

B.Ed- II

LEARNING AND TEACHING- UNIT-IV

WHAT IS TRANSFER OF LEARNING-

Transfer of learning occurs when learning in one context or with one set of materials impacts on performance in another context or with other related materials. From a theoretical point of view transfer of learning occurs whenever prior learned knowledge and skills affect the way in which new knowledge and skills are learned and performed. When later acquisition or performance is facilitated, transfer is positive. When later acquisition or performance is impeded, transfer is negative.

METHODS OF ENHANCING TRANSFER OF LEARNING.

Goal of any learning or training is to be able to apply it in real world situations. Many research and experience have shown that students will master new knowledge, problem-solving procedures and learning strategies, but usually they will not use them unless prompted or guided. Eg. Studies of real- world mathematics show that people do not always apply math procedures learned in school to solve practical problem in their homes or at grocery stores. This happens because learning is situated to specific situations. Knowledge is learned as a tool to solve particular problem, we may not realize that the knowledge is relevant when we encounter a problem that seem different.

Much of the literature suggests that it is possible, to teach successfully for transfer. Some patterns that emerged in studies of effective transfer instruction include such ideas as modeling practice, providing feedback and the use of cooperative learning groups. A number of investigations have shown that when the instruction models effective literacy practice and provides sufficient practice time and feedback, students are able to transfer newly learned literacy strategies to new tasks. For example, Palincsar & Brown (1986) report that young adult students successfully learned to transfer several metacognitive reading strategies such as making predictions, asking questions, summarizing and clarifying to new situations through reciprocal teaching. As well, Ehlinger (1989) found that by teaching think-alouds strategies, young adult students were better able to monitor their own reading comprehension.

In addition, several literacy studies have indicated that learning in social groups and pairs can provide enough interaction to facilitate transfer to new situations. A major area of interest involved co-operative learning. Co-operative learning situations in literacy usually involve two or more students working together to improve their understanding of text or to retain material in texts. Research by O'Donnell (1989) and Larson, Dansereau, O'Donnell, Hythecker, Lambiotte & Rocklin (1985) outlined a pattern of situations in which co-operative learning facilitated the transfer of reading abilities. Such a pattern consisted of reading strategies for summarizing important ideas by listening and correcting summary mistakes. It would appear from these studies that transfer occurs when there is sufficient time to practice strategies and when the co-operative activity calls for the learner to internalize what has been learned.

HOW CAN TEACHER HELP?

- For basic skills, greater transfer can also be ensured by over learning. Over learning helps students develop automated basic skills. We have heard sayings like practice makes a man perfect. (multiplication tables traditionally over learned)
- For higher level transfer the teacher should help first learn and understand. Students will be more likely to transfer knowledge to new situations if they have been actively involved in the learning process.
- Student should be encouraged to form abstractions that they will apply later. Transfer takes place if students form deep connections between the new knowledge and their existing structures of knowledge.
- Teacher should encourage students for team learning. Today's organizations are relying more and more on teams to improve quality, to develop products and services and to enhance work processes. Organizations want people with 'people skills' who can be effective team members and team leaders.
- Team work will help students to understand how individual and cultural differences in values, needs, interests, styles and competencies affect others and the learning process.
- Teachers should create powerful teaching environments using these design principles-
 - i) The environment should support constructive learning processes in all students. Students don't come with empty minds. They construct their own knowledge on understanding.

- ii) The environment should encourage the development of student self-regulation. Students take responsibility of their own learning. They monitor and judge their own behaviour.
- iii) Learning should involve interaction and collaborations.
- iv) Learners should deal with problems that have personal meaning for them, that are similar to those they will face in the future.
- v) The classroom culture should encourage students to become aware of and develop their cognitive and motivational processes. Teachers should identify important feature of a task and use discussion so that maximum transfer of learning takes place. Once a learner understands how to go about transferring knowledge to new contexts, a learner could find ways to apply prior knowledge to the situations and problems they may face in a new role.

WHAT SHOULD LEARNER DO FOR ACHIEVING MAXIMUM TRANSFER?

- Learner should focus on the relevance of what they are learning. What is being learnt at present should be linked with what has already been learnt in the past.
- Learner should integrate the theoretical studies with practical experiences.
- Use a variety of learning media. (Another way to facilitate the transfer of learning to new contexts is to use as many different learning media as possible from text and imagery, video and audio etc.)
- Identical components between the two learning situations should be properly identified by the learner.
- Learner should make learning social.
- Students should find daily opportunities to apply what they have learned.
- Use learning strategies like- underlining and highlighting. Students underlines and highlights too much. It is far better to be selective – e.g. underlining one sentence per paragraph and transform the information into your own words etc.
- Learner should establish clear learning goals.