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Mechanism of Learning Process

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Abstract- An attempt was made to understand mechanics of learning. The information showed that children generally use right brain to learn while adults use left brain. Learning is a function of conscious mind, subconscious mind, intellect and ego. The conscious mind learns with the help of sensory organs, the capacity of which is limited and its memory is also short-lived. To convert the short term memory into long term one, the material learnt by conscious mind has to be driven to sub-conscious mind by repetitions. More the repetitions, more strong the long term memory. The knowledge in the sub-conscious mind can also be stored if it is linked with things that are easy to remember. However, the recalling of information from subconscious to conscious mind is not possible in a disturbed state of mind. To alleviate this problem, a silent exercise, consisting of doing nothing for 10-15 minutes duration, is described. Besides, the silent exercise also helps in increasing the capacity of conscious mind to understand and learn.

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Mechanism of Learning Process

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Abstract- An attempt was made to understand mechanics of learning. The information showed that children generally use right brain to learn while adults use left brain. Learning is a function of conscious mind, subconscious mind, intellect and ego. The conscious mind learns with the help of sensory organs, the capacity of which is limited and its memory is also short-lived. To convert the short term memory into long term one, the material learnt by conscious mind has to be driven to sub-conscious mind by repetitions. More the repetitions, more strong the long term memory. The knowledge in the sub-conscious mind can also be stored if it is linked with things information from subconscious to conscious mind is not that are easy to remember. However, the recalling of possible in a disturbed state of mind. To alleviate this problem, a silent exercise, consisting of doing nothing for 10-15 minutes duration, is described. Besides, the silent exercise also helps in increasing the capacity of conscious mind to understand and learn.

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I. Introduction

Learning is a fantastic phenomenon. That is why, a new born baby starts observing, feeling and learning things by himself. Evidences are also available in ancient literature that an infant starts learning in the mother's womb. Abhimanyu, a great warrior of the Mahabharata learned the art of archery in his mother's womb. It is a common experience that inspite of having learnt everything well, students commit mistakes in the examination hall. Likewise, singers sing well in bathrooms but forget when asked to sing in front of an audience. Why does such forgetting phenomenon occur at the crucial hour.

All parents want their children to be outstanding with 100% memory power. What to do to make it possible? For that, an understanding of the process of learning is required which would help in improving memory. Little information is available in literature about the mechanics of learning process which would possibly provide answers to the above questions. Therefore, an attempt was made in this direction so as to help the students to improve their performance in examination. A possible mechanics of learning process is described in this paper.

II. Learning Process in Children

It is our common experience that a two year old child will easily learn a new language which an adult will find difficult to learn. This is so because children use the right part of their brain to learn while adults use left brain. Children do not ask questions of how and why? They accept whatever teacher or mother teaches them as truth. The right brain simply accepts information. Children learn speaking before they learn the alphabets. Their brain also starts making grammar. No child learns grammar before speaking words. The right brain is alive until the child attains puberty. It is the stage when child moves out from right brain and wants to liberate himself from mother and teacher. He acquires questioning tendency before accepting the information. This happens when left brain takes over the right brain. His learning process is somewhat slowed. Adults understand first and memorize later while in children, reverse is the case. During childhood, all of us have memorized mathematical tables and poems simply by repetition but without understanding. They are still in our memory. This shows that the repetition of information helps in long-term memory.

Chanting of Gayatri mantra for 2-5 minutes daily in the morning is advocated as it tends to keep the right brain open **(Prabhakar, 2009).** According to **Acharya (2000)**, chanting of this mantra generates vibrations which sharpen the intellect by activating different glands. The mantra has the purport that, "May God expand my intellect and make me intelligent."

III. Mechanics of Learning Process

The learning process involves understanding and memorizing as well. It is a function of internal organs of the body, namely, conscious mind, subconscious mind, intellect and ego. As such understanding takes place at four levels:

1. Conscious mind
2. Subconscious mind
3. Intellect
4. Ego

a) Working of conscious mind

Its working could be considered similar to a TV screen on which the images are projected. The conscious mind gains knowledge with the help of sensory organs and past information etc. and the images of the same are projected on the mind screen. The information, whatsoever, is present at a particular time is called awareness. Bigger the screen of conscious mind, more is the information or knowledge contained in it and vice versa. Thus, its size matters in grasping and containing the knowledge. The memory of

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this mind is limited. Thus main problem or challenge in education lies as to how to increase the capacity or space of conscious mind. The memory of conscious mind is also short-lived and subject to forgetfulness.

