

Education for the Future Generations

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Abstract

Education in the 21st century and beyond will be more and more dynamic and technology based. Students and educationists of the future should learn to use technology correctly and efficiently. Side by side, they should not give up the traditional method of teaching learning system. They should be able to give leadership, have strong creative ability, believe in teamwork, must be dynamic, should have critical thinking ability, problem solving ability, agility and such other skills required for effectively handling the educational arena. This paper aims to discuss various trends and objectives of education for future generation.

Keywords: *Technology, Leadership, Creative ability, Agility, Problem solving, Teamwork.*

Introduction

Education is seen as one of the ways to upward social mobility, a stepping stone to high-flying career. On this date we are about to cross 72 year border of post-independence period and have covered one fifth (almost) of the 21st century. We are not sure that during this period, we have made sufficient progress in education sector, the pass outs from different educational institutions are skilled enough to meet not only the challenges of 21st century but also different hurdles of the future.

The purpose of education is to empower students to find the paths to their own dreams, to create lifelong learners who are prepared for both the modern world and the future; and to empower individuals to make a positive impact in the world. A group of educators raised a question amongst

themselves about the process of preparing students for the future especially when the future is unknown as also the needs for future. The answer also cropped up from amongst their discussion: creation of personal educational opportunities is necessary to prepare students as world citizens who will be able to change the world of education by their multifarious activities. To make these efforts successful, the specific steps to be taken are:

1. the programme should be student-centered
2. learning should be mastery based
3. hitting the target at the end
4. forward learning, dynamicity
5. accepting newer technological support
6. life-long learning
7. promotion of creativity and critical thinking
8. teachers' guidance to promote student development
9. to identify cause and effect relationships

Importance of Education of Future Generations

Towards the end of twentieth century, educationists and policy makers started thinking about the shape of educational structure that will be essential for twenty first century and thereafter. To be more precise, future of education for future generations was also considered by them. To chalk out future plans they considered and analyzed Indian scenario, thought of global demands, and outcome of National Education Policy (1986) and its programme of action (1992), international conference on secondary education (1993) in New Delhi, WTO conference (1994) in Uruguay and international conference on higher education (1998) in Paris. Taking into account all the decisions taken and recommendations forwarded in the referred policy pack and conferences, future plans were chalked out in this format : education for future generations must be very dynamic, student centered and very much related to societal, environmental, ecological, industry related. Creation of learning society, lifelong learning system, increased employability and honest accountable and technologically competent manpower who can meet and tackle future challenges was found essential.

Trends defining the Future of Education

In view of the fact that future educational planning will be different from the present conventional type, a paradigm shift was noticed in the teaching–learning system. Newer avenues were opened to keep pace with the dynamicity and diversity of the educational system as a whole. To meet the global demands in the educational market suitable driving forces or trends defined are:

1. Practical learning strategies are the ways by which students practically demonstrate what they have assimilated before taking up subsequent learning topics. This will not only consolidate their knowledge but also help them to master their subject.
2. Focus on student's choice and preferences will allow the students to adopt flexible learning system. This will strengthen mindset of the learners who will be able to easily pick up quality education.
3. Education has surpassed geographical boundaries as well . This powerful tool of sharing paves ways for better communication between students around globe for improvement of their competencies and skills.
4. Edutainment – a novel concept of blending entertainment with learning is likely to open new avenues to think ahead. Media learning like educative podcasts, videos and recorded audio-video lessons are the latest educational trends which will be more effective in changing the traditional teaching-learning system.
5. A great holistic change emerges in the classroom based traditional teaching-learning system when teachers also learn from discussion with students. Online learning comes as a handy tool to excite participation of introvert students. Permitting students to get introduced to global educative patterns, assigning quizzes in class and home situations along with flipped classroom sessions will certainly widen the scope of learning across the boundaries.
6. Skill based training paves ways for trained professionals who will be able to seek suitable berths in job market more easily than others. They will also be able to prove their merit in the work sector. In the process, the gap between demand and supply of educated skilled professionals will be bridged.

7. Mobile learning is very popular now a days. From internet connected smart phones students can learn anywhere and anytime to enrich their knowledge.
8. Appreciating the competencies of students through award of academic credits is better option than award of grades. Feedback is another vital tool in this context.
9. Internship is another promising tool when educated or trained students are allowed to face the real situation in suitable workplaces. In-house training workshops can improve their social skills and students can gain technical knowledge from practical field. Working power and maturity will also be enhanced.
10. Adaptive learning platforms will gain prominence where teachers can improve student engagement. It is a personalized learning which helps students to work on instant feedback given out by their faculty. This competency-based educational pattern will thus lay the foundation of a curriculum that will keep in mind the fundamental interests and individual needs of the students.

