics in universities. To provide appropriate opportunities for professional

and career development, the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986, proposed Academic Staff Orientation scheme to organize course for teachers as in service training and continuing education for fulfilling their roles and responsibilities effectively. University Grants Commission initiated this scheme and renamed as Academic Staff College proposed to organize specially designed Orientation and Refresher Courses. This is the inbuilt mechanism providing the necessary curriculum for motivating teachers within the framework of knowledge society along with addition in values and skills to carry out innovative and creative work leading to a supportive professional culture essential for academic enrichment. Realizing the need for higher level skills and intellectual maturity, University Grants Commission established Academic Staff Colleges in 1987 for strengthening human resource at higher education level. ASCs are dedicated to capacity building of the entire teaching staff by organizing various courses for enhancing the cognitive ability and professional competence. The entire exercise is for catalyzing the self introspection process by overcoming the inertia to learn afresh. UGC-Academic Staff College, H.P. University Shimla was established in 1989 with the motto of 'come to Learn and Go to Serve'. Since then it is dedicated for the improvement in quality of higher education. Thousands of teachers from all over the country have participated in various courses organized here. Till date this ASC has successfully completed 272 Refresher Courses and 113 Orientation Programmes along with number of Short Term Courses, Workshops, Summer Schools etc. for in service teachers. By the completion of course, teachers accept the positive attitudinal change towards the profession and nation triggered by a series of systematic activities necessary for the journey inwards through group interactions. A number of academic Orientation games viz. Self-assessment, Self-encounter, Self-awareness and Self-introspection etc. are scheduled for, knowing awakening and sharpening the inner potential during the Orientation Programmes.

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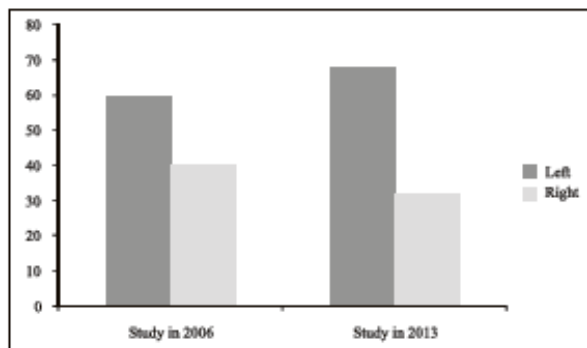
Learning strategies are determined by appropriate guidelines provided by the brain. The cerebral cortex is the part of the brain that inhabits rational functions. It is divided into two hemispheres connected by a thick band of nerve fibers known as corpus- callosum which sends messages back and forth between the two halves. Researches confirm that the brain is involved in nearly all human activities, with distinct two sides which have exclusive functioning the grayish left half is logical, analytical, verbal, linear and sequential while the white right half is emotional, imaginative, spatial, visual and holistic (Bogen 1977).

One of the exercises catering to self-assessment is completed under the title of Self-introspection with participants of Orientation Programme. Present study includes a sample of 125 participants of five recent Orientation Programme to assess the relationship between their disciplines and frequently activated brain side. Studies show that present education system compels to think from left brain more than right so as to be sequential thinker for rewarding success in academics. Data from the similar study in 2006 is also included for comparison in present analysis.

Different streams of subjects were selected keeping in mind their impact on thinking process in teaching learning of the participants. Both heredity and environment are considered while assessing their current inclination of mind. To find the type of brain dominance, seven sets of statements (Psychological test by Anil Bhatnagar in 'Life Positive', July 1997) differentiating right and left hemispheric processing, were selected. Participants were also shown a revolving figure for confirmation of their hemispheric asymmetry in working. Objective of this exercise is to make the teachers aware of the selective in use of their mental faculty according to the situation, conditioning and inheritance. The effort is to patterns of the students so that their weaker side can be strengthened by frequent stimulation for holistic learning.