b) Creating more space or capacity of the conscious mind

Some evidences of inadequate space in mind are available in ancient literature. Tulsi Saheb, a great saint of India asked his disciple to cleanse his mind because his mind was full of clutter of thoughts (Puri and Sethi,1995). Thus, there was no space available in his mind to accommodate further knowledge. Every teacher goes on feeding the information to the students without caring whether their mind is in a position to grasp or absorb it. This causes confusion in their minds. Thus, students should be taught simultaneously to keep their minds clean or empty so that they can readily absorb new knowledge. Clean or empty mind means stillness of mind or maintenance of an equanimous state. The mind whose stillness is distorted is not able to concentrate. For maintaining stillness of mind, Swami (2014) a has discovered a silent exercise which he calls as " Chup sadhan". He has designed it for spiritual purposes as stillness of mind is also required for the upliftment of the soul. The stillness of mind is of great use in learning process. The technique is described in brief, as under:

c) Silent technique for stillness of conscious mind

It is based on the inherent attribute of the soul that it is neither doer nor enjoyer of the fruit of actions (Bhagwad Gita 13/31*) as quoted by Swami (2014)b. The technique consists of the following steps:

1. Sit in a comfortable position with spinal chord erect on carpeted ground or in a chair with both the hands in the lap. The right hand palm should be on left hand palm and the palms should face upwards. This is called Brahmanjali Mudra (Sidharth and Puri, 2014).This helps in stilling the mind.
2. Keep your eyes closed and think as if you are going to sleep, but sleep is to be avoided. The simple thought of sleep helps one to withdraw one's attention from the world to eye-brow centre (concentration centre).
3. Keep in mind that God is present everywhere and everything is happening in His presence. So, whatsoever happens is justice as injustice can't prevail in God's presence. Accept it from the heart.
4. Sit quietly with doing nothing and no expectation. Even the expectation of mind to be still should not be there. When you don't have any expectation, you do nothing, neither physical nor any mental activity. (Bhagwad Gita, 3/18 ,6/25).
5. When you have made up your mind to remain calm, still the thoughts may continue to come, but just ignore them. Let them come and go. Don't interfere with them nor differentiate them into good or bad thoughts. Adopt letting go attitude or indifferent attitude towards thoughts (Bhagwad Gita, 6/25). Accept them without any reservation. This means not to attach with positive and not to hate the negative ones.
6. Likewise, don't pay any attention to any outside disturbance, (it could be due to traffic or anything else). Simply ignore and feel totally unconcerned. Maintain aloofness from all the happenings (Bhagwad Gita, 2/14, 2/64, 3/34).
7. In due course of 10 to 15 minutes, mind will become empty and thoughtless. The disturbance, if any, will not have any effect on your mind as the mind acquires an equanimous state. In this state the mind is ready to absorb or grasp the knowledge like the sponge absorbs water. It amounts to creating space or increasing the learning capacity of the conscious mind.

It is an effortless and natural process. If you make efforts to still the mind you will never succeed just like you cannot succeed in making muddy water clear by stirring it. In contrast, if you just allow the muddy water to stand, mud will settle down on its own and water will become clear. A similar principle holds good while settling the mind and its passions. The stillness of mind has also been advocated by Gillchrest (1999) to tap the hidden powers of the universal mind . Prabhakar (2007, 2009, 2015) has used a similar silent exercise with some modifications and has observed spectacular increase (15- 20%) in the marks of the students Swami (2014) a has claimed that if a person enters into his own silence even for 1 to 2 seconds, he acquires infinite intelligence and strength. It appears that all the scientific discoveries have been made when the scientists were stationed in their absolute silent state. The mechanism of the silent exercise could be also explained in the terms of duster and blackboard. In the class, the teacher uses duster to erase the blackboard, in other words, he increases the capacity or space of the blackboard by erasing off the material. Likewise student can employ this silent exercise to erase the material of conscious mind. The thoughtless state of the conscious mind amounts to erasing off the material from the conscious mind and driving the material to the subconscious mind. Thus the silent exercise should form an integral part of education program. The students should be taught to sit in silence for 5 – 15 minutes before the class begins. As such, the memory of conscious mind is short-lived and to convert it to long term one, the help of sub-conscious mind is taken.

d) Working of Sub- Conscious Mind

It is also called "Chit" in Indian literature. It is a store house of information or memory and its capacity is infinite. It retains all the material that has been learnt and works mainly on the principle of repetition. More the

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repetitions, more is the retention of the material. Students must be made to believe that every subject is very easy. This belief will accelerate the learning process. On the other hand, if a subject is labelled as difficult, the students will not even attempt to learn that subject because the word "difficult" itself will work as a barrier in the process of learning. Sometimes, larger pieces of information, although easy to understand, yet are difficult to memorize (Prabhakar, 2015).In such situations he advises to break up the large information into small segments which will facilitate the memorizing process.