How to prepare students for Future

In schools, the students learn about lots of subjects, face challenging situations but they rarely have any chance to apply their knowledge in practical work places. Their success most of the times are based on class examinations. They are rewarded by their parents for scoring good results and their parents rarely inspire them to prove their merit. Sense of responsibility and skill for application of knowledge in the areas are tested very rarely. As a result, a brilliant student with strong theoretical background fails to come out as a successful person in the world working arena. To meet the challenges of 21st century and beyond, only students with functional knowledge and skill will be essential. A question spontaneously cropped up towards the methods of preparing such students. A group of educationists suggested five methods to follow at the beginning. The methods are:

a) Encourage Teamwork:

Nearly all jobs now are a team effort. Students need to understand how to communicate, compromise and share credit so that they can be a valuable contributing member to projects.

b) Be Future-focused:

Beside learning in institutions, students should learn to think about the application and utilization of their knowledge.

c) Teach Complex Teaching Skills:

Decision making and problem solving skills are very important for students or future manpower so that they can reach the target at right time by the best path.

d) Round out the Curriculum :

Students of today need an all round education including humanities, science, technology, Engineering and Math (STEM); History and Communication courses. Even Music and the arts encourage creativity and innovations.

What we have discussed till now are the essential basics which the students of present day should learn in high schools and colleges. But as their target is to dominate the future beyond 21st century, they should internalize the skills, or rather the survival skills with which they can tackle the hurdles and challenges of 21st century. After interviewing educationists, business giants and entrepreneurs, Tony Wagner of Harvard University identified seven survival skills as basic needs. The skills are –

1. Critical Thinking and problem solving:

Students need to develop their skills and apply those to solve problems. Whatever be their field of specialization, most problems have multiple dimensions. Students should try different ways to find out multiple solutions and pick up the best one to solve perfectly in minimum time.

2. Collaboration Across Networks and Leading by Influence:

A born natural leader is rare. To complete any job successfully, it is necessary to work harmoniously with others. During this group working, leadership develops from within of those persons who are willing to lead, believe in division of labour, can encourage others and complete the work efficiently. Sometimes these people act as ‘manager’, sometimes as ‘organizer’ or as ‘graphic designer’.

3. **Agility and Adaptability:**

A particular work may not be completed in a definite way. Working situation may change desired raw materials may not be available always and working manpower may not be the best. So the leader must be agile, dynamic and sufficiently capable to adapt himself in the changing workplace and guide the co-workers accordingly.

4. **Initiative and Entrepreneurship:**

The students need to take initiative, incredibly creative and interested in shaping their knowledge and experience. While working, failure may come. It is necessary that a student for the future must take steps to find out the real cause of failure and mend it in time. They should never be afraid of failure and afraid of trying.

5. **Effective Oral and Written Communication:**

In spite of the fact that communication technology is dominating today, effective oral and written communication is still a necessity to many persons. Confident speaking about a project viability and/or detail clear write-up of the matter often touches intimately the understanding level of an assessor. Speed of delivery, gesture, voice of the speaker and eye contact with the audience is of much importance than a technology dependent information sheet. So, students in the future generation should not solely depend on technology leaving the traditional communication system.

6. **Accessing and Analyzing Information:**

Educationists and students of today are getting lots of information from internet. In near future also with improvement of technology flow of academic documents and information will continue to reach students and researchers from all corners of the world. To get benefit in future, it is necessary to learn today the process of selection of the best materials. It is essential to learn accessing the most suitable materials from the text site and the correct answers from answer sites.

7. **Curiosity and Imagination:**

Curiosity and imagination are two vital features of student's mind which provoke them to explore. Educationists of today should encourage them to develop these two skills so that they can creatively and purposefully apply them.

Conclusion

Technology and education together are changing the global learning scenerio. Changes in future will be much more for obvious reasons. Supply of education related information through smart phones has already gained strong ground in the educational set up. It is necessary to believe that students of the future should learn the correct use of technology handing and should not reject the traditional methods of teaching-learning system. They must learn to lead others in such a way that they can keep pace with the dynamic changes of the education dynasty.

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