

M.Ed. 2nd Sem.

Paper CC5 : Educational Studies and System

Unit 1

Topic :

Emerging Dimensions In School Education

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So much has changed in the last two decades with schools and students-attention spans have fallen from four hours to four minutes, Google has helped students know more than the teacher in class, admonishment no longer works and repetitiveness is increasingly resisted. It almost feels like there is too much that has changed too quickly and most schools are 'gasping or reacting' rather than 'responding'.

A major challenge is to keep pace with changing careers and industry needs. It is quite obvious that students seek education to be successful professionals. But what if the professions that we are preparing students for, become extinct? As per a popular estimate, 65% of children entering primary school today will end up working in entirely new job types that do not exist as yet.

The gasping and reaction in some cases and the thoughtful responses in others has brought about a positive and gradual shift in different areas of school education. Let us see what these emerging trends are –

Experimentation and Hands on Learning

Rote learning is on the decline. Not because it does not work but because students simply don't have the attention span or the interest to do this anymore.

Schools are raising the standard and making amends to the traditional format. A practical approach towards learning is the key change in many schools today and usage of case-study methodology is taking precedence over textbook based learning. Although it needs to do much more, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) acknowledges the need for a more practical approach and has taken multiple steps. Ever since CBSE's intervention, schools have started imparting knowledge by way of case studies, life-skills training, language and technology workshops and even project management at an early stage, so that pupils receive a holistic learning experience. Schools such as Emerald Heights International in Indore have experimented by way of giving access to laboratories to students for Mathematics, Quizzing and Geography. They have also created plays in school that are born out of academic text books. This format of education has generated immense interest in students and they are learning effectively. The prime focus of all these initiatives is to help children experience answers to their questions and not just read them.

Another development in several schools has been the introduction of 'student clubs', catering to everything from adventure, literary, animal lovers' clubs to hiking, biking and start-up clubs. These clubs in schools are providing students an opportunity to learn from the 'Classroom of life'.

Being Mindful

Given the challenges with shorter attention spans, learning disabilities and stress, schools are increasingly treading the path of meditation and mindfulness. A silent mind is essential for students to absorb new information and to be creative. There are several organizations that are committed to bringing these skills to schools and in most cases are volunteer run. There are many schools that have collaborated with spiritual wellness experts such as Buddhist monk Lama Yeshe to inculcate mindfulness in the school environment. Volunteer organizations such as Soul Science Foundation and Art of Living have managed to seamlessly integrate with schools and they have particularly focused on life-skills training and mindfulness. Through thoughtfully crafted modules, these organizations have been able to bring calmness and joy among young learners.

Technology in schools

Amid all new trends in schools, technology has managed to reinvent the wheel and bring in new approaches. Every few years, there are advancements that are raring to replace the old with the new. The educators of today have started using technology in almost all aspects of imparting knowledge. Apart from the gadgets used in the classroom, these professionals have started using digital mediums to share knowledge outside of the classroom. Webinars, online courses, virtual reality and even simulation-based learning has been integrated with ease in schools today. Several schools today have their own mobile app, use data management tools for decision making, implement ERP and use tools such as Naviance for helping students with career and college counseling.

Train the Trainer

Another important focus for schools now is training their teachers and administrators. Some schools are investing up to 20% of their budget on their teacher training, and rightly so. This is of utmost importance in the light of 'rapid and disruptive change' we are experiencing in our lives. Teachers need to be equipped with the latest knowledge, tools and guidelines on 'how to deal with the changes' and educate effectively.

Placement cell and Career Counseling

And finally, schools are now beginning to look for ways not just to improve student success in school but ways to prepare students to succeed beyond school. This trend has meant that there is an increasing focus on 'placement cells' or 'career and college counseling'. Every single student needs help from as early as Class 9 through Class 12 to ensure that he finds the best fit programme and college for his interests, whether in India or abroad.

To this end, schools are appointing full time counselors or assigning part-time duties to some teachers for counseling. Invitation to guest speakers, university visits, career days and professional development for counselors through participation in platforms such as the International Career and College Counseling (IC3) conference is helping bridge the information gap.

Through a range of efforts that they are making, every school is doing something to deal with the rapid and disruptive change – whether gasping, reacting or responding.