**I. % age of Left/Right Brain Dominance of the entire sample of teachers in 2006 and 2013**

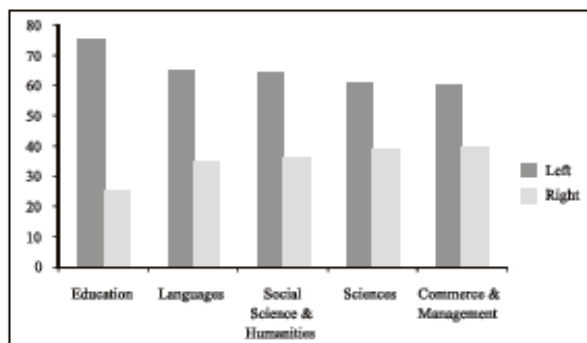
Brain Dominance	Left	Right
Study in 2006	60	40
Study in 2013	68	32



The comparative data of teachers (2006-2013) shows that most of them apply their left brain more (60-68%) in day to day activities but it is much less than general population (90%). This is due to present education system which is biased on developing left brain skills, i.e. reading, writing and doing arithmetic. Teachers of higher education under study show flexibility and try to use more of right hemisphere in comparison to general masses where it is only (10%).

**II. Comparative %age of Right Brain Vs Left Brain use by Teachers**

Faculties	Left	Right
Education	75	25
Languages	65	35
Social Science & Humanities	64	36
Sciences	61	39
Commerce & Management	60	40



As the right brain tendencies are often discouraged, the learners with right brain dominance have difficult time in classrooms and large part of potential is missed out. Moreover, development of one hemisphere in skills is done at the cost of the other thus impoverishment of the right brain leads to denial of creative and intuitive



abilities. Divergent thinking is in fact a variety of distinct thought processes that one has to learn for effective applications. Need is to assess harder and smarter about biological pathway of thinking process to excel and the trick lies in determining when to use the appropriate part of the brain. Use of both hemispheres is highly recommended to have access to entire mental faculty of the individual. It is possible as all can strengthen the weaker parts of the brain by adding new neural circuits to make connections with the help of regular exercises. Difference in brain dominance may also extend to a preferred study strategies while in teaching learning of curriculum subjects. Much of the skills developed may depend on the kind of academic faculty for study in higher education. That data from teachers belonging to different faculties depict a clear increased left brain dominance in education (75%) over the languages (65%), Social Sciences and Humanities (64%), Sciences (61%) and Commerce and Management (60%) which are near to average record. This suggests that education discipline forces towards obedience and passivity with sequential thinking. While over the recent past overhead projectors, videos, Liquid crystal display, role playing, simulations, group work, group assignments, group projects etc. are included in instructional materials (good teaching practices recorded in 'Active Learning' exercise) which provide great help to all types of learners in almost all the subjects. So depending upon the type of faculty and students, teachers can select the methodology for inducing deep and thorough modification in behaviour of the students. It is good practice to tell the students that everyone has unique neurological strengths and weakness for their motivation to keep moving forward to achieve desired goals. Trans Disciplinary Learning (TDL) refers to learning and teaching that transcends disciplinary boundaries along with maximum utilization of capacity present in human mind. It involves the exploration of relevant issue by integrating the perspectives of multiple disciplines in order to connect new knowledge and deeper understanding to real life experiences. Disciplinary boundaries have been blessing over time for many year now. Today student centric collaborative learning is becoming the need of the hour over the traditional lecture based specialized knowledge sharing. A latest entry could be obtained in the major programmes with

many benefits including the overall self development.

Successful people have right brain inner senses well integrated with left brain outer functions. Though dominance of hemispheres is universal the 'whole brained' approach increases the communication or the connection between the hemispheres. As exercises are must to keep the body fit, mental exercises are must to keep the brain fit. Like other muscles, brain works on the principle of 'use it or lose it'. During preparation for presentations or examination, mind map making if or remembering includes thinking from both halves of the brain. Similarly writing in a flowchart and making list of steps to be completed in project work, practical etc. stimulate the mind as a whole. Teaching is an art which combines the subject knowledge with the ability to communicate in an effective manner by judicious application of thinking skills. There is difference between reading from prepared notes, speaking and teaching, so majority of teachers don't fit in this parameter. Thus role of ASCs is strongly felt for imparting training in effective teaching in a professional manner. Key to start this journey is to make little improvements and develop a positive self image step by step by being introspective for awakening about one's competence.

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Purity, Patience and Perseverance are the three essentials to success, and above all, love.

*Vivekananda*

