

Course : Educational Psychology
Level : Third Year License
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Academic Year: 2022-2023

Lecture2: Teacher's Role and Personality

Introduction

The teacher is an active force in any teaching and learning process. Therefore, many things are expected from “a teacher”. These expectations increase in accordance with the variables of age, education, personality, social background and target students to be taught. In this regard, it is necessary to understand the teacher's role and personality before tackling the psychological and pedagogical factors, which influence the learner.

Defining the Concept “Role”

It refers to the social behaviours governed by certain norms. It is the public expectations attached to a socially defined position or status like “a father”, “a student”, “a president”, or “a teacher”.

Example of father's role: A man becomes a father when he has a child and so occupies the status of a father. People expect a father to provide for his family, to care for and love his children.

Example of teacher's role: People expect a teacher to be fluent and master different teaching methods and strategies.

Fathers or teachers are expected to do these things not just because they are observed to do such things but also because they are considered under obligation to do them.

Sometimes, different people have different expectations of the same role. For example, Mr. Koussa who occupies the role of “*the head of the department*”; the dean expects Mr. Koussa to be an administrator; first year students expect him to be students

counsellor; and teachers expect him to be *a curriculum designer*. This variation in role expectations depends on the source of expectations.

Therefore, the concept role can be seen in terms of *who is expecting what from whom and in which context*. For example, Mr. Koussa occupies the role of the head of the department and other roles for other people. He cannot be the head of the department at home. He is a father and a husband. This depends on the context.

Defining the Concept Personality:

In relation to the concept role, the individual's own interpretation of what is expected from him is a mixture of *self-knowledge and views of what other people think*. This mixture defines **personality**, which is the interpretation of the social expectations (role) which differ from one person to another.

Brown (1965) argued that: *“roles are units of social system and personalities are the enduring traits and motives linked to human organism. Roles and personalities are mutually determinative. The personality one brings to the role determines the manner of its interpretation”*.

Roles are categories located in social groups which makes the concept of role belongs more to *sociology*; whereas, *personality* is located in the individual himself which makes personality a *psychology* related concept.

Personality seems to refer to role style and the idiosyncrasies (characteristics of a person) of role performance.

Sometimes, the same person in different roles may show different apparent personality traits. For example, being strict and severe as a teacher but easy going and caring as a father. This is because the interpretation of what is expected from him differs from one role to another.

There might be different personalities related to the same role (e.g: a teacher= a role with different personalities- severe, friendly, authoritarian...etc)

Social expectations impose roles on the person, who also impose his personality traits that are to be shown in his performance of the role.

Teacher's Role & Personality:

Hoyle (1969) claim that: *“The sociologist is concerned with the behavior patterns amongst groups of people whereas the psychologist's problem is to study what makes individual teachers perform a role in a certain way”*. In general, the sociological norms interact most of the time with the psychological explanations. Therefore, there exist a particular psychological effect on behavior of awareness of social norms expressed in roles.

In this regard, Hoyle lists a number of pattern variables in teacher's role, which are highlighted in the following contrast:

“At one extreme, we have a stern teacher who **(1)** is detached from the emotional and personal aspects of education, **(2)** aims at maximizing the school's academic achievements at all costs, **(3)** is inflexible in his demands for obedience to school rules, and **(4)** is dominated by his own aspiration for scholastic reputation. **At the other extreme**, we have a headmaster who **(1)** identifies himself emotionally with the whole human life of school, **(2)** sets no special attention to any area of activity, and **(3)** is rarely bothered about rules or reputations”. Typically, teachers' personality would fall somewhere in between these two extremes.

Accordingly, **Morison and McIntyre (1969)** said that *“In almost every investigation of the personal characteristics of those who become teachers, differences have been found between different groups of teachers than between teachers as a whole and the rest of the population”*. There exist individual differences among teachers in terms of psychological traits (personality). However, research provided a summary of teachers' personality traits as follows:

- 1- Teachers put less than usual value on what is seen as useful, efficient and economic, and more than usual value on personal relationships.
- 2- They tend to be well adjusted, emotionally stable, objective and social.
- 3- They, in general, may be more inclined to behave in conformity with the social pressure they experience.

Children's perception of a good teacher

Evans (1962) summarized children's perceptions of a good teacher as follows: "Children like teachers who are kind, friendly, cheerful, patient, helpful, fair, have a sense of humor, show an understanding of children's problems, allow plenty of pupil activity and at the same time maintain order. On the other hand, they dislike teachers who use sarcasm and ridicule, domineering and have favorites, who punish to secure discipline, fail to provide for the needs of individual pupils and have these disagreeable personality peculiarities".

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