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A Step Towards sustainability: Theme Based Teaching

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Abstract

Theme-based teaching is a valuable approach in education that contributes to sustainability in various ways. This teaching approach organises instructions incorporating themes which allows students to gain deeper understanding about sustainability. Thematic unit approach and Integration of Themes in subject specific content are the two ways of incorporating Theme Based Teaching in the classroom.

Thematic unit approach, curriculum organised in relation to sustainability, social justice, cultural diversity, or any other important topic. On the other hand, Integration of Themes in subject specific content links subjects to existing subject-specific content. Teachers can connect various themes, such as water conservation, essay writing, and data analysis, to sustainability themes. For instance, a Hindi poetry on “EK BOOND” can be linked to water conservation, while a history class unit on fundamental rights can be correlated with social justice or equality. In commerce, business services can be connected to energy efficiency technologies or environment protection. Both approaches offer valuable opportunities to instil critical thinking, and values related to sustainability in students. The choice between Thematic unit approach and Integration of

Themes in subject specific content depends on the school's curriculum structure and educational philosophy.

Keywords: sustainability, theme-based teaching approaches, integrated theme- based instructions, completely theme-based instruction

Sustainable Development

For sustainable development, it is crucial to find a balance between economic, social, and environmental interests for the wellbeing of both present-day society and future generations. A notion known as "sustainable development" denotes a balanced and comprehensive approach to the advancement of the economy, society, and environment. It proposes a strategy for satisfying present wants while preserving the ability of coming generations to meet their own requirements. Fundamentally, sustainable development seeks to increase prosperity, improve living conditions, and protect the environment and its natural resources. Significant changes in education are needed in order to provide the next generation with the information, abilities, values, and attitudes necessary for sustainable existence. Theme-based teaching, which promotes interdisciplinary learning and engages students with relevant material, is an educational technique that can overcome this challenge.

Theme-Based Teaching

Theme-based teaching is a method that links the traditional subject by organising curricular material around major themes. Instead of teaching subjects separately, teachers combine content and theme to provide students a comprehensive understanding of a given theme

and the content of the subjects. The subjects can be language, History, Science Commerce , Economics and Mathematics and the theme selected may be associated with sustainability, such as social justice, biodiversity, climate change, or water resources. In terms of sustainable development, this strategy has a number of benefits: It promotes a holistic understanding of the interwoven economic, social, and environmental elements of sustainability by combining themes. Students will be better ready to face the complex issues of sustainable development and contribute to a more sustainable future when instructors and institutions adopt this strategy more frequently. Theme-based teaching is an effective tool in the quest for education that prepares students to be responsible, informed, and accountable global citizens.

There are two primary approaches to incorporating themes in education: Thematic unit approach and Integration of Theme in subject specific content Let's discuss each approach one by one:

Thematic unit approach:

In the Thematic unit approach, the substantial portion of the curriculum instructions are based on sustainability theme topics. These topics are the central themes for teaching learning in every subject. In other words, this approach is the organisation of the curriculum instruction in the exploration of the selected themes, which can be related to sustainability, social justice, cultural diversity, or any other relevant topic.

Suggested Themes for Sustainable development:

Economic Sustainability: Green Business Practices, Renewable Energy, Sustainable Finance, Ethical Finance, And Economic Policy For Sustainability, Energy-Efficient Technologies And

Their Role In Sustainable Development. Corporate Social Responsibility, Globalisation Of Economy, Leadership And Change.

Social sustainability: Cultural Diversity, Intercultural Understanding, Peace, Security And Conflict, Human Rights And Needs, Quality Education And Health, Community Development, Sustainable Agriculture And Food Systems, Human Rights And Sustainable Development

Environmental sustainability: Ecosystem Conservation And Biodiversity, Climate Change Mitigation And Adaptation:, Water And Resource Management, Environmental Policy And Regulation, Green Technology And Innovation, Natural Resources Management

Integration of Themes in subject specific content : In this approach , the teacher links the existing subject matter with sustainability themes/topics. Teacher goes through the subject matter and identifies the theme which could be correlated with any of the sustainability themes. For Example, if a teacher has to teach a poetry “Ek Boond” in Hindi she can connect this topic with water conservation theme, essay writing and poetry recitation in language can be done in any theme relevant to sustainability, While studying statistics or data analysis in mathematics data related to sustainability theme can be analysed. In a history class, a unit on fundamental rights and duties can be correlated with Social Justice or quality. In commerce, the unit on Business Services Can be connected with energy efficient technology or environment protection themes.

Role of Theme Based Teaching

1. Theme-based teaching encourages interdisciplinary learning.
2. It promotes critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, creativity, memory, and comprehension.

3. It also encourages research abilities, cultural sensitivity, and capacity for accommodating various learning styles.
4. They promote teamwork, practical application, and 21st-century competencies
5. Theme-based instruction improves the quality, relevance, and enjoyment of learning while preparing students for success in a world that is becoming more interconnected and complicated.

Theme Based Teaching Techniques

Field trips to environmental centres, farms, and sustainability-related organisations.

Inviting guest speakers or experts. Formation of environmental clubs, Experiential Learning, Debate, Elocution, Essay writing, Activity Method, Group Discussion, Cooperative learning and problem-based learning

Challenges in Theme Based Teaching

Theme-based teaching is a method that focuses on a specific theme and is often challenging to integrate with the curriculum. All the topics can be integrated with sustainability theme. Teachers find it challenging due to its high level of creativity, interdisciplinary knowledge, and instructional flexibility. It can be difficult to keep students interested over a long period of time, and it could be necessary to make constant modifications to keep pupils engaged. Limited Instructional timing available with teachers to teach is also an obstacle in

Theme-Based Teaching. Parent and community support is also crucial, as the approach often involves non-traditional methods.

Despite these difficulties, theme-based instruction may be an effective and engaging strategy for fostering critical thinking and comprehensive learning. For theme-based teaching to be successful and address these issues, reorganisation of curriculum, effective planning, teacher professional development, and continual assessment are important. Theme-based instruction is an effective educational strategy that prepares students to confront issues related to sustainable development and encourages them to take an active role in protecting the environment.

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