



THE TIMES OF INDIA

₹250

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# Interdisciplinary education for school-goers

METRICS OF STUDENT LEARNING CAPTURES MOVEMENT FROM LOW ORDER TO HIGH ORDER SKILLS AND PREPARES THEM FOR FUTURE, WRITES **SHALENDER SHARMA**

**W**hile the late 20th century was marked by the elaboration, diversification, and increasing narrow specialisation of fields of higher education, several new disciplines emerged and developed independent of one another in the 21st century. Historically, it was considered that education has value only if it has some social and economic utility. However, there is now an increasing awareness that for education to be effective, it must help the learners to seek solutions to some of the real-life problems.

The digital revolution is making it necessary to articulate problems differently and introducing common approaches to their solutions. This requires an interdisciplinary approach to school curriculum and teaching and learning. Real-life problems are not divided up into disciplines; therefore, they must be tackled through interdisciplinary approaches. While all the sectors of education may be related to interdisciplinarity, but it is not evenly distributed and not applied the same way.

However, it is definitely easier said than done as interdisciplinarity is not simple to implement at the level of our present teaching methods. But, it has to be initiated with the education policy reforms, education content and the education system structure. Therefore, the introduction of interdisciplinarity cannot be successful if

this is not started at the policy level. Interdisciplinarity entails significant alterations in teaching practice, organisation of teacher's knowledge and teacher's role in classroom. This may incite resistance from teachers and would require a robust change management plan. Also, there may be resistance on the part of parents, who do not recognise the type of school they themselves attended.

Introducing interdisciplinary education at the school level would require establishing relevance of teaching-learning to real life experiences of students. An important aspect of this implies relevance must have multi-dimensional modes of inquiry. The following are some of the important steps towards starting an interdisciplinary education system:

- Education policies should explicit-



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ly accept interdisciplinary approach in general education.

- System of constructive feedback and collaboration of teachers through professional learning communities needs to be promoted and institutionalised.

- The curriculum must ensure that all subject syllabi articulate the definition of competences and learning outcomes. The learning activities and assessment must reflect a shift from objective based to a competence based approach.

- Cross-cutting issues are important for students to learn about and must be integrated across learning areas. The curriculum therefore should reflect the significance of the connections between different subject areas, integrating them across years and cycles.

- There is a need to make connections between Mathematics and other subjects of study. When children learn to draw graphs, they should also be encouraged to think of functional relationships in the sciences, including Geology. Student need to appreciate the fact that Mathematics is an effective instrument in the study of science, also, strong interlinks that exist between Mathematics and Art must be made to be understood and appreciated by students.

- An integrated approach to lesson plan is needed where teachers are able to achieve identified learning outcomes and thereby are able to effectively map activities, instructional procedure, assessment for learning and strategies for student engagement.

- Consider the

specifics to each discipline - the core of the discipline - and explore as much as possible outside the discipline. Main criteria should be the relevance of interdisciplinary instruction to the priorities as per the competency based curriculum.

- Develop conceptual framework which allows the interdisciplinary approach to be adapted to the prevailing situation. Professional development programme for teachers needs to take into account effective strategies to enhance student engagement and reduce the number of student at risk of learning by memorisation. A proper short term course needs to be designed for in-service teachers to ensure they support development of soft and life skills among the student.

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