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Sustainable Practices in Education - Experiential Learning Combined with the Hybrid approach is the Need of the Hour

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Abstract

Education today is facing a paradigm shift. There is a dire need to make education student centric whereby the learner is well equipped to apply the knowledge gained in daily life and utilise the skills gained thereby contributing to the society at large. This paper deals with a few ideal approaches an academician or a teacher can use to make learning sustainable thereby facilitating a bright future (economically, environmentally, and socially) for Gen Alpha. The present paper presents excerpts of experiential activities like Energy audit, water audit, Waste segregation etc. carried out at SIES High School, Matunga to sensitise students about the twenty first century problems and thereby equipping them to find solutions to such challenges. Implementation of Such Sustainable practices in Education becomes feasible through the Hybrid approach thereby making education meaningful.

Keywords: sustainable practices, hybrid approach, experiential learning

Introduction

An ideal education system in the 21st century should aim to equip learners with the necessary skills and knowledge to confidently face the world. It should empower them to develop practical skills that will enable them to earn a living and become self-reliant. However, education must also be mindful of sustainable development and the need to create a better future for the planet. Education for sustainable development should empower learners of all ages to make informed decisions and take action towards transforming society. This approach will help instill a caring attitude towards our planet and create a more sustainable future for generations to come.

I agree that experiential learning is crucial for equipping learners with the necessary skills and knowledge to confidently face the world. In order to achieve this, a hybrid approach that combines experiential methods with traditional teaching practices can be a great way to ensure that students learn in a multifaceted way. This approach will help students develop practical skills that will enable them to earn a living and become self-reliant, while also being mindful of sustainable development and creating a better future for the planet. By living a planet-friendly life, students will be able to make informed decisions and take action towards transforming society and creating a more sustainable future for generations to come.

Definition of Education for Sustainable Development

The Brundtland Commission's report, 'Our Common Future' (1987) defines sustainability as, "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Education for Sustainable development means including key Sustainable development issues into teaching and learning. Example- climate change, biodiversity, etc. Education for Sustainable development can be in the environmental sphere, economic sphere or social sphere.

Definition of Experiential Learning

Experiential Learning is the process of Learning through experience or learning through reflection on doing.

Hybrid learning Approach

This approach combines online Education materials with traditional in -person classroom methods

Effective Integration of Sustainable Educational Practises Within the Curriculum

The goal of NEP 2020 is to develop a competent workforce that is responsive to the requirements of society, the economy, and the environment. Therefore, educators have a duty to employ a creative pedagogy that promotes students' holistic development by giving them real-world hands-on experiences, equipping them with 21st century skills, encouraging critical thinking, and helping them find solutions to the various problems standing in the way of sustainable development. Students need to be inspired to become transformative change agents who can work towards sustainable development. If this vision is to be achieved, the hybrid model of education seems to be the best option because it allows professors to conduct experiential activities and ingeniously offer theory lessons online.

We came to the realisation that experiential learning activities might effectively promote holistic education at SIES High School in Matunga. As a result, in 2012, we held an exhibition called Jal Meva Jeevanam in which student-made models were shown along with student-written explanations on subjects including water sources, water depletion, river networking, etc. The entire student body of the school was made aware of the importance of water conservation in this way. They realised that they had a duty to preserve the planet's sustainability.

There are now groups at school like the Climate Ambassadors and the Eco Club. Sessions on the numerous climatic variations and difficulties encountered are offered to this group. The students' thoughts are predetermined. These kids serve as Ambassadors for the cause and develop original solutions to the world's many challenges. They are aware that the consequences will have an impact on the living species.

These ambassadors conducted an energy audit of their own home, and after putting our theory lessons into practise, they saw a sizable decrease in their electricity costs. Similar to this, schoolchildren were taken to Mahim Creek as part of a "No Plastic" campaign. They saw that all living things are at risk from plastic. These pupils afterwards served as ambassadors, educating and enlightening kids their age.

Visits to Veer Jijamata Udyan and a BNHS talk show that educated kids on how some bird species are going extinct and how certain human behaviours are harmful to birds promoted a love for birds and animals.

Online instruction on using eco-friendly items to maintain a healthy environment was supplied to our students. The pupils themselves learnt this talent of creating eco-friendly

ganpatis and made them after the art teacher taught how to make them. Other students and staff might see these ganeshas on display. The Hybrid Approach to Experiential Learning is perfectly illustrated in this situation. According to NEP, skill development is carried out.

Our students were made aware of the use of natural colours for Holi. This inspired them to create their own colours using ingredients like beets, turmeric and cabbage.

The majority of countries now recognise the significance of education for sustainable development. The urgent need is to align educational institutions with sustainable development principles and develop learning environments where students learn to apply what they have learned in the classrooms. This will give all students the skills they need to survive in the twenty-first century on this beautiful planet. Therefore, all educators and teachers must be well-equipped with the necessary rules in order to adopt pedagogies that will empower students to become independent adults and aid in the students' search for sustainable development solutions.

Twenty-first century abilities are those that one has to have in order to think clearly, act purposefully, and deal with every experience in the rapidly changing, technologically advanced world of today. Experiential learning is one of the best ways to accomplish this goal.

Teachers are under pressure to finish each piece in the allotted time. But this shouldn't be used as a justification for sacrificing learning objectives. Hybrid mode, which combines technology, teacher creativity, and offline and online activities, is now a blessing to everyone.

Conclusion

The student-friendly learning process is fully represented by experiential learning, in our opinion. Experiential learning has several benefits, making it crucial for the advancement of education. All stakeholders must utilise this combination. Facts will be presented to students in a manner that is uncomplicated and encourages maximum participation. This method helps students retain knowledge and develops life skills while also enhancing their emotional and cognitive perspectives. Therefore, experiential learning employing a hybrid mode is essential for education for sustainable development.

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