

TRANSFORMATIVE CURRICULUM

Santosh Kumar *

The word transformation means “a marked change in nature, former appearance”.¹ Thus the word transformative would mean something that causes a marked change. A learning that causes a marked change in learners can be called transformative learning and a curriculum that causes a marked change in learners can be called transformative curriculum. Transformative learning involves a realization that one’s presumptions are incorrect which leads to assumption of new roles and learning of new skills.²

The Report of Lancet Commission on Education of Health Professionals for the 21st Century has described three types of learning.³ If there is acquisition of knowledge and skills, it leads to production of experts and it is called informative learning. If there is development of desirable beliefs, attitudes and values, it leads to production of professionals and it is called formative learning. If there is acquisition of leadership qualities and skills, it leads to production of leaders or change agents and it is called transformative learning.³ The three types of learning have a hierarchical relationship.

The Report of Lancet Commission, using a global, multiprofessional (medical, nursing and public health professions) and systems approach, has identified problems in health system and education system. ³ Problems identified in health system include inequities between and within countries. Problems identified in education system include lack of development of competencies required for the needs of patients and populations. The Report of Lancet Commission has suggested instructional reforms for dealing with problems in education system.³ Taken together, these instructional reforms may be called transformative curriculum. However one has to keep in mind that only curricular guidelines are given and not full curriculum because there are no outcomes/objectives, teaching-learning methods and assessment methods.

The instructional reforms of the Report of Lancet Commission include application of competency-based approach, interprofessional and transprofessional education, using information and communication technology for education, fostering a new professionalism, augmenting educational resources and using global resources.³ Competency-based approach should emphasise development of competencies adapted to local needs and they should be determined by all relevant stakeholders.³ It will need outcome-based education in which outcomes determine the course content. The competencies may include leadership and management skills, communication skills, critical thinking skills, research skills, self-directed learning skills and life-long learning skills.³ Interprofessional education involves team-based learning among medical, nursing and public health professional students.³ Transprofessional education involves team-based learning including professional students and basic and ancillary health students.³ Use of information and communication technology needs informatic skills of searching and evaluating information for application and includes partial and full online courses which are easy to verify and modify. New professionalism includes patient and population centredness, continuous quality improvement, evidence informed practice, service orientation and effective team work.³ Educational resources to be augmented include financial, infrastructural and material resources. There is a need for faculty development. Global resources should be utilized but they should be adapted locally.³ These global resources include open educational digitized resources which are offered freely and openly for learning.

The feasibility of implementation of transformative curriculum will depend on available resources which are inequitably distributed. However, a beginning can be made in most of places by starting digitization education materials.

REFERENCES

1. Concise Oxford English Dictionary, Eleventh Edition, Oxford:Oxford University Press 2004.
2. Sethuraman KR. Adult learning principles-In:Medical Education-Principles and Practice Eds: NAnanthakrishnan, KRSeturaman, Santosh Kumar, Second Edition, 2000:37-38.
3. Frenk J, Chen L, Bhutta ZA et al. Health professionals for a new century: transforming education to strengthen health systems in an interdependent world. *The Lancet*, 2010. At <http://www.thelancet.com/commissions/education-of-health-professionals>.

* Dr. Santosh Kumar , Senior Professor of
Urology and Former
Head of Departments of
Urology and Medical Education,JIPMER, Puducherry