He explains it with a verse, "Apavitrah pavitrova sarva avasthan gatopiva yah samreth pundaree-kaksham". After reading it once, it may not be memorized by the student. So read first two words of this verse 10 times with open eyes and then repeat it effortlessly 10 times with eyes closed. Now read the first four words of the verse 10 times with open eyes and repeat 20 times with eyes closed but without any effort. If you feel effort or strain, repeat the process till you are able to read the four words effortlessly. Do not proceed further without effortless repetition. It may appear boring, but you are doing something which you were not able to do earlier using the power of the subconscious mind. Now read the next three words of the verse, 10 times and repeat the same effortlessly with closed eyes. If effort or strain is felt, one should repeat the process. Afterwards, read whole of the verse, 3 times and repeat the same with closed eyes. Keep on repeating effortlessly without any strain. Practice repetition of the whole verse 5 times, 3 times a day for 10 days. It will get embedded in the subconscious mind on a long term basis. Lekhi (2015) suggested whatsoever a child learns should be re-affirmed after the first 10 minutes then after 10 days and then after a week, then after a month and then after 3 to 6 months. This will ensure long term memory. Care should be taken that the student does not feel any strain or stress in his mind while repeating the process. As such, the number of repititions may depend on the calibre of a particular student.

The question arises as to why we have forgotten so many things because we have left the learnt material in the conscious mind itself and have not driven it to the subconscious mind with effortless repetitions. The long term memory can also be assured if the student links the information with the things, easy to remember. If he links the names of planets with a statement, "My very educated mother just showed us nine planets", where the first alphabet of each word denotes the names of each planet of the solar system: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. Similarly colours of the rainbow could be learnt by the acronym "vibgyor" denoting different colours. The memory of an outstanding information creates a niche in the mind thus helping it to remember on a long term basis. Such information may consist of disasters, bomb blasts, demonetization etc. Likewise, pointers in the form of charts and tree diagrams may be tried to recall the information from the subconscious memory.

e) How to recall the information from the subconscious mind

Recalling the information from the subconscious mind to the conscious mind is not possible in a disturbed (fearful) state. Similarly envy, jealousy, tension, fault finding and blame also disturb the peace of mind, blocking the flow of information from subconscious mind to the conscious mind. So the students' mind should be as peaceful as possible. This could be achieved if they resort to silent exercise (as described earlier) for at least 2-3 minutes before attempting the paper in the examination hall or the class. This will ensure continuous flow of learnt material without any forgetfulness. The students should not resort to the thinking as it is a function conscious mind. The thinking needs to be avoided as it also obstructs the flow of information from subconscious mind. It is a common experience that if one forgets something as to where he has kept it, he starts thinking about it but it never comes to his mind. The moment one stops thinking, all of a sudden, it comes to his memory. Lord Krishna also advises Arjuna to establish oneself in one's own silence before starting any work (Yogananda, 2014).

f) Working of Intellect and ego

Intellect is the discriminative and determinative faculty of the mind. Its main job is to protect ego. The ego is I-ness of the consciousness, what you consider yourself to be (Sharma, 2014). In other words, ego is a shape or form acquired by the self: soul (Ahm) which by acquiring a shape (Akara) of any object, may be of body etc becomes ego (ahamkara). The soul, being animate, an essence of God, is the very infinite source of intelligence. In fact, the intelligence of the soul is reflected in the intelligence of the mind. With silence practice, intellect also gets rest and becomes pure.

Learning process is conditioned by the kind of ego of a student. If he considers himself to be an outstanding student, his intellect will do every possible effort in learning to make him an outstanding learner. Swami (2013) reported that whatsoever the mind thinks in the presence of the eternal soul, the thought is manifested into a visible form in due course of time. It is the intellect that decides what one has to do to protect one's ego. It directs its decision to the mind, which in turn conveys its orders to the concerned sensory organs for the needful. Lastly, the ego of a student must possess an element of unselfish serving attitude so that the knowledge gained by him is used for the upliftment of poor masses (Vivekananda,1969).

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IV Conclusions

From the above discussions, it can be concluded that learning takes place at four levels, i.e. conscious mind, subconscious mind, intellect and ego. The working of conscious mind is based on the sensory organs while that of sub conscious mind, on the repetitions of the subject. The intellect protects the ego and does every effort to protect the contentions of the ego. A silent exercise of 10-15 minutes duration, consisting of doing nothing, is described as it enhances the learning process by improving the overall efficiency of the learning process.

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13. *The numerator 6 denotes the chapter of Bhagwad Gita while the denominator, 25 denotes the verse of Bhagwad Gita. Likewise other numerators and denominators denote the chapters and verses of Gita respectively.

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